Masculinity, Materiality and Space Onboard the Royal Naval Ship, 1756 – 1815

Thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements of the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Queen Mary University of London

2016

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20/07/2016
Abstract

This thesis is a social and material history of the British naval ship during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, and analyses the nexus of masculine interactions with spaces and objects aboard. Previous naval historiography has tended to polarise the experience of seamen and officers as defined either by benevolent paternalism or revolutionary conflict, and has tended to avoid engagement with the analytical frameworks of gender, material culture and spatiality. Indeed, despite it acting as a temporary home for upwards of 500,000 men during the long eighteenth century, the naval ship during this period has often been understood as purely a platform for a series of hierarchical relationships, rather than a lived space, the everyday experience of which informed the masculine identities of all who lived aboard. Through an examination of records of courts martial, letters, logs, journals, memoirs, objects and ship plans, this thesis attempts to understand the ways in which a socially disparate group of men defined themselves in relation to each other, as well as the built environment and shifting material worlds they occupied. Regardless of their status within the naval hierarchy, the denizens of naval ships occupied a temporary home which was continually being made and remade. The material and social interactions which attended these processes can, this thesis argues, tell us much about masculine experience and expectation, both for the naval ship, and the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries more widely.
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Masculinity, Materiality and Space on board the Royal Naval Ship, 1756 – 1815

Fig. 1.1 Cistern Barometer, made from the wood of HMS *Temeraire*  
W & S Jones (London: 1838)  
National Maritime Museum, Ref: NAV0785
Introduction: Men, Space and Things

When HMS *Temeraire* was built at Chatham dockyard in 1798, its architects likely had little notion of the defining role it would play in one of the most decisive battles of the long eighteenth century. Indeed, the *Temeraire's* role in the battle of Trafalgar and its aiding of the *Victory* during the height of the conflict ensured that its legacy endured, and it became commonly referred to in the years after 1805 as the ‘Fighting Temeraire’, eventually immortalised by Turner in his 1838 oil painting of the same name. The same year, in a navigational instrument manufactory in London, the *Temeraire* was being reformed out of brass, mercury and glass. Figure 1.1, a cistern barometer, was made from the timbers of the *Temeraire* as the great ship was broken up in the Thames, and it joined a number of other artefacts forged from her wooden frame. These included two tables, one of which belonged to Captain Frederick Marryat, as well as a selection of furniture which was presented to Rotherhithe parish church, situated alongside the site of her deconstruction. The barometer itself includes an image of Nelson carved in bone, and a description of the provenance of the timbers, claiming they had once formed part of the ‘Main Deck’ of the *Temeraire*.

Although these objects were created slightly after the period which this thesis examines, they reflect a trend which was already clearly in place towards the end of the eighteenth century. Ships’ timbers were regularly reclaimed when naval vessels were broken up, and were repurposed into various furnishings and new useable artefacts. Indeed, as the *Temeraire* was being broken up a
'brisk demand' emerged in Rotherhithe for 'relics' of the ship, and on the 12th of October 1838 those working near the Surrey Canal dock would have been confronted with a scene 'crowded with people' raucously waiting to catch a sight of the ship and to retrieve part of its wooden skeleton as a keepsake. The series of objects which the *Temeraire* was broken into represents a repurposing which went beyond the desire simply to recycle and reuse. Here was a series of material things which were designed to be exemplary in their naval connotations, and to denote an enduring tradition of British pride in naval achievement.

In many ways, the development of a naval historiography has been very similar to the breaking up of the *Temeraire* in 1838 and its transformation into a series of commemoratory artefacts in 1838. Whilst the materiality of the ship itself shaped experience and facilitated a range of different groups and identities, the creation of commemorative objects suggests a fossilisation of the ship’s purpose, and a fixed meaning for life aboard. Likewise, naval history has often been packaged as being far removed from the every day brine and wood of experience, and made into a narrative of British achievement and national pride; transmuted from the collective daily travails of a group of socially disparate men into the story of Britannia’s glorious rise to dominance. From the almost immediate and overwhelming hagiography of Nelson in the first half of the nineteenth century, naval history has been coloured by the stories of great men achieving great and patriotic deeds at sea. The 'unprecedented

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2 *The Times* 12th October 1838, 7.
series of glorious leaders’ seen to have defined the Royal Navy over the course of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries were indeed the primary subjects for historical investigation for a large part of the twentieth century.\(^3\)

Eugene L. Rasor has denoted these men as ‘gigantic national heroes’, with Lord Nelson looming largest, followed somewhat distantly in the popular imagination by figures such as Admiral Vernon and Admiral Pellew.\(^4\) The period under study falls squarely into that understood in western narratives of maritime history as the Age of Fighting Sail, and the years under scrutiny were characterised by almost continual warfare. From the opening of the Seven Years War in 1756 to the close of the Napoleonic Wars in 1815, the period under study was one rarely witness to respite from the turmoil of international conflict with enemies overseas. The ongoing series of battles proffered up myriad chances for naval men to capture prize ships, win victories, and gain reputations at home. These years therefore provide us with an opportunity to examine a wide range of men in a specific social environment

It is important to note that the focus on the ‘celebrities’ of the Royal Navy is not entirely anachronistic. As Timothy Jenks has demonstrated, patriotism and the celebration of naval victories were harmonious concepts in late eighteenth century Britain. Jenks demonstrates that the enduring popularity of the Royal Navy relied on its ability to act as a metaphor for the British nation: the wooden world. Whilst the army was a potentially disruptive force in communities on shore and had the propensity to turn against the British


\(^4\) Ibid, 5.
people in the name of the state, the navy was glorified in its distance and was perhaps more evidently at the forefront of the war effort.\(^5\) In an era defined in many ways by seemingly interminable global warfare, the British navy afloat was understood as a protector of the British way of life, and its officers as the frontline slayers of revolutionary and absolutist monsters. National security was seen as dependent on the successes of the Royal Navy, and the men who were seen to facilitate the continuing assurance of hard won British liberty were thus touted as near-saints.

These waterborne saints also had their relics. The overwhelmingly positive reputation of the navy during this period meant that many British homes were adorned with naval imagery on ‘manuscripts, paintings, ceramics, prints and caricatures’.\(^6\) Mass produced items such as the mug below (Figure 1.2) were available cheaply to a wide audience, and occupied the hands and homes of many British subjects. The creamware mug depicts the much lauded 1798 victory at the Battle of the Nile and reads ‘When Nelson appears tis confest/That Britains are Lords of the Main’, reinforcing the symbiotic nature of the relationship between naval victory and national identity. Importantly, the mug’s design was copied from an engraving forty years earlier commemorating Captain Richard Tyrell at battle in HMS Buckingham. Naval action was a commonly repeated visual trope, and eighteenth-century consumers would have been buying into a long tradition of interpreting

victories abroad within the household. Admiral Vernon’s victories in the first half of the eighteenth century, Kathleen Wilson has argued, ‘precipitated a minor revolution in the pottery industry’. The creation and consumption of this pottery, along with various other displays of support, cohered a popular celebratory political identity which prized imperial successes. Like the *Temeraire* barometer, life at sea was repackaged for those who would use naval commemoration to assert their own affiliation with the virtues of Britishness.

![Creamware Mug (1798)](image)

Fig. 1.2. Creamware Mug (1798)
National Maritime Museum, Ref: AAA4753
Design from an earlier 1758 engraving by Robert Sayer showing the victory of Captain Richard Tyrell in the *Buckingham*

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Popular material culture, however, was not solely limited to the supposedly magnanimous leaders of naval vessels in conflict. The visages of common seamen graced countless ceramics, caricatures and printed ephemera, and Jack Tar was increasingly lionised for his ‘heart of oak’ as the eighteenth century progressed. The Sailor’s Return remained an eminently popular emblem during the mid to late eighteenth century and, as Joanne Bailey has pointed out, the naval sailor was afforded manly feelings as well as being made a robust fighter in visual culture. The pervasiveness of naval men in the eighteenth-century imagination was based in part on the potent culture of patriotism, but also on the sheer number of men whom the navy tempted and forced out to sea during the period. Between 1688 and 1815, the Royal Navy sucked 500,000 men into its vast machine, initiating them into a life marked by the emotionally charged ebb and flow of continual absence and return. This accounts for the prevalence of the Sailor’s Return as a cultural emblem, as well as the scores of caricature and printed works depicting and describing Jack’s brief time on shore: always transient and always removed from normative shorebound behaviour. This imagining of naval men as a special and separate group continually found itself expressed through a cornucopia of material goods and visual culture. Historians have argued that these representations were part of a culture which overtly celebrated military victory at sea, as well

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as asserting Jack Tar as a ‘manly’ and patriotic figure from about 1750 onwards.\(^{10}\)

However, whilst cultural representation and naval celebration have been studied as a means to better understand British nationhood and masculine types, the men who actually lived aboard naval ships have received relatively polarised scholarly attention. Much of the historiography on naval men is split between that which sees the Royal Navy as a fundamentally benevolent institution founded on patronage systems, and Marxist approaches which understand naval life as the oppressive nature of industrial capitalism writ small. Whilst early work on the Royal Navy such as that by Michael Lewis and Peter Kemp saw ships as sites of systematic enslavement and maltreatment towards seamen, the corrective to this has tended to emphasise the extent to which naval society was founded on mutual agreement and negotiation.\(^{11}\) N.A.M Rodger has authored a social history which tempers early claims that the naval ship was notable in its brutality. He and historians such as Brian Lavery argue that the naval ship was powered by paternal relations and patronage, creating a society founded on masculine congeniality, or ‘mutual


affection’ between seamen and officers as naval historian A. B. McLeod phrases it. These histories have broadly understood the Royal Navy in the so-called Age of Fighting Sail as an improving force in terms of its defence of British shores and its terms as an employer. Shipboard society is often represented in these histories as a network of mutually beneficial masculine relationships. The systems of personal patronage at work between midshipmen, officers, captains and admirals represented a time-tested arrangement for career progression, whilst N.A.M Rodger describes the mutiny of seamen as a series of considered negotiations between captain and crew.

A separate strand of historiography on naval society is at odds with this analysis. Whilst Rodger has defined the ship as akin to the shore in the co-operation between authority and the masses, and sees mutinies as ‘conservative’ affirmations of the status quo, Marxist historians such as Marcus Rediker see mutinies as indicative of an antiauthoritarian counter culture below decks. In this imagining, life on board was fundamentally an oppressive transmission of authority from quarterdeck down, with seamen subscribing to a broadly revolutionary set of ideals. Seamen here are the victims of ‘slavish hierarchical discipline’, and their identity is primarily imagined as a desire to overthrow this hierarchy as part of a transatlantic quest to reclaim the

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commons. Other histories, often focusing on mutinous action on board ship, have argued for the importance of the naval ship in this period as a site of revolutionary ideology amongst seamen. Niklas Frykman’s work has examined the ways in which the multicultural nature of transatlantic deep-sea sailing created a revolutionary lower deck culture. This informed mutinies which spread across the Atlantic world throughout the late eighteenth century and defined the global experience of seamen.

These are not the only histories to have been written of the Royal Navy during the long eighteenth century. Recent years have seen analysis of patronage systems and the attendant emotional and professional bonds by historians such as Samantha Cavell, Evan Wilson and Ellen Gill. Other recent investigations have aimed to deepen our understanding of sailor culture and labour, notably a recent monograph on impressment in the Atlantic World by Denver Brunsman and scholarship by Roland Pietsch. Importantly, Brunsman also points out the vacuum in scholarship created by Rodger and Rediker’s polarised approaches. Both Brunsman and Pietsch identify a sailor culture which was inherently youthful in its performances, arguing that the dangers of deep sea sailing required an adherence to a masculine culture valuing a “Short

Life and Merry Life”.\textsuperscript{18} Brunsman adds that maritime labour was not degrading as suggested by Marxist histories, nor was it an act of compliance with quarterdeck hierarchy. Rather it can be understood as an engagement with skilled work practices, by which seamen found some claim to dignity and ownership of their livelihoods.\textsuperscript{19} These recent contributions to the social history of the Royal Navy provide valuable complexity to the experiences of life on board ship.

Broadly, however, there has been scant attention paid to the possibilities for cross-fertilisation between naval history and developments in other historiographies. Despite the average Royal Naval ship containing myriad groups of men from all walks of life, interacting in a temporary micro society, the ship has rarely been considered alongside wider histories of masculinity. Little enquiry has been made into how experience on board the ship might have been shaped by wider masculine expectations, or how masculine identities were consolidated or contested through the processes of inhabiting a naval vessel. Furthermore, naval history has repeatedly eluded any scrutiny in relation to the materiality of the ship and the ways in which the specificities of its spaces impacted on the experience of daily life and a wider sense of masculine self.


\textsuperscript{19} Brunsman, \textit{Evil Necessity}, 55.
Time and again, masculine identities and the ways in which male senses of self were constructed through social experience and cultural expectation have been sidelined in histories of the navy order to assert narratives about naval discipline and heroism or anti-authoritarianism. Although much has changed in the last thirty years, naval history has repeatedly evaded many of the recent historiographical turns, the cultural, material and spatial seeming to have passed it by in many cases. Additionally, gender history has only recently begun to seriously engage with the maritime world, meaning that the men who went to sea in droves during the long eighteenth century have largely been seen as unrelated to the masculinities of the shore and unmoored from the cultural and social negotiations of their landlocked counterparts. Whilst naval officers have largely been represented as seafaring patron saints of Britannia, naval seamen have too often been framed as two-dimensional revolutionaries, devoid of any sense of self unless it directly opposed the authority of ship and state.

This thesis aims to salvage naval history from its hagiographic past, and to reassess the identities of the men who went to sea based on an analysis of the intersections between materiality, space and masculinity. Unlike many other studies, this examination will be undertaken through considering the naval ship as a series of lived spaces in which masculine identities were constructed and contested, rather than as stage for heroic and revolutionary performances. More than this, however, my research aims to alter the terms by which we

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study masculinities in the eighteenth century more generally, and to demonstrate that the naval ship’s diverse social make up can be employed in order to undertake a study of how different types of men might interact, and how men of different ranks formed and sustained professional and social relationships. From the polite gentleman through to the fop, the politician to the merchant, men during this period have been understood overwhelmingly as cultural creatures, their experiences of the world forged in the eminently public arenas of the assembly room, coffee house and political public sphere. As will be outlined in the literature review, this conception of the eighteenth-century man has been moulded by the earlier literature on separate spheres, the prizing of the cultural turn in eighteenth-century history, and the paucity of studies which investigate masculinities below the middling sort. This trend has begun to be reversed in recent literature, although the need for a new history of men in the eighteenth century is still evident. This thesis will attempt to write a form of social history which draws heavily on materiality and spatiality as analytical tools.

Masculinity, as this thesis will make clear, was grounded on social relations as much as cultural prescriptions, and the naval ship in many ways provides an ideal site to study various masculinities being formed and contested during this period. However, whilst the men who stepped aboard naval ships were drawn from all corners of the eighteenth-century social world, their stories are not merely that of shorebound masculinities transplanted on to the water. This study takes seriously the ways in which the ship as a built environment formed and was formed by the men who inhabited it for months or years at a
time, and endeavours to avoid understanding seafarers as merely amphibious gentlemen or labourers. The sea as an environment and the ship as a site created assemblages of men, things and built worlds which differed greatly from the houses and rooms of the shore. In this micro society, objects shifted meaning as they were moved through the ship, and spaces were continually made and remade by the men who trod the decks and climbed the ropes of this wooden world. This thesis asks how our understanding of masculinity during this period alters when we allow for the existence of identities which were socially fluid creations rather than culturally contained constructions. Identifying cultural performances as indicative of various types of prescribed masculine identity is a limited avenue for scholarship. Rather we must pursue the assumption that just as in the present day, gendered identities were formed, sustained and renegotiated in the intersections between personhood, social activity and material surroundings.

This thesis will therefore ask how our conception of masculinity is altered when we examine a single, multi-use space rather than referring to a vague and unqualified ‘public’, and considers the identities that existed there to be forged in social interaction and sustained by continual and contextual material practice. Masculine identity needs to be analysed in terms of the social experience of individuals and groups relative to spaces and things. The ship, this thesis posits, provides a discrete set of lived spaces, enabling us to conduct such analyses, and make their outcomes applicable to other men, in other spaces. The outcome of this discussion will be to enliven and expand the possibilities for writing a history of the Royal Navy, whilst also attempting to
alter the interpretative toolbox which historians of masculinity might use in the future. In order to begin such a discussion this introduction will review the literature on eighteenth-century gender and masculinity, material culture, and space/historical geography, as well as flagging up the limitations of current debates and the interventions this thesis intends to make. This will start with an examination of the state of the field of masculinity studies for the eighteenth-century and beyond and its implications for this thesis.

**Masculinity**

We can perhaps identify the beginnings of a history of masculine identity with the American feminist movement during the 1970s, and its insistence ‘on the fundamentally social quality of distinctions based on sex’. Moving to the forefront of an explicitly historical analysis over the course of the 1980s, the idea that men and women were culturally and socially, rather than biologically, constructed had by the early 1990s fully established itself as a means with which to understand and analyse the past. This approach served to dissolve rigid barriers between the categories of ‘man’ and ‘woman’ and laid the foundations for analyses which critically examined how this dichotomy had been culturally constructed, and the ways in which this construction was contingent on the specificities of time and place. As early as 1986, Joan Scott wrote in the *American Historical Review* that gender was an ‘entirely social creation of ideas about appropriate roles for women and men’. Two years later Denise Riley claimed in *Am I That Name?* that ‘woman’ was a historically

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unstable and temporal category, and argued that as a result of this, ‘woman’ could never be defined as a coherent or universal category with its tendrils stretching back into the recesses of time.23

By 1997 Penelope J Corfield felt confident enough about its progress to write that ‘women’s history’ was successfully ‘mutating’ into the history of gender.24 Historians began to compare the category of ‘woman’ to that of ‘Greek Cypriot’ or ‘peasant’ in attempts to highlight the contingency of feminine identity on a constellation of socio-cultural factors.25 This comment signals the allowance by historians that women could not be studied as a constant and ahistorical category, and that gender identity is inherently relational: femininity and masculinity were beginning to be understood as co-constitutive. Furthermore, the ubiquity of society’s gendering processes meant that historians began to call for older political, military and imperial histories to be revisited and reassessed.26

This scholarly manifesto was not welcomed by all. Early critiques were often concerned with the fact that several gender historians allied themselves with poststructuralist theory and the ‘linguistic turn’. This approach suggested that the historian could know nothing about their period other than discourse; all

26 Scott, ‘Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis’, 1057.
that existed was the written word and every historical document needed to be read as a ‘literary text’ with their ‘particular interests and biases’. This approach, many historians claimed, denied women the agency to ‘shape their world’ and was deleterious to the academic strides made by women’s historians in the decade preceding the emergence of ‘gender’ as a historical concept. During the mid-1990s, Joan Hoff rebuked poststructuralism and gender history for denying any ‘objective truth’ in history, claiming that in the process of dissolving the category of ‘woman’, gender history in fact disassociated women from their factual context, and dispossessed them from actual lived experience. Their denial of the categories of men and women, Hoff and others argued, neatly glossed over the fact that an analysis of gender for much of the past was concerned with the power that men wielded over women. From the very beginnings of gender history then, masculinity has occupied an uneasy position in relationship to femininity. Concerns were expressed by historians that as the historical record was largely authored by men, an attempt to give equal weighting to men and women in a ‘gendered’ perspective would ultimately result in masculine experience eclipsing that of women.

More recent histories, however, have highlighted that men, as well as women, frequently risk remaining outside of traditional historical frameworks.

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28 Ibid, 98.
masculine omnipresence often suggested by the written record of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries often means that men, whilst everywhere, are also invisible. Men are thus ‘everywhere but nowhere’, and the identification of the male narrative as normative means that masculinity has frequently been equated only with untrammelled power and authority through the various guises of patriarchal control.\(^\text{31}\) Indeed, the seeds of the history of masculinity were sown largely in the fertile soil of the men’s movement, which strongly supported the goals of women’s history and engaged regularly in an ‘autocritique of conventional masculinity’.\(^\text{32}\) R.W. Connell’s 1993 publication *Masculinities* is one of the texts which allowed the framing of masculinity as a field of study. Although subsequently subject to much critique, Connell’s theory of ‘hegemonic masculinity’ has acted as a touchstone for historians and opened up debate over how masculinity was societally constituted. Importantly, Connell’s model allows for not just one totemic and patriarchal masculinity, but a multiplicity of male identities formed in relation to each other. The hegemonic man, himself differing in characteristics through time and place, and ‘historically mobile’, existed in relation to a number of ‘oppositional masculinities’.\(^\text{33}\) Connell’s idea that gender relations exist between different types of men, as well as between men and women, is invaluable in its enrichment of masculinity studies.

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Alongside Connell’s pioneering sociological study, the examination of masculinities has evolved and expanded, and with it a growing critique of the concept of hegemonic masculinity. Connell herself has recently allowed that ‘hegemonic masculinity’ is overly simplistic as a category, and that men of power and privilege within any society would also be embattled due to ‘patterns of internal division and emotional conflict’, noting that the patriarchal power at the heart of hegemonic masculinity needs to be complicated.34 When John Tosh asked ‘What Should Historians do with Masculinity?’ in 1994 he identified that the Connellite division of masculinities into dominant and subordinate had allowed patriarchal power to be sustained over time. Tosh and Michael Roper had previously emphasised the need to focus on the inherent relationality of masculinity to other gendered identities, and noted the impossibility of understanding social power without drawing on relational identity formation.35 In his 1994 essay, however, Tosh also demonstrates the vulnerabilities inherent in such models of masculinity, and posits that the hegemonic-subordinate model may be too simplistic and static. Hegemonic masculinity may be impacted by active resistance from women and subordinate groups, whilst the ‘material accomplishments’ necessary to demonstrate hegemonic masculinity may not be accessible to an individual.36 Masculinity, Tosh demonstrated, was representative not of a form of modish historical ‘add on’, but rather a category of analysis which should be seen to intersect variously with class, race, ethnicity, and which histories in the future...

36 Tosh, ‘What Should Historians Do with Masculinity?’, 192.
should seek to employ in complex and nuanced ways. Within nineteenth-century historiography, Tosh called for the history of masculinity to incorporate a better understanding of how the practices of dominant and subordinate groups are shaped through the dynamics of home, work and leisure, as well as asking how historians of masculinity more generally might create a balance ‘between the discursive and the social’.37

By the beginning of the twenty-first century, masculinity had thus been clearly demarcated as a category of analysis which was not merely ‘men's history’, but which could contribute to a broad socio-cultural history of femininity, class, ethnicity, race and profession. Within eighteenth-century historiography, however, it is arguable that has been responded to only partially. The 1997 edited volume *Gender in Eighteenth-Century England* contained only one out of nine essays concerned with constructions of masculine identity. Philip Carter’s essay on foppery examines the social conduct of the fop, and questions whether this figure was necessarily seen as homosexual, and called for enquiry into urban social ‘public’ spaces. Acceptable masculine identity in ‘points of assembly such as coffee-houses, promenades, parks and pleasure gardens’ needed to be carefully mediated Carter argues, and the fop could find his manner ridiculed if it failed to comply with carefully choreographed social rules.38 This set of rules, broadly referred to as ‘politeness’, has come to

37 Ibid, 198.
dominate the way in which we understand masculinity during the eighteenth century.\textsuperscript{39}

Another volume published two years later, and entitled \textit{English Masculinities 1660-1800}, demonstrated that masculinities in the long eighteenth century were receiving increasing sustained attention. The essays here continued Carter’s themes of politeness and self-control in public spaces, with attention also being paid to the male body and sexuality. Karen Harvey’s contribution concluded that the experience of reading male erotica was as much about self-control and restraint as it was about the throes of ‘de-masculinizing sexual abandon’.\textsuperscript{40} The eighteenth century also saw an apparent decline in the acceptance of intimate male relationships, both platonic and homosexual, as the century labelled certain forms of intimacy ‘perversions’.\textsuperscript{41} Meanwhile, men were continuing to curb their behaviour in social spaces,\textsuperscript{42} with James Boswell appearing in Carter’s account as able to access a range of identities which could be deployed with different publics.\textsuperscript{43} Overall, the eighteenth-century man


\textsuperscript{41} A. Bray and M. Rey, ‘The Body of the Friend: Continuity and Change in Masculine Friendship in the Seventeenth Century’ in Hitchcock and Cohen (eds.), \textit{English Masculinities}, 83.


appears as one characterised by an increased bodily and social self restraint, performing varying masculine roles in order to mediate a public self image. Masculinity during the period appears in these histories as honed and constrained, often tempered by a newly refined expectation of public cultured performance.

In this vein, Michele Cohen's work has explored the notion of ‘fashioning’ the masculine self through an examination of didactic literature, and emphasises the control of language and gesture in the making of the polite gentleman. There was, she argues, bubbling underneath the veneer of polite conduct a concern that perhaps too much contact with ‘effeminate’ French culture might compromise one’s masculinity. However this could be countered by framing oneself as a ‘sincere’ and stoutly honest Englishman. Cohen thus presents a prescriptive balancing act for men, in which Englishness, manliness and politeness had to be learned and negotiated in order to present the male self as legitimate. Philip Carter’s 2001 publication of *Men and the Emergence of Polite Society* also drew on similar understandings of how men negotiated their relationships with others. Politeness carried worries over effeminacy, as well as worries that the artifice involved in curating oneself through the precise demonstration of learning was sapping masculine ‘moral integrity’, leading to the spawning of sensibility. For Carter, despite the evident eighteenth-

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century qualms over the polite, politeness was the organising concept which men during this period measured themselves against, and which many sought to enact. This refined sociability was performed largely in public spaces, and was characterised by a congenial manner and the comportment of a gentleman. These sets of micro-interactions and relations were supposed to ‘smooth’ men, in Shaftesbury’s words; to erode any roughness or vulgarity and grind it into a polished surface. Men were defined by their capacity for gentlemanly social performance, and although this began largely with elite men, by the end of the century politeness provided a set of cultural tools which men of the middling sort could also pick up, even if this eventually changed the terms of politeness itself.

Politeness, and the curation of the public male self which it required, has thus heavily flavoured the study of eighteenth-century masculinity. The polite gentleman has certainly not stood alone, and the fop, molly and blackguard seem to have consistently kept his company, if only in the background of masculine narratives. However, masculine identities seem to have been understood largely in how they defined themselves against the polite gentleman. Much eighteenth-century historiography has seemed to look for, and inevitably found, ‘types’ of man who have tended to be discussed in terms of their relationship to polite ideals. This is largely due to the overwhelmingly prescriptive nature of the source material used to explore masculinities during

this period, pushing the politeness of the *Spectator* and other advice manuals to lofty heights, and glossing over the multiple forms of masculinity which likely operated alongside, and interacted with, the polite. Far from Tosh's dream of equilibrium between the 'discursive and social', eighteenth-century historiography has largely drawn on evidence of cultural prescription, meaning that the myriad manuals on polite comportment have dominated the way in which we imagine male experience and expectation. As Karen Harvey and Alexandra Shepard pointed out in 2005, the distinctly cultural history approach to eighteenth-century masculinity has skewed our understanding of men for this period. Whilst the histories of the seventeenth and nineteenth centuries have a distinctly patriarchal and family-orientated flavour, the eighteenth century sits oddly between the two, offering up a man who seems to concern himself little with home and hearth, and who is more likely to be found in the assembly room than the living room. Although politeness required social conduct in order to polish the self and present the image of the polite man, these interactions in much historiography seem to exist in a cage of cultural prescription, defined and confined by advice on how one should behave in a limited variety of public spaces.

Earlier histories of the polite man have now been added to by several other explorations, which allow men a broader range of self-expression and

emotional interaction with the world around them. As early as 2001, Helen Berry called for a challenge to the ‘zeitgeist of politeness’. She identified a bawdy culture which existed alongside polite performances, a culture which embraced impolite thought and suggestive ‘flash talk’. More than this, Berry located this culture as existing within a coffee house, Addison and Steele’s touted hub of polite polish. Our sense of the schism between seventeenth- and eighteenth-century culture, Berry tells us, is overstated. There are deep continuities which she argues are borne out in newspaper and popular literary sources. Politeness, and by extension the polite man, did not leap into being in the early decades of the eighteenth century, and our understanding of his identity needs to break free from the assumption that politeness dominated his social and cultural worlds. Hannah Barker takes up the mantle of emphasising continuity in her exploration of four men who called Manchester their home in the eighteenth century. Barker found that for men of lower middling social standing such as these, a devotion to God, a strong work ethic and ‘mastery of the self’ eclipsed the influence of the polite on men's everyday lives. Barker explores the diaries of a grocer, a preacher, a wig-maker and a draper in her attempt to demonstrate the ‘variegated’ nature of eighteenth-century masculinity. These men appear to have had little reliance on codes of politeness and sociability, and instead founded their sense of self on the bedrock of respectability, work and religion.

52 Berry, ‘Rethinking Politeness’, 81.
Karen Harvey’s recent work on oeconomy and masculine domestic life has also raised questions about how far the tendrils of public politeness penetrated men’s everyday lives. Harvey focuses on masculine roles within the home, linking oeconomical practices to the creation and consolidation of a manly authority within middling households. This research joins an already substantial body of work which aims to interrogate the gendered public-private divide and Harvey asserts that men’s authority was derived from the home as well as the public sphere. Practices of household management, she argues, allowed men to demonstrate a manly authority which rested on the display of honour and credit amongst the members of their household and other men within their familial and wider social circles.\textsuperscript{54} Probity, in this imagining, had the power to supersede politeness. Furthermore, Harvey’s work allows men back into the home and reshapes the historiography into one which now needs to take seriously the spaces where men resided and worked in addition to those where they spent leisure time outside of the home.

The push in much eighteenth-century gender history has therefore moved beyond the dichotomous separate spheres model, and aims to demonstrate that daily life presented women with opportunities to articulate agency outside of the confines of the home. They were not, as Catherine Hall and Leonore Davidoff posited in \textit{Family Fortunes}, increasingly shackled to the home, but rather were part of a story of continuity in which women partook in enterprise

\textsuperscript{54} K. Harvey, \textit{The Little Republic: Masculinity and Domestic Authority in Eighteenth-Century Britain} (Oxford: 2012), 171.
and earned value through their contribution to family economies.\(^{55}\) Whilst the study of femininity has increasingly enlarged the role of women as existing beyond the house, until very recently the history of masculinity did little to analyse how men might exist within the home, and failed to use the tools employed by social historians of women’s lives.\(^{56}\) In the earlier politeness-oriented historiography, men were thus denied an investment of any meaning in the places they resided, and the importance the home played in creating and reshaping memory, building and sustaining kin relationships, and rooting patriarchy in domestic practice and management. Indeed, prior to Karen Harvey’s work on men at home, the word patriarchy was strangely absent from the lexicon of historians of eighteenth-century masculinity, despite its being bookended by seventeenth- and nineteenth-century historiographies for which patriarchy in the home was at the centre of masculine identity.

Another gap in the history of the eighteenth-century man is any attempt at a history of plebeian masculinity. There has been a startling lack of work on the masculine identities of the labouring poor. As Anna Clark has pointed out, plebeian men were not thought to be in possession of the ‘manly independence’ which allowed the middling and elite entrance to public forums


of congenial male exchange. Where then are the forums for working masculinity? Little scholarly effort has been made to identify the cradles of masculine identity which were available to labouring men. That these men remain relatively understudied is a testament to the dominance of the polite-impolite frame of reference. Anna Clark’s work on gender relations at the dawn of the industrial revolution offers some exception to this rule, and tells a somewhat negative story about an increasingly higher wall being built between women and men at home and in work. According to Clark, the later eighteenth century saw men realigning their identity in relation to their role within spheres of work and home. Ultimately, Clark paints a picture of a confused patriarchy. Unable to consistently provide a breadwinning wage, men were forced to choose between religion and homosocial, hard-drinking interaction in order to define themselves and imagine their place within the world. By the 1840s, this oscillation had stilled to become a respectable patriarchy based on a concern with domesticity. The public culture on offer to these men also became more stable, allowing for all-male respectable associations and clubs. However, for the labouring men of the eighteenth century it seems clear that male experience was framed by uncertainty and a gendered tension. If the mastery of self and home was what defined middling and elite forms of masculinity, it seems clear that plebeian masculinity must necessarily have operated within different social and cultural parameters.

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58 Clark, Struggle for the Breeches, 265-270.
However, the story of eighteenth-century working masculinity as a failure does not go far enough in allowing us to understand how men saw themselves in relation to home, work, family and wider community. Sources are obviously a problem here. Unlike the polite gentleman who left a trail of printed and written sources in his wake, we have far fewer testaments to how plebeian men framed their experience and expectation. However, Laura Gowing’s study of seventeenth-century plebeian women through legal sources demonstrates that it should be possible to reconstruct a gendered sense of self through an examination of court records.59 Indeed, Des Newell’s ongoing PhD project on plebeian male violence and fighting rituals demonstrates the usefulness of such an approach. His examination of court records between 1780 and 1840 has already uncovered a set of spaces in which plebeian masculine social standing could be built and maintained. The ale-house and the street were used to display highly ritualised fighting, the aim of which was to demonstrate not raw physical strength, but the level of control one could exert over violence.60

Although these were wholly public assertions of violent challenge, they acted as a pressure valve for tensions within the community, and allowed men to resolve disputes without anyone getting killed or seriously injured (although it is the exceptions here that provide Newell with his source base). Newell’s work enlivens another facet of the study of eighteenth-century masculinity: that of

59 Gowing, Common Bodies
violence and its uses. Robert Shoemaker has detected a decline in violent acts and an increasing reluctance to accept public forms of violence amongst men in the eighteenth century.\(^6^1\) Newell’s analysis partly counters this, as it demonstrates that fighting was still a public concern for poorer men. This shows the ways in which attention to plebeian masculinity can help to shape and amend a wider understanding of masculinity and its place in eighteenth-century society and its codes of conduct.

Furthermore, the absence of scholarly attention to plebeian masculinity means that the way in which we understand other socio-economic groups is also hampered. If masculinity is truly relational, and if as Tosh tell us, subordinate masculinities (understood by Connell to frequently be working class) could impact on the way ‘hegemonic’ man saw himself, a study only of the middling and elite must necessarily be an incomplete portrait of eighteenth-century men. Men of different social standing continually came into contact with each other on the street, occupationally, and at home in terms of male servants and masters. Encountering those who were cut from a different cloth, and who perhaps adhered to different social and cultural ideals must have worked on the minds of individuals who inhabited the teeming urban streets of London and the newer northern cities. Indeed, cultures of radical political thought over the course of the eighteenth century brought the differences between men, and what rights they held as property holders or otherwise, to the fore.\(^6^2\)

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that daily interaction with men of differing socio-economic standing could shape masculinity for all involved simplifies the meaning of relational masculinity, and leaves any sense of the masculine self disjointed and in suspended animation.

The study of masculinity during the eighteenth century has progressed a great deal since its early days, and contributions such as those of Berry, Barker and Harvey have been invaluable in shaping the field and allowing a far more three dimensional view of how men understood themselves as part of the world. However, much more needs to be done in order to realise the ways in which differing masculinities interacted, and the spaces in which they did so.

Furthermore, the wholly cultural approach which the study of eighteenth-century masculinity has tended to take needs to be amended in order to include how social relationships shaped identity. Men were part of crowds, mobs, workplaces, clubs, homes and ships, and they undertook few of the activities involved in these varied collectives entirely alone. Mapping the social nexuses of eighteenth-century men thus requires a detailed examination of relationality as well as of cultural ideals. Throughout this thesis, I hope to show the merit in assessing drastically different types of men in relation to each other, and examining how masculinity could be shaped by continual interaction with other types of men. The ship provides an ideal space in which to test how different masculinities worked in relation to each other, due to the inherently close quarters which men shared and the varied types of men who

Customs in Common: Studies in Traditional Popular Culture (New York: 1993), 104. Also, on Chartism, which sought to eradicate a property qualification for men to vote, see M. Chase, Chartism: A New History (Manchester: 2007), 12.
resided there. An examination of the ship can also demonstrate the ways in which masculinity is ultimately founded upon the bedrock of quotidian practice and sociability, as well as the guiding influence of cultural prescription. The thesis will thus attempt to augment a body of work which has already begun to question the overly heavy reliance of eighteenth-century masculinity studies on prescriptive source material, and move towards a history of men founded on everyday practice and interaction with people and things. In order to unravel these interactions, however, we need to examine the specificities of the spaces in which they occurred and the multivalent ways in which these were used.

**Space**

Space has played a large role in recent imaginings of the eighteenth century. The way in which we understand the house, the city, and the landscape has been enlarged in scope and detail by an adoption of the tenets of cultural geographical thinking. Considering spatiality and historical geography is relatively new as a method of analysing eighteenth-century life, and in the last twenty years it has slowly come to be one of the most prominent new analytical frameworks. Influenced by the work of geographers, sociologists and anthropologists, space has become a major part of how historians now imagine the eighteenth century, and historical geography as a discipline now provides fertile ground for mapping the eighteenth century. Influence has largely been taken from cultural geographers such as Doreen Massey, as well as the enduring influence of Michel de Foucault, Michel de Certeau, and Henri Lefebvre. Foucault’s work set the agenda for much writing to come, and
although his overly deterministic analysis of space as an organising category has been critiqued heavily, it is arguable that *Discipline and Punish* created a new agenda for scholarship on systems of authority. In its assertion that the built environment could make manifest the power wielded by overseers and observers within the walls of the nineteenth-century institution, Foucault’s work cemented the importance of space as an element in human experience.\(^6^3\) Indeed, Jane Hamlett, Lesley Hoskins and Rebecca Preston have recently pointed out that although Foucault’s panopticism, and his assertion that inmates were ever-monitored and stripped of agency and individual identity, are deeply flawed, his work has ‘provoked’ much work on institutional space.\(^6^4\) Furthermore, Foucault’s work is heavily qualified by the writings of other theorists such as de Certeau and Lefebvre, who give far greater credence to the power of the individual in continually creating the spaces in which they walk and dwell.\(^6^5\) The idea that space is invested with differentiated meaning through repeated use and action allows those studying the past to complicate the formation and maintenance of the daily operation of systems of hierarchical power. Furthermore, that these spaces are made through repeated human practice allows those who study authoritarian sites such as prisons and other institutions to move away from a deterministic view of inmate experience, and to see possibilities for subversion in everyday life.

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Architectural history, for example, has moved from being the preserve of those studying the stylistic to drawing on post-structuralist ideas, influenced by Henri Lefebvre, which aim to locate experience in building and to understand the relationship between the body and its lived environment.\textsuperscript{66} Although no entirely dominant way of ‘reading’ or understanding space and spatial environments has emerged within eighteenth-century history, the spatial turn has undoubtedly made historians think differently about how men and women experienced the worlds of the past. Institutions as well as homes have been analysed as spaces. Miles Ogborn’s work on the Magdalen Hospital has examined not only the prescriptive nature of the Hospital’s agenda, but the ways in which lived experience of the Hospital might have compounded this. Within the Magdalen Hospital, the self was to be the cell, and individual discrete spaces were not needed to mould the form of penitence which Jonas Hanway and the ominously named ‘Fathers’ saw fit for London’s fallen women.\textsuperscript{67} More recently, Jeremy Boulton and John Black have examined London’s workhouses, finding that their walls could prove permeable for inmates, proffering up opportunities for escape and continued dialogue with the world outside. Although as Boulton and Black conclude, life within an institution was ‘rarely easy’, it is important that these sites are examined in relation to human agency as well as authoritarian control, and the examination

of space as a construct invested by practice allows historians and geographers to do this.\textsuperscript{68}

Miles Ogborn has also used the tenets of historical geography to re-examine urban space and identity. In his \textit{Spaces of Modernity}, both the street and the pleasure garden are identified as sites in which the modern self was gestated and articulated. As London’s public spaces were reconceptualised and reformed, those who used them both contributed to their new meanings, and subverted them through action and movement. The attempts to make a coherent set of polished and public spaces within London was not straightforward. London’s thinkers and city planners could not account for the ‘tensions involved in the constitution of a public space of private individuals’.\textsuperscript{69}

The modern city could thus be planned, but not controlled, as people’s use of space could prove incongruent with the intentions of its architects. Hannah Greig meanwhile has successfully complicated our understanding of the pleasure garden through an analysis of space and sociability, asserting that spaces could be segregated through movement and practice, even when the gentry and middling sort technically occupied the same public.\textsuperscript{70} Urban landscapes were changing rapidly over the course of the eighteenth century. From the newly lit and widened pavements of the metropole to rapidly industrialising towns in the north and midlands of England, what it meant to


\textsuperscript{69} Ogborn, \textit{Spaces of Modernity}, 115.


Interpretations of space have also been used in analyses of the importance of distance in the long eighteenth century; between the metropole and the colonies, and between family and lovers parted by oceans and global conflict.\footnote{M. Ogborn, \textit{Indian Ink: Script and Print in the Making of the East India Company} \textit{(Chicago: 2007)} and B. Gammerl, ‘Emotional Styles – Concepts and Challenges’ \textit{Rethinking History} Vol. 16, No. 2(2012), 163-6.}

The construction of distance in correspondence has been key in many ways to understanding eighteenth-century social history, as physical and temporal space between men and women shaped daily life and longing. Furthermore, the means of communicating over vast distances from the colonies shaped how ideas about the foreign ‘other’ were articulated at home. Prejudices, assumptions and ideals were formed not only on the ground, but also in the space between away and home. Miles Ogborn’s work on the East India Company has identified the process of writing, recording and transmitting as...
central to processes of shaping imperial identities. Margot Finn meanwhile has published extensively on the role of distance from the imperial centre in shaping familial relationships in the Anglo-Indian world. The negotiation of family life had to straddle oceans for many during the eighteenth century, and Finn's work demonstrates the ‘social and textual’ processes which led to matches being made and relationships sustained or fractured. As Luciana Martins and Felix Driver have argued meanwhile, it is travel which has historically framed knowledge production, whilst cultural devices such as landscape painting and poems encouraged a sense of the temperate versus tropical at home. As a recent UCL project on the East India Company has demonstrated meanwhile, ideas and experiences of far flung lands and people were also manifest in the home through the importation of exotic goods, complicating ideas about belonging and empire. The study of space within histories of the eighteenth century has thus touched upon the macro and micro in order to author a history which has deeply complicated how we understand the past as an imagined and built space.

However, just as the public/private divide has determined much of the nature of the history of masculinity, so the study of space in the eighteenth century has often been mapped along these apparently ever-present social and cultural

73 M. Ogborn, *Indian Ink.*
76 M. Finn, H. Clifford, K. Smith and E. Filor (core research team), *East India Company at Home 1757-1857*, Leverhulme Trust-funded research project based at University of Warwick and UCL, 2011-2014.
lines. This is largely apparent in discussions of dwelling spaces and cityscapes. As Amanda Vickery has pointed out, the tendency to divide the past into the home and the rest of the world has been particularly tenacious in eighteenth-century historiography, and still ‘haunts the history of space’.\textsuperscript{77} Although histories have consistently questioned the simplistic division of the world into female domestic sphere and male public world, the discussion still often centres around dividing the built environment into what was experienced as ‘public’ and ‘private’. The quest for familial and individual privacy has been framed as one of the main driving forces in the forging of the modern self over the course of the eighteenth century. Although it is also located in the early modern period, historians often write about the eighteenth century as though the desire to create invisible and structural boundaries between the family, the self, and the unmediated ‘public’ leapt in to being somewhere around 1700.\textsuperscript{78}

In 1977 Lawrence Stone identified the rise of the affectionate family model over the course of the eighteenth century as concomitant with a ‘wallowing-off of the nuclear family from either interference or support from kin’.\textsuperscript{79} Philippe Ariès noted the change in ‘mentalités’ which occurred after the seventeenth century. Ariès has identified the rise of privacy as being influenced by the increase in literacy and individual reading, the development of inward-looking


\textsuperscript{78} J. Habermas identified the eighteenth century as the site of a new discursive public arena framed by political debate: J. Habermas, \textit{The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society} (Cambridge: 1989).

religiosity and the new pleasure the middling ranks derived from ‘staying at home’ amongst ‘select society’.\textsuperscript{80} Even within the household, servants were understood to be increasingly removed from the daily life of their masters as back stairs were installed and truckle beds gradually disappeared.\textsuperscript{81} A transformation of the self and the rise of modern individualism was seen as mirrored in the architecture of the eighteenth century, and this historiography was ballasted by the argument that the late eighteenth century saw the seeds being sown for the later nineteenth century ‘cult of the home’. As Amanda Vickery has pointed out, the ‘dichotomy between the home and the world’ was tenacious in many histories of women and the household during this period. Although some found positive experience in the private sphere of the home, this merely led to a conclusion that this privacy may not be all bad, rather than questioning its existence as a total defining concept.\textsuperscript{82} Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall’s study of the English middle classes from 1780 onwards depicts a world in which men’s professional occupation were coming to define them, just as domestic reproduction and servicing the home came to incarcerate women firmly within the household.\textsuperscript{83}

However, scholarship by historians such as Vickery and Tim Meldrum has worked to complicate the assumption that the eighteenth-century household was necessarily a space which prized a new model of private life over and

\textsuperscript{81} U. Priestly and P. Corfield, ‘Rooms and Room Use in Norwich Housing, 1580-1730’ \textit{PostMedieval Archaeology} Vol. 16 (1982), 115.
\textsuperscript{82} Vickery, ‘Golden Age to Separate Spheres’, 386.
above other social relations and practices. Servants were ever present in the home, and the creation of the back stairs, taken to be symbolic by many architectural historians of a desire to keep servants out of view, was far earlier than historians such as Stone have previously allowed for.\textsuperscript{84} The introduction of bells, Meldrum suggests, might have been a device to allay the need for shouting rather than the result of a desire for physical distance.\textsuperscript{85} The interior of the house is discussed in more recent scholarship as a series of micro sites with multivalent meanings and negotiations, rather than the simplistic dichotomy between outside and inside. Indeed, scholarship such as Vickery’s \textit{Behind Closed Doors} and Margaret Ponsonby’s work on furnishing and consumerism places space at the centre of its analytical framework and presents the house as a site of social dynamics contingent on the spaces in which they were played out.\textsuperscript{86} Micro geographies of sites such as the locked box and the bed have also allowed the discipline to move towards a deeper understanding of the interrelation between the space, materiality and gendered identity.\textsuperscript{87} The use of space as a category of analysis has allowed historians to move beyond the overly simplistic ideology of separate spheres and to locate variegated sites of gendered power within the household. Thus, Tessa Chynoweth’s work on servants within the eighteenth-century middling home analyses the box and the pocket as sites which could enact some degree

\textsuperscript{84} T. Meldrum, ‘Domestic Service, Privacy and the Eighteenth-century Metropolitan Household’ \textit{Urban History} Vol. 26, No.1 (1999), 34.
\textsuperscript{85} Meldrum, ‘Domestic Service’, 37.
of personal autonomy. For the early modern period, Amanda Flather has drawn on Doreen Massey’s work to assert that the space for work within the home was continually negotiated and contested. Men often undertook home-based work, and female employment often saw women removed outdoors to the streets and fields of seventeenth-century England.

However, privacy still appears to be the watchword of eighteenth century domestic space. Historians now dispute the clear division between public and private, and whom the two were available to, but the discussion still continues to adhere to the same two broad concepts. This thesis suggests instead that it is time for scholarship to seek new terms with which to frame the discussion of eighteenth-century domestic and lived space. Although ‘private’ and ‘public’ were in use as terms during the eighteenth century, we might also as historians attempt to use terms weighted with less ‘modern’ implications. An altered lexicon might also allow us to expand ideas about eighteenth-century space beyond what seems to be a wholly middling conception of the built environment. As Meldrum points out, when we discuss the eighteenth-century home as a transformed space in terms of privacy, we are certainly not referring to the privacy afforded the servant. Were plebeian homes subject to the same divisions of space? How far can ‘privacy’ be used as a blanket term describing a constellation of different architectural, social, and cultural phenomena?

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Indeed, the identification of the home as perhaps the key site of eighteenth-century gender history has meant that historians have largely focused on how the house had enduring elements of public within it as a challenge to the grand narrative of developing privacy put forward by Stone.

Whilst the home is undeniably a key site for the construction and performance of gendered identities, arenas identified as ‘public’ seem to have remained far more vague and abstract within the historiography. Jürgen Habermas’s definition of the new public sphere as one grounded in political debate and the exchange of ideas has undoubtedly flavoured much scholarship on the eighteenth century. The failure to discuss how a plebeian public sphere might look aside, historiography has tended to write the eighteenth-century public as an imagined community held together by political and cultural ideals.

Although historians have subsequently challenged the social make up of the public sphere, the materiality of the spaces in which individuals engaged with debate and discussion has gone unexplored. The ‘places’ of the public sphere tend to be literary and artistic constructions rather than lived environments, thus denying the importance of physical locality in the gestation of thought and

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91 Habermas, Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere.
93 It is telling that much work done on the public sphere is undertaken by literary scholars, see M. Ellis, The Coffee House: A Cultural History (London: 2004) and M. McKeon, The Secret History of Domesticity: Public, Private, and the Division of Knowledge (Baltimore: 2005), 49-108.
identity. Michael McKeon has discussed the importance of printing in the formation of a 'social imaginary' public sphere, yet surely social meeting and physical location also figured in the negotiation of intellectual identity for eighteenth-century men and women? Although the coffee house is a clear site of public culture, its physical makeup and the ways in which men made and unmade material environments to ballast discussion, and how these might be subverted, remains unclear. Other work on public spaces has begun to focus on the specific ways in which individuals and groups operated within them, but the scholarship requires greater consideration of the relationship between groups, individuals, materiality and space in these locations. The home then tends to be considered as invested with meaning through lived experience, whilst the public sphere has often been understood as 'virtual'. Part of this thesis’s aim is to examine an alternative space of habitation in order to investigate how space was negotiated by a range of eighteenth century men and women, and to attempt to move beyond the theoretical shackles of public and private. The naval ship was a space which denies the usual division between lived space at home and imagined professional and public life, thus providing fertile ground for a reassessment of these categories.

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95 M. McKeon, The Secret History of Domesticity, 106.
Beyond this particular concern, there is still much work to be done on maritime space, both in terms of the eighteenth century and more broadly. This is not to imply that the geographies of the sea and seafaring vessels have been entirely starved of scholarly attention. Since Greg Dening’s writing on the sea, the shore, and the fate of William Bligh and the *Bounty*, historians and historical geographers have invested time in seeking to understand how the sea and ships as physical and imagined space have shaped human experience and cultural understanding. Dening’s work takes seriously the relationship between space and hierarchical authority, and outlines the ways in which spaces meant to be sacrosanct could be disrupted or subverted by failure to remake them with words and actions. William Hasty has also examined the relationship between authority and shipboard life in the eighteenth century in his examination of the ways in which pirates used the ships they captured in order to subvert the built reification of traditional hierarchies on board. Although the purpose was arguably largely for streamlining the vessel and increasing speed, Hasty argues that the removal of the quarterdeck of newly acquired ships signalled the application of a ‘levelling’ process. Hasty thus opens up debate on how the physical alignment of seafaring vessels might reflect power struggles and the social politics of the men who sailed aboard. The relationship between space and power at sea during the period has also been explored by several others. Daniel Clayton has defined the Pacific during

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the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries as a ‘theatre of empire’ in which exploitative enterprises under the guises of science and then profit played out. Clayton emphasises that contact with the native peoples of the Vancouver Islands allowed Europeans to frame their role as civilisers through repeated interaction and exchange.

Other work examines a range of different spaces. Benjamin Carp’s work on Boston’s waterfront and representations of British imperial power in the form of naval ships and military posting led to tension in the ‘distinctive waterfront culture’ which formed there. How institutional power is communicated over space and time has also been the subject of Miles Ogborn’s work on the East India Company. Ogborn has defined ships as both ‘local and mobile sites for the work of making and communicating knowledge’. The ship, and its movement through time and space, thus facilitated the day to day fashioning of imperial control through the production of and transportation of written documents. Recent scholarship on global material culture and the ‘geography of objects’ has also noted the importance of maritime space in the alteration of the meaning of objects and their physical form. Simon Schaffer’s work on scientific instruments has also drawn on the impact of movement through time

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and space on objects carried on ships, and the intrinsic alterations in value which maritime travel could enact.\textsuperscript{104} Maritime space has therefore been conceptualised in terms of the effect of the passage of time and the implications of space and time on imperial relations. Imperial processes were mediated through the specific spaces in which they were performed, making space a key category in understanding how nations sustained power to varying degrees over far flung colonies. As Kathleen Wilson had argued, ‘all empire is local’, and the spaces in which the quotidian negotiations of imperial power took place have begun to be unravelled.\textsuperscript{105}

However, the impact of Marxist and traditional histories has been tenacious, and the ship itself is still often described as a platform for power struggles, the specificities of its multivalent spaces flattened out in order to aid a grand ideological narrative, as discussed at the beginning of this introduction. Although steps have been taken by historical geographers such as Hasty to create a spatial history of the ship at sea, there is arguably still a gap in scholarship when it comes to ascertaining exactly how maritime spaces were different from the shore in their generative relationship to gendered identity. Richard Blakemore’s recent essay on the seventeenth-century London maritime community has demonstrated how space can effectively be used as a category of analysis when it comes to the sea and seafaring. Blakemore writes that the ship during this period was ‘imbued with spatial significance’, which

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{104} S. Schaffer, 'Easily Cracked: Scientific Instruments in States of Disrepair' \textit{Isis} Vol. 102, No. 4 (2011), 706-717. \\
\textsuperscript{105} K. Wilson, \textit{The Island Race: Englishness, Empire and Gender in the Eighteenth Century} (London: 2003), 213.
\end{flushleft}
was shaped by the make up of the crew and the ‘ritualistic activity’ repeated on board. Blakemore here points to the importance attached to the lived space which existed alongside the ship’s authoritarian hierarchy.\textsuperscript{106} Analysis of this type needs to be expanded in order to identify the ship not merely as a space which allowed shipboard hierarchies to be enacted and subverted, but which hosted and informed myriad other forms of identity and imaginings of the self during the long eighteenth century. Rigid hierarchical authority, although clearly central to shipboard life both on merchant and naval ships, was not the sole organising factor for men living at sea. A serious analysis of the ship as a lived space is thus needed in order to examine the overlapping concerns of the men who lived aboard, and the ways in which maritime architecture facilitated or constrained different forms of gendered identity.

Indeed, the ship provides within itself all three arenas which John Tosh identified as central to the formation of masculinity: work, home, and all male association. Understanding the complex and overlaid interplay between these three sets of spaces and practices (which were often the same physical space when afloat) will allow us to complicate an understanding of the roles and experiences of men during the period under study, and to understand how the meanings of space could impact and be impacted by different masculinities. In this sense, analysing how spaces were used by those who went to sea can help us unravel multitudes of overlapping meaning which men attached to their

physical surroundings at different times. Ensuring that we remember that the
ship was a space variously imagined by the same men at different times, and
different men at the same time, is essential in mapping quotidian experience
and understanding group and individual identity on board. In order to avoid
working with purely conceptual space, however, is also important to
remember that the meanings attached to various spaces were facilitated, and
sometimes contested, by their materiality and the objects which filled them.

**Materiality**
Hasty and Peters have reminded historical geographers of the importance of
remembering that the ship is a ‘thing’, and indeed, one of the largest things in
many of the civilizations which have created them.\(^{107}\) However, there is little
discussion within maritime history of the ship as material object, and the ways
in which the processes of breakage and decay of the structural environment
might impact on the way of life aboard wooden ships. The active role of the
carpenter on board in repairing parts of the ship, the work rituals of pumping
water from the hull, and the fact that the damp conditions on board often
causd decay of foodstuffs and turned water bad, meant that as a ‘thing’, the
ship had a complex and multi-layered relationship with its inhabitants. That
the ship itself might also impinge on the emotional lives of men has seldom
been touched on by historians studying the sea and ships, and this thesis will
attempt throughout to consider the ship as a ‘thing’ which was experienced
very differently to a house on shore.

\(^{107}\) W. Hasty and K. Peters, *The Ship in Geography and the Geography of Ships’
*Geography Compass* Vol. 6, No. 11 (2012), 665.
Things on ships have also been neglected until relatively recently, despite the importance of seagoing trade during the eighteenth century.\textsuperscript{108} Things from overseas appear in the shops and on the tables of eighteenth-century men and women, but yet the object’s relationship with its seaborne environment often goes unmentioned in scholarship. This is perhaps due to the equation of shopping and consuming with material culture in a large part of eighteenth-century historiography. Objects on ships, many of which were being transported for others, or were owned objects which had to be reformed and reworked over the course of the voyage, have been subject to considerably less critical enquiry. Indeed, work on British material culture during this period began in the 1980s with enquiries into what people owned rather than the life of the object after purchase. Whilst Neil McKendrick identified the eighteenth century as ‘revolutionary’ in terms of what men and women were coveting and consuming, Lorna Weatherill’s 1988 monograph qualified this by arguing that consumer culture was far more unevenly distributed.\textsuperscript{109} McKendrick’s identification of a consumer revolution had relied on identifying a deluge of new luxury products entering the market, but also a rapidly developing new desire amongst individuals to spend on objects which were representative of social status. Weatherill questions McKendrick’s definition of an untrammelled


revolution in consumerism, instead asserting that engagement with consumerism was contingent on a number of factors. These included the place of towns in global distribution networks, the availability of goods, and varying attitudes to consumption amongst local people. London was identified as the primary locus of new consumer products, the continual movement of people and goods propelling the twin engines of fashion and taste. Weatherill’s findings challenge McKendrick’s overly simplistic assertion that consumerism swept the nation, leaving very few behind, and creating a universal new set of material aspirations.

Although Weatherill criticises the overly simplistic use of ‘social emulation’ as the impetus for acquiring new goods, the alternative cultural and social framework she provides is somewhat bare. Her use of Erving Goffman’s ‘front stage’ and ‘back stage’ dichotomy is inherently problematic. Weatherill writes that ‘some parts of the house were more valued that others’, and argues that an active ‘fostering’ of image occurred through a use of objects in the rooms designed for entertaining, whilst objects occupying the ‘back stage’ arenas such as kitchens were invested with less social significance. In suggesting that the presentation of the self to others was one of the major contributory factors in purchasing goods during the first half of the eighteenth century, Weatherill provides a somewhat reductive cultural explanation for the multiplication of material artefacts in the home.\textsuperscript{110} Although many of the economic factors she identifies prove salient, historical understanding of the cultural and social

motivations behind consumerism remain somewhat underdeveloped. The scholarship on material possessions has been augmented in recent years, as historians have sought to understand how and why people owned things, as well as cataloguing what they owned.

‘Things’ have thus increasingly been placed at the centre of historical debate since the late 1980s, and subsequent scholarship has continued to contribute to and complicate an analysis of consumerism during this period. Work using probate inventories has continued to add to the field as historians have attempted to understand how a three-dimensional past might have looked and felt.\textsuperscript{111} However, inventories have been increasingly questioned as stand alone sources for telling us about the material past, and objects have come to be framed as components in complex social and cultural worlds, as well as merely quantifiable entities. The perennial problem that inventories provide only a ‘snap shot’ view of the material historical moment, coupled with the unreliable nature of the recording process means that historians have sought in recent years to broaden their research to assign importance to objects in other ways, and to increasingly locate the value of objects in arenas beyond the economic.\textsuperscript{112} Historiography has ballooned to include the motivations behind purchases such as taste, the experience of shopping, and the gendered importance which individuals attached to the ownership and appropriation of certain goods. In 1993, John Brewer and Roy Porter saw that ‘belongings are

\textsuperscript{111} See Weatherill, \textit{Consumer Behaviour and Material Culture}. \\
good to think with’ and edited a volume containing a series of essays which aimed to open up debate on precisely how historians might think with things through an examination of products newly available during the eighteenth century.\textsuperscript{113}

Since then, Margaret Ponsonby’s work on the domestic interior has opened up the home and challenged the notion that houses were static displays of status, but rather continually evolving spaces which needed to develop markers of taste, facilitate work for both men and women, and uphold morality through housekeeping and the maintenance of goods. Extravagance, and the unquestioning acquisition of the new, were peripheral issues in furnishing the home, and families acted as mediators between the luxury market place and everyday practice in the home.\textsuperscript{114} Using diaries, letters, inventories and memoirs, Ponsonby has revealed eighteenth-century domestic life to be made up of a shifting materiality within the ordinary middling home which was defined by emotional investment as well as the display of cultural capital.\textsuperscript{115} Amanda Vickery’s work has also identified the eighteenth-century home as a site of complex material investment. She has demonstrated that women were not merely rabid consumers of costly gewgaws, but the architects of domestic space in their engagement with small scale crafts, and considered consumers of pots and pans and everyday mending and purchasing, as well as high value

\textsuperscript{114} Ponsonby, \textit{Stories from Home}.
\textsuperscript{115} Ponsonby, \textit{Stories from Home}, 56.
trinkets and fashionable clothes. The use of household tools allowed female morality to be enacted within the home, and to galvanize women’s dominance over the day to day running of the house. Furniture could also be heavily gendered through use. The tea table evoked potent understandings of gentility and polite female sociability in action, whilst men invested in furniture such as the bureau, the advertising of which was increasingly being gendered. Vickery has woven her analysis of the eighteenth-century household and its material make up from a varied array of court records, letters, diaries, published manuals and account books, allowing us to see some of the complexity with which individuals chose and appropriated the objects which furnished their domestic worlds.

In addition to this analysis of the home, historians have also begun to question the notion that there was indeed a ‘revolution’ for many consumers. The examination of the second hand market has complicated understandings of eighteenth-century consumer society, and allowed historians to find qualities attached to objects beyond the novel and the new. Beverley Lemire has demonstrated the centrality of second hand clothing to the eighteenth-century commercial and material world, whilst John Styles has shown that for plebeian consumers, new fashions could be acquired and woven through practice into the customary calendar of events. Both histories demonstrate the ways in which the availability of new goods during the period did not presuppose an abandoning of older forms of consumption and display, and alert us to the importance of small-scale appropriation in locating the deeper meanings

assigned to objects. Furthermore, a recent volume on recycling in the long eighteenth century has shown the importance of reuse and mending within domestic economies and networks of goods. Moving beyond the watchword ‘novelty’, the authors here place the recycling of objects or parts of objects as central to an understanding of material culture during this period. Motivations were multivalent, and Jon Stobart’s contribution sees British consumers from the highest echelons of society selling on and buying previously owned items, resulting in a conceptual pulling apart of the terms ‘luxury’ and ‘novelty’. The eighteenth century in this imagining was not purely the century of innovation and newly devised trinkets, but also continuing practices of reuse, and the repurposing of the material world.

Historians have also begun to examine the emotional lives of objects, and to track the meanings attached to them through everyday use. Karen Harvey has identified masculine emotional investment in small-scale objects such as writing tools, and shows men’s engagement with such artefacts as ‘markers of time and occasion and makers of memory’. Harvey has also explored the role of the punch bowl in masculine rituals of sociability, and has elucidated the ways in which the object could shape social conduct through its form and

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120 K. Harvey, Little Republic, 119.
design.\textsuperscript{121} Harvey’s focus on public space and social meaning here has been a refreshing addition to much of the work on material culture during the eighteenth century. One of the issues with eighteenth-century object studies has been the overwhelming focus on the domestic sphere and luxury goods. Whilst Maxine Berg’s work on luxury has enlivened the concept for the period, and identified the ‘integral relation between material and intellectual culture’, much of the evidence used is prescriptive, and the focus on luxury contributes to the sense that the eighteenth century was a period defined by a static materiality.\textsuperscript{122} As a result, luxurious objects, in their existence in the imaginary and intellectual realm, rarely seem to lose their shine or fail to meet their purpose as markers of status.

Since the dawn of the term ‘consumer revolution’, there has been a tenacious assumption amongst many historians that the prettying of the home and an investment in an increasing array of shiny articles for display was the primary relationship between objects and individuals during the eighteenth century. The attempt to find meaning in new eighteenth-century goods has sometimes resulted in an intellectualization of the meaning of things to their users, rather than an understanding of how repeated everyday practice may have shaped value and meaning. In Deborah Cohen’s examination of the British ‘mania’ for consumer domestic goods, she defines the late eighteenth century as a period in which ‘prosperous merchants and their wives had bolstered their claim to

gentility with Wedgwood china, mahogany furnishings, and Turkey carpets'. The assumption of this tasteful and aspirational spending amongst a huge swathe of society has been tempered by the work on recycling and the appropriation of objects within homes which were ever-changing in their social and material configuration.

As Timothy Dant has argued, objects must be understood in their relation to other things and to the embodied self. Here, Dant asserts that objects ‘have embedded within the materiality of their design and manufacture a series of cultural values that shape practices, both of body and of mind, by which objects are used’. Historians would do well to use this argument in order to make deeper enquiries in to the ways in which materiality worked on human experience, and also to question what happens to narratives of material practice and embodiment when designed objects are misused or repurposed. The continuing focus on furniture and fabric within the home needs to be augmented by a consideration of how the materiality of utilitarian objects and ephemeral, often now disappeared, objects shaped and were shaped by attitudes and identities. Sara Pennell’s work on ‘mundane materiality’ has achieved this for the seventeenth-century kitchen. Pennell has emphasised the importance of understanding the ‘assemblage’ of objects which individual artefacts existed in relation to, and has emphasised that objects throughout history have ‘no preordained context’. Pennell finds that many domestic

124 T. Dant, Materiality and Society (Berkshire: 2005), 3.
objects seem to defy commodification in their transitory use, and encourages us to envisage materiality as invested through everyday use.

Importantly, many of the objects, such as the broken tea cup, which Pennell discusses are no longer still available for historians to touch or are so small and everyday that many have failed to investigate them as having weighty importance in the imagining of the self.\textsuperscript{125} This has resulted in a gap in eighteenth-century historiography where an investigation in to the utilitarian and quotidian material make up of men and women’s lives should be. Furthermore, other than Karen Harvey’s examination of the punch bowl, there seems to be very little work done on how materiality functioned outside the home, Giorgio Riello’s work on shoes perhaps being one of the few other exceptions.\textsuperscript{126} In many ways the history of eighteenth-century materiality is bound, along with the histories of masculinity and space, to the pillars of the home and the rest of the world. For material culture studies, the home and its luxuries have taken centre stage in the analysis of materiality, whilst interactions with the three-dimensional world in the spaces such as the street, the work place, the ale house, the port, and the institution have received scant attention. It is time perhaps to engage with materiality as a framework which defined experience from day to night, and birth to death, rather than something experienced when choosing fashions or shopping for the home.

As Frank Trentmann has argued, despite the sizeable historiography on eighteenth-century material life and although the research agenda has broadened, scholars studying the period still needs to maintain a dialogue with anthropological, geographical and sociological approaches to the material world in order to avoid a conservative scholarship which merely sees objects as representative of certain social and cultural traits.\(^{127}\) Although the history of eighteenth-century materiality is now undoubtedly rich, there still remains a sense that objects are cultural signifiers and symbols, rather than existing in dialogue with the spaces they exist within, the objects they exist alongside, and the individuals and groups who invest them with multivalent meanings. As this thesis will demonstrate, objects were not merely props for preformed identities, ready to be displayed in polite forums and the domestic sphere, but could prove unreliable, could break, and always were engaged in a contextual relationship with the things which surrounded them. Here, the naval ship provides an opportunity to conceptualise how we might think of objects in relation to space, individual and group identity, and objects in situ. As discussed, objects at sea have received little attention. However, it is precisely the nature of the shipboard environment which can offer up chances to see the transformation of the meaning of things as they move through time and space. Objects were also repurposed aboard ship during long periods of time at sea and away from centres of consumption. Understanding how the meanings attached to objects shifted as they were changed physically and given different

uses to their intended ones is central to a full exploration of materiality and identity during the period.

**Conclusion**

The conceptual tools of these three historiographies need to be both amended, and also used in tandem in order to show how naval men negotiated their material worlds, and how the spaces they occupied shaped and were shaped by masculine identities. This will be an attempt to take serious consideration of materiality and the material environment whilst authoring a social history of masculinity and men in the Royal Navy in the latter part of the eighteenth and beginning of the nineteenth century. This is the main intervention of this thesis; that an analysis of space and materiality is essential in understanding of masculine expectation and experience, and that the meaning and value attached to spaces is made of the interaction between individuals, groups and objects. The ship saw objects change meaning and spaces change their physical form as the vessel, itself a continually changing and decaying material artefact, moved through time and space. The ship thus acts as a micro site for considering the effect this movement and shifting materiality had on the lives of the men who interacted with it on a quotidian basis.

Furthermore, the spaces examined here were inherently social, in their occupation by numerous men, and in the overlapping of work, leisure, and domestic space. Here then, we may be able to ascertain how masculinity was formed not only in relation to cultural ideals, but also in the experience of the everyday, and repeated movement within space and use of objects in practice.
Furthermore, through using the naval ship in contributing to broader eighteenth century historiographies, this thesis hopes to change the way in which the Royal Navy is understood. Time spent on board can no longer be reduced to playing a part in a series of high social dramas with all investment lying in career patronage for officers and revolution for seamen. Naval history needs to rescue the men it has left stranded and bring them back in to wider narratives of eighteenth century life, which can only be done through examining the ways in which everyday life played out on board. This will thus attempt to be a history of the minute interactions between individual, space, and objects, and of the forms of gendered experience and expectations which we might find at these intersections.

The chapters that follow are organised thematically rather than chronologically, by rank, or by specific groups of objects such as ‘furniture’. This is done in order to demonstrate the ways in which the ship functioned as whole micro society in relation to differing groups of objects and spaces, and the meanings attached to them. Furthermore, the organisation of this thesis aims to demonstrate the transmutation of meaning which objects invariably underwent once aboard. It would be misleading to talk of ‘furniture’ as a coherent and stable category, when beds became shipboard defences, and chests could become walls. The following chapters will therefore be split into studies of ‘Boundaries’, ‘Domesticity’, ‘Violence’, ‘Knowledge’ and ‘Ship-Shore Economies’. The first four chapters are loosely grouped in to two pairs, with ‘Boundaries’ and ‘Domesticity’ addressing lived and imagined space, and ‘Violence’ and ‘Knowledge’ zeroing in more closely on moveable goods on ship.
These chapters attempt to locate types of material and social practice rather than static groups of things, and to place importance on the way in which objects were used, and the ways in which the ship as a physical environment shaped this.

Whilst ‘Boundaries’ will examine the ways in which objects and spaces were used to create social and rank-based divisions on board, ‘Domesticity’ will consider the material and social strategies which men employed in order to make and sustain their temporary homes, and the challenges they faced in doing so. 'Violence' meanwhile focuses on the ways in which punishment rituals, mutinous conduct and warfare were contingent on attendant objects and spaces and how this left top-down hierarchy open to subversion. ‘Knowledge’ will then examine the divergent traditions of seamanship and navigational skill, the ways in which these were materially configured, and how differing forms of knowledge creation and use could impact on shipboard masculine authority. Through early histories of naval cruelty and more recent studies of the ship as scientific site, violence and knowledge creation have tended to be the themes most closely associated with shipboard life. These chapters will thus seek to complicate the ways in which violence and knowledge were choreographed and experienced. The thesis will finish by moving the ship towards land, and examining ‘Ship-Shore Economies’. Whilst the previous chapters focus almost exclusively on the ship under sail, the final instalment will look at how the ship transformed physically and socially whilst anchored near shore and the implications of the interactions between ship and land. When taken as a whole, this thesis should enable an in depth
understanding of the men who went to sea as part of the Royal Navy from the beginning of the Seven Years War until the end of the Napoleonic Wars in 1815.

In order to undertake this, the thesis draws on a wide and varied range of source material. In order to understand how men both imagined and used spaces and objects on the ship, it has been necessary to reconstruct lived experience and practice by drawing on diaries, memoirs, personal and professional letters, official logs, ship plans and the records of courts martial. These textual sources are used in conjunction in an attempt to weave a narrative which accounts for the expectations and experiences attendant to life aboard the naval ship during this period. The largest single source base for much of the thesis are the records of courts martial, which are employed throughout as evidence of how men of varying ranks used space, valued objects, and understood themselves in relation to other men and social structures. Using court records to author social history is not, of course, a new pursuit. In histories of the early modern and eighteenth-century shore, court records have been used with great success by historians such as Laura Gowing, Amanda Vickery, Tim Meldrum, Tim Hitchcock and Peter Earle.¹²⁸ This body of scholarship has served to deeply complicate our understandings of those who normally leave behind a relatively sparse papers trail: women of lower socio-economic status, labourers, servants and vagrants. The availability of London

court records through the Old Bailey Online and London Lives database has meant that the history of the metropole in particular has been enriched through this source base.

This thesis demonstrates that the records of courts martial, which record the trials held on board ship of those who contravened the Articles of War, can be used similarly to enliven the history of the naval ship. Like court records pertaining to shore, these records are particularly enlightening in their depiction of those in the lower echelons of social and economic life. Through their recording of sailor testimony, courts martial records provide an unprecedented glimpse into the everyday lives and practices of those occupying the lower gun deck. Whilst these records have been utilised by a few other historians, they have generally been used explicitly to examine a single issue.129 This, then, is the first piece of scholarship to draw on these records as a way of gleaning clues to the minute rhythms of life for the men who were drawn out to sea during period under study. Courts martial were presided over by the highest-ranking officers present and held ‘in the most convenient and public place of the ship’.130 Witnesses gave testimonies, prisoners supplied their defence and punishments were doled out accordingly. Due in part to the


heavily bureaucratic nature of the Royal Navy as an institution, these records were stored by the Admiralty and exist now in the National Archives in weighty and as yet undigitised tomes. There are of course problems of veracity in the testimonies of ships’ residents. Seamen would likely have altered their narratives in order to avoid prosecution or incriminating other crew members, and it is difficult to use such sources without ‘subtly privileging the perspective of the court and the elite men whose explicit purpose the archive served’.\textsuperscript{131}

Furthermore, as Laura Gowing has reminded us, testimony is always shaped by the legal process. Memories of events can be guided by leading questions and the structure of proceedings has the power to shape personal narratives.\textsuperscript{132}

However, there is a strong case for using court records to get to the everyday experience and routines of men and women from hugely varied backgrounds during the eighteenth century. Just as a ‘history from below’ on shore has been authored through drawing on legal records, so the records of courts martial allow us a glimpse into all parts of the wooden world, but mostvaluably the lower gun deck, a space for which very few personal recollections survive. The recounting of routine action, expectation and practice below deck is a unique resource in its ability to reveal fragments of daily life on board ship. These are all the more important due to the fact that much of the material make up of shipboard life is now lost to us. Not only the ships themselves, but also the personal effects of crew and the ritual objects such as the messing table which made up day to day life have now often disappeared. This is likely in part due

\textsuperscript{132} Gowing, \textit{Common Bodies}, 14.
to the temporary nature of the ship as a residence, and in part the less than desirable conditions which seafaring provided for preserving objects. Despite the ubiquity of the sea chest in naval life, the National Maritime Museum holds only a couple, and none belonging to residents of the eighteenth-century lower deck. This sparse archaeology means that in order to uncover the relationship between men, things and space, any analysis must be based on records of how objects were used, rather than a sole reliance on our interaction with the artefacts themselves.

This kind of analysis has risen in popularity amongst historians in recent years, and has been dubbed the ‘practice turn’. Originally entering historical scholarship from the social sciences, this shift in how object history is written has created new and more complex ways for historians to write about the relationship between objects, individuals and groups. This is evident in recent work by Kate Smith on the production and use of consumable goods in shaping identity in Georgian England. Here, repeated handling and use is key in the participation of the individual in economies of production and consumption.133 Simon Werett’s work meanwhile examines scientific practices within the home, and how minute interactions with domestic material culture created a framework for engagement with scientific principles.134 Tessa Chynoweth’s current PhD project similarly draws on small-scale routine within the home, and asks how servants added their own value to objects and came to ‘know’

them through repeated cleaning and touch. Examining practice is important in that it allows us not only to look at how objects were used, but also at how repeated use can speak to ideas about skill, value and knowledge. As Frank Trentmann has pointed out, the practice turn can augment the study of objects by ‘drawing our attention to habits, routines, and rhythms’. It is, in this sense, a way of accessing a deep vein of emotional and social life for sections of the population traditionally given a cursory examination by historians.

Practices, Trentmann has posited, are useful in connecting many apparently modern ideological developments such as consumerism with lived experience. Sociologists such as Elizabeth Shove have demonstrated that modern designers and consumers renegotiate objects and add variegated value to the things they engage with over time and through practice. Importantly for this study, examining practice allows for studying objects beyond their role as personal individual possessions and moves object based scholarship past the confines of ‘consumer culture’. On board the naval ship, daily life was enacted in relation to a constellation of objects and built environments, very few of which would have personally belonged to the individual in question, the captain’s cabin perhaps being an exception. In order to understand the experiences and expectations of these men then, we need to divine how objects functioned on a quotidian basis in relation to individual and group identity. Furthermore, an approach which prizes practice rather than purely cultural

135 Chynoweth, ‘Domestic Servants’.
knowledge and ideology allows us to detect older or alternative skills which were valued beyond those championed by scientific and Enlightenment ideals, and we can begin to build an understanding of the past in which different value systems and knowledge types worked in tandem, and often in conflict. Court records are a useful source in examining practice as testimony often recalls daily routines surrounding a criminal event, and remark upon the subversion of normal practice. However, it is also important to augment this source base with personal accounts such as memoirs, letters and diaries in order to retrieve a sense of what routines and rituals meant to those undertaking them.

This thesis seeks to draw on the tenets of the practice turn, in addition to spatial history, gender history and wider histories of materiality, in order to write a history of the ship which treats the men on board as denizens of a variegated micro society, the lived experience of which was contingent on the intersection of space, object and practice in galvanising individual and group identity. Accordingly, a wide range of sources are deployed throughout to create as three dimensional an image as possible of life both above and below decks. To begin this examination, the thesis will first turn to the multivalent imagined and physical boundaries on board ship, and the ways in which they were negotiated by the men who created and crossed them.
Chapter One: Boundaries

The study of those who remained on shore during the late eighteenth century has often been told in terms of the way the world was divided up both in the imagination and in physical space. Boundaries, and specifically an analysis of household boundaries, have been crucial to how eighteenth-century gendered identities are interpreted. As outlined in the previous chapter, boundaries between the nuclear family and the outside world were understood in earlier historiographies to have undergone a process of crystallisation during the long eighteenth century.\(^{138}\) The family was described as withdrawing inside in search of a modern form of private life, whilst the home was increasingly demarcated from a public sphere in which men were the only legitimate members. Boundaries increasingly incarcerated women and defined a male public culture which existed away from the hearth and home. Indeed, the very language of ‘separate spheres’ implies a dichotomous hemming in of behaviour and experience. As Amanda Vickery has pointed out, one of the first histories of the women’s movement in England contained a chapter entitled ‘The prison house of home, 1792-1837’.\(^ {139}\) Whilst men were seen to have ‘benefitted most from the gendering of tasks and work locations’ and inhabited the masculine industrialising world, women were consigned to their place in the home which

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was increasingly being ideologically removed from an association with gainful employment.\textsuperscript{140}

Within the home, architectural changes were supposedly based on an increasing distaste for the presence of those outside the nuclear family, as servants were funnelled away in to more remote parts of the house. Happily, much historiography since the 1990s has called in to question the simple division of society in to pockets of private and expanses of public. Amanda Vickery’s discussion of the manifold boundaries which existed within the home has defied any simplistic analysis of ‘inside’ and ‘outside’, whilst the work of Tim Meldrum has demonstrated that servants were still firmly embedded within the eighteenth-century house, calling in to question the untrammelled desire for individual privacy.\textsuperscript{141} Vickery and Meldrum have also both questioned the supposed increase in separated room function during the eighteenth century.\textsuperscript{142} Furthermore, the walls of the house are now generally understood to be thoroughly permeable boundaries, far from the barriers to outside influence which Stone implied they acted as. Commercial work and home have been reinterpreted as entwined well in to the nineteenth century, as paid work continued to be undertaken at home.\textsuperscript{143} Jon Stobart meanwhile has asserted the enduring importance of kin and community over the course of the eighteenth century. In his study of merchant networks Stobart finds that

\textsuperscript{142} Meldrum, \textit{Domestic Service and Gender}, 77.
wider family associations outside the household were far more important than previously assumed in much historiography, thus negating the insistence on the sacrosanct nature of the house’s four walls. Within the physical structure of the house itself meanwhile, Sara Pennell has demonstrated the kitchen to be a space which whilst technically the heart of domestic production, acted simultaneously as a site of negotiation with the outside world through the comings and goings of visitors and goods.144 Amanda Flather’s work also attests to the unreliability of external walls in separating the ‘private’ family and ‘public’ outside world. Children and women were sexually and violently assaulted in their own domestic spaces by outsiders, and Flather points out that visits from neighbours and tradesmen made access to the home ‘difficult to control’ during the eighteenth century.145

Understanding how the physical and imagined boundaries of the past were negotiated has thus been vastly complicated, allowing for discussions which see space as made through movement and experience rather than via circumscribed gender roles. Boundaries within the home, between work and home, and between family and the wider world have been contested by historians and the household no longer appears to be the increasingly ‘private’ realm previously assumed. Unlike early architectural histories, it is no longer assumed that the ways in which space was used can simply be ‘read’ from house plans, or from existing examples of eighteenth-century architecture. Interpretations of the built environment are now based on an understanding

145 A. Flather, *Gender and Space in Early Modern England* (Suffolk: 2007), 53-54
that spaces are formed through movement and ritual as well as bricks and mortar. While there has emerged no clear cut framework with which historians might analyse spatial environments within eighteenth-century history, boundaries are now generally engaged with as porous constructions which created opportunities for subversion just as they were able to constrain. Indeed, the recent increase in the study of incarcerated individuals has highlighted the extent to which boundaries assumed to be prohibitive could also present opportunities for exchange with the outside world. Whilst Michel Foucault is the obvious influence in carceral studies, the writings of authors such as Henri Lefebvre and Michel de Certeau have also allowed eighteenth-century historiography to begin to adopt a framework of analysis which sees space as continually remade through movement and meaning as produced through repeated engagement with the built environment. Historians now seem to take seriously Lefebvre’s argument in Production of Space that space is constructed by daily practice as well as ideology.

It is arguable, however, that this analysis needs to be broadened in order to enliven more traditional histories which exist alongside that of the household. As Vickery has pointed out, the public-private dichotomy still ‘haunts the history of space’ despite attempts to move beyond the two terms as organising concepts. It is perhaps the task of historians of the period to examine different types of space in order to find new terminologies and divisions which

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147 Lefebvre The Production of Space.
148 Vickery, ‘An Englishman’s Home is his Castle?’, 150.
might enlarge our understanding of how the built environment was imagined and used. Miles Ogborn’s work on spaces of modernity has revealed the way in which this can be undertaken in relation to the city. Ogborn examines a series of specific London spaces such as the street, the Magdalen Hospital and the pleasure garden in order to find new ways to frame the onset of ‘modernity’ in its various guises. Public spaces seen previously as sound representations of the congenial affability of modern life during the period, such as the street and the gardens at Vauxhall and Ranelagh are revealed to be sites of considerable contestation and gendered anxiety through a serious consideration of how space was seen in practice.\textsuperscript{149} The social boundaries supposedly offered by the newly paved street and pleasure garden were in fact continually being redrawn and challenged through use. This form of historical geography, in its interrogation of spaces as sites demonstrative of the gestation and occasional subversion of burgeoning eighteenth-century ideals, needs to be rolled out over far greater swathes of British landscapes if we are to attempt a reassessment of how boundaries were made and managed during the period. Although boundaries between home and world, and male and female roles, have come to be understood as less rigid, space needs to be applied further as an organising category within eighteenth-century studies. The narratives surrounding the public and private are still tenacious in much historiography on the eighteenth century and the ways in which a range of lived spaces were understood by inhabitants has much scope for growth.

Naval history seems like a fruitful place to start. The history of the navy as an institution and set of lived experiences on ship has proved particularly resilient to changes in the historiographical climate over previous decades. This is despite the fact that naval ships temporarily housed tens of thousands of men from a huge variety of social backgrounds for often long periods of time. The ship thus provides a site within which we can observe overlapping understandings of spatial division and variegated expectations of where boundaries should lie and what they should mean. N.A.M Rodger’s *The Wooden World* provided an important social and cultural history of the naval ship at the time of the Seven Years War. However despite his assertion that ‘space’ was the most important governing factor in terms of shipboard society, the outline of how these spaces functioned is largely descriptive and fails to fully explore how space was negotiated on a daily basis.\(^{150}\) Rodger’s claim is based on the fact that the men below deck were ‘crowded’ (although he points out that seamen were accustomed to this) and that the amount of space allowed men was indicative of hierarchical position. The ways in which spaces were shaped and invested with meaning through practice goes relatively unexplored.

The tradition of Marxist writing on the lower deck has similarly offered little analysis of how the lived specifics of spaces and their boundaries on board the naval ship could shape men’s identities. Marcus Rediker and Peter Linebaugh define the naval ship as a prototypic ‘factory’, in which ‘complex and

synchronized tasks’ were carried out under tyrannical top-down authority. This is an inherently problematic definition in its suggestion that the ship acts as a flat and homogenous ‘setting’ for the playing out of proto-industrial relations. In this sense the ship is reduced to a window for an entirely different set of identities, to be worked out on the factory floor a century later. Although similar writings have expanded on Rediker and Linebaugh’s thesis, the ideological notion that sailors were defined by their desire for revolution on ship and shore has left the discrete ways they understood their lived environment relatively unexamined. Scholars such as Niklas Frykman and David Featherstone have provided important accounts of the experience of mutiny, however, the articulation of anti-authoritarian motives still defines the ways in which we understand ratings’ interaction with the ship as a space.152

As a result, the precise ways in which the ship’s boundaries were made through practice has remained unexplored. Only Greg Dening’s analysis of the *Bounty* has taken in to account the sheer complexity of the naval ship as a constellation of different spaces, accompanied by different and overlapping understandings of power, rank, gender and performance.153 In particular, an inquiry in to how inhabiting the naval ship may have impacted on masculine self-fashioning and self-imagining has yet to be undertaken. Performances, as

153 Dening, *Mr. Bligh’s Bad Language* - HMS *Bounty* was atypical both in terms of the events which took place and the violent realignment of power relations, and the fact that she was on a botanical collecting mission in the Pacific. Dening’s exploration also avoids an analysis of masculinities in relation to those on shore.
we will see, were central to imbuing the ship with ideas about rank and order. However, it is important to understand how these performances were informed by the spaces in which they were conceived and undertaken, and to look not only to naval discipline and rank, but also to wider understandings of the masculine self. In order to begin this work, this chapter presents a discussion of the worlds of officers and ratings in which we understand the ship not just as a conceptual space, nor as one which defines a single set of human relations, but as a lived space which was given meaning by movement and which had the power to mark and shape the identities and bodies of the men who inhabited it. The wooden world, in my understanding, needs to be reconceptualised as wooden worlds, and our vision of it as historians should broaden to engage with a constellation of meaning, movement and cultural understanding which had an uneasy but deeply connected relationship with society on shore, rather than as a wooden platform for hierarchy. In order to assert the fluidity of movement which attended life aboard the naval ship, and the hugely varied living spaces which were present on board, the chapter will move through the ship, beginning on the lower deck, before moving up a level to the forecastle, main deck, quarterdeck, wardroom and then captain’s cabin. These were all spaces in which men variously slept, worked, walked, ate and socialised. It is important to explore not only how these spaces were imagined at one point in time, but how the shifting nature of the ship’s materiality and movement through time and space affected the configuration of boundaries. Through this examination I hope to show the way in which the ship was made up not only of wood and canvas, but also of a complex latticework of
continually remade discrete spaces, forged through repeated movement and practice.

The Lower Gun Deck

The lower gun deck has long been envisaged as the site of an undifferentiated rabble, allowing effectively none of the privacy which has been defined as a condition of modernity during the period. Traditional naval histories envisaged the lower deck of the naval ship as a place of ‘crowded circumstances which precluded privacy’ as late as the mid nineteenth century,\textsuperscript{154} whilst more recently Greg Dening has described the space as one in which denizens spent ‘their working and leisure hours and performed every bodily function in public’.\textsuperscript{155} Ship plans from the period seem to support this assessment. Figure 2.1, a plan of the lower deck of the 74-gun HMS Bedford, is demonstrative of the cramped and crowded conditions which seamen and marines were subject to. The blue hammocks here represent the seamen, whilst the red represent marines. Each man would have been allotted 14 inches for their hammock, although in practice this would have worked out as 28 inches due to the cyclical nature of watches. Below deck was a mass of hammocks positioned around the fore and main hatchway, and as Dening points out, it appears to make personal privacy an impossibility.


\textsuperscript{155}Dening, \textit{Mr Bligh’s Bad Language}, 35.
Fig. 2.1. Plan of lower deck of HMS Bedford (1775)
58.4cm x 74.5cm
National Maritime Museum, Ref: ZAZ6793

However, an examination of the records of courts martial reveals that this formation of individual sleeping space was but a small part of how seamen mapped their lives below deck. Rather than understanding their place there as a series of jostling, cheek-by-jowl individual spaces, men divided the lower deck in to a series of what they termed ‘berths’. One deck above, the term ‘berth’ was used by officers to refer to the cot or bed installed in their cabin. Below deck, however, the term took on a far more fluid social meaning. Far from meaning purely the physical space within the hammock, men describe being collectively ‘in the birth’\textsuperscript{156} and in court martial records make the distinction between men who were inside and outside this berth when a crime was committed.\textsuperscript{157} When seaman Joseph Dunscomb was beaten by the boatswain with a rattan, his friend Thomas Moffett knew he was suffering from

\textsuperscript{156} The National Archives (TNA hereafter) Courts Martial Papers, ADM 1/5301, 18\textsuperscript{th} June 1762.
\textsuperscript{157} TNA ADM 1/5304, 4\textsuperscript{th} August 1769.
his injuries because he ‘slept in the same berth, and likewise mess’d in it’.\textsuperscript{158} Stephen Ball, Master of Arms on the 32-gun Montreal, described taking a nap whilst sitting in the ‘same Berth’ as two seamen.\textsuperscript{159} Francis Potts made his way below deck to visit the berth which the carpenter’s crew occupied and smoke a pipe with them,\textsuperscript{160} whilst in 1783 and at sea off St. Lucia, John Bryan and Joseph Hailes sat together ‘in the Birth’ talking and smoking until the lights were put out and they returned to their respective hammocks.\textsuperscript{161}

The berth therefore seems to be a space within which two or more men could socialise, drink and talk whilst under sail, and provided a socio-spatial unit which men could enter and leave over the course of the day. Furthermore, those who spent time together ‘in the birth’ often seem to have belonged to the same mess. Men were split in to mess groups of six for eating, with their tables slung between the guns both starboard and port. Men seem to have made a distinction between the spatial unit of the berth and the act of messing. Thomas Moffet noted that his friend Joseph Duncomb ‘slept in the berth and likewise mess’d in it’. The berth thus seems to have been the spatial imagining of the social group of the mess. Indeed, the men who shared close quarters and occupied the same mess group would have shared food from the same pot, boiled by one of the mess, and spent much of their leisure time together drinking, smoking and talking.\textsuperscript{162} Deep familiarity was inspired amongst messmates who spent repeated time together in the berth. William Richardson,

\textsuperscript{158} TNA ADM 1/5314, 9th November 1779.
\textsuperscript{159} TNA ADM 1/5304, 3rd February 1770.
\textsuperscript{160} TNA ADM 1/5301, 19th June 1762.
\textsuperscript{161} TNA ADM 1/5323 23rd December 1783.
\textsuperscript{162} Caird Library (CL hereafter) JOD/156/2, p17.
a seaman during the Napoleonic Wars, noted that when his fellow crew members dressed up in the lace and silk from a Spanish prize ship, they were ‘so metamorphosed that their own messmates hardly knew them’; and when John Lee came across a dead messmate on the forecastle in 1768 he identified him as ‘one of our own people’. Clearly, messing and spending time ‘in the birth’ inspired a deep familiarity with ones messmates, and the mess formed a distinct domestic and social unit. The imagining of a communally occupied berth in which socialisation and leisure time could occur demonstrates that sailors experienced the lower deck not purely as a space in which all was public and none private, but as a criss-cross of shared and personal spaces.

The importance of these small-scale social units is demonstrated in an occurrence which took place off the coast of Ireland in 1789 as the 20-gun Perseus was being stripped. Due to the degraded state of the ship, a cook room had to be hired and the men’s food (boiled pease) served to all of them at once from a ‘tub’. The crew were so outraged to be forced to eat ‘before the crowd who were constantly about the ship’, that they shouted at the marine who was standing guard until he threw the provisions in to the sea. Eventually, they agreed to be served their provisions raw so they could split off and eat them, as they could not ‘dress it on board’. Clearly, eating in unbridled publicity was viewed by seamen as a disgrace, and a divisional system was seen as a basic right. Dening’s assessment that ‘every bodily function’ was performed in public

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163 CL JOD/156/2, p139.
164 TNA ADM 1/5304, 14th March 1768.
165 Cambridge University Library (CUL hereafter) MS Add. 9303/3, p59.
166 CUL MS Add. 9303/3, p60.
therefore, whilst technically accurate due to the lack of rooms below deck, glosses over the imagined divisions which sailors made for themselves. The absence of a physical barrier did not equate with a form of unvaried ‘public’ space, and it seems that the ability to undertake practices of messing as a smaller social unit was highly prized. The cellular communality which existed below deck organised the seemingly undifferentiated lower deck into a lattice work of social units, which crystallised through repeated practices of spending time in the berth and routinely congregating to mess.

Furthermore, cellular communality was made manifest by furnishings as well as repeated practices of eating, drinking and socialising. Sea chests were often kept below in the hold for large parts of voyages, and brought up when near
shore or when men specifically needed things from them. During these periods, however, chests ‘could serve as a seat, a table, a container, a writing desk, as well as a place to keep private possessions’.\textsuperscript{167} Chests thus repeatedly became more than their storage function through repeated use, the extent of which is demonstrated in Figure 2.2, a 1774 sketch by Lieutenant Gabriel Bray. As various furnishings, chests facilitated the creation of the spaces which men recognized as berths, and thus constituted a large part of sailors’ spatial and material worlds by allowing them to create spaces of leisure and communal dining. Chests also appear in records of courts martial as markers relative to the spaces men defined as berths. William Smith was killed when sitting on his chest in the ‘afterpart of the Berth’;\textsuperscript{168} John Tanswell watched his messmate Richard Russell emerge from the bread room as he was ‘Sitting upon the Chest in the Birth near the Main Hatchway’;\textsuperscript{169} marine John Burchett sat drunk on his chest below decks,\textsuperscript{170} and John Campell, abused by the boatswain in his hammock for refusing to work, eventually climbed out of his sleeping place and ‘sate down on a Chest’.\textsuperscript{171} Chests could mark out spaces below deck and act as boundaries which defined where certain men and messes were placed on the lower deck. Indeed, their role as generative of discrete spaces is demonstrated in the 1762 court martial case of Martin Billin and James Bryan. Billin and Bryan, despite knowledge that the act of sodomy carried the death penalty, chose to commit what was described as an ‘unnatural act’ behind a chest near

\textsuperscript{168} TNA ADM 1/5304, 3rd February 1770.
\textsuperscript{169} TNA ADM 1/5314, 1st November 1779.
\textsuperscript{170} TNA ADM 1/5301, 11th March 1762.
\textsuperscript{171} TNA ADM 1/5301, 17th January 1762.
their messmates. Considering the weighty toll this crime could carry, it would make sense that the two men would choose a space somewhere they deemed removed from the rest of the lower gun deck. That they chose behind a chest demonstrates the chest's role as boundary as well as furnishing, and its ability to construct as well as contain space.

The multifaceted role of the chest must, one might assume, extend to that of being a relatively private personal space for stowing away objects. Amanda Vickery's work on the technologies of privacy has demonstrated the fundamental importance of the lock and key to eighteenth-century identity. Vickery argues that the locked box was the material conclusion of an independent personhood during this period, and that to be deprived of it was tantamount to the removal of human integrity.\textsuperscript{172} In a recent discussion, Tessa Chynoweth has further stressed the importance of the locked box in the eighteenth-century home, and argued for its centrality to the labour of domestic servitude.\textsuperscript{173} However, the external boundaries of the sea chest do not seem to have guaranteed that the objects within it were 'private' in any modern sense. Much in the way the domestic servant's box was liable to be broken in to, the sea chest was inherently unreliable as a bounded space. Chests were liable to be searched by officers if theft was suspected, and men rarely seem to have had their permission asked before this intrusion.\textsuperscript{174} Some ships even instituted ritualistic weekly public unpacking of sea chests on the

\textsuperscript{172} Vickery, \textit{Behind Closed Doors}, 46-48.
\textsuperscript{173} Tessa Chynoweth 'The Box and Pocket: Servant Spaces?' unpublished PhD thesis chapter (QMUL: 2013).
\textsuperscript{174} TNA ADM 1/5304 25\textsuperscript{th} April 1770 and TNA ADM 1/5323 18\textsuperscript{th} August 1783.
main deck, making it difficult to hold on to stolen or smuggled items for any length of time. The regulations of HMS Hind stated that all ratings should unpack their chests each week in order ‘to see every one had his own’.\(^{175}\)

Worries about stealing were warranted. As a midshipman in 1811, James Everard mentioned that chests in general were ‘not infrequently meet with Customers’ hoping to steal and sell off spoils\(^{176}\) and this is borne out in court martial records, in which thieves smashed open chests below deck to access their contents\(^{177}\). These were of course part of inhabiting a quasi institutional and densely populated environment which meant that storage space was fair game for prying eyes and hands. The wooden boundaries of the chest were well known to be porous to both authoritarian and illicit invaders.

However, rather than see this as a perversion of what was supposed to be an entirely closed and secret space, we might see it as a by product of the chest’s inherent lack of individual ownership. Although it is tempting to see the chest as a repository of personal private space, sea chests on naval ships tended to be shared between two or more men. During the trial involving Samuel Chatham and James Christian, the court asked ‘Had the Prisoner a Chest to himself or only part of one?’. Although the man questioned failed to answer this question, the fact that the prisoner, Philip Clarke, hid the large part of the goods he stole in the head of his rolled up hammock suggests that he did not


\(^{176}\) CL MS/89/060, Letter from James Everard to his father, 18\(^{th}\) March 1811.

\(^{177}\) TNA ADM 1/5301 13\(^{th}\) April 1762, TNA ADM 1/5304 4\(^{th}\) August 1769 and TNA ADM 1/5404 11\(^{th}\) April 1810.
possess his own chest. Seaman James Carey meanwhile was unable to keep a box for Daniel MacCaster ‘not having a chest of my own’, and instead had to ask one of his shipmates to take care of it. This case also reveals that individual keys were expected to open more than one chest on board the naval ship. On MacCaster being unable to open what was supposedly his chest, Carey assured him there was ‘no doubt but he might get a key somewhere on board’. Chests were thus hardly expected to be effective barricades against the hands of other men, and objects seem to have moved fairly fluidly both between chests and men, involving continual negotiation. In 1779, William Hudson had to ask his messmate John Tanswell for the key to their shared chest in order to store his hat and tobacco in it, leading to an argument over whether the chest was too full. Hudson soon found an amount of stolen shirts in the chest, which he looked through and questioned Tanswell and other messmates over. Importantly, Tanswell’s defence relied on other men also having access to the chest, and placing the shirts there without his knowledge.

The sea chest was thus a site of shared negotiation rather than personal privacy, and was open to intervention by other seamen as well as officers. Chests therefore need to be understood not as stand-alone vessels, but objects which were written into the varying communal structure of the lower deck through use and association. This runs counter to a narrative in eighteenth-century historiography which has tended to see the development of secrecy and individualism as manifest in furnishing, and perhaps signals the

178 TNA ADM 1/53011, 3rd April 1762.
179 TNA ADM 1/5304, 4th August 1769.
180 TNA ADM 1/5314 1st November 1779.
importance of considering the counter or parallel narrative of plebeian ideas about boundaries. Boundaries were not created necessarily to exclude outsider and draw away from the rest of the world, but also ballasted formations of multiple sociability and allowed crowded spaces to be split in to units. The few histories of plebeian dwelling and work spaces have suggested that men and their families often ‘slept among the looms’, with several families occupying ‘Preston loomshop houses’ in the early nineteenth century. These labouring families slept on the same floors and shared the same overcrowded spaces for purposes of both industry and familial life. It is probable then, that working men and their families on shore had to employ similar material and spatial strategies of separation and create shifting boundaries which demarcated family groups and owned belongings. Boundaries were thus temporary and shifting for many labouring men and women, and we might see the strategies of seamen below decks as partially taken from the expectations of skilled labour on shore as well as being fundamentally shaped by the local built environment in which they were enacted.


The Gunroom

Metres away from the cellular communality of seamen’s berths lay another boundary, one designed to actively separate the body of seamen and marines from men who considered themselves socially and culturally superior. Aft of the seamen’s berths lay a carefully hung canvas boundary, separating the gunroom and cockpit from the expanse which housed the ratings. A young William Dillon describes the gunroom as the ‘after part of the Lower Deck, portioned with a netting close to the mizen mast’.183 Behind this hanging lay the opportunity to construct other smaller cabins for warrant officers, using largely canvas. The cockpit meanwhile allowed midshipmen the light and air understood to be beneficial for both their health and ongoing navigational studies, although midshipmen also berthed and messed in the gunroom alongside warrant officers.184 To push aside the canvas curtain and move across this boundary was to enter a space in which men imagined their role differently to ratings. Although many warrant officers came from rating stock, moving to the gunroom allowed them more space and berthing there was indicative of increased status. Midshipmen meanwhile were the young gentlemen who would one day confidently walk the quarterdeck and perhaps berth in a captain’s cabin. Their place in gunroom and cockpit was overtly a removal from the habits and conversation of common seamen, and the canvas separating the gunroom and cockpit from the rest of the lower deck seems to have acted as a buffer for interaction between the two groups.

The role this boundary played in relation to young gentlemen is evidenced by the role of the ‘Lady of the Gunroom’. The Lady was supposedly a ‘steady seaman’ who was continually stationed near the entrance to ‘prevent improper intruders’. This was presumably to keep safe the seamen’s small arms, which were secured within the gunroom under the care of the gunner. When, as a midshipman, William Dillon stole a cutlass, the gunner shouted to the Lady of the Gunroom to pursue him rather than doing it himself, suggesting that this figure was required to form a barrier between midshipmen, seamen and weaponry. The Lady’s presence thus seems to have been implicitly for the safety of midshipmen and for ensuring they were not influenced to behave unlike young gentleman. Captain John Cremer recalled the Lady of the Gunroom ensuring that the young midshipmen ‘went to bed in good hours’ and were generally looked after and organized sensibly. The Reverend Edward Mangin remembered his first months berthing in the gunroom in 1812, and his encounter with the Lady of the Gunroom on board HMS Gloucester whose name was Crosse. Crosse was clearly older and more experienced than the other members of the gunroom and looked ‘more like a seal than a man’. His duties extended to fixing clothes and sweeping at the gunroom entrance. The boundary to the gunroom was thus in many ways a feminized space, marked by the need for both providing care for youths and the policing of young men's behaviour in a manner not unlike that of a governess.

185 Lewis, Dillon’s Narrative, 13.
186 Ibid, 17.
188 Thursfield, Five Naval Journals, 31.
The role of the ‘Lady of the Gunroom’ as a buffer also suggests how the boundary between gunroom and lower gun deck worked in constructing a sense of masculine difference between the seamen and the young gentlemen. Midshipmen were of a generally far higher social standing than seamen, and thus needed the implementation of routines and spaces which would protect them from the influence and attitudes which seamen were understood to inculcate. One young midshipmen wrote home during the 1790s that he feared the lack of ‘good company’ on the lower gun deck and was concerned for his own habits as it was, he knew, ‘Impossible to help Imbibing a part of that we are continually hearing’. Edward Codrington meanwhile worried about the lack of ‘steady gentlemanlike midshipmen’ to head the messes on board the Orion as there would otherwise be disruption in ‘forming their manners’. Whilst ‘frivolous effeminacy’ was decried amongst midshipmen, they were still expected to keep the appearance of gentlemen and to maintain a degree of the manners instilled on shore. Life cycle and social standing thus played important roles in the creation of the cockpit and gunroom as discrete spaces. Midshipmen not only slept in the cockpit and gunroom, but also attended to their studies and formed friendships there, thus ballasting the identity of gentleman officer, who lived and possibly died with his comrades. When Thomas Huskisson was ushered in to the cockpit of HMS Romney as a young boy during the summer of 1800, he was introduced to his messmates as

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189 CL CAR/8A Letter from Philip Cartaret to his mother, undated but likely 1793.
190 CL PER/1/45, Letter from Edward Codrington to Lord Arden, 25th June 1805.
'another young bear'. Although Huskisson found fault with the older midshipmen in their prudishness over drinking, he got on famously with those of his own age, and his memoirs record their various exploits. In reference to the orlop deck, which was the lowest inhabitable deck on the ship, Huskisson and his messmates wrote a newspaper they termed the ‘ORLOPIAN GAZETTE’. The gazette was authored collectively and allowed for criticism of others in the berth and comments on events which had happened each week.\textsuperscript{193}

\textbf{Fig. 2.3.} Gabriel Bray \textit{A Sketch between Decks, May ‘75} (1775)  
198 x 245 mm  
National Maritime Museum, Ref: PAJ2026

\textsuperscript{193} Huskisson, \textit{Eyewitness to Trafalgar}, 52.
Although Huskisson insisted that his gazette still observed the 'strict subordination' of the naval ship, and avoided any derision aimed at lieutenants, midshipmen seem to have been frequently mischievous. The surgeon Peter Cullen noted frequently having 'tricks' played on him by the midshipmen of HMS Squirrel,\(^{194}\) whilst time on shore provided opportunities to terrorise the residents of port communities.\(^{195}\) Bartholomew James berthed in the cockpit of the 74-gun HMS Torbay in 1770 where he learned 'all the knowing tricks of a midshipman by composing bowls of punch by the rules of trigonometry, and proving the purser a rogue by Gunter's scale'.\(^{196}\) An intersection between navigational learning and fraternal merry making is made explicit here, and is suggestive of an environment in which the practices of group learning and living side by side shored up a sense of youthful masculine social cohesion. Learning together, as depicted in Figure 2.3, enforced sets of rules which although adhered to, gave them leverage for minor acts of disobedience. Alexandra Shepard's work on masculinity in early modern Cambridge University has demonstrated that misbehaviour and cultures of excess worked to cement men’s elite status through asserting that they were above the rules. This was accommodated by authorities as the fundamental outlook of students was not threatening to the patriarchal hierarchy on which the student body was founded.\(^{197}\) Although Shepard’s work

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\(^{194}\) Thursfield, *Five Naval Journals*, 56.

\(^{195}\) CL BUR/2, Letter from Captain Alfred Burton to his sister, 20\(^{th}\) April 1812.


focuses on an earlier time period and men of slightly greater age, her narrative seems to align well with the activities of the young gentlemen aboard eighteenth-century naval ships. The cockpit it seems was defined by differences in age as well as social standing. This is made further evident in the frequent purposeful differentiation between older and younger midshipmen. When the ‘elderly midshipmen’ of HMS Alcade established a ‘club’ in the cockpit in 1792, young midshipmen in the gunroom were ‘not admitted to these scenes’.  

In a space where to be older was to signal some form of failure to rise through the ranks, age in the cockpit took on magnified significance. Youth was eminently important as a defining factor of the cockpit as a space, and the pranks which young gentlemen played on other men around them suggest a juvenile masculine confidence which also defined other institutions housing primarily young men. This was a space in which navigational learning was accompanied by opportunities for the performance of a more wayward and confident youthful culture, expressed through sociability and limited friction with officers. The boundary of the cockpit and gunroom thus had heightened significance and the map of the lower deck was continually drawn along the lines of age and social background, reinforced by where one ate and slept.

**Quarterdeck and Forecastle**

However, boundaries divided vertical as well as horizontal space, and movement up and down was as formative of experience on board as horizontal movement between spaces. Indeed, moving up and down the ladders and

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198 Lewis Dillon’s Narrative, 38.
through the hatches of a ship under sail was a learned skill which required some degree of practice. William Dillon remembered the need as a young gentleman to become ‘accustomed to a ship’ and ‘found the ladders communicating from one deck to another rather awkward’. Dillon wrote that as he was not ‘used to going down them’ his feet ‘often slipped’ and his back was in ‘considerable pain’ thanks to repeated slipping and falling.\textsuperscript{199} In contrast, seamen who had worked afloat for long periods of time were described as ‘perpetually passing and repassing’, as their bodies wove between decks and up to the heights of the main mast to furl and unfurl the sails.\textsuperscript{200}

Navigating between decks easily was thus central to knowing the ship as a built environment, and an inability to pass up and down with ease would have marked a man out as green and inexperienced. Furthermore, once common seamen emerged through the hatch above their berthing space, they entered a site repeatedly marked through practice as one of sailor sociability and fraternal display.

The forecastle was the site of numerous activities which reproduced sailor culture and allowed ratings a space of leisure and social life. Alexander Galloway, boatswain of the Hermoine reported in 1784 a group of sailors making a great noise and dancing between eight and nine o clock at night, whilst seaman John Campbell, on trying to get out of work with sickness during 1762, was told “You were not sick yesterday when you were Dancing

\textsuperscript{199} Ibid, 18.
\textsuperscript{200} Thursfield \textit{Five Naval Journals}, 11.
Barefooted”, referring to his performance on the forecastle. In 1797, two men shared bread and butter and ‘fell into some Romancing talk’ with each other, before another seaman joined by joking and pretending to shove them. Indeed, in addition to dancing, play fighting and story telling were two activities characteristic of the forecastle. On the 6th December 1770, two seamen John Curry and Charles Dunstan stripped to the waist and fought on the forecastle, before shaking hands, and declaring they would ‘drink in water, as there is as much Friendship in drinking water, as any other Liquor in the world’. The specific purpose of these fights will be discussed in Chapter Three, but it is sufficient to say here that fighting between friends formed part of the social fabric of ratings’ experiences aboard ship and was largely accompanied by joking and laughing rather than any real intent to harm. ‘Forecastle yarns’ also allowed men to showcase their experience, and to narrativise their time at sea; where they had travelled; what they had seen; what travails they had overcome. As Jonathan Neale has argued, ‘forecastle culture’ was central to the way seamen understood their place on the ship, and was grounded in ‘women, drink, song and solidarity’. The forecastle was thus host to various social activities undertaken solely by seamen, and allowed these men a site in which to enact their own cultural performances even within a quasi-institutional space. These performative social acts did not exist in

201 TNA ADM 1/5301 7th January 1762.
202 TNA ADM 1/5340 3rd-7th July 1797.
203 TNA ADM 1/5304 12th December 1770.
204 Linebaugh and Rediker, *The Many Headed Hydra*, 160 and S. Leech, *Thirty Years From Home; Or A Voice from the Main Deck* (Boston: 1834), 73.
isolation however, and the forecastle often seems to have existed in opposition to quarterdeck culture.

The quarterdeck and forecastle of the naval ship are frequently discussed as being in continual dialogue. Testimonies from officers in courts martial frequently reference having only a partial or obstructed view of the forecastle from the quarterdeck at the other end of the ship. In a court case over fighting on the forecastle in 1810, Lieutenant Samuel Allen was questioned over whether he had failed to witness the event as ‘the Main Sail was set so that it could not be seen from the Quarter Deck’.\textsuperscript{206} In 1768, a midshipman named Richard Dawes had to admit that from the quarterdeck of the 30-gun Renown he had been unable to make out the identities of those watching a fight on the forecastle.\textsuperscript{207} For officers therefore, the forecastle was not a site which could be entirely controlled, as those committing offences were able to assume they could not always be seen. There is also evidence that seamen took advantage of the quarterdeck’s physical disconnection. In December 1770, Lieutenant Molloy was walking upon the quarterdeck of the sloop Spy at night, when he and the master’s mate Ambrose Wareham were hit by a shot from the forecastle. On going to discover who had thrown it, they were hit again as they approached the forecastle ladder, before finding seaman Jeremiah Styles sitting ‘on the foremost Gun in a very careless manner, with his arms across’.\textsuperscript{208}

\textsuperscript{206} TNA ADM 1/5404 11\textsuperscript{th} April 1810.
\textsuperscript{207} TNA ADM 1/5304 14\textsuperscript{th} March 1768.
\textsuperscript{208} TNA ADM 1/5304 22\textsuperscript{nd} December 1770.
In launching shot from the forecastle towards the quarterdeck in the dark, Styles was drawing on an understanding that the quarterdeck was far from absolute in its ability to control the actions of seamen. His cocky sitting position also suggests his confidence in launching an offensive from the forecastle. As will be enlarged upon in Chapter Three, the forecastle was also the site from which attempts at mutiny were launched, and men tended to drive towards the quarterdeck as the rebellion progressed. Indeed, as Jonathan Neale has written in his unpublished thesis, the forecastle represented a space where seamen were able to ‘build and subtly defend a world of their own’.209

The quarterdeck and forecastle existed in relation to each other as contested arenas, and were understood to be sites in opposition to each other, supported by their physical placement at either end of the ship. When the boatswain John Pendergast was ordered off the quarterdeck by William Mead, the commanding officer of the sloop he served on in 1774, his response was to proceed to the forecastle and shout across ‘Mead you Bougre, I have a Quarter Deck of my own, Let me see you or any other Bougre belonging to this ship come here’.210 Pendergast believed the forecastle could act as an alternative base for authority on the ship, and the fact that he was able to shout to Mead suggests the interactivity between the two sites. The forecastle was also made in to an alternative site of power through the performances of sailor culture which repeatedly took place there. Men outside the officer rank were able to articulate a part of the ship as theirs, and the implications of this are clear in

210 TNA ADM 1/5306 3rd April 1774.
attacks launched from the forecastle. Many of these cases seem to have taken place on smaller ships, like the sloop which Pendergast and Mead both belonged to. This is perhaps due to the fact that tensions were magnified, and also that court cases came in to being because officers on smaller ships were more aware of wrong doing on the other end of the vessel.

Despite such evidence, the quarterdeck’s role on all naval vessels during this period has generally been understood as formative of a top-down authority and defined by patterns of observation and the administration of official power. It was the site from which orders were issued, commands were given during battle, and even the time was announced from its lofty planks. Indeed, one naval surgeon described the quarterdeck as ‘the grand promenade’ of the ship from which ‘All order and speeches’ were delivered. Membership of the quarterdeck and the right to promenade across it were privileges which held considerable social and professional weight on the ship. Only commissioned officers, the captain and occasionally midshipmen were granted unmediated access to the deck. Greg Dening has described the quarterdeck of the naval ship during this period as the primary performative site for the ‘social group’ of commissioned officers. Its importance as a site of hierarchical performance meant that ‘all its trivial gestures and etiquette were its geography’. Many contemporaries also commented on the inflated role of movement and performance on the quarterdeck. The Reverend Edward Mangin, on entering HMS Gloucester in 1812, noted his surprise that no man should sit on the

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211 Thursfield, *Five Naval Journals*, 57.
quarterdeck, and that when walking along the ‘parade of the quarterdeck’, the superior officer must always walk in front. These displays of reverence and tightly controlled performance were something Mangin, as an outsider, had to learn from scratch. He later understood that:

‘These ceremonials, which, in one point of view, appear frivolous, are in another, of the utmost importance to the well-being of naval society; an association of men full of passions and prejudices, huddled together in a floating prison, where even a momentary dereliction of forms might prove fatal to the general interest.’

Mangin was picking up on the intricate social ballet required in order to continually instate the quarterdeck as the locus of authority on board. Nicky Gregson and Gillian Rose have both called attention to the importance of ‘performativity’ in relation to investing space with meaning and point to certain sites being ‘brought into being through performances and as performative articulations of power’. The reverence which needed to be paid to the captain on the quarterdeck, both in movement and in welcoming him on and off ship when in port, were indicative of the conspicuous and powerful hierarchy which the deck was to showcase. As Mangin noted, superior officers were expected to climb to the quarterdeck in front. Furthermore, the men on the quarterdeck were expected to use their time

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213 Thursfield, *Five Naval Journals*, 16.
there to display 'etiquette and privilege',\textsuperscript{215} and dancing was a favourite activity for officers there in the evenings.\textsuperscript{216} Matthew McCormack has pointed out the important role which dance played in formations of military masculinity, and the mastery over the body which it was seen to demonstrate.\textsuperscript{217} The control of the body was central to inscribing the quarterdeck daily with meaning, and walking and dancing as repeated practices had the power to assert elite masculine control over that space. It was a space in which men expected to be seen and benefitted from being seen to perform their duty there well. Invariably described as a promenade or parade, it was the stage on which officers gave their daily performances, and which as a space imbued such performances with meaning.

We should be careful, however, in declaring any site to be a 'stage'. Erving Goffman's theories of space as divided in to 'front stage' and 'back stage' have now been long subject to critical analysis, and his claim that space is 'scenery and stage props' for the 'spate of human action played out before, within, or upon it' hugely oversimplifies the relationship between individual and practice.\textsuperscript{218} Furthermore, the quarterdeck was far more complex than a show performed for an audience, and its most important role lay in shaping masculine definitions of the self and allowing men to distance themselves emotionally and physically from social inferiors. However, the quarterdeck did

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\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{215} Dening, \textit{Mr Bligh's Bad Language}, 19.
\item \textsuperscript{216} CL MS/89/060, Letter from James Everard to his father March 18\textsuperscript{th} 1811.
\item \textsuperscript{217} M. McCormack, 'Dance and Drill: Polite Accomplishments and Military Masculinities in Georgian Britain' \textit{Cultural and Social History} Vol. 8, No. 3(2011), 315-330.
\item \textsuperscript{218} E. Goffman, \textit{The Presentation of the Self in Everyday Life} (New York: 1959), 13.
\end{itemize}
represent a space where to ‘promenade’ and exercise visible difference from the rest of the ship were required performances. When Captain Joseph Mead was insulted on the quarterdeck by the Master Solomon Spanton in 1762, he recalled that Spanton had abused him ‘publicly on the Quarter Deck’. That such an insult could be articulated as public here suggests that the quarterdeck was a site of scrutiny from other men, and that it did act in many ways as a space for display.

As Spanton’s insult suggests, the sanctity of the quarterdeck could also be subverted, and the social gravitas of the space meant that, as Mangin indicated, any rupture in performance could have grave consequences for the social fabric of the naval ship. The fragile nature of the quarterdeck’s authority is also enlivened in a series of court martial cases relating to HMS Magnanime in February and March 1784. The initial case saw Captain Thomas Mackenzie take his third lieutenant to trial over his being drunk on the quarterdeck and disobeying orders there. The third lieutenant John Conquer was formally reprimanded, although the other lieutenants who testified claimed that he had done his duty, and was not drunk. This case led to a spate of further trials against the other commissioned officers of the Magnanime for ‘quitting the Deck when the Ship was under sail’ and other related offences such as failing to perform duty and ‘retarding the Service’. The first and second lieutenants both faced trial for failing to receive their captain when he entered the ship and for not demonstrating the proper reverence expected on the quarterdeck. Another

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219 TNA ADM 1/5301 24th March 1762.
220 Thursfield, Five Naval Journals, 16.
221 TNA ADM 1/5323 25th February 1784.
captain who had been guest on board reported that he had frequently
witnessed Captain Mackenzie ‘come out of the Cabin on the Quarter Deck,
when the Officer of the Watch has left that side of the Quarter Deck and gone to
the other, and not taken the least notice of Captain Mackenzie’. First
Lieutenant Thomas Wilson was reported to have frequently ‘turned around’ on
the quarterdeck when orders were given, and to have removed his hat ‘but not
in a respectful manner’. The purser John Gilbert meanwhile remembered
that second Lieutenant Philip Tule Stephenson had left the side of the
quarterdeck whenever the captain approached. Gilbert records this avoidance
in a way that suggests a series of steps:

‘I have seen Captain Mackenzie come upon Deck to go out of the ship,
the Barge mann’d alongside – Captain Mackenzie walked forward to
the Gangway – Mr. Stephenson walked to the after part of the Quarter
Deck – Captain Mackenzie has gone in to the Boat – I have seen
Captain Mackenzie come out of his Cabin on the Quarter Deck – Mr
Stephenson then on Deck turned his back on him and leaned over the
Iron Rail on the forepart of the Quarter Deck, the whole time Captain
Mackenzie has been upon Deck which might be the space of fifteen or
twenty minutes – Captain Mackenzie then returned to his Cabin, and
Mr. Stephenson to walk the Deck as before’.

222 TNA ADM 1/5323 3rd March 1784.
223 TNA ADM 1/5323 3rd March 1784.
224 TNA ADM 1/5323 9th March 1784.
Both first and second lieutenants were dismissed from the ship for their crimes against quarterdeck choreography. The weight given to these small scale steps, and to the ways in which the lieutenants were required to move in relation to the captain demonstrates the importance of controlled movement on the quarterdeck. The trials and dismissals were time consuming for the entire ship’s complement, and the testimony from the captain seems to present genuine distress at having his lieutenants literally turn their backs on him. The bugbear of the first and second lieutenants seems to have been ‘a publick insult’ made against them, coupled with the unfair reprimanding of Lieutenant Conquer. The lieutenants of the Magnanime fully understood the social weight which movement on the quarterdeck implied, and used it to devastating effect for the hierarchical structure of the vessel. Relations between the captain and his lieutenants deteriorated, and the society of the quarterdeck crumbled without the framework created by reverential acts. This demonstrates the extent to which the quarterdeck needed to be made and remade as an authoritarian space each day through practice, and the officers’ use of movement to create frictions highlights that men were clearly aware of the ease with which the quarterdeck’s power and authority could be disrupted and undone. Furthermore, the evidence given by a cast of characters such as the purser John Gilbert, who were not the lieutenants or the captain implies that the deck was in some respects a stage for a broader audience. Whilst the quarterdeck was clearly a source of masculine authoritative rule for commissioned officers and the captain, the lines drawn by men’s performances

225 TNA ADM 1/5323 3rd March 1784.
there were easily subverted, and the carefully constructed hierarchy could prove brittle.

**The Captain’s Cabin**

Whilst the quarterdeck was continually made secure in its power through the carefully choreographed actions of its officers, its importance was also sustained by its proximity to the captain’s cabin. Importantly, the officers of the *Magnanime* also refused to dine in the cabin and spoke to the captain in his cabin with less than respect after events on the quarterdeck. When Lieutenant Stephenson entered the captain’s cabin after his comrades had been taken to task for their misdemeanors on the deck, Captain Mackenzie reported that his manner was such that ‘he might as well have laughed in my face’.\(^{226}\) If the quarterdeck was a publicly negotiated stage, then the captain’s cabin was in many ways the engine of authority driving performances there. The captain as a figure was understood to be the physical embodiment of legitimate authority from the state, and as a result, ‘much state, like that of a petty king, was observed towards him’.\(^{227}\) The captain’s authority was essentially one based on patriarchal governance of the entire society of the ship, and his power to grant patronage meant that men were generally keen to keep in his favour.

The boundary separating the captain’s cabin from the remainder of the ship was thus one which was frequently described with a degree of reverence.

Naval surgeon Peter Cullen remembered that ‘A Marine sentinel always

\(^{226}\) TNA ADM 1/5323 9\(^{th}\) March 1784.

\(^{227}\) Thursfield, *Five Naval Journals*, 57.
paraded before his [the captain’s] cabin door’, 228 whilst Ned Ward described the interior of the cabin as a ‘sanctum sanctorum’. 229 An invitation in to this space was generally treated with the utmost importance, and lieutenants and midshipmen alike waited their turn to be beckoned over the threshold. Conversation within the cabin was understood to be endowed with the possibilities of patronage and promotion. It is no surprise that when Philip Carteret was invited to dine there as a young midshipman in 1792 and was toasted to, he was ‘astonished with so great a mark of his Lordships condersention & good will’ that he could not recall his answer. 230 Entrance in to the cabin was monitored by the clerks who worked within the cabin and policed by guards meaning its status as a distinct site was continually reinforced. When shipwright Rice Price apparently falsely accused Captain Henry Angel of molesting him in his cabin on board HMS Stag in 1762, Price used a knowledge of the cabin’s restricted access to build his narrative. Price accused Angel of ‘Calling me into his Cabbin and Doing those Actions which I do not think proper to be keep secrett’. Angel, desiring Price’s company more frequently, supposedly asked if he ‘cou’d not find something to do, that I might come in to the Cabin when I pleased’. 231 Whether Angel was guilty or not, this case suggests to extent to which the cabin was considered to be at a remove from the rest of the ship, and its ability to house acts which could potentially remain ‘secrett’.

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228 Ibid, 57.
230 CL CAR/8A Letter from Philip Cartaret to his mother, 12th October 1792.
231 TNA ADM 1/5301 12th January 1762.
Part of the reverence afforded the captain’s cabin was linked to the strictures of its entrance policy and the visual and spatial remove which it represented. As a source of power, the cabin needed to be carefully calibrated in order to maintain order and, like the quarterdeck, its deeply symbolic nature left it open to subversive practice. The refusal of men to enter the cabin became one of the main points drawn on by Captain Mackenzie in the courts martial cases following their conflict. In his defence, first lieutenant Henry Wilson argued that his disagreement with the captain made it ‘improper’ for him to dine with him as a gentleman, and that entering the cabin for this purpose would be an insult to his ‘delicacy of feeling’. Entrance to the cabin, and interaction with the captain there, was heavily weighted with symbolic meaning and representative of the acceptance of the strict hierarchies which existed on board. As the officers of the Magnanime realised, the power with which the cabin was endowed could be subverted through a disruption in normal practices, and in refusing to treat the space with the correct esteem.

The room for the subversion of the cabin’s social and professional eminence is further documented in a court martial case from January 1780. Samuel Jackson, a marine on board HMS Stag, chose to behave in a ‘contemptuous manner’ by jumping on the part of the quarterdeck which was situated over where the captain ate dinner. Jackson was reported to have been ‘stamping over the captain’s head whilst at dinner’, before hissing and sticking his tongue out at the midshipmen who came to halt him. Although the motives for Jackson’s display are lost to us, his actions seem to imply that he understood

232 TNA ADM 1/5323 3rd March 1784.
and was aiming to offend the potent hierarchical meaning of the cabin, and the importance of dining rituals within. As a space, it seems that the cabin possessed considerable symbolic meaning and physical separation, which allowed its resident more personal privacy and influence, yet simultaneously rendered him vulnerable to misuse of the cabin’s spatial strictures.

The Wardroom

Furthermore, although officers made frequent visits to the cabin to gather their orders and to dine, the captain’s removal from the officers’ berths meant that he had little control over discipline there. The officers of the *Magnanime* clearly discussed their disdain for their captain whilst together in the wardroom, leading to their ostracizing Lieutenant John Sole, who sided with the captain and continued to visit him in his cabin. The wardroom, which was located directly below the captain’s cabin, could thus act as an alternative locus of masculine authority and seems to have operated with its own guidelines for membership. Indeed, John Sole was not the only individual to be made to feel unwelcome in the wardroom. On the 7th of August 1756, Andrew Knox, Master of the 66-gun *Lancaster* descended from the quarterdeck to the wardroom only to discover that his cot and sleeping area had been ‘foul’d’ with ‘Excrement’. The perpetrator was the 2nd Lieutenant Thomas Montague’s dog, and this was, to Knox’s great vexation, not the first time such an indiscretion had occurred. Days before this Montague had begun his seemingly wanton assault on Knox’s space by tearing down the canvas separating his berth from the rest of the ward-room as it was not ‘to his fancy’, and pulling down shelves

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TNA ADM 1/5323 3rd March 1784.
which Knox had constructed for his ‘Books and Instruments’; objects which he describes as ‘every conveniency remaining in my cabin’. Knox claimed that several times in the past he had had his berth laid open to the ‘public’ of the wardroom, but on this occasion he had even had to take his cot down and must now ‘lay every day for the conveniency of the wardroom’. When Knox went to his captain, however, he was told that if he kept his cot in the wardroom and berthed there, he ‘had the least rights there of anybody’.\textsuperscript{234}

It was perhaps Knox’s status as Master of the ship which encouraged such violent disregard for his berthing space in the wardroom. As the highest ranking warrant officers, masters exercised greater authority than the gunner or carpenter, and their responsibility for navigation allowed them frequent access to the quarterdeck. They were also occasionally allowed a space berthing in the wardroom when there were fewer lieutenants than cabins. However, as is clear from the above case, the allowance of a cabin did not equate with acceptance in to the wardroom mess, and masters could be made to feel uneasy in their occupancy there. Indeed, a satirical guide for officers in 1785 suggested that the master was ‘apt to give himself airs of consequence, and frequently has the astonishing impudence to think himself your equal’.\textsuperscript{235}

In 1779 a Mr. Fox, Master of the \textit{Fancy} tender, was informed in no uncertain terms that he had ‘no Rite in the Caben’ of the wardroom by his captain. Fox’s letter to the Navy Board demonstrates the power that the wardroom had as a space on the naval ship. He asks the Board to acquaint him with the rules of

\textsuperscript{234} CL ADM/B/156, Letter from Andrew Knox to the Navy Board 20\textsuperscript{th} August 1757.

\textsuperscript{235} Anon, \textit{Advice to the Officers of the British Navy} (London: 1785), 40.
who is allowed to berth in the wardroom, asking ‘wether the master of a Tender has any Rite in the Cabben and which side he is intitled to if any Rite’. Like Knox, Fox’s occupation of the wardroom had been seen as something he did not have the ‘Rite’ to due to his position on the ship, and the wardroom emerges in both cases as a space which was jealously guarded to ward off outsiders.

It is unsurprising in many ways that officers were keen to keep the wardroom to themselves. Within its wooden walls existed a number of practices which worked to mould gentlemanly identity and to foster a sense of cultural remove from the rest of the vessel’s inhabitants. Although the quarterdeck and forecastle allowed different groups of men to engage in openly visible performances of cultural difference, the wardroom was prized as a space in which a professional and elite identity could be gestated. The surgeon Peter Cullen remembered the main body of the wardroom as acting as a ‘common sitting room’ in 1801, whilst the Reverend Edward Mangin recalled officers lingering around the wardroom table ‘for the various purposes of writing letters, playing backgammon, fencing, singing’, as well as ‘practicing on a violin or German-flute – in order to learn these instruments at a future period, etc.’ The mid eighteenth century had seen professionalization of the Royal Navy coming to fruition, and the role of naval officer was one increasingly seen as linked to gentlemanly status rather than as the ‘sea monsters’ which such

236 CL ADM/B/199, Letter from Mr. Fox to Navy Board 10th June 1779.
237 Thursfield, Five Naval Journals, 58.
238 Ibid, 11.
men had previously been assumed to be. Engaging in practices such as singing, fencing and writing cemented the social superiority of the wardroom and the cultural remove which a space in the wardroom afforded men. Residence in the wardroom was generally concomitant with procuring a commission, and the form of masculine conduct which was enacted there supposedly supported a group who ‘were Gentlemen alike’. Chapter Two will look in greater detail at the practices which defined the wardroom mess, and here it is necessary only to stress the exclusive nature of the wardroom as a space and the elite masculine identity which it was understood to facilitate through the practice and performance of gentlemanly activities.

Fig. 2.4. Wardroom plan taken from Brian Lavery’s The 74 Gun Ship Bellona (London: 2003), 80.

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240 TNA ADM 1/5304 12th February 1771.
N.A.M. Rodger has argued that the ‘privacy’ afforded by its small canvas sheathed cabins was at the heart of the appeal of the wardroom.²⁴¹ Tellingly, Rodger’s only reference for this assertion is Lawrence Stone’s *Family, Sex and Marriage*, which suggests a need to update the way the wardroom was understood by the men who occupied it. Figure 2.4 is a plan of the wardroom of a 74-gun ship of the line, and depicts the personal cabins and communal space of the wardroom. Unlike the lower gun deck and the cockpit, men here did have access to cabins designed for their use only, and officers slept within a discrete space which they could technically designate as theirs. However, it is clear from records of courts martial and men’s recollections that these individual berthing spaces did not grant access to untrammelled ‘privacy’ as we now understand the term.

An Admiralty order of 1757 stated that all entrances to wardroom berths were to be made from canvas hanging ‘like a curtain, or laced above and below with a parting in the middle of each bulkhead to go in and out’.²⁴² This canvas sheath, whilst acting to visually separate officers from the messing area of the wardroom, seems to have been ineffective in creating a barrier between the gathering of men in the commonly used space and the individual. A court martial case from 1780 saw Robert Bourne accusing a lieutenant of molestation, and included in his testimony that those sitting on the other side of the canvas divide between the berth and the messing place would probably have been able to hear his conversation with the lieutenant. Bourne supposed

that although they couldn’t see him, the answer which the lieutenant gave to him would have been clearly heard by all as the door was but ‘hanging loose canvas’ and there was ‘no more noise in the Wardroom than there is in general in a civil company of Four Gentlemen’. In 1768, and on board a sloop bound for the waters of Nova Scotia, Lieutenant Daniel Butler invited a marine in to his cabin in the wardroom. A midshipman alerted the master John Shirer that there had been a ‘great noise’ in Butler’s cabin. Shirer then ‘sat down by the Lieutenant’s Cabbin Door, and heard a man’s voice in the Cabbin; asking if he had any Coffee or Tea to give’. This incident eventually resulted in Butler being confined to the cabin, and demonstrates that although visually removed, there was little hope for keeping transactions private.

The canvas sheet was thus an inherently flimsy boundary in its separation of individual from communal space. Canvas doors were also required to be rolled up every morning, meaning that for large parts of the day the interior of the cabin was on show to everyone who entered the wardroom. Despite this exposure, and the often busy nature of the wardroom, complaints from lieutenants over the presence of others of the same rank in close quarters are rare. Rather, men seem only to have taken exception when men of lower professional and social status joined the wardroom, otherwise they took pains to ensure it was a cohesive social unit. When Andrew Knox’s cabin door was pulled down by the lieutenants, giving him no space for retirement but what was ‘public to the whole wardroom’, he still noted that he would not have

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243 TNA ADM 1/5314 1st January 1780.
244 TNA ADM 1/5304 13th September 1768.
complained about this, and only went to the captain after being beaten and physically forced out. It seems then that what was valued about the wardroom was its ability to create a sense of communal exclusivity amongst men, rather than offering an enclave of personal privacy. Amanda Vickery has argued that privacy amongst the eighteenth-century elite was considered to exist in social gatherings which were by invitation only. It seems that a similar form of social organisation was valued in the wardroom, and that it was a particular professionalised brand of communal exclusivity which was valued over and above the individualistic privacy defined by Stone.

**Servants and Unstable Boundaries**

Servants were also continually present in the wardroom and cabins, disallowing any clear sense of individual privacy as outlined by earlier historians. Servants were a socially amorphous group whose roles allowed them to move seamlessly between the different spaces of the naval ship, and whose repeated actions wove together the lower deck, wardroom and captain’s cabin. The title of ‘servant’ on ship tends to be associated with a ‘particular and very distinctive group’ of boys whose backgrounds ranged from the sons of gentry, to ‘poor waifs’ plucked haphazardly from the alleys of Georgian London, and for whom the naval ship represented an

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245 CL ADM/B/156 Letter from Andrew Knox to the Navy Board, 20th August 1757.
These boys made up between 6% and 10% of the ship’s crew, and were each answerable to a warrant or commissioned officer, the gunner, boatswain and carpenter excepted. Although it has been repeatedly asserted that the role of servant was a training rather than domestic one, it can be argued that the nature of the ship as an environment does not allow the two to be so easily separated. Spaces of work and spaces of eating, drinking, socializing and sleeping intersected and overlapped, and the naval vessel did not lend itself to a clear division of productive labour and domestic reproduction. Although servants were technically in training to become seamen or officers, their duties extended beyond learning their trade and expanded into the ancillary duties based on the needs of the officer they were attached to.

Courts martial records are peppered with the references to the continual presence of servants in the wardroom and captain’s cabin, and suggest that they were a group who were deeply embedded in the social fabric of all the naval ship’s discrete spaces. Servants appear as informers on a variety of crimes all over the ship suggesting that, as on shore, they were built in to the social fabric of everyday practice. When lieutenants and captains danced on the quarterdeck in 1811, the new servants were the individuals who were commented on as being witness to what they might deem a ‘very queer

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247 Rodger, Wooden World, 27.
248 Ibid, 28.
249 Cavell, Midshipmen and Quarterdeck Boys, 9.
250 TNA ADM 1/5304 1st December 1769, TNA ADM 1/5314 1st January 1780 and TNA ADM 1/5448 7th March 1815.
Within the captain’s cabin, the servants’ sleeping space was only demarcated by a canvas hanging, and in the inventory of Admiral Keith we see a ‘Servant's Bed’ being stowed in the ‘Birth’. Admiral Nelson’s linen book meanwhile recorded the inclusion of ‘Servants Sheets’, intimating the close quarters which servants kept with those at the top of shipboard hierarchy. The wardroom servants meanwhile berthed below decks, but ducked in and out of the lieutenants’ cabins routinely and were intermittently present at the wardroom table. One servant of Lieutenant Edward Bailey in 1784 was flogged for being assumed as the thief of ‘some rupees’ from his master’s chest off Bombay Harbour. The servant was the first to be accused when he ‘could not account for them’, suggesting the fluidity of movement which servants were understood to have as a group. On board the naval ship during this period, servants occupied a broadly defined role of domestic care and upkeep, which allowed them to transcend boundaries, and thus underpinned the social and material fabric of the vessel.

Their canvas berths within the cabins of captains and admirals allowed servants quick access to the domestic spaces of their masters, and meant they could be called upon to help at short notice. A series of letters between the Navy Board and a Captain Benjamin Caldwell dating from 1768, however, demonstrate the use of canvas as a very different type of boundary for servants. Caldwell wrote from HMS Rose whilst stationed at the Nore

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251 CL MS/89/060 Letter from James Everard to his father June 9th 1811.
252 Hamilton, Byam Martin, 58.
253 CL KEI/L/164, Personal inventory of Lord Viscount George Keith July 1797.
254 CL BRP/12, Nelson’s Linen Book 1803-1804, (verso 3).
255 TNA ADM 1/5323 3rd January 1784.
demanding that ‘a Painted Canvas birth’ be erected under the half deck for the female servants of their passenger Governor Shirley whilst he made his way to Providence. Caldwell insisted that the construction of this berth was ‘the only possible means there can be to accommodate them, which will oblige Gentlemen’. Having received no reply, he wrote again one week later that the Navy Board needed to take immediate measures to build a painted berth to ‘accommodate Governor Shirly’s women servants; which otherwise cant go out in the ship’. The insistence on painted canvas here was likely due to the fact that painting made the material heavier and more opaque, creating a more reliable shield around the women. Caldwell was repeatedly insistent that this was an absolutely necessary measure. That it was the only measure which would ‘oblige Gentlemen’ suggests that other suggestions had been overturned; perhaps allowing them space in the gunroom, wardroom or captain’s cabin.

It has long been understood that women had a particularly fraught relationship with shipboard life in the past, and arguably still do. Early modern mariners of all vessel types thought women to be bad luck for the voyage, in part because of their status as ‘potential breaches in the male order of seagoing solidarity’. The female body could threaten the social order of the ship therefore, and it was generally understood that sexual temptation whilst under

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256 TNA ADM 106/1163/93, Letter from Captain Benjamin Caldwell to the Navy Board 20th June 1768.
257 TNA ADM 106/1163/94, Letter from Captain Benjamin Caldwell to Navy Board 28th June 1768.
sail was universally negative. However, the wives of warrant officers and occasionally captains were allowed passage on ship, usually berthing with their husbands in the gunroom or cabin. Indeed, women and children are referred to whilst at sea as well as in port, where it was common for families and ‘wives’ to visit for varying periods of time. In 1812 the Reverend Edward Mangin baptized the son of a sailor after his wife had given birth at sea, whilst Captain Robert Middleton took his wife to sea for months on a voyage to Gibraltar. What Captain Caldwell likely took offence to then was the unattached nature of these women. Women without a male representative were inherently disruptive and the need to physically segregate them from the rest of the ship suggests the danger with which the single female body could be endowed.

The power of the unmarried female body on board the naval ship is further proved in a court case dating from 1797. When a group of seamen brought their ‘wives’ on board HMS Sandwich in port, a mutiny was called due to one of the lieutenants pulling down the canvas screens around these women. It is unlikely these women were actually married to the seamen in question, but all agreed it was a ‘disgraceful thing to take down the screens’ and thus show the group of women to all below deck. Taking down the canvas which had allowed the women their own space whilst the ship was anchored was seen to reduce

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259 Thursfield, Five Naval Journals, 14.
260 CL MDT/1, Letter from Susannah Maria Middleton to her sister 22nd August 1805.
them to ‘brutes in the field or ten thousand times worse than common
prostitutes’. The removal of this separating canvas thus destroyed female
modesty and the exposure of these women caused a huge tear in the
hierarchical and social fabric of the ship, leading as it did to mutiny. The
exposed female body, especially when unmarried, was seen as incompatible
with the normal running of the ship, and only by cordonning women off visually
with canvas could some form of decorum be maintained.

Female bodies could be understood as a dangerous force on board a ship held
together by homosocial practices of masculine work, and the fact that painted
canvas seemed to have been an acceptable way to neutralize their threat
allows us to reflect on the power of moveable boundaries at sea. Stationed at
the divide between seamen’s berths and the gunroom, and defining the
personal spaces of wardroom cabins, canvas hangings were part of the shifting
material map of the man-of-war. As discussed, canvas was an inherently
permeable boundary, allowing sound through, facilitating easy entrance, and
subject to daily rolling and movement. Along with the wooden walls, however,
these impermanent structures defined lived experience of the ship, and
worked to demarcate the ship along the lines of gender, professional status
and sociability. Indeed, when the seamen of the Sandwich who had complained
of the women’s canvas being pulled down made their own committee
headquarters below decks, it was ‘canvassed in a framed round’ and ‘hung
around with hammocks’.

261 TNA ADM 1/5340 6th July 1797.
262 TNA ADM 1/5340 6th July 1797.
Conclusion

The continual formation of boundaries, both physical and imagined, is key to understanding the naval ship as a lived environment. The ship housed a range of groupings of men, all with different ideas about belonging and their place within the hierarchies housed there. These ideas were galvanized through repeated movement, practice and socialization with other men, and the ship as a lived space was wrought out of continually reenacted discrete arenas, all interconnecting but made separate in their performed rituals. It is only through an attempt to map movement and quotidian practice using testimonies and recorded memories from those who walked the boards of the ship during this period that we can begin to forge a history of masculine experience. The quarterdeck, the forecastle, the wardroom, captain’s cabin and lower deck, were all invested with meaning and made discrete by their residents. Importantly, men were able to use performance to claim a form of temporary ownership over the spaces they occupied through making and remaking them in an environment where many men had little to their name materially.

This analysis suggests the importance of understanding boundaries as drawn by human interaction and movement rather than architectural design, and contributes to the school of thought which sees the space as fluid and continually remade. Importantly, the remaking of these spaces left the associated practices and performances open to disruption, and those sites invested with the most authority were open to subversion as in the case of the
quarterdeck and captain’s cabin. When seen as a whole, the ship can be understood as a multiplicity of shifting sites of gendered identity, sustained both by cultural performance and social practice. Movement between the lower deck and the forecastle, the forecastle and the quarterdeck, and the quarterdeck and the wardroom had significant implications with regards to power relationships on the ship; the forecastle could be cast as a space of subversive activity, whilst the Master’s entrance to the wardroom from a berth below decks unbalanced its claim to elite exclusivity. Although the remaking of spaces with practice and performance was most clearly choreographed on the quarterdeck, the ship as a whole was constituted of myriad different spaces which were continually being rewritten through movement and action. Although the structure of the ship’s hierarchical order was rigidly top-down, the experience of living aboard a naval ship was shaped by overlapping constructions of social and cultural authority. To move through the naval ship was to crisscross a series of imagined and physical boundaries, leading men through sites of differing power relationships and social structures.

This chapter also suggests that the public/private divide within understandings of eighteenth-century space be reconsidered. From the cellular communality of the lower gun deck to the communal exclusivity of the wardroom table, men seem to have valued being woven into part of a social and labour based or professional group rather than continually seeking their own private space away from others on board. Even the captain, arguably the most invested in individualistic removal from the rest of the ship, relied heavily on the visits of lieutenants and the dinners staged in his cabin. At the
other end of the social spectrum, the sea chest also requires us to reconsider the blanket desire for secrecy in the eighteenth century. Although privacy was certainly prized in some arenas and locked boxes and secrétaries proliferated, it is too simplistic to assume that storage was synonymous with secrecy for all types of men and women during this period. For seamen, the chest appears to have been a material building block of fraternal companionship, and its use as furnishing and shared interior suggests its role was socially cohesive rather than individually segregative. Furthermore, although lieutenants seem to be more aligned with assumptions about eighteenth-century privacy, and did have their own furniture, it was the social formation of the wardroom which allowed them to articulate their difference from the rest of the ship.

We should, perhaps, consider replacing public and private in the eighteenth-century historiographical lexicon with new terminology which is place specific and considers how the intersections between individual, group and lived environment forged social and cultural expectation and experience. The actions of those in the past were not necessarily merely obeying or disobeying the public/private distinction which past historians seem to have printed clumsily on to the home and the rest of the world. Social and cultural historians of the long eighteenth century might start to identify different kinds of belonging outside of the family and the modernising individualistic self, such as attachments to work-based groups, clubs, neighbourhoods, or wider friendships. Past worlds were drawn of a constellation of different associative

spaces, of which this chapter has attempted to explore just a few. The next chapter will examine how these spaces were invested with meaning through domestic practice and the imagining of home. It was not enough simply to demarcate one’s place on the naval ship, and years at sea meant that men needed to negotiate ideas about belonging through domestic practice and social interaction. At sea, home was both physical in terms of men’s immediate surroundings and emotional, in the distance often keenly felt between ship and hearth. Chapter Two will examine how domestic practices and ideas were worked out on board the naval ship, and what this can tell us about eighteenth-century masculinity.
Chapter Two: Domesticity

In the winter of 1803, seaman Robert Hay opportunistically deserted HMS *Eling*, with no money, no sense of direction, and no clear plan. Hay's written recollections give scant suggestion of why exactly he decided to desert, since he had found himself 'a great deal happier on board the *Eling* that at any time since I left home'.\(^{264}\) Considering that his first move was an attempt to walk from Plymouth back to his family home in Dumbarton, Scotland, and taking into account a recent visit from his father, it may well be that Hay was feeling homesick. His resolve, however, did not last for long, and Hay was soon back on board the *Eling* and amongst his companions who furnished him with food and gin. Hay's reflections on these experiences culminated in his noting that "Home' says the proverb, 'is home, howe'er homely'\(^{265}\). Here, Hay made a distinction between the physical place of his residence or 'home', the *Eling*, and the galaxy of emotional, social and cultural expectations which defined the 'homely' during the long eighteenth century. This chapter will seek to explore both the notion of the homely in the imagining of a home on shore, and the lived experience of the naval ship as a home. I will cover home as an emotive, imagined and lived concept, and demonstrate how naval men of every rung understood their relationship with domestic comfort and carried this out in relation to space and material culture.

Ideas about the creation and consolidation of a stable domestic situation seem to have weighed heavily on the minds of the men who populated the decks of men-of-war during this period. Letters home from naval men recount desires to be reunited with the minutiae of domestic comfort at home, and to depart the rigours of shipboard life for invariably warmer, more familiar, and more comforting interiors. Officers wrote of their longing to be next to the 'fine large wood fire' of home, to be reunited with their family cottage, and even recounted dreams in which they returned home and shared their prize money with their kin. Lower down the rungs of naval hierarchy too, men, especially those new on board, could be heard to pine for the domestic comforts of a landlocked family abode. Samuel Leech remembered an Irish seaman named Bill Garvy newly impressed on to HMS *Macedonian*, being mocked by the boatswain and fellow sailors. Garvy had misunderstood that there would be no proper bedding, before exclaiming that when at home he would:

“walk in my father’s garden in the morning until the maid would come and say, “William, will you come to your ta, or your coffee ta, or your chocolarata?” But oh! The case is altered now; it’s nothing but bear a hand, lash, and carry. Oh dear!”

Although Leech did very little to defend Garvy, he wrote mournfully of his memories of his own ‘bright hearth-side’, and the ‘pleasant voices of that quiet

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266 CL PER/1/25, Letter from George Perceval to his mother 28th January 1808.  
267 CL WEB/3, Letter from William Webley to his mother 16th May 1797.  
268 CL AGC/P/17, Letter from John Martindale Powell to his mother 12th June 1805.
home’ he had left behind for a man of war. Indeed, Leech’s memoir is entitled *Thirty Years from Home*.

The men, such as Leech and Garvy, who went to sea aboard naval vessels in this period then, were acutely aware of the emotional and physical distance of their dwelling space from somewhere which was identifiably a proper ‘home’. Leech’s messmates celebrated raucously on approaching shore at the thought ‘of many an old fire-side, of many a humble hearth-stone, poor, but precious’. The notion of the physical house from which one came, and the network of familial and kin relationships which this space denoted, formed a powerful set of associations in men who were continually made absent by the nature of their work. The ‘precious’ status of even the lowliest households is indicative of a masculine identity shaped in part by experiences of emotional and geographical nomadism. Until recently, there has existed only a sparse historiographical framework within which to study men’s relationships to ideas about home and household. The eighteenth-century man had been located firmly in the public sphere, with little indication that his worldview encompassed any part of the ‘private sphere’ of the household. As discussed in the introduction to this thesis, the insistently cultural flavor of the history of eighteenth-century masculinity has meant that its subjects have often appeared as figures of the assembly room and pleasure garden, far removed from the places and spaces where they slept, washed and conversed with their closest relations. Masculine politeness and the portrayal of a specific cultural

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269 Leech, *Thirty Years From Home*, 45.
270 Leech, *Thirty Years from Home*, 106.
polish has been considered so significant in relation to the metropolis, to
commerce and to politics, that focus has seldom rested on the small-scale daily
rituals invested in the home.\textsuperscript{271} Explorations of men's role within the
household have previously been overwhelmingly based on conduct literature,
and the home frequently appears as a 'venue for truly refined behaviour',\textsuperscript{272}
or an 'idealised space for the production of a virtuous and moral nation',\textsuperscript{273}
rather than an arena which was formative of its own particular modes of masculinity.

Over the last ten years, however, explorations of masculine involvement in the
home have begun to consider the domestic interior as a material space, and
male experience within it as made via continual physical interaction with the
domestic environment through repeated practice, rather than a nebulous
collection of moralistic and polite ideals.\textsuperscript{274} This is explicitly clear in Karen
Harvey's recent monograph, which emphasises male concern with the material
upkeep of houses in need of continual repairs and a focus on the emotional
fortification of the dwelling. Objects within this space could be drawn on by
men as artefacts of memory, and the material culture of the home was
emotionally charged with masculine associations. For example, the repeated
use of writing tools within the home drew together male emotional, domestic
and social life, and was immensely important in the formation of a masculine
sense of self. Masculine identity in the home relied not merely on men's role as

\textsuperscript{272} P. Carter, \textit{Men and the Emergence of Polite Society}, 98.
\textsuperscript{273} M. Cohen, ‘Manliness, Effeminacy and the French: Gender and the
Construction of National Character in Eighteenth-century England’ in T.
Hitchcock and M. Cohen (eds.), \textit{English Masculinities, 1660-1800} (Essex: 1999),
59.
\textsuperscript{274} See pages 24-27 of ‘Introduction’ in this thesis.
‘avid consumers’, but on the ways in which objects functioned within the household, making and remaking memory and identity.  

In this vein, Margaret Ponsonby and David Hussey have contributed to the field of study through an examination of the material lives of single homemakers over the course of the long eighteenth century. Single men’s homes were often subject to ‘inappropriate arrangement’, and the domestic experience of bachelors was frequently defined in part by an intrusion of objects associated with working life in to the domestic sphere. Men here were active in the material construction of domestic space, even if it failed to comply with the ‘appropriate’ standards associated with a marital household. The highlighting of these spaces as improperly organised has also moved the historiographical conversation away from imagining men as paragons of taste, and allows us to see male accumulation of goods for the home as part of a messy human process, rather than the result of cultural prescriptions. The male experience of the home is made here through repeated and overlapping work and domestic practices. The homes of shore were thus not stable places, either physically or emotionally, and men were continually negotiating the processes of domesticity and belonging.

Historiographical debate over male interaction with the home has, therefore, progressed greatly over the last ten years, and the field is no longer one which

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275 Harvey, *The Little Republic*, 110 and 119.
focuses insistently on the public and cultural. Extending this work, this chapter argues that we can learn far more about different facets and forms of masculine identity if we examine the ways in which men made homes in spaces which did not overtly lend themselves to normative domestic experience and which lay outside the four walls of the conventional house. Large swathes of the male population in eighteenth-century Britain found themselves ensconced within various penal and reformative institutions, schools, universities, hospitals, ships, and temporary accommodation abroad, for varying periods of time. Home has tended to be synonymous with house in eighteenth-century historiography, a distinction which perhaps denies other forms of temporary and long term residence which defined human experience during this period. The recent publication by Jane Hamlett, Lesley Hoskins, and Rebecca Preston on residential institutions in Britain between 1725 and 1970 has made clear the salience of considering these alternative lived spaces. Essays within the collection focus on the experience of inmates, and the opportunities and restrictions which defined the ways in which they made their residences into homes. Tellingly, only one essay in the collection concerns the eighteenth century. 277 Jeremy Boulton and John Black's work on the London workhouse does demonstrate the possibilities of exploring the lives of those who made a quasi-institutional space their temporary residence, and their contribution outlines a permeable institutional space in which temporary homes were made under difficult and sometimes dangerous circumstances, allowing us a glimpse

277 Hamlett, Hoskins and Preston, Residential Institutions in Britain
of a set of domestic practices and understandings which existed in dialogue with, but not within the house.\textsuperscript{278}

Tim Hitchcock’s work on sleeping rough in eighteenth-century London also explores practices of temporary home making. Hitchcock demonstrates that it was ‘possible to create a home from the disregarded corners of greater London’, and finds poor men and women living in the barns, sheep pens and annealing yards of the capital.\textsuperscript{279} More recently, Hitchcock and Robert Shoemaker have drawn attention to the ‘many temporary and artificial communities’ which those who flitted between the workhouse and the gaol were destined to negotiate for varying periods of time.\textsuperscript{280} Despite these explorations, sustained enquiry into the material and emotional strategies employed by those inhabiting makeshift and temporary residences needs to be expanded and deepened, and historians of the period should broaden their enquiries to include transitional and quasi-institutional home making.

Domestic life, in these settings, and the comforts which attended it, needs to be understood as based on the quotidian practices of everyday life which allowed men and women to create a sense of belonging within a particular place and space. As Michael McKeon has demonstrated, the ‘privacy’ assumed to be available within the home cannot be neatly equated with ‘domesticity’.\textsuperscript{281}

\textsuperscript{281} M. McKeon, \textit{Secret History of Domesticity}, 238.
Domestic practice spilled out of the four walls of the house and can be located in a panoply of different urban and rural spaces. Domestic life and strategies of home making must be understood to operate productively in a range of spaces, all with variegated levels of recourse to privacy and differing family structures.

The naval ship is a space in which the reconstruction of how men made temporary homes is possible through a synthesis of diaries, letters, inventories, advertisements and records of courts martial. As this chapter will demonstrate, the naval ship facilitated a constellation of different domestic expectations and experiences, all of which were forged in the intersections between object, space and practice. In order to try and understand how men constructed their temporary homes on the ship this chapter will examine the repeated material and social practices which were undertaken, and what such practices can reveal about masculine expectation and experience during the eighteenth century. While the first section of this chapter will look at the relationship of officers and ratings with the idea of home on shore during their absence in terms of oeconomic and emotional responsibility, the second section will examine the quotidian practices of making a temporary home within the wooden walls of the ship whilst under sail. Routines involved in food provisioning, eating, making, mending, furnishing, cleaning and sleeping will be examined, as well as the material artefacts which made such practices possible. The naval ship was a temporary home in which attempts at domestic comfort were beset by continual movement, crowdedness, violence, bad weather and perpetual damp. However, in order to sustain themselves on board for years at a time, men necessarily developed strategies to organise
their daily lives, and to create some kind of belonging on board. As this chapter will argue, these strategies were central to the creation and consolidation of social and professional groups on board ship, with repeated domestic routines continually creating distinctions between those on board and allowing men of drastically different backgrounds to forge their senses of belonging within the same structure. Whilst Chapter One examined the imaginary map which men laid on to the ship through movement and interaction, this chapter will attempt to shade in the detail of domestic life aboard the naval ship, and to enliven the ways in which objects and practices compounded or challenged a sense of masculine self on board ship.

**Imagining Home**

For men leaving home and hearth to sail for months or years at a time home was a distant and idealised place, as well as a lived and practised space. As Michel de Certeau reminds us, ‘Space is a practised place’.\(^282\) More recently, Doreen Massey has argued that the experience of place as a specific locality is always defined by wider political and ideological imaginings: local particularity is a specific intersection of global processes and ideas.\(^283\) Although through living aboard the ship men made and remade their temporary homes through domestic and work practices, existence within this space was always understood through the imagined stability of home on shore. Home was thus at once a set of local practices informed by and feeding into a wider framework of ideas about domesticity and belonging. Men longed for marital and parental

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homes, and the historical record hints at rituals of remembrance being continually undertaken as ratings and officers crisscrossed the oceans. The wardroom officers of HMS Gloucester made it their nightly ritual to toast to their ‘Wives and Sweethearts’ waiting at home after they had dined together, thus inserting their connection to distant hearth in to the daily rhythms of shipboard life.\textsuperscript{284} Meanwhile, a mutiny on board HMS Saturn in 1797 was apparently occasioned by the crew’s feeling they had been denied access to letters from their wives. Master’s mate John Pasley overheard those who led the mutiny saying that they desired ‘to hear from their Wives & Families That they wanted Tobacco & to have Letters, & that they would go in’.\textsuperscript{285} The receipt of letters, and the acts of remembrance which reading through them, and even exchanging them as in the case of whaling ships, was an important way in which men maintained a relationship with home on shore.\textsuperscript{286} As Samuel Leech remembered, men who had not received letters would ‘jocularly offer to buy those belonging to their more fortunate mess-mates’, and the arrival of the ‘mail-bag’ generally occasioned outpourings of ‘conjugal, fraternal, and filial affection’.\textsuperscript{287} In their ability to draw the lower deck together and create an economy of tokens, letters took on an even more potent meaning as relics of softer domestic comforts and sites of connection to the concept of shorebound home, as well as allowing group participation in receiving letters and acts of communal remembrance.

\textsuperscript{284} Thursfield, \textit{Five Naval Journals}, 12.
\textsuperscript{285} TNA ADM 1/5340, 19\textsuperscript{th} – 27\textsuperscript{th} July 1797.
\textsuperscript{286} M.S. Creighton, ‘Davy Jones’ Locker Room: Gender and the American Whaleman, 1830-1870’ in Creighton and Norling (eds.) \textit{Iron Men Wooden Women}, 127.
\textsuperscript{287} Leech, \textit{Thirty Years}, 104.
Ellen Gill has emphasized the importance for commissioned officers of communicating with family left on shore, and the centrality of letters in maintaining emotional bonds with wives and children. Absence was emotionally traumatic for men, and Gill claims that ‘removal from the domestic hearth was painful and distressing’. In addition to the emotional distress caused by long periods of time spent away from family and kin, however, naval men were also beset by another maze of potential problems in their practical relationship with home on shore. As Amanda Vickery has stressed, setting up and managing a household represented ‘possibility and glamour’ for men. Far from being considered a sacrifice of freedom, the physical and emotional tasks involved in settling down were seen to grant a ‘manly independence’ which was inextricably linked to political citizenship, a masculine attribute also discussed by Matthew McCormack. Indeed, ‘independence’, meaning manly primacy over governance of the household, finances, self and profession, was the bedrock of masculine identity during the eighteenth century. Part of this rested on the assumption that a man had, in Harvey’s words, ‘proprietorship’ over his domestic affairs, and that he could independently secure stability and comfort there as patriarch.

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289 Vickery, Behind Closed Doors, 82.
291 Harvey, Little Republic, 108.
By the mid eighteenth century, naval officers had broadly come to be defined as ‘desirable masculine types’ and were positioned within a category of professionals for whom manly independence was understood to secure a legitimate form of masculine identity. This may have been securely the case for the higher echelons of the officer class, but the practicalities of sustaining a household and maintaining the ‘independence’ which was keenly wished for over one’s living situation often proved vexatious for naval lieutenants. A lieutenants’ petition of 1795 highlights the ‘debt and distress’ which these men found themselves in when unable to access the fruits of prize money in relative peace time. The petitioners claimed they were unable to sustain the ‘appearance’ of a gentleman, and could not procure the ‘necessaries’ to support themselves and their families.\(^{292}\) This group of men lamented their inability to help their families, and asked the Admiralty whether they thought it right that their situation end in ‘a prison for himself, and a family to support upon a pittance which does not equal a third of the income of many *[shoe-black]*s in the streets of London’.\(^{293}\) Another petition of the same year noted that whilst the army meant the life of a gentleman for many, naval officers frequently found themselves ‘buried in the darkness of a dungeon, deprived of every comfort’, and forced to bow to their superiors rather than providing for their families. These were men who had ‘quitted their families perhaps in distress’ and ‘encountered every hardship and inclemency of season and climate’, and for which they felt deeply unrewarded.\(^{294}\) Unable to provision even themselves,

\(^{292}\) *Appeal of the Lieutenants of the Royal Navy* (London: 1795), 1.

\(^{293}\) Ibid, 2.

\(^{294}\) *Case of the Lieutenants of the Royal Navy* (London: 1795), 1.
their ‘wives and families’ would ‘pine in want, and sink beneath the weight of misfortune’.\textsuperscript{295}

Both petitions used highly emotive language to impart the gravity of a situation produced by the meagre salary on which they were expected to keep a family on shore. Although during periods of war, this plight would have been alleviated due to the chance of procuring prize money and avoidance of being put on half pay, naval careers were inherently unstable. The petitions emphasise the distance between their ‘dungeon’ on board and their households on shore, which seemingly undid much of the mastery which they were expected to have over their own affairs. Even during wartime naval men could experience problems in supporting a home on shore. In 1778 Hugh Frow had been a midshipman for six years and was eager to enter the rank of lieutenant. Charged with the task of enlisting men in Cork, and failing to get the compensation back for his travels, he saw his wife and children reduced ‘to a state of beggary’ whilst he was stranded and unable to help them.\textsuperscript{296}

Furthermore, the years spent away at sea often precluded the initial steps of setting up one’s own household, let alone being able to sustain it afterwards. Lieutenant William Webley, unmarried and unable to support himself at the age of thirty, wrote to his mother of his wish for a promotion and an increase in pay. He related that all men of service ‘wish and deserve’ the means with which to establish themselves, emphasising his ultimate desire for an income

\textsuperscript{295} Ibid, 3.
\textsuperscript{296} TNA ADM 106/1243/1, Petition of Hugh Frow, January 1778.
which would ‘enrich me as to make me Independent!!!’

This was a concern of all stations. One anonymous midshipman wrote to his close friend in 1770 that ‘the stings of dependence are more sharp’ than all other ‘mortifications’ which attended naval service.

Even captains found themselves in want of a secure domestic situation on shore. Captain John Hancock, himself a well established superior in the Royal Navy, told his friends that as soon as he could get a wife his ship would ‘go to wreck directly’, as he would ‘never think of it’ again.

Hancock here juxtaposed a life of commitment to the ship and to a household, demonstrating the sacrifices which naval officers were expected to make. These dichotomies emphasised what was missed on land in order to facilitate progress in a naval career. Indeed, it seems that for men a large part of what home meant was the ability to financially create and maintain it for others. On land, repeated practice and contribution would have shored up a sense of masculine legitimacy. On ship, however, the inability to perform these obligations resulted in home becoming a fraught imaginary arena for men.

Maintaining a solvent household was even more of a problem for ratings as continual movement and an unreliable pay system made a stable domestic unit on shore something of a fantastic notion. The impact of repeated absence was publicized by the panoply of satirical and artistic representations of naval seamen over the course of the later eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.

Indeed, there seems to be a dichotomy in eighteenth-century visual culture

297 CL WEB/3, Letter from William Webley to his mother 30th March 1796.
298 R.B, Sailors’ Letters: Letters from a Midshipman in the Royal Navy to his Friend and Brother Officer, in various parts of the world, from the year 1768 to the year 1777 (Plymouth: 1800), 17.
299 CL MS/89/060, Letter from James Everard to his mother 25th August 1811.
between the enduring trope of the ‘sailor’s return’ to his sweetheart and the
crunder depictions of the sailor as a hard-drinking, rollicking individual, not
long for dry land. Joanne Bailey has argued that the two images of Jack Tar in
popular culture worked in tandem to ‘democratise’ the common sailor, and to
provide an accessible plebeian figure whose rowdy behavior was tempered by
his sincerity of emotion.\textsuperscript{300} However, these images also held other
assumptions, namely that the definitive factor of sailor masculinity was that
they were only temporarily on shore. The manhood of the seamen in these
depictions rested on their imminent absence, and their inability to belong or fit
in on shore. Satire tended to depict men as unable to operate on land, as they
confused horses for ships, and women for frigates.

\begin{figure}
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{Fig3.1.jpg}
\caption{George M. Woodward \textit{Proof Positive or no Deceiving a Sailor} (1807)
256 x 350 mm
National Maritime Museum, Ref: PAG8567}
\end{figure}

\textsuperscript{300} Bailey, ‘Tears and the Manly Sailor’, 118.
In Figure 3.1 for example, the Jack Tar mistakes a horse for a vessel, pronouncing it has sprung a ‘leak’, and enquiring as to why the cabin lights are not clearer. In a very different image, Figure 3.2 depicts Jack nobly and cheerfully returning home to his sweetheart. The Sailor’s Return was an image repeatedly consumed by a wide public in the eighteenth century, and was familiar on paper, porcelain and textiles. Figure 3.2 was painted on to a pratt ware jug in the 1790s, whilst Figure 3.3 dates to 1786, and depicts the sailor discovering his fiancé and her sickly mother. In both images, and in the representations of the sailor’s return more generally, the male figure has just arrived. He is eternally just getting home, with little reference to how long he will be back or where his place in the home might lie. Indeed, both suggest that the presence of the sailor will be somewhat fleeting: the ship in the background of the image on the jug, and the complications of the sickly mother of the sailor’s wife-to-be in the painting. In the latter, it is implicit that the sailor’s departure has scuppered his chances of making a home with a new bride: he has waited too long and she now needs to tend to her relative.
Fig. 3.2 Pratt ware jug (after 1790)
130 x 125 x 105 mm
National Maritime Museum, Ref.: AAA5151

Fig. 3.3. Francis Wheatley, *The Sailor’s Return* (1786)
Oil on canvas, 470 mm x 381 mm
National Maritime Museum, Ref.: BHC1076
Although these images seem to be striking very different chords to the satire of the sailor and the horse, they all have a similar implication for the sailor. Jack Tar is out of place of land, and his return home is evidently temporary, or even disruptive to the domestic status quo. Seamen were by definition chronically absent, and their role within the social landscape of eighteenth-century Britain required that their relationships within the household, and on shore generally, were fractious. As Denver Brunsman has argued, seamen were a necessary sacrifice at the temple of empire and conquest, and it is arguable that the nation needed these men in their thousands to fail to belong at home in order to fulfil their role as defenders of English liberty at sea. Although the seaman was a virtuous and virile masculine type as Bailey has pointed out, it was also his absence from the rooms and hearths of England that was lauded.

In addition to demonstrating the cultural understanding of naval seamen, these representations mask the reality of a group of men who were often incapable of supporting their families from afar when they chose to. Seamen were largely unmarried, but when they were an ineffectual naval bureaucracy made it difficult to send pay back to families on shore. The notoriously unreliable system of the ‘pay ticket’ was supposed to provide a means of transferring a sailor’s wealth to a pay office in Britain to be collected by his kin, but in practice the system saw tickets created which were ‘often not redeemed for

years’. Even after a 1792 Act of Parliament which made provisions for
seamen in the navy to send a proportion of their pay home, and allowed the
use of a local agent to transfer the money to their families in the event of the
sailor’s death, their wives still frequently missed out on the receipt of their
husband’s pay. These ‘allotments’, as they were referred to in pay books,
amounted to 9 shillings and 4 pence a month for ordinary seamen, and 11
shillings and 8 pence for able seamen. Although this sum is not
incomparable with contributions made to the family economy by other
labouring breadwinners at the time, it was the irregularity and infrequency of
the payments which ensured sailors’ wives and widows were situated firmly
on the breadline. Indeed, the HMS Abergavenny, which left England’s shores in 1799, did not pay out any allotments to the wives of its men until 1802. Jane McRea, the wife an ordinary seaman on the HMS Brunswick which sailed in 1796, was living in Liverpool at the time when payments were finally doled out in 1800. For the previous four years Jane had been caring for four young children and had only received one payment. For officers and ratings alike then, just as a naval career removed men from the hearths of home, so it
tended to prohibit a supportive working relationship with domestic comfort on
shore for their spouses and wider kin. ‘Home’ and ‘comfort’ were fraught

302 Earle, City Full of People, 80. For a detailed account of the pay ticket and its practicalities for women left on shore see also M. Hunt, ‘Women and the Fiscal-imperial State in Late Seventeenth and Early Eighteenth Centuries’ in K. Wilson (ed.), A New Imperial History: Culture, Identity and Modernity and Britain and the Empire 1660-1840 (Cambridge: 2004), 29-48.
303 D. Cordingly, Heroines and Harlots: Women at Sea in the Great Age of Sail (London: 2002), 266.
304 TNA ADM 27/1.
concepts for men on board naval vessels during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, and masculine governance of the domestic was rendered intensely difficult.

**Making Home on the Lower Gun Deck**

Men did however have varying degrees of governance over their immediate surroundings whilst resident on board naval vessels, and the rest of this chapter will enquire as to how far the ship provided men with a framework to invest in domestic comforts, both physical and imagined. Unsurprisingly, the men who made their homes on board, however briefly, adopted a number of material and social strategies in order to make their time there more ‘homely’ and to inculcate a sense of comfort and belonging. These strategies were simultaneously material, emotional and social. Whilst homes left behind were often imagined as synonymous with the fires of hearths and the softer comforts of the household, the practices of making the ship a viable residence resulted in far less apparent domestic comfort. Men of every rank were expected to become physically and mentally hardened due to time spent at sea resulting in, ideally, an alienation from the attractions of a comfortable shore-based domesticity and its material counterparts. Admiral Byam Martin insisted that the ‘luxury of a visit at home twice a year’ from the Royal Naval College would be detrimental to the professional development of a young would-be officer. Byam Martin reminisced that this provision would leave a naval recruit too ‘pampered with the good things of the world to bear patiently with the rough fare of the cockpit, and perhaps too fine a gentleman to think the smell
of a tar barrel fit for his lavendered nose’. Here, Byam Martin insists on the irrelevancy of domestic comforts to naval success and diametrically opposes a life on ship with a home on shore. Likewise, in the popular 1773 production of The Fair Quaker of Deal Commodore Flip decries the existence of the ‘maccarone captain’, a type who were wont to ‘have their cabbins lined with green bays, who carry cows to sea for milk to wash their hands, who banish peas-soup and beef from their tables’. A proclivity for comfortable surroundings was thus imagined as deleterious to the masculine identity needed to effectively live at sea for long periods of time, and shipboard life was in many way an antithesis to the easy ‘sociability and comfort’ which has come to define our understanding of eighteenth-century domestic culture.

Below deck, men also expected their experiences to position them at odds with the rituals of domestic comfort on shore. As seaman William Richardson lay upon a chest lid on board HMS Minerva in 1793, he pondered over how his ‘bones had got so hardened’ since he went to sea that he ‘could sleep as comfortable on a chest lid or on the deck, as on the best feather bed in the ship’. Indeed, seamen were accustomed to sleeping conditions which required physical adaptability. William Spavens remembered on changing ships during the mid eighteenth century having ‘no bedding, and nowhere to sleep but on the water-casks in the hold’. On board one sloop in 1775,

308 C. Shadwell, The fair Quaker: or the humours of the navy (London: 1773), 5.
309 Harvey, Little Republic, 10.
310 CL JOD/156/2, 1.
ratings had so little room below deck due to cargo that they slept ‘amongst the cables & casks, with their chests, & cumber &c.’, which was not only ‘very uncomfortable for the People’ but also apparently created a great amount of dirt which could not be cleared up. Even when beds were provided, sleeping spaces were impermanent structures, requiring unmaking and reinvention on a daily basis. Canvas hammocks were slung between beams below decks and were rolled up and tucked away during shift hours, and unfurled when men were due time to rest.

The material culture of sleep was thus defined by impermanence and the practices of preparing one’s bedding were intimately bound up with the rhythms of work. This was a common theme in the material culture of the lower deck, and the following section of the chapter will examine the material and social practices which ratings undertook in order to make the ship a home, before moving up the social hierarchy to discuss warrant officers, midshipmen, lieutenants and captains. The thesis will here examine the practices involved in preparing for bed, mending clothing, eating, food provisioning, cleaning and furnishing, in order to demonstrate how a masculine sense of self was formed through repeated engagement with groups of objects and individuals. These practices of domestic reproduction and temporary home making will allow for an examination of everyday experiences of the ship as a lived environment. It is through understanding objects in use and in the context of the spaces they

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312 TNA ADM 106/1231/19, Letter from Captain William Parker to Navy Board 18th March 1775.
were used in, as well as in relation to the objects they were used with, that historians can begin to enliven a history of gender and materiality.

For seamen, shift work and the furling and unfurling of individually numbered hammocks meant that the material world of the lower deck was characterised by a shifting landscape over the course of any day and night. The material structure of the lower gun deck was thus fundamentally unstable as men changed places, returned from shift, and woke to return to work. Within this temporally changing landscape, the hammocks as objects themselves were inherently unstable. Hammocks were prized for their ability to be quickly packed and transported between ships, which made them eminently portable but also easy to break. The awareness of the frailty of hammocks as structures is evident in the practice of ‘cutting down’ hammocks below deck. William Hobbs, the serjeant of marines on board HMS Cyclops, was tried for cutting down the hammocks of marines during November 1783.\textsuperscript{313} Hammocks were also cut down by boatswains and their mates as a form of punishment for waking late,\textsuperscript{314} whilst one seaman threatened his messmate that he would ‘cut him down’ from his ‘Hammacoe’ with an axe below deck during an argument.\textsuperscript{315} In 1780 Bernard Quin added the cutting down of his victim’s hammock to a long line of assaults, including the burning of hair, and the cutting of his ear.\textsuperscript{316} The hammock was therefore broadly understood as a

\begin{enumerate}
\item TNA ADM 1/5323 28\textsuperscript{th} November 1783.
\item TNA ADM 1/5314 1\textsuperscript{st} November 1779.
\item TNA ADM 1/5301 19\textsuperscript{th} June 1762.
\item TNA ADM 1/5314 25\textsuperscript{th} January 1780.
\end{enumerate}
temporary structure, defined by its frailty of form and its ability to be packed away each day and taken down at will.

Cutting down, however, whilst marking out structures defined by their impermanence, also perhaps signals a material artefact which was intimately identified with the person who occupied it. When hammocks were cut down as part of arguments, as in the two cases mentioned, it was part of an attack launched against the individual. In Bernard Quin’s case, the hammock of his victim was considered a legitimate addition to a systematic attack on various body parts, signalling the way hammocks figured in the make up of individual seamen’s material presence below deck. Hammocks were indeed the closest thing to personal space which ratings had, and defined the space allotted an individual for sleep and temporary removal from the rest of the crew. An attack on this represented an attack on a very limited recourse to personal comfort. The historiography on early modern beds should alert us to the permeability of sleeping spaces generally during the period under study. Beds have tended to figure in early modern and eighteenth-century historiography as arenas of varying public or private activity. Laura Gowing’s work demonstrates the bed’s role as a site of contestation, and a space which when shared has given rise to multivalent social negotiations.³¹⁷ On the lower gun deck, the hammock seems to have been involved in a series of negotiations between the individual and the mass of surrounding men.

Hammocks were, for example, one of the primary places in which men who had stolen from their fellow seamen hid their spoils. Through the records of courts martial, it is evident that men understood their bedding to be perhaps the most ‘secret’ place they had access to. In February 1770, the marine John Stone, who would have berthed alongside seamen below decks, had his hammock searched thoroughly. He had been accused of thieving from the men who slept alongside him, and had been seen spending recklessly on shore at Plymouth. Within Stone’s rolled up hammock were found stolen trousers belonging to a seaman as well as ‘a number of new things’ such as ribbons and buckles, which were suspected to have been bought with stolen money.\(^{318}\)

When accused of cutting a cable on board with a knife which had a ‘long handle’, ‘broad Blade, and sharp point’, seaman John Bryan hid the weapon in the head of his hammock, which was taken in part to be a signifier of guilt.\(^{319}\)

Off the coast of Martinique in 1810 meanwhile, a ‘Pocket Handkerchief and three one pound notes’ were found sewn up in to the ‘pillow’ of James McNamara’s hammock below deck. McNamara was caught as the thief as he had been seen ‘sewing his pillow up with a needle and thread’ and being overly careful about how he kept his pillow centred. The pillow was discovered to be freshly sewn by the enquiring eyes of other nearby seamen and the stolen goods were discovered when the hammock was cut from the pillow.\(^{320}\) This alerts us not only to the cheek-by-jowl environment in which the roving eyes of messmates could uncover any inconsistencies in domestic behaviour, but also that the men who hid objects in their hammocks clearly equated the space with

\(^{318}\) TNA ADM 1/5306 4\(^{th}\) March 1773.
\(^{319}\) TNA ADM 1/5323 23\(^{rd}\) December 1783.
\(^{320}\) TNA ADM 1/5404 25\(^{th}\) April 1810.
a degree of secrecy. As chests were commonly shared the hammock was the only arena on the lower gun deck which was individually controlled.

The equation of hammock with individual is also clear in men’s recourse to them when abused, hurt or too drunk to function. Joseph Dunscomb was brutally beaten by the boatswain of HMS *Russell* in 1779 and ‘took to his bed’ immediately after receiving the injuries,\(^{321}\) whilst Daniel Lynch was carried back to his bed by two men after being struck in the face by another seaman, Denis Canty.\(^{322}\) Seamen also used hammocks as a form of material care giving when their friends were too indisposed to return to their proper sleeping places. William Carter found his messmate William Hooper ‘passed out drunk by the foremast’ in July 1797. His testimony reads that he ‘lower’d down the Prisoner’s hammock, and took it to the larboard side, where I spread his Bed and blanket, and took his shoes and hat off. Hooper then apparently got up and laid down on his hammock on the deck, with Carter lying next to him.\(^{323}\) John Lee, meanwhile, a seaman aboard HMS *Renown* in 1768 found William Smith lying on his back on the forecastle. Believing he was ‘disguised in Liquor’, Lee went to get a hammock and ‘put it under his head’ where he lay, only discovering the man was in fact dead ten minutes later.\(^{324}\) The taking down of hammocks and their reforming as beds elsewhere for those believed to be incapacitated demonstrates well the pivotal role which they occupied as objects of emotional importance below decks. If men were ill, their hammocks

\(^{321}\) TNA ADM 1/5314 9th November 1779.
\(^{322}\) TNA ADM 1/5304 12th January 1771.
\(^{323}\) TNA ADM 1/5340 6th July 1797.
\(^{324}\) TNA ADM 1/5304 14th March 1768.
were fetched or returned to, indicative of their role in a material culture of fraternal care on the naval ship. Within the material culture of life below deck, continual recourse to the hammock, and its role as a marker of the individual within the crew, meant that it was allied with a degree of individual and even ‘secret’ space which is rarely seen in examinations of the lower gun deck.

Finally, with regards to sea burial, for many men their own hammock would also be a final resting place, ‘sew’d up’ within the cloth which had previously provided respite from harm, and cast into the deep.\(^{325}\)

Another way in which men interacted with their bedding was through the process of cleaning it. Seamen were reportedly ‘very much’ upset when their bedding became wet, and hammocks were frequently scrubbed and temporarily replaced with clean ones over the course of a voyage.\(^{326}\) This should alert us to the particular ways in which seamen undertook actions which might be seen on shore as ‘housework’. Karen Harvey has made the distinction between the ‘keeping of a house’ and ‘housekeeping’. Men of the middling sort in eighteenth-century society were expected to invest heavily in the former, but to distance themselves from the latter on a quotidian basis. ‘Housekeeping’ implied the workaday tasks of mending, sewing and cooking and the continual upkeep of the home as a physical space.\(^{327}\) Women were therefore seen as bound into a small-scale regenerative role in relation to the domestic, whilst men were decidedly the governors of the household. The material worlds of seamen however required continual repair and upkeep, and

\(^{325}\) TNA ADM 1/5314 9\(^{th}\) November 1779.
\(^{326}\) Rodger, Wooden World, 62.
\(^{327}\) Harvey Little Republic, 105.
thus necessitated skills which Karen Harvey has designated as housework/women’s work on shore. William Baker, MP for Hertfordshire, saw his son off to sea in 1793 as a midshipman with the advice that he must have a chest containing ‘spare buttons, needles, thread &c’, for when he was at sea he needed to be his ‘own tailor’ and indeed, his ‘own everything’.\footnote{328} Sewing would have figured much less in the life of Baker’s son than in that of the ordinary seaman, and sewing and mending seem to have been central to the skills which defined the lower deck.

That being at sea required a man to be his ‘own tailor’ suggests the extent to which seamen were equated with small-scale domestic repair. Through the records of courts martial we see men such as seaman James Newsom mending his clothes ‘below in the Hatchway’,\footnote{329} men sewing pillows into their hammocks,\footnote{330} ‘fleching on the medicine chest’,\footnote{331} and some even customizing their own slops with embroidered marks as identifiers to prevent theft. In an investigation on board HMS \textit{Royal Oak} in 1773, lieutenants questioning those who appeared to have had clothing stolen asked if there was ‘any mark’ on the shirt, to which one marine replied his had held a ‘Figure of four with a red Thread on one of the Flaps’.\footnote{332} A court martial case from the 24th of March 1762 demonstrates that, at least on board the \textit{Magnanime}, clothing was marked in order to identify it as belonging to an individual. Seaman Samuel

\footnote{328} CL XDUC/27/11 Letter from William Baker MP to his son Edward 24th January 1793.\footnote{329} TNA ADM 1/5314 1st November 1779.\footnote{330} TNA ADM 1/5404 25th April 1810.\footnote{331} TNA ADM 1/5323 4th August 1783.\footnote{332} TNA ADM 1/5306 6th April 1773.
Chatham recognized his jacket, shoes and stockings, taken from his chest in the preceding weeks, through the ‘assigning marks by which he knew them to be his’. James Christian also knew his shoes and shirts ‘by particular marks’ he had made on them.  

The skills used to ‘mark’ items of clothing were learned whilst aboard ship for long periods of time, and there is evidence that these skills were peculiar, if not unique to, the naval ship. William Richardson had been aboard a merchant ship for ten years by the time he was pressed into naval service in 1793. On boarding HMS Minerva, however, he found there were ‘no slop cloaths’ on board. The purser therefore accordingly served out each seaman with pieces of fabric and ‘Needles & thread to make shirts, jackets & trowsers of it’. Richardson however did not know how to begin with making a whole set of clothes out of the cloth he had been presented with. Luckily his messmates were ‘a set of good fellows & accustom’d to the work’. They taught him to ‘cut out & make & soon after I got decently rigged with some to spare & with a new straw had I made by their instructions’. Sewing and the tailoring of clothes was a commonly held skill on the lower deck, and men like Richardson had to be socialised into the domestic work which needed to be undertaken in order to sustain clothes and hammocks. These skills were vital, as voyages could be years long, and often physically arduous, resulting in continual decay and requiring the repair of textiles below deck. Indeed, when HMS Lichfield was cast ashore on the coast of North Africa, and the majority of its clothes stores were

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333 TNA ADM 1/5301, 24th March 1762.  
334 CL JOD/156/2, 2.
were destroyed, the crew found ‘some thread Drove on shore’ and made clothes for the officers.\textsuperscript{335} Later, whilst captured in Morocco, the captain found some coarse cloth and thread and ‘then all Hands turnd Taylors and to work as fast as we could for most of us was Naked’.\textsuperscript{336}

Naval seamen were thus required to reform cloth into wearable items, as well as ‘mending’ their clothes during the course of the voyage. Material comfort in the form of wearable textiles had to be made and remade by the men themselves. Boarding a naval vessel thus initiated men into cultures of making and reuse. Certainly, those men involved in tailoring trades on shore would have known how to deftly employ needle and thread, and there is not yet enough work done on labouring masculinities to ascertain the extent to which men lower down the socio-economic ladder were involved with fixing and making textiles and clothes at home. However, studies such as that by Hannah Barker on ‘middling and lower-class masculinity’ suggest that the idealised male role was still based on domestic governance rather than piecemeal domestic creation.\textsuperscript{337} Even men who worked in the weaving trades during the first half of the nineteenth century were considered ‘mollies’, and decried for an involvement in small-scale reproductive tasks.\textsuperscript{338} On the naval vessel, however, sewing and mending were essential learned skills which, akin to seamanship, required being able to work with one’s hands and to improvise. Testimony from seaman Robert Hay also demonstrates the pride which men

\textsuperscript{335} CL JOD/7, 6 (recto).
\textsuperscript{336} CL JOD/7, 12 (recto).
\textsuperscript{337} Barker, ‘Soul, Purse and Family’, 34.
\textsuperscript{338} Clark, \textit{Struggle for the Breeches}, 256.
took in the act of making and mending, and the possibilities for display which such practices could offer. Whilst aboard HMS *Culloden* in 1804, Hay was assigned his mess, overseen by the ‘best seaman’ in the grouping by Admiral’s orders in an attempt to encourage good behaviour amongst the crew. The assigned seaman in Hay’s mess was John Gillies, apparently a ‘handier fellow than [any] whom had ever left the Emerald Isle’. Gillies immediately told Robert to start working on the ‘necessaries’ before they attended to the work of the ship, and they set about attending to the ‘cutting out and making of jackets, shirts, and trousers, the washing of them when soiled, and mending of them neatly’. 339 This was followed immediately by the undertaking of seamanship practices such as knotting, steering, and sail making.

It is necessary to understand the importance of ‘handiness’ to naval seamen, and the significance men invested in displaying handiwork both in terms of mending clothes and working with rope and sail cloth. Even though Jack Gillies could not read, he could ‘shape and make’ brilliant sails, model ships, was highly skilled in the crafting of garments, and was hugely respected in the mess for his ability to perform and display these skills. 340 We thus need to understand lower deck practices of mending and sewing not merely as domestic routine, but also as part of a prizing of the ability to work with one’s hands, which manifested itself in a constellation of small-scale interactions with the material world. Sewing clothes or a sail or working with thread cannot be clearly divided into ‘domesticity’ and ‘work’, but rather represented

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a set of skills which straddled the two and were formative of maritime identity. Sewing and mending built and demonstrated a sustained technical ability and niftiness with one's hands. Once again, domestic practices and practices of labour were learned skills which complemented and fed in to each other. Mending and sewing suggests taking pride in one's material environment and displaying a mastery over the limited material world available to men below decks. The existence of enduring traditions such as scrimshaw and the carving of sea chest handles suggests that there was a sense of skill attached to the altering of objects, and sewing, making and mending may well have been understood as a demonstration of male mastery and talent, rather than lowly 'women's work'.341

As Denver Brunsman has convincingly argued, seamen took real pride in seamanship as a set of skills which allowed them to enlarge their 'dignity and sense of manhood'. Their work practices instilled and compounded a 'common fellowship based on shared skills, language and knowledge', and allowed seamen to achieve a sense of status.342 This seems to have extended below deck, and to a sense of pride in making and fixing. Gender historians have long demonstrated that in relation to women's housework, practical domestic skill had the power to compound female authority within the family. Being 'one's own everything' could denote a similar governance of environment, and may have made up in some way for the inability to exercise independence over one's family and household on shore. As with many facets of seamen's lives, it

342 Brunsman, Evil Necessity, 166.
is difficult to ascertain precisely how this might have bolstered a form of masculine identity. However, sewing and mending are rarely commented on as anything but boons to men’s social capital on board, and the learned skill required to undertake these practices can be seen as a way of solidifying a sense of belonging whilst contributing to the material environment of the lower deck.

Stomachs needed sustaining as well as hammocks, and the acts of cooking and eating were also central to social formation and masculine identity below decks. Robert Hay showed his gratitude to Jack Gillies on the Culloden through assisting him when it was his turn to be cook. Hay would ‘attend to the sea pie or lob-scouse, bring down the pea soup and grog, wash the traps, and make all snug’.343 Existing within a mess on ship centered around the practice of eating, and as seen in Chapter One, the continual reforming of the mess for consuming food in discrete groups was a deeply important part of how the lower deck was structured. Each mess assigned themselves a cook who would serve out alcohol at noon and in the afternoon as well as provisioning the mess table with more solid consumables.344 This created a coherent domestic unit which men participated in through repeated rejoining over the course of the day, and through sharing food from a common pot. Men were responsible for their own utensils: Robert Hay records the purchase of a ‘horn spoon’,345 whilst spoons also crop up within men’s chests.346 Men reformed briefly as a distinct mess in

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343 Hay, Landsman Hay 76.
344 Leech Thirty Years, 46.
345 Hay, Landsman Hay, 43.
346 TNA ADM 1/5340 13th July 1797 and 15th July 1797.
order to share food, contributing to the cellular communality defined in
Chapter One, and created a shifting site of sociability in which groups came
together and dispersed throughout the day. The allowance of individual cutlery
could also result in skirmishes below deck, as knives for eating were the only
weapon generally available to seamen and meal times were a natural juncture
in the day for their production.

In 1773 off the coast of Madras, Daniel MacCarthy was threatened with a knife
by another drunken seaman who ‘almost fell upon the tea things’ after
attempts to placate him with a drink of grog. Meal times represented parts
of the day during when large numbers of men would be gathered below deck at
once and had the propensity to create small scale tears in the social fabric of
the lower deck; tears which were exacerbated by the presence of edged
weapons. In 1762 Joseph Thompson accidentally stabbed several men with his
knife whilst they were ‘at Victualls’. Thompson had been ‘eating pudding’ with
the knife when he leaned forward to grab a keg of wine, accidentally piercing
William Hawke’s thigh, which led to several challenges to fight. Although
Thompson maintained he had leaned over to get the keg, several witnesses
said that there was in fact a ‘struggle about a keg of liquour, which you would
not give up’. Eight years later, Thomas Bruin and William Smith sat at either
side of their mess table on board HMS Montreal pushing ‘an earthen Dish of
broth upon the Table between them with some Bread in it’. Bruin reportedly
shouted that he was able to ‘push as well as any Man in England’, and the two

347 TNA ADM 1/5306 2nd August 1773.
348 TNA ADM 1/5301 30th August 1762.
laughed and shoved the bowl around the table. This social encounter lasts within the historical record due to its grisly outcome. Bruin slipped drunkenly and stabbed Smith in the chest, killing him and leading to his own death sentence for murder.\textsuperscript{349} Whilst gathering in messes for food was in many ways conducive to the ‘snug’ atmosphere which Hay desired to create, the necessary unsheathing of weapons and consumption of alcohol could lead to an atmosphere which bristled with potential for unrest. Dining then, was not necessarily purely a domestic act of serving and eating, but also facilitated the existence of a raucously social arena below decks.

**Making Home in the Gunroom**

The lower deck, however, was not left to ratings alone, and messes were also sustained towards the stern of the ship. Aft of the seamen’s berths, and past the groupings of marines, lay the gunroom and the cockpit; spaces in which warrant officers and midshipmen formed their messes and spent their leisure time below deck. The perception that this part of the ship was healthier due to the improved access to light and air made this an attractive place for midshipmen both in terms of wellbeing and because the light allowed for study. As has been shown in Chapter One, a canvas sheet was drawn between the gunroom, cockpit and the remainder of the lower deck allowing for a sense of physical separation from seamen and marines.\textsuperscript{350} The cockpit and the gunroom seem to have interacted continually over the course of voyages due to physical proximity, and the divergence which both warrant officers and

\textsuperscript{349} TNA ADM 1/5304 3\textsuperscript{rd} February 1770.

midshipmen understood themselves to have taken from the careers of seamen; one due to seniority, and the other due to social superiority. Indeed, moving between seamen’s berths and the gunroom meant entering into a differing set of expectations of how daily domestic practice might be undertaken.

Many midshipmen initially found their transplantation from the elite and upper middling homes of their parents to the ship an uncomfortable and alarming experience. Comfort was often dependent on what one’s parents provided, and boys could find themselves reliant on their messmates to lend them necessaries and ‘ashamed’ at their lack of money to pay for their mess and ‘real requisities’ such as ‘clothes and linen’. 351 Sleeping quarters were also far removed from the beds they had occupied at home on shore. Like seamen’s hammocks, the hammocks occupied by midshipmen could be cut down by an unhappy quartermaster. A young Philip Carteret remembered an incident during the 1790s where he found that he must ‘splice it [the hammock] again myself, or lay on the floor’. 352 William Dillon remembered being taught how to ‘turn a hammock’ by his companions below deck in 1790, but commented for the most part on his memory of sleep deprivation due to the ‘effluvia of the cable tier’. Over the course of Dillon’s residence in the cockpit he found that the ‘noise of chain pumps in the morning was a regular annoyance, and I was in one sense powerless, not knowing what to do’. 353 A lack of home comforts was reinforced by the fundamental impermanency of sleeping structures. In addition to being cut down at the will of a naval, but not social, superior,

352 CL CAR/8A Letter from Philip Carteret to his brother, undated but 1790s.
midshipmen could expect to have their beds removed during the day to act as battle defences. When not in use, beds were employed in ‘what is called the bulwarks of the ships, and they serve as some sort of defence in time of battle’.\textsuperscript{354} Domestic comfort was thus continually subsumed to the practicalities of residence on board a machine of war, and this separated young gentlemen from their on shore counterparts whilst also attaching them in practice to the life of the lower deck.

Crucially, however, midshipmen paid for their mess, and allocated a ‘caterer’ to ensure the smooth running of meal times and the procuring of consumables from shore such as a ‘small cask of wine’ for the men to share.\textsuperscript{355} The organisation of a paid mess secured their status as the financial betters of the men that surrounded them, and allowed them to embed social hierarchy into the act of eating. Midshipmen drank tea regularly, were able to procure the ‘great luxury’ of ‘water cresses’,\textsuperscript{356} and enjoyed cheese and biscuits before they settled into their unruly beds.\textsuperscript{357} Midshipmen also exercised alternative forms of dining practice in their continual interaction with the nearby gunroom. As a young midshipman, James Everard expressed delight at being invited to ‘dine in the gunroom’ by the purser Mr. Penny. Two years later, and still a midshipman, Everard wrote home of his evening activities at sea, noting that he did not indulge in playing cards, but that he ‘dined’ with the gunroom.

\textsuperscript{354} Thursfield, \textit{Five Naval Journals}, 58.
\textsuperscript{355} Huskisson, \textit{Eyewitness} 9 and 16.
\textsuperscript{356} Huskisson, \textit{Eyewitness} 53-59.
\textsuperscript{357} CL CAR/8A Letter from Philip Carteret to his brother, undated but 1790s.
officers where they drank milk from the captain’s cow.\textsuperscript{358} Indeed, although those in the gunroom clearly could articulate themselves as a single ‘Gunroom mess’, dining practices seem to have been articulated and enacted in different ways. As a midshipman in the 1770s, Graham Moore described finding the purser and the surgeon ‘having supper’ together in the gunroom alone.\textsuperscript{359} This scene further depicts an arena in which eating was understood and practiced differently to the seamen’s tradition of messing in groups, allowing its residents to curate a sense of domestic comfort and removal from the rabble.

The gunroom also represented respite by providing some form of maternal care for midshipmen. The Lady of the Gunroom, a figure outlined in Chapter One, took on a seemingly feminised role of caregiver. As a seaman, the Lady of the Gunroom’s role lay on the boundary which separated the gunroom and the rest of the lower deck, and seems to have had a mediating influence. The Reverend Edward Mangin recalled seeing the Lady of the Gunroom aboard HMS \textit{Gloucester} sweeping the gunroom deck, opening and shutting the stern ports, playing the fiddle, and taking on the ‘craft of a tailor’ as he sat between two 32-pound guns ‘carving trousers, and sewing on horn-buttons, to the tune of ‘Death and the lady’.\textsuperscript{360} The Lady of the Gunroom was also responsible for ensuring that midshipmen ‘went to bed in good hours’, suggesting a role in the care of young gentlemen which was akin to that of a nursemaid in character.\textsuperscript{361}

The gunroom and cockpit, spaces in which midshipmen were resident

\textsuperscript{358} CL MS/89/060 Letter from James Everard to his father 17\textsuperscript{th} April 1811.
\textsuperscript{359} CUL MS Add. 9303/2, 4 (recto).
\textsuperscript{360} Thursfield, \textit{Five Naval Journals}, 31.
\textsuperscript{361} Bellamy, \textit{Ramblin' Jack}, 46.
sometimes from the age of ten years old, necessitated the existence of a feminized element in the domestic hierarchy and marked out this part of the ship as one identifiable with a specific stage of life cycle.

This was further evident when actual women supplanted the Lady of the Gunroom. When women were present below deck they were generally taken aboard as the ‘wives’ of warrant officers, and lived alongside their men in the gunroom. Unlike the flurry of sexual and social activity which defined female presence below deck when anchored off home port, warrant officers’ wives tended to exist as regular members of a vessel’s outfit.\(^{362}\) Samantha Cavell has shown that the gunroom provided a site of ‘maternal care’ for the midshipmen when the gunner’s wife sailed as part of the ship’s complement.\(^{363}\) This kind of female presence was fairly normal in the gunroom during the period. Indeed, William Richardson only considered taking his wife to sea once promoted to gunner, because the master, purser and serjeant of marines were taking their wives as well.\(^{364}\) Varying degrees of female presence, both physical and enacted, were thus woven in to the domestic life of the gunroom, and the provision of ‘maternal care’ likely helped to define this space as one of sanctuary for young and inexperienced midshipmen and ballasted the sense of the gunroom as a canvas-sheathed enclave.

\(^{362}\) Rodger, *Wooden World*, 76.
\(^{363}\) Cavell, *Midshipmen and Quarterdeck Boys*, 12.
\(^{364}\) CL JOD/156/2, 164.
Making Home in the Wardroom

Despite inhabiting the same deck as the seamen then, there was a sense that midshipmen would be catered for differently, and considered to be different types of men with differing requirements. When young gentlemen gained promotion and moved to the wardroom, this sense of being apart from the crew was further compounded. In Chapter One, this thesis sought to outline how the wardroom was imagined as a space of fierce group exclusivity and was jealously guarded by its denizens. The discussion here seeks to enlarge upon how practices of home making and domestic provisioning contributed to the specific identity of the wardroom, and to the masculine sense of self which was produced and enacted there. Amanda Vickery’s comments on the efforts of urban bachelors to distance themselves from ‘housework’ through association with a growing number of clubs and service providers alerts us to the shape which men’s involvement in the domestic could take in this period. Single men in the eighteenth-century city had access, where they could afford it, to a constellation of service women who washed and cleaned, whilst meals could be provisioned from the chop house or family and friends.\textsuperscript{365} As discussed by Karen Harvey, there was a clear distance between the ideological governance of the household and the workaday tasks involved in the physical maintenance of the house as a material environment for men.\textsuperscript{366} For the men of the wardroom, who were generally conceived as being professional and respectable by the late eighteenth century, importance was attached to removal from practices of material upkeep. As a space which spoke of privilege

\textsuperscript{365} Vickery, \textit{Behind Closed Doors}, 58-62.
\textsuperscript{366} Harvey, \textit{Little Republic}, 106.
and hierarchy, the wardroom thus represented an opportunity to realise the male goal of distance from domestic tasks deemed 'housework'.

As outlined in Chapter One, the wardroom’s status as a space representative of professional and social hierarchy meant that membership was prized by those who berthed there, and these berthing spaces were often jealously guarded. When the Reverend Richard Green was accused of tampering with the property of Lieutenant Leeke in the wardroom of the 74-gun HMS *Prince of Wales* in 1771 he was specifically told he was ‘no longer a Messmate in the Ward Room’. After being unceremoniously ‘kickt out of the Ward room’ and having his named scratched off the list of members, Green insisted that he ‘would take a Table and set by the Fire’, before being forced to leave.\(^{367}\) It is clear in several testimonies that one of the main privileges men valued was becoming a member of the ‘wardroom mess’ and thus having access to the wardroom table. When Lieutenant John Sole of the HMS *Magnanime* was asked to leave the wardroom in 1756, it was his dining privileges which were taken issue with and revoked, being instructed that he ‘ought not to Dine with [the] Captain’ and ‘ought to be affronted as much as them’. As outlined in Chapter One, John Sole had contravened the wishes of his fellow lieutenants by spending time with the captain during a dispute. Whilst Sole’s entrance to the wardroom was clearly cause for concern, it was the specific dining rituals which he engaged with there which incurred the anger of his messmates, leading to them refusing to eat with him and asking him to leave their mess.\(^{368}\)

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\(^{367}\) TNA ADM 1/5304 12\(^{th}\) February 1771.
\(^{368}\) TNA ADM 1/5323 3\(^{rd}\) March 1784.
The wardroom mess, and the table around which it was configured on a daily basis, was central to the consolidation of officer identity whilst on board. That members could be punished for not conforming to expected social standards demonstrates the potency of the wardroom as a space for the gestation of an elite naval identity. This enclave of male respectability rested firmly on inclusion in or exclusion from the ‘mess’ and a place at the wardroom table. On shore, Harvey has shown that patriarchal authority within the household was sustained through the ‘richly symbolic material culture of the table’ and its associated performances.\textsuperscript{369} Sara Pennell meanwhile argues for the role of the table as an ‘ordering tool’ within the domestic sphere during this period.\textsuperscript{370} Lieutenants hailed generally from families of considerable social and economic status and would thus have understood the dining table as a space in which male authority could be both consolidated and contested. The wardroom table’s importance in male authority lay largely in its role as a site for displaying relative wealth and manners associated with dining, both of which simultaneously distanced men from the residents of the lower gun deck and allowed them to demonstrably exert some independence over their material surroundings.

Part of this demonstration lay in the payment of the mess subscription, a donation which was paid to the ‘mess caterer’ to be spent on food, wine, coffee, 

\textsuperscript{369} Harvey, \textit{The Little Republic}, 100.
tea and tableware. As a young lieutenant in 1803, Henry Walker John Sibthorp wrote to his father begging for him to send £20 in order to contribute to getting the wardroom in a ‘more comfortable style’.\textsuperscript{371} Henry Jenkinson meanwhile, in his list of expenses for his berth in the wardroom during 1812, listed ‘Mess’ as the second largest expense after a ‘Chest of Drawers for my cabin’.\textsuperscript{372} Much was made of funnelling one’s earnings into the upkeep of the table and ensuring that it spoke of professional and social gravitas. The wardroom accounts of HMS Leyden for 1809 shown in Figure 3.5 can give us an insight into the makeup of the wardroom table and the comforts and delicacies with which wardroom members saw fit to furnish themselves.

\begin{table}[h]
\centering
\begin{tabular}{ |c|c|c| }
\hline
\textbf{1859} & \textbf{£} & \textbf{s.} \\
\hline
\textbf{Jul 8th} & & \\
18 Long Brass Hapins & 11 & 9 \\
Japan Knife tray & 4 & 9 \\
Do. Bread Basket & 4 & 6 \\
6 qt Japan Jugg & 7 & 6 \\
2 qt. Do. & 4 & 6 \\
3 qt Best Black Tin Tea Pot & 8 & 6 \\
2 pair Soufflers & Stands & 11 & [5] \\
Flour Dredger & Tureen & Ladle & 11 & 9 \\
2 & 6b Tea Canisters 3/6 & 6 & [3] \\
Japan Sugar Canister with two Tea do. & 14 & 6 \\
Steamer & Saucepan & 7 & 6 \\
Dutch Oven & 7 & 6 \\
Long Tined Plate Basket & 8 & 6 \\
Do. Tined Knife Tray & 8 & 0 \\
Gridiron 4/6 & Oval fryng pan 4/6 & 9 & 0 \\
2 pair Brass Candle Stick Loadig & 14 & 0 \\
Coffee pot & Iron Spout & 3 & 6 \\
Chocolate pot & 3 & 0 \\
Best Japan Qt pot & 1 & 4 \\
Coffee Roster & 3 & 0 \\
3 Stewpan & 1 Saucepan Old half price & 12 & 6 \\
Clean plate Basket old & 4 & [5] \\
\hline
\end{tabular}
\caption{Fig. 3.4. Taken from N. Blake ‘The Wardroom Mess Accounts for HMS Leyden, 1809’ \textit{The Mariner’s Mirror} Vol. 99, No. 4 (2013), 447.}
\end{table}

\textsuperscript{371} Lincolnshire Record Office (LRO hereafter) SIB/2/4/13 Letter from Henry Walker John Sibthorp to his father 19\textsuperscript{th} July 1803.

\textsuperscript{372} CL JEN/2 Letter from Henry Jenkinson to his mother 21\textsuperscript{st} January 1810.
Most notable here is the panoply of specialized tableware which a subscription afforded lieutenants. Where the wardroom seems to skimp on expenditure, on an ‘Old half price’ saucepan and an ‘old’ plate basket, suggests that the wardroom officers understood the value of the individual items they were purchasing, but did not see fit to pinch pennies for items which would be displayed on the table. Whilst 14 shillings were spent on candlesticks, and 12 spent on the stands for snuffers, objects which would be used by servants and cooks rather than the officers themselves were bought cheap and second-hand, pointing to a high valuation of the material showiness of the wardroom table. Virginia Dellino-Musgrave has convincingly argued that porcelain and earthenware found amongst archaeological excavations of HMS Swift, sunk in 1770, signal that the repeated practices of eating and drinking, familiar to a masculine elite on shore, cemented cultural superiority for those who joined in on ship. Inclusion within the wardroom mess, and access to the performative materiality of the wardroom table, allowed eating and drinking to take on professional and social importance and to ritually demarcate the men involved as belonging to elite masculine cultures on shore and, most importantly, to mark them out as separate from men berthing below.

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The servants depicted in Edward Mangin's rather generous rendering of the wardroom table (Figure 3.6) also enabled officers to sustain a domestic situation befitting a gentleman. As outlined in Chapter One, the amorphous category of ‘servant’ was one which allowed men to traverse the sacrosanct boundary of the wardroom throughout the day. Servants were expected to keep officers comfortable and ensure that they were removed from direct responsibility for anything which might be designated ‘housework’ on shore. In 1803, once made servant to Lieutenant Hawkins at the age of fourteen, Robert Hay found himself carrying out a number of tasks under the broad umbrella of domestic service. Hay was to ensure that if Hawkins ‘missed his share of the good things going at the wardroom table’, it was no fault of his servant, as well as attending to the ‘neatness and order’ of Lieutenant Hawkins’ cabin and

**Fig. 3.5.** Sketch taken from Edward Mangin’s journal (1812)
Thursfield *Five Naval Journals, 8.*
cleaning and brushing his clothes. Edward Mangin meanwhile, remembered seamen filing into the wardroom soon after day break to ‘wash and scrub the flooring of the ward-room, whilst the ward steward makes the preparations for breakfast’. Servants were responsible for allowing practices of eating, dressing and cleaning to be undertaken with ease and allowed officers to live in the catered and serviced manner they would have expected if on shore. Courts martial records show a further set of small scale domestic service duties. In 1771 one servant was ordered by a lieutenant to ‘make his bed’, and proceeded to take a ‘new Cot frame into his Cabbin’. Servants were also responsible for seeing candles were ‘fetched away’, put out, and lit over the course of the day and evening. Daily domestic regeneration was thus attended to by a range of men who were considered socially inferior, but who contributed to the status of the wardroom as an enclave of masculine superiority, which was continually remade through their domestic labour.

Another privilege which the wardroom allowed was the ability to furnish one’s own cabin. For all the limitations on individual privacy as outlined in Chapter One, the lieutenant’s cabin did allow for an entirely personal space which men could furnish as they saw fit. Although James Trevenen complained that in furnishing his cabin he had filled it up ‘as an egg’, he had room for his cot, a small bureau, and a hanging image of Captain Cook ‘pointing to a map of the South Sea’, likely an engraving of the stern-faced portrait created by Nathaniel

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376 TNA ADM 1/5304 26th April 1771.
377 TNA ADM 1/5314 1st January 1780.
Dance. For many men, however, moving from the cockpit to the wardroom represented a chance to materially outfit themselves with some of the domestic necessaries of the modern gentleman. As soon as Henry Jenkinson received his promotion to lieutenant in 1810, he drew up a list of purchases he would need to make in order to move to the wardroom. This included a ‘Chest of Drawers’ for just over four pounds and a ‘Chair’ for sixteen shillings, next to which he wrote ‘for my Cabin’. Although like Trevenen, Jenkinson found his new abode modest in size, he commented to his mother that ‘small as it is it is much more comfortable than when I used to have none’. Jenkinson capitalised fully on having a space to call his own, and within a year he was able to tell his mother, ‘you ought to see how fine I have made my Cabbin, I have it papered with a green Leaf pattern, and a new sofa, and it is agreed by every one to be monstrous fine’.

The wardroom brought with it freedom to decorate, and to impress gentlemanly living on the minds of one’s companions. However, this freedom also came with expectations over how one could exercise taste within such limited space. Henry Sibthorp outlined to his parents that now he was to ‘live with’ the lieutenants, it would be necessary not only for ‘silver table & tea spoons’ to be sent in order to contribute to the status of the table, but he also needed to be shipped his linen, ‘the curtains’, as well as ‘the books & other

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379 CL JEN/2 Letter from Henry Jenkinson to his mother 21st January 1810.
380 CL JEN/2 Letter from Henry Jenkinson to his mother 26th January 1810.
381 CL JEN/2 Letter from Henry Jenkinson to his mother 15th November 1811.
Lieutenant Edward Fiott meanwhile fitted himself out in 1819 with a large plate chest of ‘Spanish wood Divided and Lined through with cloth’ which was ‘Bound with Brass Locks Keys & Handles’, and ‘Trunk Stripe Linen’ as well as ‘4 Ewers & Basons Copper’, ‘2 Mahogany Bidet Stands’ with corresponding pans, and four ‘Basons’. Image needed to be maintained within the wardroom, and the purchases made by a variety of officers suggest a need to keep their immediate lived surroundings if not ‘monstrous fine’ then at least fairly well stocked with the domestic material touchstones of more expansive homes on shore. This desire was helped along by the proliferation of metamorphic furniture during the eighteenth century. The market for multi-purpose and space efficient furniture blossomed over the course of the century, fulfilling the needs of those who occupied rented rooms and lodgings. Metamorphic bureaus and writing desks allowed men to overcome the limitations of space in their wardroom cabins, and to undertake a variety of daily rituals requiring material props.

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382 LRO SIB/2/4/11 Letter from Henry Walker John Sibthorp to his mother 19th June 1803.
383 CL HAR/160 and CL HAR/161 Receipts of Lieutenant Edward Fiott from 8th Octboer 1819 and 2nd November 1819.
Fig. 3.6. Naval Officer’s travelling, writing, and toilet chest in National Maritime Museum (late 18th century)
914 x 711 x 508 mm
Object reference: AAA3617

Chests such as the late eighteenth-century example in Figure 12 allowed officers to practice daily personal grooming through the inclusion of a folding mirror, razor box and washing bowl, as well as housing a writing slope and drawers for the writing equipment and the storage of letters. Historians have flagged up shaving and writing practices as central to the continual
manufacturing of the legitimate gentlemanly self. Multi-functionality and provisioning for variegated daily domestic practices were a cornerstone of naval officer furnishing, necessitated by the 6 by 8 foot cabin provided them. When moved up a deck on the ship, the chest also became ancillary to dominant upper and middling sort masculine practice as well as being a repository like the sea chests of the lower gun deck. By the end of the eighteenth century naval officers had become respectable masculine figures, in part due to the professionalization of the Royal Navy and the centrality of naval success to British imperial and military expansion.

However, this respectability was a relatively new development, and replaced the earlier eighteenth-century framing of naval men as weathered and robust ‘sea monsters’, implying they had no place in the masculine cultural tropes of the shore. The equation of the naval profession with genteel and respectable masculinity was thus fairly recently won, and many men still feared that their time on ship eroded the manly qualities valued by their peers on shore. Time aboard was understood to potentially produce the ‘rude uncultivated manners of a Tar’ as well as absenting them from the ‘manly independence’ discussed earlier in the chapter. Furnishing one’s cabin well, in addition to being attended by servants and participating in the wardroom table, might thus go some way to cementing in the minds of naval officers the privilege of their

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385 Miller, Dressed to Kill, 9.
386 CL WEB/3 Letter from William Webley to his mother 30th March 1796.
profession. Metamorphic furniture allowed for individual male practices such as writing and grooming which connected men to male cultures of dry land. Daily rituals of domestic (re)creation thus allowed men to articulate an identity which could be afloat without turning into a ‘sea monster’, and the wardroom was an essential site in facilitating this.

However, the efforts made to maintain the practices and appearance of a gentleman were frequently embattled, and the wardroom provided no guarantee of domestic comfort. Whilst lieutenants had access to cots rather than hammocks and slept in individual cabins just off the wardroom, their spaces for sleeping and time spent alone were never far removed from the rigours of maritime labour. Canvas doors were rolled up and down, meaning that cabins were invested with a sense of temporality and the cyclic rhythms of the ship, whilst domestic niceties and objects implying comfort were also liable to be affected by the ship as a lived environment. A study of lieutenants’ letters in the Caird Library demonstrates a veritable litany of problems which lieutenants and midshipmen had with material possessions kept on the ship as they deteriorated, broke or generally lost their power to impress. Newly appointed to HMS Revenge, John Martindale Powell wrote to his mother as a midshipman detailing his expenditure on a looking glass and a spoon ‘having lost one and broke another’. William Webley wrote home as a young

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387 CL AGC/P/17 Letter from John Martindale Powell to his mother 12th June 1805.
lieutenant that he had lost all of his linen which he feared he would ‘never get hold of’ due to moving between ships.\textsuperscript{388}

More extreme and unpredictable circumstances caused Lieutenant Sibthorp to write home in 1805 that he would need to draw two drafts of £20 as in the recent storm ‘every thing belonging to me was consigned to the angry deep’.\textsuperscript{389} Lord Arden meanwhile was advised not to give his son anything but three jackets in his chest to take to sea as ‘all things whatever found laying about are thrown overboard’.\textsuperscript{390} During periods away at sea things were spoiled, as well as lost. To add to his list of complaints over the years 1810 to 1811, Henry Jenkinson detailed to his parents the ‘great holes’ worn in his ‘new Worsted Stockings’ in three days whilst at sea,\textsuperscript{391} his dysfunctional watch which seemed to add quarter of an hour,\textsuperscript{392} his hat ‘spoilt by some salt water’\textsuperscript{393} and his jackets which were ‘rather shabby and not quite according to the present fashion’.\textsuperscript{394} Similarly, although a lieutenant in 1780, James Trevenen was forced to go and meet Lord Inchiquin in shabby clothes he felt embarrassed to wear as his buckles were broken and he ‘had let [his] hat and coat grow old in the service’.\textsuperscript{395} Even Robert Barrie, freshly promoted to captain and stepping aboard the first vessel he would command in 1804, found that several of the things in his large chest were ‘spoil’d’. His subsequent

\textsuperscript{388} CL WEB/3 Letter from William Webley to his mother 25\textsuperscript{th} January 1796.
\textsuperscript{389} LRO SIB/2/4/34 Letter from Henry Walker John Sibthorp to his father 24\textsuperscript{th} March 1805.
\textsuperscript{390} CL PER/1/46 Letter from Edward Codrington to Lord Arden, 7\textsuperscript{th} July 1805.
\textsuperscript{391} CL JEN/2 Letter from Henry Jenkinson to his mother 12\textsuperscript{th} February 1810.
\textsuperscript{392} CL JEN/2 Letter from Henry Jenkinson to his mother 21\textsuperscript{st} January 1811.
\textsuperscript{393} CL JEN/1 Letter from Henry Jenkinson to his mother 2\textsuperscript{nd} October 1809.
\textsuperscript{394} CL JEN/2 Letter from Henry Jenkinson to his mother 1\textsuperscript{st} September 1811.
\textsuperscript{395} Lloyd and Anderson, Memoir of James Trevenen, 48.
comment that this counted him ‘pretty lucky’ hints at the level of object degradation that a serving lieutenant might expect.396

Both the cabins where men slept and the various objects they kept within them were frequently disrupted in their original form, and the course of a voyage had a deleterious effect on the material artefacts with which officers had fitted themselves out. The realities of inhabiting a structure which could prove open to the elements and which provided little real protection for material possessions were continually made evident. Men’s ability to manage their material environment was thus seriously impinged on, and the will they exercised over their temporary homes could be continually subsumed to forces outside of their control. We can begin to see here the limits of the long held historiographical tradition in eighteenth-century studies of discussing the masculine self as a purposefully fashioned cultural product. Objects which many historians of men on shore have previously understood as working for men, to display identity, on ship were far from guarantors of polite masculine identity.397 The ‘props’ which historians have often seen as amplifiers of an idealised masculine identity were on ship degraded and eroded through contact with the maritime world, and the lengths of time spent away from shore and shop. Objects brought on to a naval vessel immediately entered into a fraught relationship with the spaces they inhabited; one in which purchasing power and taste often gave way to salt, waves and wood.

396 CL BIE/1/1 Letter from Robert Barrie to his mother early October 1804.
It may be argued that the precarious position of the material superiority of officers, coupled with their continual worries over being able to sustain something which represented ‘independence’ in a household on shore, contributed to the fierce guarding of the wardroom as a space. Although the wardroom was an embattled space, and certainly did not allow men anything like individual ‘privacy’, the exclusive sociability which was fostered there conjured up a sense of belonging and social practice which ensured that naval officers were able to assert social superiority over others parts of the crew. However, men also needed to negotiate a fragile materiality on board. Whilst it is clear that a commission was equated with a higher standard of domestic provision and material luxury on ship, the physical articles which were taken on board as part of a performance of domesticity and luxury could prove unreliable. Men were thus made continually aware of the precarious nature of their cultural eminence, and could not rely on the things they bought to assert that superiority. When James Trevenen felt embarrassed by his clothes being ruined by salt water, and that he ‘had let [his] hat and coat grow old in the service’, it was with an awareness that his time at sea was the factor in his slightly derelict appearance. Perhaps commissioned officers relied even more on keeping the wardroom as a space away from the remainder of the crew, because the actions and items which were meant to imbue it with gentlemanly status could not always be trusted to last.

This is not to assert that this group of men were necessarily ‘failures’ in relation to gentlemanly masculinity, but rather to point out that for long
periods of time, men were unable to support a household on shore and sustain material markers of status at sea. Officers still held lavish meals and had their dirty laundry washed by their social inferiors, but were themselves in an embattled relationship with their domestic situation. That men could maintain clear hierarchy whilst struggling to adhere to the standards of masculinity on shore suggests not only the power of military rank in defining identity, but also the ways in which the locality of the wardroom as a place could empower men. Discrete spaces on the ship and the material and social interactions which took place within them thus had the power to gestate a legitimate forms of masculine self expression. Masculine identity was here defined through a series of practices delineating men as belonging to a special group. This masculine sense of self had its roots in the middling and elite practices of shore, but was also fed by a specific sense of naval superiority and rank. This should signal the importance of professional groups and working identities in shaping masculinity often over and above a desire for polite performance in public.

Making Home in the Captain’s Cabin

Part of the power of the wardroom was its proximity to both quarterdeck and the captain’s cabin. Both were spaces in which lieutenants were able to enact the authority they were endowed with through promenading above, or socialising at the captain’s table. The captain’s cabin was a sacrosanct space aboard most naval ships. Described as the ‘sanctum sanctorum’ of shipboard society by Ned Ward, being asked to enter to dine with the captain was
invariably described as an ‘honour’.\textsuperscript{398} As Chapter One demonstrated, entering
the captain’s cabin and dining there was overlaid with considerable
professional and social importance. Domestic ritual was always part of the
micro-politics concerning which officers were favoured for promotion and
which were likely to receive the patronage of the commander of the vessel. The
eighteenth-century naval system of ‘followers’ was personal at its core, and
one’s progression in the service relied on the development of relationships
with superiors which generally had to be built up on ship.\textsuperscript{399} Captains were
deeply involved in the career and personal progression of their lieutenants and
petty officers, and an invitation to dine in the captain’s cabin was seen as an
opportunity to prove oneself professionally. James Everard, a young
midshipman in 1809, penned a letter to his father revealing that ‘Captain
Reynolds is just like a father to me, I have dined with him almost every day’.
Although Everard also dined in the gunroom and occasionally with the
lieutenants, it was entrance in to the captain’s cabin and their conversations on
‘old affairs’ which allowed Everard to feel secure in his chances of success in
the navy.\textsuperscript{400} An examination of a ‘menu book’ kept by the steward of Admiral
Robert Digby, whose cabin was aboard the 90-gun \textit{Prince George} in 1781,
shows the influx of visitors which commanders could expect to move through
their residences. Admiral Digby’s menu consisted of roast fowl, pies, tarts and
puddings, and the fluctuating groups of men who attended differed at each
meal. As evidenced in the extract from the menu book shown below, captains,
lieutenants and several other men moved through the son of a Baron’s cabin,

\textsuperscript{398} CL JOD/156/2, p114.
\textsuperscript{399} Rodger, \textit{Wooden World}, 280.
\textsuperscript{400} CL MS/89/060 Letter from James Everard to his father 31\textsuperscript{st} July 1809.
eating at the captain’s table before presumably returning to their own berths and ships. The same names are rarely entered as guests twice, although the consistently high standard of food and drink suggests an environment designed for ceremony and display.

The steward, a man named John Gulivar, recorded a scene of shifting luxury, with visitors likely discussing affairs of ship and shore over sumptuous dishes, selected each day at the behest of the Admiral. Although they would attract a more limited social retinue, captains were also privileged with the power of extending invitations when they occupied their cabins. The continual presence of dining companions created a form of sociability which was at once fluid in

Fig. 3.7. Menu Book of Admiral Robert Digby, July 27\textsuperscript{th} 1781 – September 27\textsuperscript{th} 1781
Written by John Gulivar
Caird Library, JOD/12

401 CL JOD/12 Book kept by Admiral’s steward John Gulivar, 1781.
its variety of guests and contained in its social strictures. The power of the invitation to dine in the cabin was one which few lieutenants would have taken lightly.

Very few inventories of cabin furnishings for captain’s residences on ship still exist. N.A.M Rodger has noted that ‘Captains and admirals enjoyed a degree of ease which vastly exceeded anything available to their officers and men’, whilst contemporary comments invoke images of lavishly adorned quarters. Peter Cullen remembered the captain’s cabin as the ‘largest and most splendid...and exclusively his’, whilst James Everard found Captain John Hancock’s cabin in 1811 ‘very handsomely fitted up, and a very great quantity of Plate, besides various hand some bits of furniture’. For many captains, this furniture seems to have been made up of substantial pieces which could be taken apart and reformed in a different location, allowing for the transitory nature of the employment of a naval man. Whilst we see metamorphic furniture in the lieutenant’s berth, above the wardroom there was far more physical space for additional furnishing and thus scope to bring aboard furniture which was easy to dissemble but which once unpacked in the cabin would have created an impressive material retinue. In the 1814 shipboard inventory of Admiral Thomas Fremantle, a ‘Folding Book Caise’, a ‘Caise containing an Iron Bedstead’ and a ‘Large Circular Wallnutt Tree Table in 4 Pieces’ would have been arranged in the cabin to create a scene of comfortable, if transient, masculine domesticity.

402 Rodger, Wooden World, 68.
403 Thursfield, Five Naval Journals, 57.
404 CL MS/89/060 Letter from James Everard to his father 18th March 1811.
Several objects which crop up in Fremantle’s inventory are made of mahogany; a ‘Mahogany Box’, ‘Mahogany Square Table’, ‘Mahogany Dressing Table’, as well as the heavy, unwieldy large walnut table, which had to be quartered to move between Fremantle’s quarters whilst at sea. Other high ranking officers also furnished their cabins with mahogany. Captain Curry of HMS Sirius had a mahogany writing desk in 1787, whilst in 1811 Admiral Warren paid a Mr. Parker for ‘altering & repairing’ his mahogany travelling chest. Amanda Vickery has argued that eighteenth-century furniture was inherently gendered, and was marketed and sold as masculine or feminine. Examples of masculine furniture tended to be made from mahogany, and were overwhelmingly heavy-set and dark in colour, used largely in the male-centered drawing room. This supposedly spoke of masculine authority, and was counterweighted by the more feminine rooms and articles of furniture which expressed a lighter style of decoration. In the captain’s cabin, however, there seems to be little evidence of more feminine pieces such as a ‘satinwood dressing table’, tea table, or bottle stand. The environment which these pieces cultivated then, in the examples available, seems to be one of asserted masculine authority, the furnishings being designed to unpack in order to create the sense of a stable and respectable domestic environment. Although portable and metamorphic, these were pieces which were designed to imbue a

405 Centre for Buckinghamshire Studies (CBS hereafter) D-FR/41/5 Inventory of Admiral Thomas Francis Fremantle, 1814.  
406 CL MS88/004, Letter from Newton Fowell to his father 27th March 1787.  
407 CL WAR/38/1, Prize accounts for Sir John Borlase Warren, 1811.  
408 Vickery, Behind Closed Doors, 284.
sense of manly dominance rather than speaking of the profession's necessary transience.

The inventory of Lord Viscount George Keith, taken as he moved his residence between ships in 1797, shows a similar array of furniture which had the ability to be dismantled and packed up. Keith took with him a ‘sopha’ and ‘sopha case’ suggesting it was intended to be packed away, as well as a ‘Cot and Bedding’, and a panoply of different chests for tea, sugar, hats, sherry, claret and stationary. Keith’s inventory alerts us to the vast quantity of material possessions which filled the captain’s cabin at sea, but also the need for the cabin as a domestic and lived space to be entirely collapsible. For all its appearance of authoritative stability, the assemblage of the captain’s cabin was formed through a piecemeal and segmented process, with furniture being bought new, taken from home, and inherited from brother officers. Admiral James Gambier found himself having to employ the help of a cast of people, including his wife, when moving his furniture between Portsmouth and his house in Mayfair. In a series of letters between the Navy Board and the Gambiers, worries over the impact of his furniture being transported over cobbles were voiced, as were anxieties over exactly where the items were and the length of time they would take to reach him. Likewise, Captain William Drake had been waiting on the Boston at Woolwich without any of his effects when he wrote to the Navy Board begging them that he might have the

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409 CL KEI/L/164, Personal inventory of Lord Viscount George Keith.
410 TNA ADM 106/1243/328, Letter from Admiral Gambier to Navy Board 15th March 1778.
411 TNA ADM 106/1243/327, Letter from Mrs. Gambier to Navy Board 13th March 1778.
'liberty’ to put his ‘Stores and Cabbin furniture’ into his new ship, the 32-gun
*Lark* in winter 1757.412 Similarly, Admiral Keith in the move between ships
which necessitated his inventory, wrote in a panic to the Navy Board that he
feared an ‘awkward situation’ in which he would have ‘nothing on shore but the
Clothes in which I stood’.413 He wrote again once he had arrived in Plymouth
that ‘all my things are on board’ the previous ship,414 and requesting that
transport be sent to drop them off to him as he had no furniture and was left
only with the ‘few effects’ he had ‘been able to collect’.415 In his rapid reposting,
Keith had not had time to move his cabin goods with him, and was cast ashore
possession-less and temporarily destitute.

When almost ejected from his ship in 1762, Captain Nicholas Angel feared that
‘they will turn me out, without allowing me Time to move my Things’,
preumably referring to the material possessions and furnishings which he
kept in the cabin of the 32-gun frigate *Stag*.416 The transportation of furniture
between ships, and the forming and reforming of a suitable domestic enclave
on board the naval vessel was not a seamless process. Even Nelson, already
revered and well on his way to naval sainthood in 1800, experienced
difficulties with recreating and moving the objects kept in his cabin. On the 5th
of December 1800, he wrote to his close friend Sir Edward Berry asking
whether anything from his previous ship had been sent home as he had ‘none

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412 TNA ADM 106/1089/300, Letter from Captain William Drake to the Navy Board, 12th December 1757.
413 CL KEI/L/158, Letter from Admiral Keith to Admiralty 2nd July 1797.
414 CL KEI/L/158, Letter from Admiral Keith to Lord Birdport 4th July 1797.
415 CL KEI/L/158, Letter from Admiral Keith to Admiralty 2nd July 1797.
416 TNA ADM 1/5301 1st February 1762.
of the little things either out of the tabled drawer or out of the drawer of the Chest of Drawers'. The domesticity of the naval captain and admiral’s cabin therefore was one which involved fraught processes of assemblage and disassemblage, meaning that these eminent figures had varying amounts of control over the way their material outfit was distributed and looked at at any given time. Furthermore, the way in which Drake, Keith and Angel expressed their fear of moving without their belongings demonstrates the denial of a static domesticity which a naval career necessitated. The cabin was outfitted in a process of continual flux, as furnishings and owned objects were left behind, transported between ships, and refitted anew. Even the most powerful domestic space on board was continually in process.

One way the taking apart of the cabin’s outfit seems to have been remedied was in the sharing of domestic goods between captains and admirals. Admiral Fremantle, in an inventory made whilst moving ashore, crossed out the entrance for ship carpet and wrote next to it ‘given Capt Renley’. Earlier, in the years between 1807 and 1813, another of Fremantle’s inventories records large quantities of silver and plate ‘Given up’ to a Samuel White, Edward Hughes, Joseph Henly and William Heydon. The previously discussed letter from Nelson to Berry also shows that whilst he was claiming the effects he had left behind, his furniture was allowed to remain on the ship he had left. Another letter to Berry in 1799 sees Nelson telling his friend that whether he joined him at sea or not, Berry should ‘always consider that my table is kept on

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417 CL BER/6/10 Letter from Nelson to Edward Berry 5th December 1800.
418 CBS D-FR/41/5 Inventory of Admiral Thomas Francis Fremantle 1814.
419 CBS D-FR/41/6 Inventory of Thomas Fremantle 1799 – 1815.
board and I desire you will without ceremony use all my stores’. Furnishing and tableware seem therefore to have been shared between high-ranking naval men, allowing them to switch between ships without acquiring an entirely new set of objects, or carrying their entire material retinue with them each time they were commissioned to a new ship. Although there is little evidence for the feeling behind these material impartments, one might speculate that accepting the gift of another naval captain might bolster relationships of friendship and patronage, and solidify links between high-ranking naval men. This meant that the captain’s cabin was outfitted based on the practicality of inhabiting a highly transient domestic space as much as it was on taste and their own personal style. Objects were left behind, passed down, shared, and could potentially be damaged between postings, as evidenced in the Gambiers’ worries over the transportation of the Admiral’s furniture. Making the ship a home for captains and admirals, whilst allowing for far greater luxury than in the case of officers and seamen, was a continual process of remaking, and one which necessitated pragmatic strategies for the movement of goods.

**Conclusion**

The sharing of goods between naval captains as they moved between ships, and on and off *terra firma*, signals one of the most important factors in making the naval vessel home. Even though admirals and captains were technically alone in their cabin, the gifting and lending of furnishings meant that through the creation of domestic comfort, professional and social relationships were

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420 CL BER/6/5 Letter from Nelson to Edward Berry 28th October 1799.
reinforced. This was true on every level of the ship. The creation of spaces which facilitated comfort and domestic routine continually intersected with the cohesion of work-based identities and was sustained through repeated practice the masculine bonds which defined life aboard ship. Domestic routine could be as divisive as it was cohesive however, from the skirmishes of meal times below decks to the sometimes aggressively exclusive sociability of the wardroom mess. This signals the deeply rooted meanings embedded within eating, drinking, furnishing and congregating on board the naval ship. For young gentlemen and warrant officers, as well as those with a commission, it was often the practices of civility invested in eating and group organization which kept men continually feeling separate from the mass of common seamen. The seamen themselves meanwhile created a map of individual and communal domestic practice through the use of hammocks, the rituals of eating and mending, and making their temporary homes below deck. Home, for obvious reasons, could not be extricated from work. Hammocks, although providing short-term respite, had to be rolled up, just as canvas doors were tied away, and the mahogany furnishings of captains were moved between ships at short notice. Domestic comfort turned on professional progression and improved along with rank, certainly, but men of any status on ship could find their transient homes taken apart. The shipboard home was a shifting landscape which required repeated cohesive social practices in order to sustain the numerous discrete domesticities which existed on board at any one time.
Furthermore, the ship as a home was a fundamentally awkward space within which to maintain the markers of middling and elite domestic comfort. Linen, prized objects and clothing were ruined by the maritime environment, whilst the realities of naval duty saw men disassembling their material worlds and attempting to orchestrate their removal to another ship or to their shorebound homes. Domestic comfort was made and remade, forged simultaneously by the harsh realities of life at sea and the dreams of professional association which many officers held dear. Here, we must see the experiences of naval officers, living and breathing within an environment so deleterious to their material comforts, as a challenge to the body of research which has imagined male experience as that of mastery over the material. Many histories of polite identity and masculinity have placed emphasis on the power of ‘self fashioning’ and the ‘use’ of goods to display an external representation of a well-considered self. We see through the letters and records of naval officers the regularity with which objects broke, or were simply absent, disallowing men from enacting the ‘performances’ they had perhaps envisaged when purchased. Importantly, these men were liable to discuss such breakages and ruination as they requested new items from family members on shore, and used such mentions as a means of expressing the hardships which attended shipboard life. Men who made their homes on shore must also have experienced the degradation of their domestic environment, although not in the same ways or to the same degree. Perhaps future research should be directed at a relationship between men and materiality which is less stable and predictable than that of ‘self fashioning’. An approach which sees the material artefacts as social and fluid, as well as cultural and static, is essential for
developing histories of masculinity in any period, but the eighteenth-century’s reputation for ‘conservative’ histories of luxury and material culture means it is all the more salient here.\textsuperscript{421} Moreover, whilst the current historiography is right to place men back by their firesides, we also need to think about how the daily domestic practices and lives of those living in the same town or city might have interacted and impacted on each other.

How the fashioning of transient homes worked on a masculine sense of self for the thousands of men who occupied naval ships during the period under study is hard to pin down precisely. It seems clear that men were able to establish a sense of social cohesion through domestic practice, and that the ship allowed several discrete grouping of men to operate their own routines alongside one another with varying degrees of interaction. If Chapter One demonstrated the ways in which men imagined the ship as divided into varying shades of personal and communal space, then this chapter should alert us to the ways in which practices within these boundaries coloured men’s experiences of life aboard ship and their expectations of how it would provide a home for them, however temporary. This chapter reinforces the importance of sociability and group integration for masculine identities during the eighteenth century. Cellular communality below decks, communal exclusivity in the wardroom, and the continually changing and restricted sociability of the captain’s cabin; all occupied a central place in the minds and motives of those aboard the naval ship. These associations and the assurance that one was knotted into the legitimizing rituals and routines of shipboard life were likely all the more

\textsuperscript{421} Trentmann, ‘Materiality in the Future of History’, 285.
important due to the fractured relationship which naval men of all levels had with the notion of masculine ‘independence’, and the governance of household and family ashore.

Whilst ‘homeliness’ has been seen as fundamentally bound up with attachment to the feminine and the creation of a household, we must seek to understand how men could construct ‘home’ in other social formulations. Perhaps on shore this might extend to the clubhouse, the lodging, the tavern, and the society. Masculine identity on the naval ship, however, and at this particular time, seems to have leaned heavily on the consolidation of the group through shared and repeated material and social practices, all of which contributed to a sense of belonging. It is telling that Robert Hay’s reinitiating in to the crew of the *Eling* with which this chapter began was performed through the provision of gin and bread. Home was indeed home, ‘howe’er homely’, and it was collective masculine belonging and practices which provided the comfort and care which made it so. In the next chapter, this thesis will turn to another set of relationships which defined masculine experience on board the naval ship; those of violence and the enforcement of authority. Whilst an exploration of the domestic has allowed us to see how men created a temporary residence through cooperation within their discrete social groups, Chapter Three will look at how naval masculinity operated in relation to the friction between various populations on board the ship. This will be analysed through an examination of the quotidian choreography of violent acts and the power relationships which supported them.
Chapter Three: Violence

In 1969, Hannah Arendt argued that violent acts had too often been considered as existing outside of any distinct culture, and were broadly understood to be a subversion of any social order rather than a force which underpinned it. Violent acts were seen as the exception, a ‘marginal phenomenon’ which existed outside the remit of social sciences as they could not be conceived of as acts which were constituents of any coherent culture. Six years later, Michel Foucault would publish Discipline and Punish, a book which fundamentally reshaped the way in which violence and control were understood to have evolved historically. Foucault argued that a change in the way punishment was enacted by the state occurred towards the end of the eighteenth century. Where once bodies were subjected to public dismemberment and torture, now punishment was to work on the minds and inclinations of inmates, behind the doors of institutions and gaols. The notion that one might be reformed thus led to a longer-term and increasingly insidious attempt to shape the morality of those considered subversive. Importantly, it was the specificity of newly invented eighteenth-century spaces which allowed this transformation to take place. Reforming institutions were seen to aspire to Jeremy Bentham's panopticon, which worked through the ‘omnipresence of inspection’ and the social isolation of the inmate. Bentham realised that the ‘power of mind over mind’ could be gained through ‘a simple idea in Architecture’ and the

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423 Foucault, Discipline and Punish.
principles of control. Miles Ogborn has more recently demonstrated that this isolation could be enacted on inmates even where cells did not divide. In his study of the Magdalen Hospital, Ogborn finds that the self was to be the cell, and individuals were forced to reflect inwardly through rigorous and repeated practices of discipline. Control had become an internal process rather than an external performance, as the reform of the individual superseded the public display of state retribution.

The history of eighteenth century state violence has broadly followed many of Foucault’s assumptions about the removal of violence from official public life, although recent explorations find different ideological engines powering this privatisation. Robert Shoemaker’s exploration of eighteenth-century state violence has claimed that public punishment was moved behind institutional walls during the period. This was due to an increasing metropolitan distaste for the public punishments such as flogging or whipping in the streets, and an apparent ‘elite squeamishness’. Concomitantly, masculine ideals of honour were shifting as public reputation was defended and managed through performances of politeness and men relied less on the notion of public reputation in order to conduct business. This led to the gradual decline across the century of honour fights and duels and a general decrease in public

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425 Ogborn, *Spaces of Modernity*, 68.
violence. Public acts of physical violence were, in this analysis, becoming less central to eighteenth-century life. Whilst hangings moved behind the walls of the institution, disputes between men were worked out in language rather than with gunpowder or edged weapons.

We might be forgiven then for imagining that the eighteenth century, for all its newly devised methods of oppression, was a century becoming more discrete in its physical violence. However, as Shoemaker points out, the decline in public violence was not mirrored in domestic settings. Wife beating continued during the eighteenth century, and Shoemaker suggests that this was due to the insecurities of men about the new forms of domesticity and a desire to assert traditional patriarchal authority. Joanne Bailey has also made clear that the eighteenth-century home was an environment beset by violent tendencies, albeit mediated by the expectations of marital power relations. Wife beating was permissible if the woman was seen to have contravened the rules of marriage through adultery or prostitution, although any attack was still condemned if committed with anything resembling extreme force. Physical violence was also a social pressure valve in the alehouse according to research being undertaken by Des Newell. Acts of physical violence were thus present in specific spaces in eighteenth-century life, and were used for

428 Ibid, 208.
purposes of amelioration and control. Importantly, scholarship by historians such as Shoemaker, Bailey and Newell relies on an analysis of masculinities and the reinforcement of masculine types, a topic ultimately ignored by Foucault in *Discipline and Punish*.

Historians of the eighteenth-century Atlantic world meanwhile have demonstrated that the prevalence of violence could be used as a means of cultural and social control. Removed from the strictures of modern urban life, men (and women) on the fringes of the British empire were able to engage in acts of extreme physical violence against the native populations of other continents. Miles Ogborn has demonstrated that violence was a ‘crucial element in the making of the early modern world’ as European nations sought to expand and attempted to exert influence at the edges of their geographical reach.\footnote{M. Ogborn, *Global Lives: Britain and the World, 1550-1800* (Cambridge: 2008), 169.} Vincent Brown, in his history of Atlantic slavery and the spectre of death which it created, draws our attention to the ways in which Europeans perceived their new worlds as ‘atavistic spaces of degeneracy and violence’, spaces which enabled them to act outside the parameters of acceptable social norms in the ‘nightmarish societies’ they created.\footnote{V. Brown, *The Reaper’s Garden: Death and Power in the Atlantic World* (Massachusetts: 2008), 8.} Stephen Greenblatt meanwhile discusses the ways in which violence was heavily mediated based on European understanding of their own power within the Atlantic world. Violence against the other, Greenblatt asserts, pivoted on a ‘complex, well-
developed, and, above all, mobile technology of power’.433 This is nowhere
clearer than in the diaries of Thomas Thistlewood, the son of a tenant farmer
who became a Jamaican slave owner in the mid eighteenth century, and whose
barbarity against the slaves he kept demonstrates the liberties allowed the
frontier men of empire during this period.434 Distance from the centre and the
need to sustain control often resulted in the edges of empire hosting a litany of
cruel and violent acts.

The geographical and built environments in which men and women made their
lives then, had an immense impact on the ways in which violence was enacted
and ideologically framed. The ways in which violent acts were carried out and
understood tell us much about the expectations of different individuals within
a society, as this was often a means for perpetuating gradations of authority
and thus reinforcing variegated masculine identities. The naval ship is no
different. As a site of warfare, the men aboard were subjected to the violent
acts of foreign enemies and to sporadic onslaughts of military aggression.

However, although this chapter will consider the emotional impact of warfare,
the main focus is how violence, and importantly the threat of physical violence,
was organised on a quotidian basis on board the naval ship. Violence in any
society tends to serve to either reinforce or to challenge power relationships.

For the Royal Navy in particular, violence has tended to be seen as a defining
factor of life aboard ship, and a clear differentiator between naval men and

434 T. Burnard, Mastery, Tyranny and Desire: Thomas Thistlewood and his Slaves in the Anglo-Jamaican World (North Carolina: 2004). Thistlewood routinely tortured and maimed his slaves for the most minor of offences.
those who remained at home. This chapter argues that through studying how violence and the threat of violence was practised in daily life, we can unpick these power relations and divine how they functioned on the bodies and minds of perpetrators and victims. Violent practices and acts relied on the material implements involved in inflicting pain, and this chapter posits that violence was also contingent on the spaces in which it was performed. Violence therefore becomes more than a breach of civilized society, and becomes a series of minute rituals which relied on space and material objects to enforce the intended outcome. Furthermore, social and cultural histories of masculinity need to be mapped on to the practice of violent acts if we are to discern the work which violence did in upholding or challenging dominant male types. If studying violence can tell us about gendered power relationships in the street and the home, then it must also enlighten us as to the masculine identities and social hierarchies present on the naval ship.

Imaginings of violence within naval history in past analyses have seemed to see shipboard society as either entirely brutalising or as merely an extension of the penal codes on shore. The historiographical focus on the cruel injustices of impressment,435 coupled with the enduring tripartite imagining of ‘Rum, Sodomy and the Lash’, has meant that life, at least for ratings, has been framed as brutal, unforgiving and often short.436 Marcus Rediker commented in his

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analysis of maritime labour that although the Royal Navy made the seas ‘safer for commerce’, this was achieved only by ‘violently subjecting seamen to involuntary labor’.\textsuperscript{437} Seamen are thus seen as forcibly carrying out manual tasks due to the fear of physical retribution if they were to disobey. It is arguable that, as with much Marxist writing on maritime labour, this denies seamen sufficient agency in relation to their working lives. The usual alternative to this strand of thinking, however, is also overly simplistic. In order to attempt to move past the image of the naval ship as barbarous, historians have argued that in fact naval violence in the form of punishment was merely an extension of the codes of conduct on shore.

For John D. Byrn, naval violence as administered through the court martial was purely an extension of the penal traditions of the shore, if perhaps exercised with more flexibility by the captain. An obsession with ‘brutality’, Byrn argued, had obscured our sense of how naval justice worked. In fact, the eighteenth-century naval ship was a ‘microcosm’ of the Georgian state. The raison d’etre of punishment was to administer discipline and to keep naval society in check, as on shore.\textsuperscript{438} Likewise, N.A.M. Rodger has described the practice of pressing, so condemned by many other historians as tantamount to slavery, as a ‘humdrum affair calling for little if any violence’.\textsuperscript{439} Although Rodger demonstrates that systems of punishment were a reaction to conditions of life at sea, his argument also posits that punishment was for the good of the whole ship, and

\textsuperscript{437} M. Rediker, \textit{Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea: Merchant Seamen, Pirates and the Anglo-American Maritime World} (Cambridge: 1987), 75. \\
\textsuperscript{438} J. D. Byrn Jr., \textit{Crime and Punishment in the Royal Navy: Discipline on the Leeward Islands Station 1784 – 1812} (Aldershot: 1989), 5. \\
\textsuperscript{439} Rodger, \textit{Wooden World}, 182.
comparisons it to continuing trends of violence ashore.\textsuperscript{440} This argument has been tenacious in naval historiography. As recently as 2004, Marcus Eder noted that punishment at sea and in harbour was ‘hardly any harsher than the civil law system on shore’.\textsuperscript{441} This chapter posits that whilst violence must be put in context with the expectations prevalent on shore, the ways in which the infliction of punishment was understood was always contingent on the material and spatial makeup of the naval ship. Violence is not an act outside of culture, as Hannah Arendt suggested, but rather violent acts are mediated by the locality in which they are enacted. This locality is comprised of the cultural and social expectations of a specific time and place, and shaped by the environment in which violence occurs.

Indeed, many studies of eighteenth-century life in general have failed to take into account the materiality of violence. Although eighteenth-century material culture has repeatedly made the case for the importance of the material world in shaping the emotional life of individuals and communities, scholarship has traditionally been devoted to material comforts, luxury items and new objects which filled homes and shops. Weapons and the tools of punishment were also made, sold and used, however, and an examination of the relationship between gendered identity and the use and experience of pain and violence allows us to better understand how power relationships were maintained. Scholarship has begun to diverge and move towards a more thorough examination of how everyday materiality in a number of spaces and places shaped and was shaped

\textsuperscript{440} Rodger, \textit{Wooden World}, 212.
\textsuperscript{441} M. Eder, \textit{Crime and Punishment in the Royal Navy of the Seven Years War, 1755-1763} (Surrey: 2004), 16.
by variegated gendered identities. However, conflict and violence have arguably remained understudied as parts of eighteenth-century life. For example, Peter Linebaugh has pointed out that the descriptions of hangings were published widely, and found their ways in to the hands and homes of the general eighteenth-century populace as pamphlets and broadsides. The technologies of punishment were also still present in the streets of the metropole, even if they were gradually being moved out sight. Douglas Hay has convincingly argued that the threat of retribution from the criminal justice system was made physically and socially manifest in the twice yearly visitation of Justices of the Peace to provincial areas, whereby towns were transformed by the arrival of the court. Here, the threat of violent retribution for subverting the law of the land was choreographed through the use of spectacle. The ritual advertisement of the power of the state was essential in Hay’s analysis to the maintenance of order, and the physical change in the provincial town signalled the onset of punishment to come.

Although the enforcement of terror through displaying heads and bodies was on its way out in the British Isles, the full potential force of the law was still made clear through the ‘elaborate manifestation’ in unusually crowded halls, erected gallows and the creation of temporary courts in parish buildings. Hay’s arguments have come under much criticism over the plausibility of a cohesive

conspiracy of the middling and elite against the poorer members of society.\textsuperscript{445} However, his discussion of the continually remade assemblage which toured the country doling out punishment and pardon is persuasive, and serves to remind us that the gallows was not the distant memory of an urban elite during the eighteenth century. Violence was written into the built environment in various visible and invisible ways. Within the home meanwhile Bailey’s suggestive analysis of domestic violence shows that the house as a built environment shaped the ways in which violent acts were carried out and framed in discourse.\textsuperscript{446} What fear of violence and the ability to instil it felt like and looked like during the eighteenth century influenced the minds of men and women, and shaped relationships between individuals, and between the state and the wider population.

Just as the experience and understanding of spousal violence was contingent on the spaces and places in which it was enacted, and the social makeup of those who witnessed it, so the naval ship must be understood as a site in which the performance of authority through violent acts can reveal more to us about those who inhabited it. Understandings of violence then cannot simply be transplanted from shore to ship or vice versa. Central to our notion of how officers and sailors understood shipboard violence must be the way they interpreted the signifiers of such violence on a quotidian basis. To see flogging, hanging, beating, or a crew rising in mutiny as a single act, one which can be

\textsuperscript{445} J.H. Langbein, ‘Albion’s Fatal Flaws’ \textit{Past and Present} No. 98 (1983), 960-120.

compared with another act on shore, is to miss the overlapping and nuanced understandings which individuals held about violence and the threat of violence. This chapter attempts to show that although naval society did not divorce itself from the manifestations of violence on shore, the ways in which it was spatially and materially configured were very different, leading to an altered set of expectations and experiences. Through using this approach, the chapter will ask how punishment was worked out on the ground, so to speak, and how power was choreographed and understood through a series of material and social negotiations whilst the ship was under sail.

Influential here is John Allen’s discussion of the spatiality of power, which reminds us that power is in all cases mediated, and that geographies have throughout time influenced these mediations. Violence itself, often seen as a direct ‘effect’ of power, was similarly mediated. The men aboard eighteenth-century men of war interpreted the objects and spaces which we now see as relics of a top-down authoritarian regime in myriad different ways, just as objects and spaces which today seem harmless may have struck terror into the hearts of crew and officers. We might see many of the spaces, objects and experiences under discussion as the ‘mute’ processes which Michel de Certeau described as making the manipulation of discipline and order possible. Examining the ship in this way allows us to fill the vacuum between the historiographical approaches which variously see naval violence on board as either the result of a brutal dictatorial micro society or as an irrelevant adjunct.

to naval life. Furthermore, this analysis aims to complicate the Foucauldian notion that punishment was necessarily inflicted with little negotiation from those who were victim to it, rather than a series of practices open to minute mediation and negotiation. Whilst space could work to reinforce top-down power, this chapter will explore the ways in which the quotidian delivery of violent acts could disrupt structures of authority and the ways in which lived space and the practice of violence shaped masculine identity.

The spaces and objects involved here will be examined primarily through the use of court martial records, although the chapter also draws on letters, newspaper reports, journals, memoirs, surgeon’s records and punishment logs. Although the records of courts martial show us only a ship in which the rules governing its society have been transgressed, through the articulation of this transgression, and men’s chance references to the objects and spaces which were implicated, we are able to glimpse a port hole view into the rituals of the men who lived aboard. The discussion of such tears in the ship’s social fabric also allows us to understand better what people’s expectations were, and what the limits to violence and sedition were. Moreover, through the prism of violence, it is possible to ask new questions about how the world of the ship related itself to the shore, and how authority could be constructed and contested. This chapter begins by discussing the ultimate subversion of shipboard authority, the mutiny, before moving on to other forms of violence which seamen had recourse to. The chapter will then discuss punishment, and finally edged weapons and warfare. Part of the aim of this is to enliven how violence was part of the fabric of shipboard life, and the arguments here should
be considered in light of those made in previous chapters. Far from existing outside society, violence maintained and reinforced various relationships, and could perpetuate or challenge authority. For men who lived in groups clearly segregated by their relationship to a top-down hierarchy, violence was thus a cornerstone of masculine identity on board the ship.

**Mutiny**

One of the most notorious ways in which naval authority was contested in modern historiographical imagining was the overthrow of officers during the mutinies of Spithead and the Nore. Described by E. P. Thompson as a ‘revolutionary portent’, the events of spring 1797 saw a great tear appear in the authoritarian fabric of the Royal Navy.\(^{449}\) The seamen aboard threw their officers off ships as they docked in Portsmouth and the Thames Estuary and organised themselves into councils with representative delegates, making reasoned demands about the need for fairer pay and more equal access to prize money.\(^{450}\) Here, the seamen used their numbers to advantage, taking over entire docked fleets and ejecting those they though particularly troublesome in authority. Despite the Admiralty making promises about sailor grievances once the mutiny came to a close, those identified as ringleaders were publicly hanged quickly after. Richard Parker, perhaps the most famous of the 1797 mutineers, was hung on board HMS *Sandwich* on the 30th June.

Parker reportedly asked that his black silk handkerchief be removed by the


boatswain's mate, talked of the estate he left to his wife and said 'Good bye to you!' to his shipmates. Parker was left hanging on the yardarm for a 'full hour' before the 'awful ceremony' was concluded.451

Fig. 4.1. William Chamberlain, 'Richard Parker President of the Delegates in the late Mutiny in his Majesty's Fleet at the Nore' 8th July 1797
510 x 327 mm
National Maritime Museum, Ref.: PAH5441

451 The Whole Trial and Defence of Richard Parker, President of the Delegates for Mutiny &c on board the Sandwich, and others of His Majesty's Ships, at the Nore, in May 1797' Published by G. Thompson at No. 50 Old Bailey (London: 1797), 42.
Like the prints of the gallows speeches on shore, Figure 4.1 shows Richard Parker signalling to his owned hanged corpse, representing as a warning for any seamen considering out and out rebellion against shipboard authority. The entirety of Parker’s trial and details of his execution were also printed for a popular audience, reflecting the trends on shore to produce cautionary tales of criminals for public consumption.\(^{452}\) The warning was clear. Parker was amongst those who had contravened what was understood to be the natural authority of naval shipboard society, and his death was a necessary admonishment for all those who had attempted to use sometimes violent methods to question the supremacy of commissioned officers. Punishment of other mutineers however was ‘haphazard’, with the majority of the four hundred seamen facing trial granted a pardon.\(^{453}\) This is perhaps in line with Douglas Hay’s analysis of ‘mercy’ in the English justice system at the time; a show of paternal forgiving in order to further keep men and women toeing the line and to enforce the sense of warning attached to those who had been executed.

Scholarship has suggested that these mutinies, and the men who met grisly ends as a result of them, were definitive of the shape and nature of sailor confrontation to the shipboard status quo. Indeed, the late 1790s saw the springing up of several mutinies, with the bloodiest being the events which

\(^{452}\) *The Whole Trial and Defence of Richard Parker, President of the Delegates for Mutiny &c on board the Sandwich, and others of His Majesty’s Ships, at the Nore, in May 1797* Published by G. Thompson at No. 50 Old Bailey (London: 1797).

\(^{453}\) P. MacDougall, ‘The East Coast Mutinies: May-June 1797’ in Coats and MacDougall (eds.), *The Naval Mutinies of 1797*, 158.
occurred on HMS *Hermoine* on 21st September 1797, where ten officers were murdered by the crew. The majority of the perpetrators here escaped in to what Nikas Frykman has described as the ‘gaping crevices of the war-torn Atlantic world’. Frykman identifies a ‘heaving mass of mutinous discontent’ which took place on Royal Naval ships across the Atlantic during the Age of Revolution. The complete overturning of authority on the ship was thus a viable strategy to seamen for engaging in violent protest against a range of concerns over pay and treatment. This section of the chapter, however, will examine the many stages of recourse available to ratings long before anything resembling a full-scale organised mutiny took place. The analysis here will show the ways in which seamen could use the ship and their understanding of authority to make threats to officers and captains, without resorting to violently overthrowing the ship, and thus risking the fate of Richard Parker. Seamen were not a group for whom absolute mutiny was desirable, and this chapter will attempt to demonstrate their ability to use an understanding of their built and material environment as bargaining tools.

It is first important to establish the paucity of actual weapons which were available to ratings on board naval vessels during this period. Although seamen were provided with axes, cutlasses and pikes on the sighting of an enemy ship, these were customarily locked away in arms chests and the magazine store, to which the lieutenant or captain held the key. In the lead

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455 Ibid, 177.
up to the 1797 mutinies at the Nore, the crew repeatedly solicited their captain to provide them with the keys to the arms chest which was in their possession.\textsuperscript{457} In day to day life aboard ship, armed marines were placed at strategic access point to the locations of the arms chests, physically demarcating the limitations of trust placed in seamen with relation to weapons.\textsuperscript{458} The denial of ownership of material tools which were essential to survival during various parts of the voyage can be understood as perhaps a worry on the part of officers that once armed, seamen would have greater leverage to challenge authority. Unsurprisingly, one of the first actions which seamen seem to have undertaken during mutinies was the reclaiming of the locked-away weapons. Keys were demanded for the arms chest and magazine,\textsuperscript{459} sergeants were 'stripped' of their arms,\textsuperscript{460} whilst one group of men on HMS Sandwich threatened to break open the magazine.\textsuperscript{461} On board HMS Lancaster in 1797, an attempted mutiny began with Captain Wells failing to listen to demands, before a 'large body' of men 'took possession of the arm chest, which they carried forward immediately, and distributed the contents among the men. They then 'took possession of the gun room and powder magazines, over which they placed four of their trusty hands as centinels'.\textsuperscript{462}

\textsuperscript{457} TNA ADM 1/5340 20\textsuperscript{th} July 1797.
\textsuperscript{458} B. Zerbe, \textit{The Birth of the Royal Marines, 1664-1802} (Woodbridge: 2013), 118.
\textsuperscript{459} TNA ADM 1/5340 6\textsuperscript{th} July 1797.
\textsuperscript{460} CL KEI/L/158, Letter from Admiral George Keith to Admiral Richard King, 4\textsuperscript{th} July 1797.
\textsuperscript{461} TNA ADM 1/5340 20\textsuperscript{th} July 1797.
\textsuperscript{462} \textit{Oracle and Public Advertiser} (London: 4\textsuperscript{th} July 1797).
Defending the location of arms was one of the key sites of power struggle in the lead up to mutinies. The ‘possession’ of the arms chest was representative of control over the ship. Indeed, in November 1783, fearing the crew were turning, the armourer of HMS Blenheim Joseph Narmour took a cutlass and ran to ‘defend [his] arms Chest’.\textsuperscript{463} Three months earlier, the captain and first lieutenant of HMS Lively were dismissed from their posts for failing to replace a broken lock on the arms chest.\textsuperscript{464} The arms chest was a potential chink in the authoritarian armour of the quarterdeck’s rule. Although usually locked, such chests could be broken open or locks could be compromised. The masses of labouring men who occupied the ship were thus only a broken chest away from gaining the material advantage of weaponry and thus opening up the possibility of waging warfare on officers. If we look to shore, it is clear that a sense of alarm around arming the working masses was not a purely naval concern. The end of the eighteenth century saw a heightened fear that warfare previously contained on the continent would spread to the British Isles. This led to a discussion about the possibility of arming able men in militias to defend against Napoleonic invasion. Despite the fear amongst many in government that war on home soil was imminent, arming ordinary men with swords was a ‘dangerous’ pursuit, and one which could well backfire against those who armed them.\textsuperscript{465} On a naval ship afloat in the middle of the Atlantic Ocean, with around six hundred labouring men and less than fifty commissioned officers and midshipmen, this concern must have been heightened.

\textsuperscript{463} TNA ADM 1/5323 10\textsuperscript{th} November 1783.
\textsuperscript{464} TNA ADM 1/5323 26\textsuperscript{th} August 1783.
\textsuperscript{465} Colley, Britons, 283-285.
However, the evidence of seamen actually seizing weapons and using them violently against their superiors on ship is rare. Indeed, the act of taking possession of arms was a fairly clear statement of mutinous intent, and men were heavily flogged and even hung for such offences. On the whole, men worked around their lack of weaponry on ship, and used the threat of their numbers in other ways. One of these ways was the use of the ship as a soundscape. A search of the Burney Collection of newspapers at the British Library for the period 1\textsuperscript{st} March 1797 to 31\textsuperscript{st} December 1797 finds that out of the seventeen reports in which the word ‘murmuring’ was used, eight of them were used to describe sailors.\textsuperscript{466} Although the prominence of sailors as complaining amongst themselves is here magnified by the events at Spithead and the Nore during this period, a search for the word in the same months in 1790 found its use was applied most numerously to soldiers and sailors, after the discontent inculcated by the French Revolution. Going back even earlier, the term was used between March and December 1760 mostly to refer to citizen unrest over the taxes being implemented to fund the Seven Years War.\textsuperscript{467} Invariably then, ‘murmuring’ in the public discourse of the second half of the eighteenth century was attached to the notion of an anonymous mass who expressed their unrest outside of the official channels, and whose feelings were at odds with the current order of things.

\textsuperscript{466} 17\textsuperscript{th} and 18\textsuperscript{th} Century Burney Collection Database, search for ‘murmuring’ between 1\textsuperscript{st} March and 31\textsuperscript{st} December 1760 [Accessed in the British Library: 16/09/2014]

\textsuperscript{467} 17\textsuperscript{th} and 18\textsuperscript{th} Century Burney Collection Database, search for ‘murmuring’ between 1\textsuperscript{st} March and 31\textsuperscript{st} December 1760 [Accessed in the British Library: 16/09/2014]
In the wake of the spring of 1797, when the crews of naval vessels at Spithead and the Nore mutinied and sent their officers on to shore, this ‘murmuring’ was seen to have reached its zenith. Reports of the trials of the mutineers at Spithead which appeared in the London broadsheets describe a ‘murmuring’ as being heard amongst the ship’s crew in the hours and days preceding the uprisings. In the *St James Chronicle*, murmuring was defined as one of the signs that a mutiny was about to start, along with ‘meetings’ and ‘violence of language’.\(^{468}\) As reported in the *Evening Mail*, murmuring was a captain’s way of telling that the ship’s company disagreed with his decisions,\(^{469}\) whilst the *True Briton* published the testimony of a captain’s clerk, who said that the crew had been heard ‘murmuring’ and that ‘from some conversation they had, I suppose they had an idea that there was an Opposite party’.\(^{470}\) Murmuring then, was a voicing of dissent amongst a group which went either unheard or only partially heard, the meaning being obscured by the mass of people engaging in it. Murmuring was not only a concern in public printed material, nor was it peculiar to the 1797 mutinies alone. In 1779, men were reported as ‘murmuring’ as they expressed dissatisfaction over the cause of death of a comrade. During the summer of 1800 Garratt Barry, a carpenter’s mate on board the sloop *El Corso*, said that prior to a complaint lodged by the seamen he had ‘heard some murmuring’ about the issue beforehand. When the court

\(^{468}\) *St. James’s Chronicle or the British Evening Post* (London: 22\(^{nd}\)-25\(^{th}\) April 1797).

\(^{469}\) *Evening Mail* (London: 28\(^{th}\) – 20\(^{th}\) June 1797).

\(^{470}\) *True Briton* (London: 4\(^{th}\) July 1797).
subsequently asked him to ‘Mention any person whom you have heard murmuring’ he could only answer ‘I cannot’.471

On the 6th July 1797 the Master of HMS Sandwich referred to the ‘general voice’ ordering mutinous action,472 whilst seventeen years earlier in a trial held just off the coast of Plymouth, every witness of officer class testifying in a case about the attack on a lieutenant would claim they had heard a ‘great noise’ coming from below decks which they could not identify.473 The Reverend Edward Mangin’s account of his first steps aboard a naval ship in 1812 also attests to this unidentifiable swell of noise. Upon seeing the man of war, his first impressions were that ‘The magnitude of the vessel, the multitude of fierce and sunburnt faces looking out at the ports, and the hum of voices from within, almost disconcerted me’.474 The naval ship it seems, provided the architecture for a soundscape in which men could talk as a group and retain a degree of anonymity. As James C. Scott has posited, ‘grumbling or muttering’ meant that traditionally oppressed groups have been able to express their dissent without being identified and thus penalized. As part of the ‘hidden transcript’ which Scott focuses on, the effect of overhearing mumbling or grumbling on the ruling group was often that their minds were set free to wander and fear the worst.475 Thus Lieutenant Maxwell of the Beaulieu overheard ‘muttering’ below decks near the cockpit of what he ‘thought were

471 TNA ADM 1/5353 12th June 1800.
472 TNA ADM 1/5340 6th July 1797.
473 TNA ADM1/5314 24th January 1780.
474 Thursfield, Five Naval Journals, 6.
mutinous expressions’ but from whom he could not tell. There is a sense when sifting through the tomes of court martial cases throughout this period that for officers, there constantly existed an element of shipboard life which was half-heard. This was allied with a sense that ideas below decks could ‘spread’ quickly and result in a kind of contagion. During the 1797 mutinies the London Gazette declared that all who spent any time on a ship in mutiny would be sent to their deaths, men accused of speaking contemptuously were confined to irons, whilst a seaman too ‘harden’d’ by punishment was seen as capable of infecting the rest of the crew with his notions of revenge. The unspecified fear which Scott refers to must have been severely compounded by the notion that sailor attitudes to authority were contagious in the densely populated space below.

Indeed, the work patterns of seamen and the spaces in which their labour and leisure had to be enacted meant that seamen were continually being pushed below or aloft. Although the dangerous working conditions and cramped accommodation which sailors experienced has been argued in traditional historiography to have given them great discomfort, it is arguable that these spaces also provided the officers with reasons to feel uncomfortable, or at least uneasy. Seamen were continually working and living out of earshot and often out of sight, even in the smallest ship this project looks at, the sloop. The way the ship was built and functioned required that men be above and below, but

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476 TNA ADM 1/5340 6th July 1797.
477 London Gazette (London: 7th June 1797).
478 TNA ADM 1/5323 13th October 1783.
479 Leech, Thirty Years, 63.
the court martial records do signal a deep sense of unease amongst officers over the ‘murmuring’ they could both hear and not hear as a result of this spatial configuration. Sailors’ ability to spread ideas through verbal communication is also exemplified by the word ‘scuttle-butt’, used now to refer to someone who communicates gossip, but originating on the naval ship to refer to the area in which sailors collected their ration of grog. The scuttle-butt was a space in which sailors would have to collect communally to draw their rationing of alcohol and, unsurprisingly perhaps, it was also one of the spaces in which a high concentration of sentries were posted.\textsuperscript{480} In Green’s remembering of the mutiny of the \textit{Royal Sovereign}, the men who spoke of breeding ‘Riot and disturbance’ on the forecastle had just been to collect their ‘Quantity of Grog’, presumably from the scuttle-butt.\textsuperscript{481}

Furthermore, this grumbling and murmuring did not always remain merely a faceless hum, unnerving if not directly threatening. The hidden transcript in which sailors discussed their grievances could and did spill over into collective acts of direct threat, drawing on the anonymity which the collective and its spaces allowed them. Whilst the trope of the cheering sailor was used in contemporary popular culture to depict Jack’s fancy-free carousing attitude, cheering appears in several cases as an act of sedition. Most famously, the mutineers at Spithead and the Nore used cheering to signal when the mutiny would begin, thus creating the voice of a crowd and also disguising the individual, in case the mutiny went wrong. Officers came to recognize this as a

\textsuperscript{480} Zerbe, \textit{Birth of the Royal Marines}, 118.

\textsuperscript{481} Warwickshire Record Office (WRO hereafter) CR114A/329 Statement by Green, a seaman of the \textit{Royal Sovereign} 1797.
sign that mutiny was about to break out on a ship, and this recognition spread far beyond the direct impact zone of the mutinies. For example, Captain John Maitland, cruising just off Cadiz during July 1797, wrote that he had heard his crew cheering after being forced to assemble to punish a man who they believed innocent. When asked what the meanings of these cheers were Thomas Carr, a seaman who had been present, testified that they were 'To give the Captain warning about flogging the people'. William Seager meanwhile recollected that they did not mean to hurt the captain, but did intend to 'frighten' him by cheering and hissing at him.

John Allen, another seaman, had heard a voice a few hours before the cheering started which he could not identify saying near the main forehatchway that the prisoners should not be flogged. Here we see then, the space which sailors identified as their own cultural and social arena, forward of the foremast, as a space in which the hidden transcript could be articulated, and a sense of collectivity gained, before part of it spilled over into a more public articulation. The discontent on the ship had clearly been building throughout the day, and by the time the men came to assemble on the main deck, there was some consensus that to give 'three cheers' and move forward was the most threatening way to express this without actually putting their grievances forward individually and thus risking punishment themselves. The case came to trial because Captain Maitland had lunged forward in terror and stabbed two of the men, who had apparently not even been involved in cheering. In his

482 St James’s Chronicle or the British Evening Post (London: 22nd-25th April 1797).
483 TNA ADM 1/5340 12th July 1797.
defence, he claimed not only that he was provoked by the ‘recollection’ of the cheering at Spithead, but also he implored the court to remember that ‘that the cheering was very general – it was almost impossible, at that time of Night, to discriminate persons’.484

Sailors were here harnessing a knowledge that the voice of many disallowed the detection of the individual in the spaces which sailors knew they had recourse to as a group. This is also evident when we look at other moments when the hidden transcript is revealed. The few cases so far which have discussed the exact location in which mutinous letters were created seem to have identified the tops, rigging and below decks near one’s mess as the locations. The ‘tops’ were worked by the youngest and most skilled seamen on board.485 Their physical distance from the deck, as well as the presence of the shrouds and rigging to obscure some view meant that in addition to the shadowy bowels below, they were sites of sailors discussing action against authority. The confession of John Brown, a seaman aboard the ill-fated Hermoine, stated that on the night of the mutiny, a series of discussions took place at the main top. A man named David Forester made an appearance on the first night to tell Brown and the captain of the main top that they would take the ship the next night. After the mutiny had begun, Forester climbed up again and informed that the mutiny was partially underway, and told Brown he was wanted on the forecastle where men were ‘drinking and fighting’.486 Three

484 TNA ADM 1/5340 12th July 1797.
485 Rodger, Wooden World, 27.
486 R. Mends, Captain Mends’s Narrative of the Mutiny, Murder and Piracy Committed on board His Majesty’s Ship Hermoine (Haiti: 1798), 21.
years later, Thomas Lawrence and David James were tried for 'secretly stirring up the Ships Company to write a letter against the Officers'. David Lawrence had attempted this by taking the petition he wanted his shipmates to sign up into the rigging and tops. Sea shanties sung amongst the shrouds may well have, like the slave songs of the antebellum American South, also acted as a form of communication which existed beyond the boundaries of officer intervention or even comprehension. Due to their being sung and called back to from all parts of the ship, and as before, constituting a set of voices which were only ever partly heard, it is perhaps unsurprising that they were banned briefly during Nelson's time as Admiral. Aloft, as well as below, could provide space in which seamen felt they were able to elaborate on the hidden transcript.

As Doreen Massey reminds us, lived spaces are ‘an ever-shifting social geometry of power and signification’. The totemic authority of the quarterdeck and its monopoly over violent threat must be called into question when we look at the ways in which spaces could be negotiated and used for the purposes of seditious threat. Sailors were able to articulate a hidden transcript below decks, aloft, and to some extent on the forecastle; one which did not necessarily directly challenge the status quo, but whose echoes were heard and felt by officers. The meanings of authority and the level of control which officers felt they had over the ship was heavily mediated by the understandings which ratings had of how to demonstrate grievance without

487 TNA ADM 1/5353 12th June 1800.
489 Massey, Space, Place and Gender, 2.
flagging up individuals. Men could thus avoid punishment, whilst still framing a threat. Importantly, this threat was predicated on the large numbers of ratings when compared with officers, suggesting the frailty of the hold which their commission held over the ship.

There is further evidence that seamen used the spaces available to them to mask themselves, even when ‘murmuring’ spilled over in to action. By 1795, men barricading themselves below in response to disagreement with officer practice was a ‘familiar pattern’, with the crew of the Culloden in 1794 shutting themselves off for a week.\footnote{Frykman, ‘The Mutiny on the Hermoine’, 161.} The men on board HMS Adamant in 1783 meanwhile, cheered as they turned the lights of below deck, took the ladders away from the gratings, and shut themselves off. When John Burn, one of the ringleaders, was confronted by a midshipman during the retreat, he refused to reply but made ‘only a kind of humming noise’.\footnote{TNA ADM 1/5323 8th and 10th November 1783.} Men thus used the space they had been allotted and its situation within the ship to their own advantage, and as leverage against their officers. Space was not only constraining, but was also negotiated by the men who trod its planks and climbed its rigging on a daily basis. Their understanding of ‘below’ was clearly as a space in which they could go unidentified, through donning the cloak of the lower gun deck, whilst their creation of a soundscape in which an individual could not be picked out worked alongside this to ensure they went undetected.
Threat was further expressed in the physical makeup of the ship when mutinies did erupt. In the cases of several mutinies between 1793 and 1797, sailors turned the guns on the forecastle toward the quarterdeck. Sailors would have had training to use these guns in case of contact with an enemy ship, and by employing them in this way were drawing on the very small amount of artillery available to them without accessing the arms chest. By turning the guns on the quarterdeck, seamen marked their position as in direct opposition to the traditional seat of officer authority, and rewrote the meaning of the ship’s architecture to imply what their actions would be if demands were not met. This realigning of the ship in order to threaten the officer class was also present when seamen started reeving the yard-arm rope, the yard-arm being the place from which men were hung on ship. On board HMS *Sandwich* the mutineers quickly ’rove the yard ropes and pointed aft the forecastle guns’ as the movement to take over the ship gathered momentum.

The yard-arm rope was a clear physical indicator of preparations being made for hanging, and thus represented the spectre of a potentially brutal overthrow of the officer class on ship. William Barry, Master of the *Sandwich*, noted that he perceived this reconfiguration of the ship to have been made with the hope to ‘intimidate the Officers of the ship and the well affected to their King and Country’. Mutineers were able to manipulate the symbolism of violence on board the ship and turn it on their perceived oppressors precisely because of

492 TNA ADM 1/5340 6th July and 20th July 1797, also see Frykman, ’The Mutiny on the *Hermoine*’, 161 and 173.
493 TNA ADM 1/5340 20th July 1797.
494 TNA ADM 1/5340 6th July 1797.
the importance which men at sea attached to material signifiers of violent threat. The few seamen who managed to take over ships during the latter half of the eighteenth century, largely during the 1790s, created an alternative order through the rearticulation of the artefacts of violence on board the ship. The yard-arm’s rope and the forecastle guns saw sailors engaging with the ship as a space which was usually defined by other threats of violence, against unruly seamen and foreign enemies, and adopting the real and symbolic power for their own cause.

The one weapon which was available to seamen was the sailor’s knife. These were small tools which were required in order to undertake the everyday work of the ship such as cutting cables, and were one of the few objects which seamen frequently owned. Knives were used for food preparation as well as work, and below deck we can see examples of them being used in a social setting. Indeed, in two examples unearthed through the records of courts martial, the sharing and ownership of knives results in the accidental stabbing of messmates on the lower gun deck. In August 1762, Joseph Thompson ‘was at Victualls & had a knife in his hand’ when he inadvertently stabbed William Hawke. The men had apparently been ‘much in liquor’ when Thompson inadvertently stabbed Hawke in his ‘Right Buttock’ as he lent over to get some wine. 495 In 1770, Thomas Bruin and his messmate William Smith were ‘preparing for supper’ when Bruin, brandishing a knife he had borrowed from the sailmaker, accidentally stabbed Smith in a game they were playing about

495 TNA ADM 1/5301 30th August 1762.
who would eat the bread they had first.\footnote{TNA ADM 1/1/5304 3rd February 1770.} When the knife was produced in court in this case, several of the sailors recognized it, signaling a sense of ownership over knives as objects, as well as an apparent familiarity with the knives of other men. Knives moved between people below decks in the practices of food preparation, although clearly clumsy handling sometimes led to fatalities. Nevertheless, their accidental use signals that knives made up a part of the limited world of material possessions on the lower deck.

These knives were generally foldable in order that they could be kept in pockets, as evidenced in the 1780 case of Bernard Quin who produced a knife from his pocket and ‘opened it’ as he walked towards James White to cut his ear off.\footnote{TNA ADM 1/5314 25th January 1780.} Officers too must have known that sailors’ knives were a constant material companion to them, and always within grabbing distance. When James Hayes strolled toward the forecastle on the 15\textsuperscript{th} June 1797, he withdrew his knife from his pocket and began to use it to eat a portion of bread and butter from his hand, before joking with another seaman Andrew Manza, who pretended to shove him. However, before he could make it to the forecastle, he was stopped by Captain Halstead, who Hayes testified ‘ask’d the Reason of my having the Knife open in my Hand, or whether I meant to injure any body with the same, I made answer no \textit{Sir; I do not, God forbid’}. Captain Halstead ordered him to put the knife back in his pocket and to go forward, which Hayes immediately obeyed.\footnote{TNA ADM 1/5340 15\textsuperscript{th} June 1797.} A month later and several hundred miles away, Lieutenant John Pilfold would order seaman Thomas Leach into irons after he
pulled his knife out, claiming he saw ‘drawing a knife’ as conduct which
‘appeared to me to amount to a Mutiny’.\textsuperscript{499} During 1783, a seaman named John
Bryan was charged with cutting the cable with a knife on board the \textit{Experiment}
and also using ‘threatening Expressions’. Bryan had apparently been making
speeches that he would ‘be revenged’ for a punishment he had received the day
before and, with a knife he had borrowed that afternoon from a messmate, had
cut the cable near the main hatchway. Despite the clear testimony of two men
who had apparently witnessed Bryan cutting the cable, several others said he
had produced the knife to cut tobacco, and Bryan was found not guilty of the
charge.\textsuperscript{500}

The knife was an object of deep and unsettling ambiguity; its production from
a pocket, or its use in cutting tobacco or food in even a mildly suggestive
manner would have been enough to set the minds of officers and ratings alike
on to what else it could be employed for. We may perhaps locate the
production of the knife within the shadowy world of ‘countertheatre’ which
E.P. Thompson outlines, and thus link it to the theatrical symbolism which the
plebeian world on shore was apparently replete with.\textsuperscript{501} Due to the nature of
the records which sailors left behind them, there is no recorded discussion of
the ways sailors believed the knife could operate within the ship. However,
taking into account its centrality to the daily rhythms of their routine and the
way it was regarded as a potential threat to the order of shipboard life, it
seems likely that the knife was an object which carried some symbolic weight

\textsuperscript{499} TNA ADM 1/5340 12\textsuperscript{th} July 1797.
\textsuperscript{500} TNA ADM 1/5323 23\textsuperscript{rd} December 1783.
\textsuperscript{501} Thompson, \textit{Customs in Common}, 67.
when held in certain ways and produced in certain spaces. We must, however, ultimately remember the recourses which men took in light of their severely circumscribed arsenal. Slipping a knife out of one’s pocket at the opportune time, along with murmuring below decks, and whispering in the shrouds, were spatial and material strategies which seamen practiced due to a lack of leverage in terms of actual weaponry, and the threat of the cat o’ nine tails.

**Punishment**

When a young William Dillon set foot on a naval ship for the first time in 1790 at the age of ten, his status as son of a baron and his time spent at the best schools in Europe meant that many things affronted him about his new waterborne home. He detested the noise, the ‘scenes of licentiousness’ amongst the seamen, and worried the ship would ‘fall over and sink’ due to its rocking motion.\(^{502}\) One of his greatest shocks, however, was having his ‘fondness’ for the captain called in to question after he watched him beat one of the seamen with a ‘speaking trumpet’ when he did not haul to the captain’s ‘satisfaction’.\(^{503}\) Dillon’s ‘next trial’ was to witness the flogging of a crew member for ‘some act of subordination’. The cat o’ nine tails was used against the unfortunate man and Dillon found that his ‘feelings were touched to the quick’. However, this sentiment did not last long, and Dillon describes his rapid realization that flogging was a necessary evil of shipboard life, and that ‘there was no controlling the bad characters without resorting to such measures’.\(^{504}\)

Dillon’s initiation into the violence inflicted against seamen on a naval ship

\(^{502}\) Lewis, *Dillon’s Narrative*, 13-18.
\(^{503}\) Ibid, 23.
\(^{504}\) Ibid, 23.
would not have been unusual. Although naval historians have claimed that personal violence was more common in the eighteenth century, and thus it is anachronistic to see it as affecting men's minds on board, young boys from elite families could be ill prepared for the violence of the cat. Samuel Leech described several seasoned officers who still abhorred flogging, with one Lieutenant Scott pleading with the captain not to flog a 'poor marine'.

Historian John H. Dacam has claimed that for those of the officer class, naval punishment was not 'suited to the sensibilities of family and friends' in letters home. Like Dillon, many met the sight of their first floggings with deep upset. Captain Frederick Chamier for example, wept at the sight of his first flogging. In 1794 meanwhile, Admiral Fremantle's new wife Betsey wrote of 'Much flogging this morning which made Fremantle ill and broke my heart. I could distinctly hear the poor wretches cry out for mercy, from the cabin'. Clearly, even admirals were sometimes unable to stomach the effects of the cat o' nine tails on the human body.

For all though, the use of the cat was something which had to be accepted as part of standard practice. Flogging was a part of the routine of naval life, and was seen as educative. Even Admiral Nelson, famed for his paternalistic relationship with his crew, was said to be a proponent of regular flogging to

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505 Leech, *Thirty Years*, 52.
keep seamen in line. On shore, flogging was still in practice as a mode of
punishment, but as Shoemaker has shown, it was moving behind closed doors
and certainly did not require or warrant the direct involvement of the elite.\textsuperscript{509}

At sea, however, flogging was turned into a ritual which involved the entire
shipboard society, and in the case of ‘flogging round the fleet’, the whole fleet.
Lashed up to the gratings situated at the gangway, and stripped of the clothes
from his back, a man who had transgressed the Articles of War would watch as
his fellow crew members were mustered by the boatswain and ordered to
stand in their watches. The group of marines would then assemble ‘in their
cocked hats and side arms’, with bayonets unsheathed, whilst the officers, with
swords on display, looked on. The entire proceeding was highly ritualised, as
John D. Byrn argues, ‘to heighten the terror of the victim’s example’.\textsuperscript{510}
The practice of flogging round the fleet meanwhile, involved the man being tied to a
makeshift triangular grating, built especially for this purpose, and launched in
one of the ship’s boats to do his rounds of the fleet, receiving a proportion of
his punishment alongside every ship.

Witnessing the punishment would have been impossible to avoid. Even the
trial had to take place in the ‘most convenient and public place in the ship’.\textsuperscript{511}
Whether these punishments were always as formalized and wholly public as
they were intended to be is difficult to tell. Captain Maitland in 1797 seems to
have mustered the seamen who were described as ‘all standing along

\textsuperscript{509} Shoemaker, ‘Streets of Shame’, 242.
\textsuperscript{510} Byrn, \textit{Crime and Punishment}, 17.
\textsuperscript{511} Regulations Relating to His Majesty’s Service at Sea 2\textsuperscript{nd} edition (London: 1806).
starboard side of the Deck’ before the commencement of a flogging. John
Spencer Smith meanwhile, writing in his ‘Miscellany’ and private journal
during 1779, described the death of a man from flogging round the fleet. He
recorded that ‘every ship’ in the fleet of the Roebuck sent ‘a boat manned, &
armed’, ‘on the arrival of which the criminal was embarked in the Roebuck’s
launch stripped & made fast to a sort of gallows erected in it for that purpose’.
This spectacle, Smith claimed, was heralded by the raising of a yellow flag and
the calling of all to witness.\textsuperscript{512} Letters from Admiral Herbert Sawyer to Prince
William Henry, Captain of the Pegasus, concerning the execution of a master’s
mate eight years later insisted that ‘as many Petty Officers on board that ship
as the necessary Duty of your Ship will allow’ needed to be present at the
execution.\textsuperscript{513} However, Thomas Lapthorn’s attempting to attend the flogging of
his shipmate named Bowers, noted that he did not actually witness the
punishment, but only because he ‘could not get in for the crowd’.\textsuperscript{514}

Flogging was then an inherently public ritual, and one which drew naval
society together as a grisly reminder of the consequences of subversion for
ratings. Flogging was a regular as well as public fixture on board ship. On
board HMS Cerpheus, Maidstone, Statira, Dragon and San Domingo during 1813,
returns to the Admiralty of punishments issued outside of the remit of the
court martial show that these floggings were overwhelmingly enacted on the

\textsuperscript{513} CL AGC/16/21 Letter from Admiral Herbert Sawyer to Prince William
Henry 6\textsuperscript{th} October 1787.
\textsuperscript{514} Oracle and Public Advertiser (London: June 30\textsuperscript{th} 1797).
same day. This meant that the captain saved them up, presumably to reduce
the regularity with which the entire crew had to stop their work to attend, and
issued them all at once. Under Captain John Thomson then, the crew and
officers of HMS *San Domingo* would have witnessed eight floggings of between
8 and 24 lashes on one day, although the punishments had taken place at
different times over the preceding weeks. The men who trod the decks of
HMS *Statira* meanwhile would have seen the main deck transformed on the 4th
March 1813 into a ritualized space of violent justice, as they witnessed 150
lashes break against the backs of six different men. Six days later, the spectacle
would reconfigure itself and officers and crew alike would once again be made
party to the authority of the cat. An examination of punishment records
from the beginning of the nineteenth century demonstrates the commonplace
nature of the punishment. The lash of the cat o’ nine tails was said to turn a
man’s back like ‘roasted meat burnt nearly black before a scorching fire’, and to be worse than 'hot boiling lead' poured over a man's back. Although,
as John H. Dacam points out, this was likely something of an exaggeration, the
constant presence of a surgeon at proceedings suggests there was the
presupposition of real harm being done.

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515 A practice only instituted in 1813, and which would act as the precursor to
standardized punishment and punishment warrants. See R. Blake,
*Evangelicals in the Royal Navy, 1775 – 1815: Blue Lights and Psalm Singers*
(Woodbridge: 2008), 158.
516 CL WAR/21 Punishment log, 1812-1814, p211.
517 CL WAR/21, Punishment log, 1812-1814, p212.
518 Leech, *Thirty Years*, 50.
520 Dacam, *Wanton and Torturing Punishments*, 89.
How, then, did officers reconcile themselves with administering such punishments? Dillon certainly found it necessary to convince himself that seamen required such punishment in order to rectify their wayward behaviour. Captain Archibald Sinclair wrote that ‘A certain indefinite amount of flogging was considered a necessary evil, without which the machinery would go all wrong; like the eels, the sailors got used to it, the debt was paid’.\textsuperscript{521} This categorisation of sailors as corporeally different to officers meant that Sinclair was able to justify the ritual use of intense physical violence. This is echoed in the use of the term ‘harden’d’ to describe a sailor who had undergone punishment. During a court martial against a deserter in the spring of 1770, the court asked Admiral Hyde-Parker whether the man had felt his previous punishments as he should have, or whether he was in fact a ‘harden’d fellow’ who could not ‘feel it as much’.\textsuperscript{522} This was asked at several points throughout the trial, with the supposition being that punishment impacted both on the mind and the body of the sailor simultaneously, leaving his mind hardened as his scars and bruises healed. The sailor could also seemingly be punished too much, with the effects on his mind turning him into a force which could act as ‘incorrigible, detrimental and disgraceful to the remaining part of the Ships Company’.\textsuperscript{523} That men could seemingly grow ‘callous’ from their contact with the lash and ‘harden’ to become a deleterious force in shipboard discipline demonstrates the uneasy relationship which officers often had with

\textsuperscript{521} Quoted in Byrn, \textit{Crime and Punishment}, 73.
\textsuperscript{522} TNA ADM 1/5323 2\textsuperscript{nd} August 1783.
\textsuperscript{523} TNA ADM 1/5314 1\textsuperscript{st} November 1779.
the cat, as well as the mythology of the sailor’s character and body which they were required to propagate in order to justify its use.\footnote{TNA ADM 1/5314 1\textsuperscript{st} November 1779.}

The language describing the criminal as a 'hardened' being was also present on shore, but it was the unique environment of the ship which required officers to confront literally face-to-face the realities of how physical punishment might operate and therefore enter into imaginings of how the cat engaged with the body and mind of seamen as a specific group.\footnote{The term 'hardened criminal' in use frequently by the end of the eighteenth century C. Emsley \textit{Hard Men: The English and Violence since 1750} (London and New York: 2005), 150.} The cat then was used as part of an implicit understanding that officer and sailor masculinity were not just mentally, but corporeally different. Those at the top of the shipboard hierarchy understood the body of the sailor as being changed through the physicality of his work into a tar; therefore only the raw physicality of the cat could also alter his behaviour. Sailors were understood as being entirely separate from the masculine forms of the gentlemen officer. They were remarked upon as akin to ‘eels’; creatures of the water, and the workings of their minds were seen as entirely reliant on the experiences of their bodies. This is opposed to the trains of thought on land in middling and elite culture in the mid to late eighteenth century, that mind was over matter, and that the relationship between the life of the mind and the experience of the body was one which could be controlled and contained.\footnote{R. Porter, \textit{Flesh in the Age of Reason} (London: 2003), 474.} In a period where public flogging was becoming increasingly unacceptable on shore, physical violent punishment was framed as the natural method of maintaining status quo by naval officers. Imagining the sailor as an
individual who could be emotionally and physically ‘harden’d’ through punishment, and who could only learn through violence, allowed officers to participate in the economy of punishment without sacrificing their own sensibilities.

For commissioned officers, removal from the emotional realities of flogging a man was also allowed by the role of the boatswain’s mate. On larger ships there were several boatswains mates, and their role in the everyday running of the ship was to act as an assistant overseer of seamen. The boatswain and his mates ensured that seamen kept to their shifts and behaved, but the boatswain’s mate still shared the daily work of the ship and berthed alongside common seamen below deck.\textsuperscript{527} Once ratings were found guilty of a punishable offence, however, the boatswain’s mate became the wielder of the cat o’ nine tails and was, as Foucault phrased it, ‘a cog between the prince and the people’.\textsuperscript{528} The boatswain’s mate’s relationship with the cat was an intimate one. Not only was he required to use it against members of the crew, whether he wanted to or not, but he was also charged with its construction and its storage when not in use. He would construct the body of the cat and its ‘tails’, pictured in Figure 4.2, from rope stores on the ship, finishing it off with red baize for the handle, before making a storage bag for it out of the same material.\textsuperscript{529}

\begin{footnotesize}
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\item[527] Rodger, Wooden World, 26.
\item[528] Foucault, Discipline and Punish, 74.
\item[529] Dacam Wanton and Torturing Punishments, 84.
\end{itemize}
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The boatswain’s mate’s role on board therefore was intimately linked with the creation and use of this object, as well as the implications of this. The lashes falling on men’s backs were not simply the direct effect of power from the quarterdeck and the tyranny of naval authority; the punishment was heavily mediated through this individual. It is clear when we look at the sources that flogging was a practice which had to be learned, and which therefore could be manipulated in order to dole out a more or less painful punishment. There has been confusion within the historiography about how ‘bad’ flogging was. It

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530 A later example is provided here, eighteenth-century examples seem not to have survived, perhaps due to the rope being reused or discarded. By the mid nineteenth century ‘cats’ were distributed from a centralised Admiralty supply, meaning that examples still survive. They were still made from the same materials, although obviously their appearance was more standardized than during the eighteenth century.

may well be that the discrepancy has much to do with the influence of the boatswain's mate; an invisible figure in many imaginings of the excesses of naval violence, but a central force in the application of the cat. The skill needed to use the cat o' nine tails is evidenced in a court martial case dating from November 1779, in which Captain Henry Edwin Stanhope of the Trepassey was accused of cruelty and oppression towards his own crew. Asking the boatswain's mate about the infliction of floggings, Stanhope enquired, 'Do you not remember upon my finding fault with your mode of Punishment you acknowledged you did not know how, having never punished a man before?'. Stanhope pushed Morris Drummond, the new boatswain's mate, asking him if he could recall how many lashes the punished man had eventually received before he fainted.532

Clearly, an understanding of the relationship between the handling of the cat and its exact effects was something a boatswain's mate was presumed to know. An anonymous satirical publication of 1785 compounds this notion of the cat o' nine tails as an object whose use could be learned and differentiated. The publication, Advice to the Officers of the British Navy, advised the boatswain and his mates that if ordered to punish a man for whom they had some 'regard', it was advisable to 'give your arm a jerk that will throw the appearance of force upon the stroke, without the effect'.533 Samuel Leech meanwhile noted in his depiction of the grisly scene that 'The reader may be sure that [the cat] is a

532 TNA ADM 1/5314 1st November 1779.
533 Anon, Advice to the Officers of the British Navy (London: 1785), 108.
most formidable instrument in the hands of a strong, skillful man’. In relation to the reeving of rope before his execution for mutiny on board the *Neptune*, Richard Parker was reported at the time to have said to his boatswain’s mate ‘*Do you do it, for he seems to know nothing about it!*’. Despite the intensely public nature of flogging, looking at rope and the cat as material objects and understanding their use as a learned skill allows us to see the ways in which punishment worked on a micro-social level. Boatswain’s mates must have been able to temper the lash, and even though captains such as Stanhope may occasionally have stepped in, only the boatswain’s mate would have fully understood what effect holding the cat in certain ways would have had, as evidenced in the calling of a boatswain’s mate to give evidence in court about the effect of a punishment.

Furthermore, as the 1813 punishment records for the *Cerpheus, Maidstone, Statira, Dragon* and *San Domingo* demonstrate, there could be a time lag between sentencing and the application of the cat. There is scant evidence for the precise discussions which occurred below decks, and the courts martial records which remain tend to record conversations relative only to a particular subversion of shipboard law. However, through these records, it is evident that there was a considerable level of interaction between common seamen and boatswain’s mates. Indeed, they tended to be seamen themselves who had gained a slight promotion of authority and commonly still occupied a space in the ‘berths’ of other seamen. Testimony given by boatswain’s mates finds them

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534 Leech, *Thirty Years*, 50.
535 *Trial and Defence of Richard Parker*, 41.
below deck, and although they were often charged with controlling the
behaviour of seamen, continual quotidian interaction and berthing side by side
must have meant that relationships between these men and ratings were
personal as well as authoritarian. In 1763, Giles Willman, boatswain’s mate of
HMS Renown intervened to help a seaman to his hammock when he was ‘very
much in liquor’; whilst other testimonies show frequent conversation
between boatswain’s mates and ratings. Peter Farrier, boatswain’s mate
aboard the sloop Swallow in 1762, even kept his role as maintopman,
presumably due to the smaller crew needed in manning a smaller ship.
Perhaps on larger vessels the divisions of authority would be more clearly
demarcated, but on the Swallow at least, Farrier was accused of mutinously
fraternising with common seamen despite not being at the site of the
rebellious incident, suggesting an assumption that conversations had taken
place below. It is possible to speculate then, that in the time between
punishment being assigned and issued, seamen and boatswain’s mates may
have exchanged words regarding the flogging to come, and perhaps even made
deals regarding the force with which the cat would be applied. Although
satirical, the author of Advice to the Officers of the British Navy’s assertion that
boatswain’s mates could create a less painful punishment for those who they
held in ‘regard’ is not necessarily fabricated. Lieutenant King of the sloop
Trepassey recalled that during a flogging, the boatswain’s mate Morris
Drummond ‘could not or would not’ lash the seamen in question hard

536 TNA ADM 1/5304 14th March 1768.
537 TNA ADM 1/5306 8th November 1773; TNA ADM 1/5323 15th October
1783; TNA ADM 1/5323 4th March 1784.
538 TNA ADM 1/5301 22nd March 1762.
enough.\textsuperscript{539} It is likely then, that the experience of coming into contact with the cat, was a social one as well as a physical one, and its performances were worked out through relationships and conversations below deck before the public ritual took place on the main deck before the officers.

Seamen, however, were not always averse to the implementation of physical punishment on their shipmates. Below decks, where a quasi-communal living and sharing of goods was central, theft was considered a detestable crime. When sailors from the \textit{Royal Sovereign} joined the mutiny at the Nore during 1797, one of their first demands after better wages was that ‘no man go through the fleet [meaning flogging round the fleet] Except for Murder or Robbery’.\textsuperscript{540} The standard punishment for theft on board the naval ship before it was abolished in 1806, by the desire of Admiralty not the seamen, was running the gauntlet. This was only ever used for cases of theft, and saw the thief walk through two lines of the ship’s company whilst they each hit him repeatedly with a piece of rope.\textsuperscript{541} This would have led to different markings on the body from the cat o’ nine tails, thereby setting a man apart as one who had contravened the trust of his shipmates. Even if a thief was not sentenced to running the gauntlet, his punishment still differed. The ‘thieves’ cat’ was much like the cat o’ nine tails, except that the boatswain would create three larger and harder knots at three-inch intervals, designed to make the punishment

\textsuperscript{539} TNA ADM 1/5314 1\textsuperscript{st} November 1779.
\textsuperscript{540} WRO CR114A/329 Letter issued from mutineers on HMS \textit{Royal Sovereign} 1797.
\textsuperscript{541} Lewis, \textit{Dillon’s Narrative}, 23.
more painful, and the impact on the sailor’s body more severe.\textsuperscript{542} Theft was viewed by sailors, as one naval historian had phrased it, as a ‘serious crime against society’.\textsuperscript{543} The practise of running the gauntlet pushed a man into the intensely public arena of the main deck, to be whipped by his messmates and fellow seamen. Only then could he potentially be subsumed back into lower deck society as trustworthy comrades. Justice through ritualised and physical violence was thus not the preserve of a top-down hierarchy but was participated in by seamen also, and was continually being negotiated as a form of physical justice.

Away from the transformed and ceremonialized main deck and grating, seamen also meted out social justice within a different forum. As discussed in previous chapters, the forecastle was a site of sociability and cultural performance for seamen, in which men could fall ‘in to some Romancing talk’ or ‘yarns’ with their fellow sailors outside of the strictures of their labour patterns\textsuperscript{544}, and where a group of seamen could gather to discuss that they wanted ‘to hear from their Wives & Families’.\textsuperscript{545} One important dynamic of forecastle culture was physical violence and its performance in the pursuit of social justice and the resolution of minor conflicts. The fights that took place there between men seem to have regularly been between friends, and also drew the attention of many witnesses. When a ‘Scuffle’ occurred on the forecastle on the 14\textsuperscript{th} March 1768, a midshipman named Richard Lafoney

\textsuperscript{542} Dacam, ‘Wanton and Torturing Punishments’, 85.
\textsuperscript{543} A.B. McLeod, \textit{British Naval Captains of the Seven Years’ War: A View from the Quarterdeck} (New York: 2012), 131.
\textsuperscript{544} TNA ADM 1/5340 3\textsuperscript{rd} -7\textsuperscript{th} July 1797.
\textsuperscript{545} TNA ADM 1/5340 19\textsuperscript{th} -27\textsuperscript{th} July 1797.
Dawes who had been acting as a sentry nearby approached to break up the disturbance. He noted in his later testimony that 'There were many people but I cannot recollect who they were'. Charles Dunstan and John Curry meanwhile, sailing just off Jamaica during the winter of 1770, stripped to the waist and exchanged blows on the forecastle. After they had fought together, several of the eight witnesses heard Curry say 'don’t bear malice, for we will drink together', before Dunstan replied 'theres much friendship in drinking water as in Grog'.

These seem delicate sentiments for seamen, but fighting and the threat of violence was a cornerstone of male friendship and group identity on board the ship. Indeed, in most court martial cases where sailors were found fighting each other on the forecastle, the conclusions of those watching were not that the men are enemies, but rather that they 'liv'd in the greatest friendship' and 'had neither anger, nor animosity betwixt each other'. The purpose of these fights does seem to be a mechanism for dealing with minor disagreements among co-workers and friends. Jerimiah Nooney and James Brady for example, both 'friends', fought after 'several words' passed between them about the fresh beef they were meant to be sharing. Male violence here was constructive of social life, and created a platform on which disagreements occurring in lower deck life could be ameliorated through ritual fights. The lower deck was, as elucidated in Chapter One, defined in many ways by a

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546 TNA ADM 1/5304 14th March 1768.
547 TNA ADM 1/5304 12th December 1770.
548 TNA ADM 1/5301 18th June 1762.
549 TNA ADM 1/5301 18th June 1762.
cellular communality. Acts of violence were necessary in order to qualify social relationships and as a vent for the disagreements attendant with this form of communal living, and sharing space, food and material things. For seamen on board naval ships during this period, violence against them and between them was continually being mediated by expectations of masculine sociability below deck, and the ways in which associated objects and spaces acted as intermediaries in top-down physical violence is central to enlarging our understanding how men understood institutional violent acts.

**Warfare and Edged Weapons**

For commissioned officers, institutional violence had quite a different relationship to masculine identity. Midshipmen, and even more seasoned officers, had to align their sense of masculine self with the physical and public punishment of flogging. As evidenced, this could be achieved by creating a sense of physiological distance between seamen and officers, and imagining that their bodies could only be educated through physically violent acts. Officer bodies also, however, were required to make themselves subject to the violence of warfare and the training which this necessitated. Whilst seamen were denied access to personal weapons on a daily basis, with the exception of their knives, swords were seen as an essential part of the officer’s possessions and uniform. Although the wearing of swords had declined in fashion over the course of the eighteenth century, for obvious reasons, they were still identified
as key objects in the shaping of the naval officer’s masculine image.\textsuperscript{550} Naval officers appeared frequently in portraits holding edged weapons, although many were presentation swords rather than those used in battle. The Napoleonic wars in particular saw a proliferation of presentation swords being awarded by Lloyd’s Patriotic Fund among others, for participation and success in decisive battles.\textsuperscript{551} Presentation swords were highly elaborate objects and were more likely to be mounted on walls than fought with. However, they were commemorative of specific moments in battle where men had shown bravery, heroism and a dogged determination to do their duty on behalf of the nation.

Figure 4.3 shows a sword presented by Lloyd’s Patriotic Fund to Captain Samuel Mallock in 1805, was given for ‘energy and gallantry at the storming Fort Mudros on the coast of Spain on the 4\textsuperscript{th} June 1805’. Inscribed with those words, and made of steel and ivory, swords such as these were luxury commemorative objects, and are instructive in our understanding of officer masculine identity.

\textbf{Fig.4.3.} Lloyd’s Patriotic Fund presentation sword
Blade: 768 x 38 mm
National Maritime Museum, Ref.: WPN1043


\textsuperscript{551} Wolfe, \textit{Naval Edged Weapons}, 7.
When displayed on the body on shore and on ship, swords seem to have worked as a physical corrective for the male form and sustained the posture which naval officers would need for authoritative communication on the quarterdeck. Alun Withey’s work on the uses of steel in the shaping of masculine physical form throughout the eighteenth century is useful here. Although focusing on shaving and new technologies for the styling of the self, Withey’s work demonstrates that steel was increasingly being used to denote polite and modern masculinity.\(^{552}\) In an article authored with Chris Evans, Withey also explores the importance of steel in altering the body to present a refined version of the masculine self. Steel was used in collars to correct posture, as well as acting as an outer sign of refinement.\(^{553}\) By the later eighteenth century, the form of naval men in portraiture was fairly well devised, and the sword was often central to stature in these images. We may well see display swords then as an addition to uniform which could at once prove the honour of service and the legitimate Enlightenment masculinity which Withey sees as bestowed using steel objects. Furthermore, as the sword was worn on the body in a scabbard, we might see the day to day use of these objects as part of a process of embodying a professional and respectable masculinity, which also incorporated more traditional notions of martial honour associated with sword wearing.

\(^{552}\) Withey, ‘Shaving and Masculinity in Eighteenth-Century Britain’, 239.
Whilst the swords presented to officers were not usually worn during service, they were mementos of particular moments in battle. These moments formed the currency in an economy of bravery which could drive men to the top of their profession or result in their failure, or even execution in the most extreme cases of misjudgement such as Admiral Byng. The realities of warfare did of course kill men, and undoubtedly proved traumatic for many. As a thirteen year old midshipman, George Perceval wrote to his mother of a recent battle with a town situated on the banks of the River Nile. He referred to it as a ‘great slaughter’ and worried that captured native men would ‘scoop out’ the eyes of the crew and ‘cut them [his shipmates] up in Pork Pieces’, concluding ‘it is horrible indeed’. Samuel Leech remembered the throes of battle on ship as ‘dreadful’, and recalled ‘the presence of torrents of blood which dyed our decks’. Leech watched ‘the horrors of war’, as seamen and officers alike were wounded and killed.

Although ratings were far more physically abused in the daily running of the ship, battle was a different matter altogether. Whilst captains were allowed to retreat to their cabins to strategize, commissioned officers were expected to do their duty by remaining on the quarterdeck. Rodger has argued that it was ‘not unusual in action for casualties to be virtually confined to the quarterdeck’, such was its raised position on the ship. The quarterdeck’s authority could

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554 CL PER/1/22 Letter from George Perceval to his mother 3rd May 1807.
555 Leech, *Thirty Years*, 86.
prove to be the downfall of the men who habitually dwelled there. In many ways, the threat of violence was very different to that experienced on shore and young boys were exposed sporadically to gore, bloodshed and the death of friends and shipmates. However, it is important to reemphasise the relative rarity of battles punctuating most ship’s voyages and also their centrality to naval prestige. Many men joked about violence in a social setting from a young age. As a young midshipman on board HMS *Gibraltar* in 1812, Frederick Pynsent joked that he would love to be part of an action but ‘hoped he should not be killed before he had eaten his Ham’.\textsuperscript{558} Thirty years earlier, Captain James Wallace shouted down to the surgeons ‘Doctors we shall have more fun before night’ as they approached two ships which they planned to engage with. This battle resulted in the death or serious injury of many of the ship’s crew, such as that to the captain of marines who ‘who had his Eye almost put out by Brains & pieces of skulls blown against him’.\textsuperscript{559} However, the gallows humour which existed in the lead up to battle suggests a competitive masculine stoicism in the face of death. In the journal of a young Bartholomew James, the future rear-admiral, violence and death are framed as actively amusing.

Fighting off the coast of New York, James saw many of his friends killed in action, but noted that a rebel’s head being severed from his body was an ‘amusing ... sight’.\textsuperscript{560} James even asked for leave to go on shore with some fellow midshipmen to search dead bodies for ‘little trifles’, eventually taking a musket ‘from the hands of a rebel officer who lay dead in the field’.\textsuperscript{561} Violent

\textsuperscript{558} CL JOD/148 Diary of Midshipman Pynsent, 11 (recto).
\textsuperscript{559} CL JOD/23 Journal of Reverend Vyvan, 15\textsuperscript{th} July 1780.
\textsuperscript{560} Laughton, *Rear-Admiral Bartholomew James*, 31.
\textsuperscript{561} Laughton, *Rear-Admiral Bartholomew James*, 31-32.
death may have been offensive to eighteenth-century masculine sensibilities, but it was also a fact of life for men of all walks of life who joined naval ships during this period. The harvesting of mementos from the battleground suggests a fairly utilitarian approach to the bodies of dead men, and an ability to find humour in what was apparently considered grotesque on land.

Indeed, violent action was also part of a pragmatic approach to career development for naval officers. Patronage in the Royal Navy required not only family connections but also opportunities to demonstrate one’s worth in battle and to undertake the acts of heroism and bravery which presentation swords were awarded for. James Trevenen noted in 1781 that he was ‘mortified’, not at the conditions at sea, but at not seeing any action. He wrote of his desire to win ‘honour’, adding ‘God knows, a sea life is extremely dull without it’.\textsuperscript{562} To win honour in battle was to show oneself as worthy of sea command through action and duty, and could only be achieved in the setting of encountering and often coming in to direct conflict with other ships. Lieutenant William Webley found himself immensely frustrated when he could not seem to get an act of gallant bravery in the face of danger recognised in 1794. Webley had high hopes of a promotion to captain after he had made the decision to chase a ship whilst still under the fire of heavy cannons from shore near Toulon. He wrote to his mother that he thought that if this news travelled to Admiral Alexander Hood, he could secure a promotion, and it would also be necessary to use ‘those Friends that can get me private recommendation to Sir John Jervis in the

\textsuperscript{562} Lloyd and Anderson, \textit{Memoir of James Trevenen}, 45.
West Indies’. Webley refers to this single act of bravery and ingenuity for almost a year in letters to his family at home, insisting that he should profit professionally from his actions in the face of danger. Nearly one year on from the events at Toulon, Webley described another escape he had made as ‘nearly as fortunate as Toulon’ and ‘equally daring’, asking his mother to use her connections on land to recommend him again to John Jervis. Two years on, Webley still had not received promotion, this time after having successfully landed at Tenerife. Webley wrote that he hoped Admiral Hood would have noticed him and considered him for promotion as he could ‘safely say I cannot be engaged in a more dangerous one in all points’. Frustrated, Webley ended his letter of October 25th 1797 by exclaiming that ‘this is now gone by like a great many other scapes, I suppose I must have a great exploit to accomplish this Promotion! If it lasts much longer I shall sicken indeed’.

Webley’s consternation at his invalid currency in an economy of heroic acts is clear throughout these letters. Engaging in dangerous and violent conflict was supposed to gain favour. Instead, Webley had remained unrecognised. What these letters show is that warfare for officers was viewed largely as a means with which to advance one’s career and to enter into the naval economy of individualized bravery. Writing from a guardship at Portsmouth to his friend abroad in 1770, one midshipman expressed his vexation at the delight his fellow naval men took in war. Oncoming war meant ‘consequently promotion to folks in our way; and on promotion attends the chance of wealth and fame’.

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563 CL WEB/3 Letter from William Webley to his mother 19th January 1794.
564 CL WEB/3 Letter from William Webley to his mother 20th December 1795.
565 CL WEB/3 Letter from William Webley to his mother 25th October 1797.
The anonymous midshipman wrote that whilst war ‘figured glory, riches, pleasure to you, to me, to five or six hundred’, it also meant ‘ruin, desolation, bloodshed, horror’.\textsuperscript{566} It is important to note here that these published letters expound views of sensibility and make themselves overtly opposed to the position of most in the Royal Navy. We must therefore see involvement in bloody warfare as one which, whilst very much counter to the experiences which commissioned officers would have had on shore, was not deleterious to a sense of professional and legitimate masculine identity. The desire for professional progression and to prove oneself to brother officers and superiors had the power to trump the ‘squeamishness’ which Robert Shoemaker has argued was becoming the preserve of elite men and women in relation to violence, and it seems that humour could be used to soften the edges of an approaching conflict.

\textbf{Conclusion}

This chapter has not intended to act as an entire history of violence and the naval ship during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Rather, it has aimed to alter the lines along which we delineate ideas about violence, power and masculinity in the long eighteenth century, and to reflect on the multifaceted ways in which violence and violent threat could operate. Previous histories have tended to suggest either a mutinous lower deck who were prepared to take charge of the ship by violent means, or a quarterdeck whose authority was near absolute and enforced through varying degrees of physical

\textsuperscript{566} R.B, \textit{Sailors’ Letters}, 16.
punishment. Indeed, the ship as a built space seems geared towards the latter, with the quarterdeck position as an observing point, and a place from which orders could be issued to the entirety of the vessel. However, the lived experience of the ship as a space rendered the intricacies of doling out violent punishment and maintaining absolute power over the vessel much more complicated. Seamen did not have to resort to out and out mutiny in order to make officers feel unsafe, and were able to access the knowledge of the spaces they worked and lived in, coupled with an understanding of anonymity amongst the masses, in order to weave a subtle but clearly present thread of seditious intent. Seamen, after all, were greater in number by far than their superiors, and it seems from testimony in courts martial records that they were aware of this, and understood how to use it to their advantage.

If men were picked out from the crowd, and charged with offences, the process of public and brutally violent punishment was also far more complex than it seems at first glance. The mediator here was the boatswain’s mate. His relationship with the cat o’ nine tails as an object and its use as a set of learned skills meant that there was room for huge variation in the application of punishment and thus the lived experience of authority from the quarterdeck. This could be influenced both by the skill of the boatswain’s mate, or his decision to go easy or hard on the victim of the lash. The application of power and the violent acts which sought to maintain its structures therefore needs to be complicated through an understanding of the micro rituals involved and the ways in which these could be subtly subverted or altered through the persuasion of individuals and the physical makeup of the objects used. The
eighteenth century continued to see executions on shore and the routine application of smaller scale violent acts in gaols and workhouses, as well as attempting to ‘keep in check’ populations on the outskirts of empire. It is important to examine the relationship between skill, authority, and practice in the small scale application of power structures, especially in age which was continually redrawing the boundaries of how far centralised power structures could stretch.

It is also important to remember that for eighteenth-century men, violence could be cohesive as it could be destructive. The fights which took place on the forecastle seem to have fostered a sense of sailor friendship, supporting the wider sense of community which was performed there. Furthermore, whilst violent warfare should be recognised for its brutality compared to the shore, we also need to avoid seeing involvement in battle as a contravening of elite masculine conduct. When men entered the Royal Navy and engaged in battle, they entered into an economy of bravery and heroism which could elevate them to the heights of professional success or, as in the case of Webley, frustrate them hugely by exclusion from it. It did mean that naval officers had to negotiate the contradiction that, as a successful naval career was by the mid eighteenth century a means through which one could be classed a respectable gentleman, this career was won by flying in the face of the ‘elite squeamishness’ of those onshore. This was due to a desire to gain notice on a personal level, as well as the need to protect themselves and their ships and further their nation’s interests. By studying naval officers as a discrete group in a specific time and place, it is clear that elite and gentlemanly masculinity had
fairly stark subdivisions in terms of expectation and experience. Whilst most men on shore during the eighteenth century would not have had to defend themselves and by proxy their country from foreign enemies, elite masculine identity may well have been far more varied than previously acknowledged. There is a need to begin to study smaller and more discrete groups of men in eighteenth-century society in order to ascertain how masculine identity was constructed, and how it might contravene the norms which have been assigned to class-based masculinities during the period.

Violence on board the naval ship was continually present in its various forms, and shaped social and professional relationships and masculine expectations on every deck. This analysis has hoped to allow for a dialogue in shipboard negotiations of power, rather than seeing a top down enforcement of punishment or violent mutiny from below as defining of how the naval ship was experienced by those who dwelt there. Due to the limited scope of the seamen’s arsenal, this dialogue was sustained through subtle threat which allowed mass voicing of discontent without singling out the individual.

Violence was negotiated on all levels and mediated through an interrelation of spaces and objects which allowed for small-scale subversions in the application of power from the quarterdeck. The presentation sword meanwhile, was an object through which power and legitimacy was transmitted on shore, but hard gained amongst the bodies of fallen friends.

Violence on board the eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century naval ship had to work. It did not mean a subversion of order but rather a continual process of negotiation between lower deck and upper deck, and amongst officers, a
negotiation of careerism. Violence was not an act outside of society, but rather sustained it. Those who were flogged needed to be reintegrated back below deck, and the ritual of running the gauntlet in cases of theft demonstrates that seamen also understood the uses of physical punishment in correcting an individual. Violence and the threat of violence was a shared language on board naval ships during this period, and the men who went to sea entered in to a series of negotiations with masculine authority and legitimacy staged through violent acts. The next chapter will continue an examination of the relationship between space, moveable objects and masculine authority, but will instead move to another theme which has come to be definitive of maritime history. ‘Knowledge’ will analyse how ways of knowing the natural and built environment were constituted and expressed on ship, and how forms of knowledge could support or endanger claims to masculine authority.
Chapter Four: Knowledge

Discussions of knowledge within the historiography of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries have tended to zero in on the rapid development of new technologies and the existence of a ‘knowledge revolution’. Inventiveness was widely participatory, and a taste for the ‘ingenious’ and the ‘inventive’ became ever more diffused amongst the British people. Scientific demonstration and clubs dedicated to natural philosophy proliferated; as did objects which facilitated these types of knowledge, such as scientific instruments and various ingenious trinkets.567 The market for these instruments was huge, with ‘domestic, colonial, and European consumers’ demanding their entrance into the world of popular science.568 Experiments became public affairs and the quest for new scientific knowledge could be opened to an observing or participatory audience. Indeed, the search for longitude, which has received so much attention as a feat of knowledge consolidation was only one manifestation of an increasingly open mode of approaching scientific knowledge.569 Richard Sorrenson has demonstrated the move of natural philosophy and scientific demonstration out of courts and academies and into the commercial market place during the first part of the eighteenth century, whilst Larry Stewart sees the period in terms of new

experimental spaces which found their legitimacy in the link between the
traditional scholarly and the artisanal.\textsuperscript{570} This view is supported by Liliane
Hilaire- Pérez who notes that the eighteenth century saw a rise in technical
displays open to the public; evidence that it was an artisanal knowledge which
was receiving the biggest legitimization during this period.\textsuperscript{571}

Importantly, the artisans present in these displays of knowledge were
overwhelmingly men. Smaller scientific clubs and the Royal Society seem to
have been a recourse for almost solely men, whilst even within the home,
historians have claimed that new forms of scientific knowledge manifest in
instruments were consumed by a predominantly male audience. Scholarship
on masculinity and politeness has found in scientific instruments and the
appropriation of scientific knowledge a means through which men during this
period could display their cultural supremacy. Alice N. Walters argues that
whilst public displays could reach only a fraction of the population, objects
such as orreries could be sent for from London and learned within the home in
order to participate in polite society from afar. The implication of Walters’
argument is that the mastery of instruments in the home created a cultural
currency for eighteenth-century men, one which they could use to impress
those around them and to connect with an imagined polite network of
instrument consumers.\textsuperscript{572} Michele Cohen meanwhile has posited that the
framing of the middling and elite male intellect as inherently stronger than the

\textsuperscript{570} J. Mokyr, \textit{The Gifts of Athena: Historical Origins of the Knowledge Economy}
(New Jersey: 2002)
\textsuperscript{571} Hilaire-Pérez, ‘Technology as Public Culture’.
\textsuperscript{572} Walters, ‘Conversation Pieces’.
female was predicated on an access to scientific knowledge, both at home and in public forums.\textsuperscript{573}

Scientific knowledge then, and the objects which allowed its practice and display, have frequently been represented as a boon to refined masculine identity. Public displays and the widespread sale of scientific instruments meant that an engagement with scientific discoveries was opened up for men of middling status as well as a small elite. Clearly, however, the tenets of natural philosophy and the ownership or access to scientific instruments was but one of the many knowledge economies in operation during the eighteenth century. Recent scholarship has attempted to frame the production and demonstration of specific types of knowledge as made through continual association with a variety of objects. Kate Smith has argued that the knowledge of consumable ceramics amongst women during this period was based on an understanding of methods of production and how goods came in to being.\textsuperscript{574}

The Royal Navy has been understood by many traditional histories as the ‘spearhead of the Enlightenment’, and as a site of distinctly new scientific knowledge formation.\textsuperscript{575} The importance placed on the project of finding longitude, and the instruments which were taken to sea to be tested throughout the period, has frequently led to the naval ship being viewed as a kind of laboratory; a testing site for new technology, and thus a space which

\textsuperscript{573} M. Cohen, \textit{Fashioning Masculinity}, 81.
\textsuperscript{574} K. Smith, \textit{Material Goods, Moving Hands}.
\textsuperscript{575} N.A.M. Rodger, \textit{Essays in Naval History, from Medieval to Modern} (Farnham and Burlington: 2009), 5.
represented the frontier of navigational knowledge. However, for naval officers, this role was entangled with the realities of their profession, and the desire to have the Royal Navy act as a vehicle for socio-cultural upward mobility. The anxieties over knowledge on board, and the disjuncture between gentlemanly theory and practical experience, has been discussed in detail by historians such as Samantha Cavell and N.A.M Rodger. Officers often entered the navy very young, and failed to receive ‘any general sort of education’, leaving them stranded somewhat awkwardly as gentlemen without a gentleman's education. Whilst this disjuncture undoubtedly existed, the discussion of naval knowledge thus far has tended to resist discussing the material and spatial organization of knowledge on board, and what this can tell us about masculinity and social practice. Furthermore, discussion has looked at a specific group on board, namely officers or midshipmen, and needs to be extended to take in to account how knowledge impacted on and had the power to disrupt shipboard society.

Myriad forms of maritime and scientific knowledge operated on board naval ships, intersecting and negotiating with one another due to the nature of the ship’s architecture and the sea as a natural force. Although work on knowledge as a material and socio-spatial process has been undertaken by Simon Schaffer among others, much still turns on the representations and showiness of ingenious instruments and the clamouring for ways to forge and display the

fruits of the ‘knowledge revolution’. The naval ship, however, harboured both the ancient and the new: seamanship, navigational studies, and gentlemanly learning seem to have jostled for the attention of midshipmen and officers. Seamen meanwhile drew on a culture which valued experiential tacit knowledge above all else, and which gave kudos to those who had seen, been and touched, rather than digested from lectures and clubs on shore or learned from books. Knowledge, touch and power were all intimately related on board the naval vessel during this period, and this extended to the physical architecture of the ship as well as to the miscellany of instruments, charts and books which resided afloat. This chapter then, will attempt to dissect how the men who made naval ships their homes grappled with differing knowledge economies and their associated objects and, ultimately, how practices of knowledge formation and display influenced masculine identity.

To this end, the chapter will be split roughly into two sections: navigation and seamanship. These are the two skill sets which officers divided knowledge on board into, and it was along the lines of these two different types of knowledge which learning was continually aligned upon board. Both were necessary in order to become a successful commissioned officer, although tensions between the two became increasingly apparent in relation to elite and middling masculinity over the course of the period under study. ‘Navigation’ will look at the purchasable: instruments and other objects understood to facilitate a specific form of manly learning. Seamanship meanwhile will examine the practices involved in maritime labour and the upkeep of the ship as a physical environment, and how related skills were learned and enacted in relation to
different groups on board. One of the main aims here is to examine knowledge not as static, but as continually in process and liable to disruption or failure. As Simon Schaffer has demonstrated, even the most modish technologies were continually liable to breakage, especially at sea. Just as acts of violence articulated masculine power in ways which were far from reliable, so new scientific technologies and learned displays of their use could also falter. Furthermore, knowledge and its many manifestations were, on board the naval vessel, entirely entangled with the social and professional politics which ruled shipboard society. This chapter will demonstrate the complex intersections of knowledge, power and materiality for the men on board.

Navigation

The history of eighteenth-century scientific and navigational instruments has overwhelmingly been couched within narratives of progress and endeavour. This is unsurprising. The latter half of the century was a period in which new designs and purposes proliferated, and which saw the development of Hadley’s quadrant, the marine chronometer, as well as various new takes on older technologies such as the compass. To naval men particularly, instruments and the developments in navigational skill which they facilitated were central to personal and professional identification. The instruments taken aboard the ship can be divided into those provided by the Royal Navy as an institution, and those which were bought by the individual. Clearly, those further up the professional ladder were more likely to own their own instruments; objects which were frequently inscribed and personalised, and bought in the shops.

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and instrument makers of London and Portsmouth. Although wooden quadrants were provided for midshipmen on their joining the service, it seems that choice over one's own personal instrument was prized. This is not surprising in light of recent scholarship on men and consumer choice. David Hussey has demonstrated that by the eighteenth century, men of middling and elite social standing were 'skilful and assiduous consumers of goods', whilst Helen Berry has painted a metropolitan scene in which men ducked easily in and out of shop doors, browsing and buying.\textsuperscript{579} Instruments were a fundamental part of this world, both in the capital and in port towns, notably Portsmouth. A few weeks before the Battle of Trafalgar, Admiral Horatio Nelson was witnessed having just purchased a telescope from highly reputed makers the Dollond family firm.\textsuperscript{580} Dollond telescopes were high status purchases. John Dollond was made a Fellow of the Royal Society and sold 'thousands of telescopes to gentlemen and professionals alike'.\textsuperscript{581} Even though the Admiralty provided a telescope for use on board, many men chose to purchase their own increasingly expensive instruments as they rose through the ranks.

Admiral Thomas Fremantle, whilst waiting at Spithead during the autumn of 1812, requested that his current compass be replaced with one he had noticed


\textsuperscript{581} Ibid, 80.
in a shop in Portsmouth. Fremantle, keen to update his ship's technology, wrote to the Navy Board asking that ‘as early as possible’ he be supplied with ‘Walkers’ improved Meridian Compass, and two steering Compasses improved by Stibbins’.582 Even within the parameters of institutional necessity then, naval men were making individual consumer choices, which were based on shopping around and an understanding of what was ‘improved’. This supports previous work on male consumption during the period, and also allows us to frame the commanders of ships as entrants into the marketplace for instruments. Fremantle’s receipts for the months prior to his contacting the Navy Board show his dipping in and out of shops selling ‘Quadrants, Telescopes, Cases of Instruments &c. &c.’, and purchasing new marine barometers from the same ‘Stibbing’ he would later demand a compass from.583 The retinue of objects for measuring and navigating on board then was a mix of the personally purchased, and the institutionally owned. However, captains were clearly able to influence the choice of maker, meaning that individual consumer choice was intertwined with institutional decision making.

The large majority of new midshipmen meanwhile, whilst lacking in sway over the Navy Board, were from relatively monied backgrounds, and could still with parental help buy their own navigational instruments as part of their fitting out. At the age of eighteen and newly aboard HMS Venerable in 1808,

582 CBS D-FR/41/1 Letter from Admiral Thomas Fremantle to the Navy Board, 10th September 1810.
midshipman Henry Jenkinson wrote to his mother that alongside paying for his mess and purchasing a chest, he would need to invest in 'buying a Quadrant and various other expenses I have and shall be at'. Midshipman Newton Fowell meanwhile wrote to his father in 1787 from HMS Edgar requesting three guineas to buy a quadrant in Portsmouth, whilst Alexander Hood wrote home informing his father of the present of a quadrant given to him by his cousin. Hood’s quadrant was part of a thicket of gifts designed to facilitate his easing in to shipboard life, which included a sword, kettle, plates and ‘Bucket Brushes’. The newly designed Hadley’s quadrant was central to naval knowledge as a means of finding the ship’s position, and making reports, which would be judged by the captain at the end of each day. For midshipmen the possession of a quadrant to practice with was central to getting ahead and attracting a captain’s notice in order to gain promotion to lieutenant.

Quadrants were thus essential components in the material make-up of an officer. The places where midshipmen and lieutenants would have shopped for and purchased these instruments appear to have recognised this, and often invoked the image of the ideal naval figure in order to attract customers.

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584 CL JEN/1 Letter from Henry Jenkinson to his mother 8th June 1809.
585 CL MS88/004 Letter from Newton Fowell to his father 24th February 1787.
586 CL MKH/17 Letter from Alexander Hood to his father April 1772.
Figure 5.1 depicts the trade card of Richard Rust, who operated out of a shop near the Tower of London from 1780 onwards. Rust’s trade card uses the image of the gentleman naval officer, evidently confident and well-practised in handling and using his quadrant. The image is also accompanied by instructional text, telling the user of the new and improved addition of an artificial horizon to the instrument which could be used in even during periods of poor visibility at sea. The relationship between text and image in this advertisement suggests a training of the body to use the instrument, and instruction is purposefully accompanied by an idealised image of the masculine gentility. Richard Rust was not alone in representing the relationship between masculinity, objects and knowledge in this way. Other
trade cards, such as the early nineteenth-century example pictured in figure 5.2 mirrored the stance and positioning of the naval officer. The male form here demonstrates the idealised use of the instrument, as well as implying the polite nature of navigational learning; bodily comportment and ease of use here seem to define the experience of using the instrument.

5.2. Trade-card of Ebenezer Hoppe (1801)  
British Museum, Banks Collection, Ref: 105.25

The posture and comportment of the gentleman officer was also made three dimensional in the ‘Little Midshipman’, a wooden decoration which stood outside the famous I.W.Norie’s navigational warehouse during the early nineteenth century (Figure 5.3). This midshipman marked an arena of naval consumption for over 150 years, and Charles Dickens mentions him as one of
several in his 1846 novel *Dombey and Son*, 'eternally employed outside the doors of nautical instrument makers in taking observations of the hackney coaches'.[^587]

The masculine figures represented in both print and wood show the naval officer navigating safely without a crew member in sight. Historians have long recognised the importance of masculine bodily discipline in constructions of polite identity.[^588] Most recently, Matthew McCormack’s discussion of dance and militia drill has flagged up the importance of seeing the male military body as controlled by performative movement. McCormack has noted the ways in which dance helped to ‘produce a male body’ that was suited to the battlefield and the weaponry involved in warfare.[^589] There was then, an ideal militia man’s body, and an ideal way in which it moved and worked. Whilst the bodies of the men studied in this thesis were disciplined through the swords they wore and formations they walked in, navigational instruments also played a part in the choreography of the naval officer.

[^589]: McCormack, 'Dance and Drill', 327.
However, mere purchase was not a guarantee of performance. Quadrants, sextants, marine chronometers - all had to be learned in order to be used properly, and the representations of naval officers’ perfect understanding tell us very little about how men actually understood their ongoing relationship to navigational knowledge and instruments. There were several outlets touting instruction manuals to be bought alongside instruments, often sold in the same shops from which the objects themselves were purchased.\textsuperscript{590} When a new construction of the sextant was made public in 1775, its maker even offered a free treatise ‘illustrated by copper plates’.\textsuperscript{591} These guides overwhelmingly marketed themselves as manuals in the technical use of the instrument, rather than purely the theory behind it. The Mariner’s Guide for example, promised to

\textsuperscript{590} Gazetteer and London Daily Advertiser (London: 7th January 1764).
\textsuperscript{591} Morning Chronicle and London Advertiser (London: 24th July 1775).
teach the reader how to use a Hadley’s quadrant ‘With practical Examples wrought at large’. These guides marketed themselves on their ease of use so that ‘Persons of common Understanding may easily comprehend what is contained therein’,\(^{592}\) and any new improvements would be ‘amply explained’.\(^{593}\) A trade card for John Lilley’s ‘Nautical & Mathematical Instrument’ shop near the West India Docks in London boasted that ‘Gentlemen [are] instructed in the true adjustment of their Instruments’.\(^{594}\) There existed a market then for instruction in the practice and handling of navigational instruments.

Furthermore, the latter half of the eighteenth century saw the proliferation of small-scale academies, in addition to the Royal Naval Academy in Portsmouth, which promised to allow men physical interaction with instruments for a reasonable subscription. At Waddington’s Academy near Cannon Street in London, young gentlemen were taught to make observations with a Hadley’s quadrant, and could even pay extra to be instructed in ‘their own apartments’.\(^{595}\) In 1788, J. Bettesworth advertised his academy in Chelsea, which boasted navigational skills ‘taught by real Observations’, and ‘at the same time shewing Pupils the use of the Quadrant, Sextant, &c’.\(^{596}\) In Gosport meanwhile, young gentlemen could expect to be ‘Genteely Boarded and Carefully Educated for the Navy’ through the ‘use of all sorts of Mathematical

\(^{592}\) Public Advertiser (London: 17\(^{th}\) February 1764).
\(^{593}\) Public Advertiser (London: 14\(^{th}\) May 1784).
\(^{594}\) British Museum (BM Hereafter) Trade Card Collection, Heal: 105.63.
\(^{595}\) Lloyd’s Evening Post (London: 20\(^{th}\) July 1763).
\(^{596}\) World (London: 21\(^{st}\) June 1788).
Instrument’.\footnote{The Portsmouth Gazette and Weekly Advertiser (Portsmouth: 9th January 1797).} When an ‘Astronomical Quadrant’ was delivered for the use of the Royal Naval Academy in Portsmouth by the famous instrument maker John Bird, so much was made of its arrival that an entire building was constructed to house it, and the Reverend who delivered it noted that he found himself ‘peculiarly fortunate’\footnote{TNA ADM 106/1188/233 Letter from Reverend Thomas Hornsby to Admiralty 19th September 1770.}.

There was a clear sense that handling the instrument before one went aboard, and gaining some form of training in its practical application, was considered preferable when entering an environment where its use was a necessity of day to day life. Navigational instruments were not simply objects of decoration or symbols of masculine knowledge; they needed to be held and worked, and this process was one which was seen to be best achieved through practice rather than theory. Although the eternally stilled men of the trade cards and shop signs depict a perfect form of comportment and knowledge gathering, the emphasis on practising with the instrument in both guides and at academies suggests that there was scope for misuse of instruments. Whilst practice and processes of reading and learning could be undertaken on shore before boarding ship, once aboard the salience of being able to take readings and to handle the quadrant or sextant in the correct way became clear. By the time of the Seven Years War, navigational skill was coming to be understood as a cornerstone of officer identity.\footnote{Rodger, Wooden World, 52.}Whilst also sharing in a part of the physical work of maintaining and sailing the ship, midshipmen were expected to be able
to take regular observations and return them to the captain, as pictured below in a detail from a scene aboard the *Deal Castle*.

![Image](image_url)

**Fig. 5.4** Detail from Thomas Hearne ‘*A scene on board His Majesty’s ship Deal Castle in a voyage from the West Indies in the year 1775’*
Original painting: 190 x 155 mm
National Maritime Museum, Ref.: PAJ0773

The highly personal nature of patronage and promotion meant that demonstrating skill in navigation and an aptitude for identifying where the ship was and where it needed to be was paramount to getting ahead in the Royal Navy. Furthermore, mastering the use of navigational instruments had an additional weight in its setting apart young gentlemen and officers from the seamen. Learning how to hold the quadrant or sextant correctly then, as well as attracting the notice of the captain, continually set these men apart from the ratings. As outlined in ‘Boundaries’, the use of navigational instruments on the quarterdeck, combined with practices of issuing the time of day, giving orders, and promenading in formation, made that space the locus of official mandate, and the site of cultural and social legitimacy. Whilst sailing aboard HMS *Culloden* in 1803, seaman Robert Hay found himself confronted with a
miscellany of navigational books and objects belonging to the lieutenant who had made him a servant. The Gunter’s scale, a nautical almanac, charts, and mathematical instruments, jostled alongside the ‘books and furniture’ in Lieutenant Hawkins’ cabin. Of particular interest to Hay, who was generously granted access to all of Hawkins’ navigational treasures, was the Hadley’s Quadrant. Although he found his basic knowledge of trigonometry was ample for him to understand many of the principles of navigation, he asked himself, ‘how was the knowledge of the use of the quadrant in taking the sun’s meridian to be gained?’. Hay quickly realised that the notion of a servant ‘on the deck of a warship with a quadrant in his hand’ would be seen as such a ‘flagrant breach of discipline’ that he would likely have been whipped. His endeavours to discover its workings below deck by candle light further confounded him, and led to nothing more than a ‘sooty circle’ and rapid packing up of the instrument he had borrowed.600

The correct use of the quadrant can be understood as a form of codified knowledge, unlocked only to those who had access to education in its use, or the means to purchase instructions. Furthermore, Hay’s experiences demonstrate the ways in which the learned use of objects aligned social and hierarchical order on board. Although Hay was able to hold the same object as midshipmen and commissioned officers, he could not practice in the appropriate forums, and struggled to learn alone - without the cultural guidance which more elite men received on shore and through manuals. The practical methods of interacting with instruments thus structured the social

600 Hay, Landsman Hay 68-69.
world of the ship, and allowed those in the upper echelons to use the quarterdeck appropriately to flaunt their learned cultural superiority. However, even men who had received formal instruction in the use of navigational instruments were not guaranteed ease of use and performance. As was well understood in the eighteenth century, instruments were unstable objects and were not always guarantors of cultural performativity. As Simon Schaffer has demonstrated, the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries saw not only an explosion in those with an investment in scientific instruments, but also a concomitant understanding that distance from the maker could result in the instability of the instrument. Disrepair, Schaffer points out, ‘became the norm’. On board naval vessels there was very little chance indeed of returning instruments to makers once under sail. As a result of this, advertisements for instruments targeted at naval officers often emphasised their endurance away from the centre of their production. Instrument maker Henry Pyefinch made himself known to the Navy Board as early as 1769, claiming that he had recently invented a new compass which was ‘less liable to be affected by the Motion of the ship’ and could even ‘withstand the shock of oars in a Boat’. The compass was granted to a Captain Man, who specifically requested that he be provided with the new invention.

Pyefinch knew his audience. Midshipmen and officers alike experienced the deleterious effect which a life at sea could have on the instruments which they purchased and were provided with. The binnacle was a piece of equipment

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601 Schaffer, ‘Easily Cracked’ 710-711.
602 TNA ADM 106/1180/265 Letter from Captain Man to Navy Board 24th April 1769.
designed to protect delicate instruments such as the compass from the worst effects of the ship’s movement. However, precautions such as these were no match for the unpredictability of the ship as a physical environment. Captain John Fergusone, writing to the Navy Board in July 1752, complained that the iron work which had been used to fit the wheel of the ship repeatedly attracted the compass. Fergusone asked that the wheel be removed, and that he be allowed to steer with the tiller instead; a much older and more labour intensive method of steering a ship’s course. In this case, the unpredictable nature of technologies such as the new compass resulted in a return to older forms of ship work, a narrative perhaps against the necessarily progressive nature of instruments at sea. The ship as an environment could be corrosive to technological development in other ways too. In 1797, and seven years after he passed his lieutenant’s examination, Thomas Byam Martin went to ‘a very inconvenient expense’ to purchase a chronometer from the Master of Portsmouth Academy. The marine chronometer, devised by John Harrison during the mid eighteenth century, was by the 1790s an instrument which had undergone extensive developmental change. The creation of a timepiece which could effectively function at sea had been seen as an almost insurmountable task at the beginning of the century. By 1797, although expensive, the chronometer was available, and promised to reliably report the time. Indeed, Byam Martin was assured that the instrument he purchased was the best money could buy, and he noted that he was ‘determined its credit should not suffer in my hands, and took as much care of it as it had been my child’. Byam

603 Byrn, Naval Courts Martial, 179.
604 TNA ADM 106/1100/54 Letter from Captain John Fergusone to Navy Board 22nd July 1752.
Martin’s hopes for his chronometer, however, were thwarted and he had the ‘mortification’ to find that the calculations of his position were out by seventy miles.\(^\text{605}\)

Byam Martin’s parental care for his instrument was proven futile as he became more distant from the Academy in which he had purchased his chronometer. Midshipman Henry Jenkinson meanwhile waited two years for a watch he had bought with his parents’ help to be delivered to him on board HMS *Inconstant*. The letters leading up to its delivery made clear Jenkinson’s desire to have it before he set sail: ‘I hope I shall get the Watch before we sail’ was repeated one way or another over the course of many, many months.\(^\text{606}\) However, despite waiting for its delivery from his family home to Spithead, as soon as it arrived with him on the 21\(^{\text{st}}\) January 1811, Jenkinson found that the piece did ‘not go well as it gains about a quarter of an Hour during the 24’, and blamed this not on the extended time it had been in transit, but on its arrival on board the *Inconstant*.\(^\text{607}\) Examples such as these should flag up the discrepancy between practice and learning on land, and use on ship. Although quadrants and sextants were less temperamental than the marine chronometer, the number of shops on shore which advertised for their repair suggests they too were liable to succumb to breakage whilst on ship.\(^\text{608}\) Even in 1847, when navigational equipment was far more regulated, Herman Melville referred to a voyage to the South Sea in which a captain’s mate attempted to find their

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\(^\text{606}\) CL JEN/2 Letter Henry Jenkinson to his mother 24\(^{\text{th}}\) December 1810.  
\(^\text{607}\) CL JEN/2 Letter from Henry Jenkinson to his mother 21\(^{\text{st}}\) January 1811.  
\(^\text{608}\) BM Trade Cards: Heal: 105.63, and Banks: 105.41.
location with ‘rusty quadrant’ and checked the time with a ‘broken chronometer’.\footnote{R. L. Gale, \textit{A Herman Melville Encyclopedia} (Westport: 1995), 327.}

Distance from the centre of production increased the likelihood of instruments performing in increasingly unreliable ways. There was thus an underlying unease in the translation from purchase of scientific artefact to performance of learned knowledge. This was made manifest in the education which one had to undertake in order to access the navigational knowledge, as well as in the likelihood that an instrument’s performance would be marred by its briny surroundings. Midshipman Philip Cartaret, writing to his brother in the 1790s, noted his ritual visits to the schoolmaster, and his practising of navigation every day. Even those who had practised navigation ‘for many years’, Cartaret noted, must still be taught in order to occupy the profession of naval officer.\footnote{CL CAR/8A Letter undated but others in bundle marked as 1792.}

This ongoing task of learning to master the tools of one’s trade, coupled with the deleterious nature of the ship as a lived environment, meant that knowledge formation was continually in process rather than functioning as a predictable quarterdeck performance. The inscription of cultural and scientific legitimacy which the quarterdeck was supposed to embody as a space then, and which disallowed seamen like Robert Hay from using a quadrant there, was far from guaranteed.

The presence of the master on board naval vessels further complicated the quarterdeck as a space of knowledge consolidation and performance. The role
of the master on board men-of-war was as the warrant officer in charge of navigation. A Navy Board directive of 1769, published in the *Whitehall Evening Post*, ordered that all masters were to report to Portsmouth Royal Academy in order to receive training for using Hadley’s Quadrant and the Nautical Almanac correctly. This training would result in the award of a certificate, which signified that the master was ‘properly qualified’ to use navigational equipment on naval voyages. The master’s role once on board encompassed plotting the position of the ship on a daily basis, and using his own instruments to ascertain the progress of the vessel. The master was therefore supplied with the professionalised legitimacy in undertaking navigation which was often equated with the quarterdeck and its performances. Indeed, as N.A.M Rodger points out, the master was in some respects, including pay, ‘equal’ to the serving lieutenants. Rodger argues that at the time of the Seven Years War, there was already an overlap between the navigational skill set required of commissioned officers and masters.

Out of all the other warrant officers – the boatswain, the carpenter, the gunner – the master was also the only man who could rightly claim a place on the quarterdeck in order to obtain his observations. In many ways then, the Master occupied a somewhat awkward role; the need for his specialist knowledge marking him somewhere in between the warrant officer and the commissioned. This was, as were so many social and professional relationships, made manifest physically in terms of berthing spaces. In 1769, a

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611 *Whitehall Evening Post or London Intelligencer* (London: 19th January 1769).
series of letters were written to the Navy Board by the surgeon of the cutter *Chomondley*. Cutters were short of space for berthing at the best of times. A dispute had arisen on board the *Chomondley* however, due to the oversized cabin of both the master and the steward, and the lack of accommodation in which the surgeon would be able to assure the ‘Efficacy of the Medicine’. There was clearly feeling on the part of the surgeon, Charles Smyth, that the tools of his trade were being put in jeopardy to house the master in his ‘large and commodious’ cabin.613 The lieutenant on board took the side of the master, and ruled that the cabin should remain as it was. This fellow feeling between commissioned officer and master, however, was arguably only sustained due to the small size of the ship, and thus the single lieutenant’s role as the clear commander of the vessel. On larger vessels, where several lieutenants occupied the wardroom and the captain was the locus of authority, the master seems to have been less likely to be supported by his commissioned superiors.

Masters such as Andrew Knox and Mr. Fox, who as were saw in Chapter Two were expelled from the wardroom, for having ‘no Rite’ to berth there, were perhaps victims of unstable hierarchies of learning on naval ships. Although there is little information given on the specific plight of Fox, the fact that Knox had his shelves of ‘Books and Instruments’ torn down several times by Lieutenant Montague suggests that this was an attack on his status as well as his physical residence. The navigational knowledge, as well as instrument ownership and use, which the master’s role required resulted in a series of

613 TNA ADM 106/1183/276 Letter from Charles Smyth to the Navy Board 17th November 1769.
tensions over the relationship between knowledge and hierarchy. The wardroom thus became the site of power play for lieutenants, who felt the need to assert their primacy of residence, as they were often forced to share skills and space on the quarterdeck with the master. Lieutenants were largely men from gentry or upper middling backgrounds. The roles which most men would go on to fill from these social categories were often increasingly professionalised: the clergy, law, medicine. Whilst the fine tuning of navigational knowledge and instrument use certainly increased along with the professionalization of the navy as a career, there were very few other professions in which those of a higher social status would be expected to share specialist knowledge with a man of lower social standing such as the master.

In September 1762, in a trial held off the coast of Havana, the master of HMS Richmond Robert Bishop was charged with ‘making use of threatening and unbecoming speeches, and for disobeying command in refusing to take upon him the Charge of Master’. The supposed offence had taken place on the quarterdeck, when Captain Elphinstone had threatened to order Bishop away from the deck as he ‘wanted no advice’ from the Master. The altercation seems to have surrounded Bishop's advice for navigating towards a prize during a chase. Bishop was heard to comment that 'if we did not steer in such a Manner, we should lose the Prize', directly after which the captain 'told him if he would not hold his Tongue that he would order him down'. The quarterdeck thus became a site of competing understandings, with the master's legitimate right to share a space denoted for naval authority resulting in conflict. Indeed, that
the charge against Bishop was dismissed despite his superior’s protestations demonstrates that the master’s power as a repository of navigational skill was not illusory.\textsuperscript{615}

In the same year, another master by the name of Solomon Spanton shouted at his captain that ‘you are like a farmer, and Don’t know how to bring a ship to Action’. This abuse was made ‘publickly on the Quarter Deck’. After being swiftly ordered down to the main deck, Spanton asserted that he was just as much a ‘Gentn’ as the captain and made several abusive speeches.\textsuperscript{616} There was an awareness on board naval vessels that the quarterdeck was a sanctified space which denoted commission and professional legitimacy. The presence of the master confused this space, as he had less allegiance to the captain for patronage than lieutenants, but was also a legitimate architect of the ship’s course, and a possessor of instruments and charts. Furthermore, the choice of ‘farmer’ as an insult, suggests that the issue at stake was the lack of honed skill in maritime technology, as well as suggesting that there was a direct correlation between the ability to navigate properly and the status of ‘Gentn.’

Whilst social and professional hierarchies on board ship were frequently enforced, the necessity of navigational skill and knowledge to finding a course meant that the cultural superiority denoted by ownership and use of scientific instruments on shore was subverted. Masters were often socially inferior, but were allowed to walk the quarterdeck, berth with lieutenants and discuss

\textsuperscript{615} TNA ADM 1/5301 13\textsuperscript{th} September 1762.
\textsuperscript{616} TNA ADM 1/5301 24\textsuperscript{th} March 1762.
charting a proper course with authority due to the nature of their role, and their skill with scientific instruments.

More than fifty years later, another master would encounter problems due to his clashing with commissioned officers. Caleb Hiller was tried in March 1815 for a litany of offences. Amongst them were frequently acting with ‘quarrelsome and outrageous behavior’, as well as threatening several lieutenants and the captain. One of the incidents took place when Hiller was asked by Lieutenant James Tait to hand over his quadrant as part payment for a sum he owed one of the men. When confronted by Tait, he yelled from his cabin door that ‘he knew the prosecutor [Tait] wanted the Quadrant, and that he would sooner break it to pieces, than any body should have it’. After this, Hiller produced the quadrant from its box and ‘made a gesture as if he would heave it somewhere to break it’. Unsurprisingly, Hiller’s display of aggression and ownership did not sit well with Tait. When Hiller went ashore next, Tait ordered his servant to remove the quadrant from the master’s table and place it in his own cabin. It seems that in addition to the quarterdeck, the quadrant was another site where social and professional stratification was contested. Hiller’s threat to physically deconstruct the quadrant rather than hand it over to a lieutenant suggest that to possess, and to handle, an instrument such as the quadrant on board was to hold a form of social power. Although the debt Hiller owed was to a surgeon’s mate, he specified that he would not hand the quadrant to the lieutenant, and the lieutenant was the one who claimed it back.
from his cabin. Similarly, seaman William Spavens remembered Mr. Husband, the master’s mate of HMS Buckingham, disagreeing with the captain over the chasing of a prize. When it became clear that the captain was refusing to ‘obey his commands’, Husband threatened that he ‘would throw his books and instruments overboard, and we would all go to hell together’.

The power struggle here was between two men on board ship who had the skills to use navigational instruments and technically the right to walk the quarterdeck. The conflict, as in the previous three cases, was predicated on who had legitimate access to object and space. Far from being objects purely of self fashioning or scientific progress then, instruments, and the ability to use them also stratified shipboard society in terms of its socio-spatial and material landscape. That threatening to discard instruments or books if not obeyed seems to have been an accessible idea for masters and masters’ mates suggests the potency which these men believed the objects were invested with by those they threatened. Exasperated by the obstacles placed in the way of their authority, masters transformed instruments from objects of knowledge production to sites of protest against the hierarchy of the naval ship. Knowledge was power, certainly, and the masters understood that this lay in who was able to access such objects as well as in knowing how the operate them.

617 TNA ADM 1/5448 7th March 1815.
618 Spavens, Memoirs, 42.
Navigational knowledge and the ability to use instruments demarcated social and hierarchical relationships and were thus tools of social stratification as well as surveyors of the skies. Instruments allowed midshipmen and officers to perform their professionalism, setting themselves apart as the agents of legitimate polite, scientific endeavor and as the cultural benefactors of the booming luxury trade in instruments at home. However, the instability of this performance was ever palpable. The encroachment of the master and the often violent reaction against him suggests an awareness on the part of officers that their own relationship with instruments was tenuous and needed to be jealously guarded. Instruments were thus tremulous guardians of shipboard superiority and officer professionalism, liable to bow to the physical and social environment which they entered on board the naval ship.

**Seamanship**

The mastery of navigation was not the only form of learning which officer identity was predicated on. Throughout the latter half of the eighteenth century there was an ongoing debate over exactly what midshipmen and officers should know, and how they should learn it. It is the debate which N.A.M. Rodger has dubbed the ‘Training or Education’ dilemma. The crux of this dilemma was that a naval officer’s education was ‘strikingly unlike any other gentleman’ in a time where education loomed large as an indicator of a man’s worth, especially amongst the middling sort and elite. As the 1785 ‘Essay on Gentlemen’ asserted, any individual could be born to a well-to-do

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620 Gill, ‘Devoting the Pen to your Service’, 100.
family, but ‘education must make gentlemen or brutes’.\textsuperscript{621} The question of how naval men should be educated was one which reared its head time and time again during the period under study, and which Samantha Cavell has described as ‘a long debate over the merits of schooling and training ashore or afloat’.\textsuperscript{622} The heart of this argument lay in the fact that would-be commissioned officers, known as ‘young gentlemen’ on their entrance into the navy, were ‘gentlemen born’ or at least ‘near-gentlemen-born’.\textsuperscript{623} Largely the second sons of elite families, these were men who would fail to inherit an estate but who were still expected to embark on careers which would secure their position in society as gentlemen. However, the training and day-to-day skills one was required to receive and possess as a naval officer were often seen as being at odds with the conduct and education of a gentleman. The modes of knowledge expected of these men on shore – classical learning and education in the theoretical precepts of science – were important cultural signifiers, and had the power to separate the polite from the vulgar. Although the mastery of scientific instruments was one arena in which acceptable gentlemanly masculine conduct on shore and ship could, at least in theory, be equated, there were many other arenas where they could not.

Historians of the eighteenth century have long recognised the importance of education and specific forms of learning and knowing in shaping elite masculinity. Michele Cohen’s study of masculinity, nationality and language has argued for the centrality of a rounded education which included reading.

\textsuperscript{621} Cavell, A Midshipmen and Quarterdeck, 70.
\textsuperscript{622} Ibid, 25.
\textsuperscript{623} Lewis, A Social History, 24.
speaking and writing. These cultural accomplishments were to be more than mere ornament, but rather a reflection of the inner life of the man, and a mirror of his virtuous manliness.\textsuperscript{624} Politeness, the much-touted touchstone of eighteenth-century masculinity, has been discussed as reliant on self-improvement and polish through education and learning by several scholars. As the tenets of a well-rounded education were popularised further down the social scale, notions of self-improvement through study, understanding, and the ability to communicate this understanding were emphasised.\textsuperscript{625} The study of the history of masculinity has moved far beyond an analysis which prides politeness as the \textit{modus operandi} of all middling and elite men, or even one which accepts that politeness was a cohesive set of ideals. Indeed, this thesis seeks to fundamentally question the overwhelming emphasis which has been placed on the cultural fashioning of the masculine self.

However, when it came to a man’s education whilst at sea, it seems there was an evident disjuncture between the forms of learning expected on shore and those accessible at sea. This was discussed contemporarily as an issue which caused real, tangible concern. In an introduction to the memoirs of Lieutenant James Trevenen, written by his brother-in-law Admiral Sir Charles Vinicombe Penrose, the author pointed out Trevenen’s ‘indefatigable’ attitude to learning before he left the Royal Naval Academy. Penrose wrote that as a young man

\begin{footnotesize}
\item[624] Cohen, \textit{Fashioning Masculinity}, 56.
\end{footnotesize}
Trevenen had seemed to value his education especially as he foresaw a time ‘when more action would deprive him of the leisure requisite for making improvements in science’. Similarly, amongst the largely positive reflections of Admiral Thomas Byam Martin on his life spent at sea, lies the admission that he ‘came to be sensible of the degradation attached to me, as the son of a gentleman, without a suitable education’. Byam Martin’s time at sea afforded him little scope to correct this ‘degradation’, despite his ‘double diligence’ in gentlemanly learning.

However, the emphasis on gaining practical skill and in working with one’s hands, rather than studying and conversing, does not seem to be the problem which commentators had with the navy as a site of educative influence. The applause for practical genius and education rang throughout the century, and to design, to tinker, and to create was understood to be an increasingly acceptable way of asserting one’s cultural currency. This was an avenue of scientific assertion which was open to naval men, and Matthew Paskins has found myriad examples of lieutenants and captains who were awarded medals or money prizes by various bodies for inventing. These inventions were largely designed to improve the safety, speed and architecture of the naval vessel. In 1798, William Bolton of the Royal Navy invented a machine which could draw bolts in and out of ships, whilst 1776 saw William Shipley create a ‘floating light for preserving the lives of those who fall overboard at Sea’. Both were awarded the gold and silver medal respectively by the Society for the

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Encouragement of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce. In Jane Austen’s *Persuasion* Captain Harville is commented on for his mind of ‘usefulness and ingenuity’. Although Harville is described as being ‘no reader’, he is able to skilfully fashion ‘very pretty shelves’ of his own devising, and create improvements to the needles and pins for net-making which he already had. Far from marking him out as a weak-minded man, Harville is painted throughout the novel as a paragon of virtue and sensibility; the inner conviction which so many late eighteenth-century commentators argued was what maketh the man.

To be inventive and broadly ‘hands-on’ then, was not the bugbear which commentators such as Halloran had with the navy as a nursery for the mind. Indeed, ‘seamanship’ and the art of managing a vessel was, for obvious reasons, not seen as a failing in men who opted for a naval career. Alongside their quadrants, lieutenants of high repute purchased manuals with titles such as *Practical Seamanship*, and Vice-Admiral Sir William Dillon remembered that on boarding a vessel he had ‘two separate duties to learn – Seamanship and Navigation’. Naval men were required to be able to order improvements to the ship and to govern it correctly, meaning that an understanding of the procedures involved in sailing and seamanship was required. Rather, dissatisfaction seemed to stem from the ship as a specific

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630 CL HAR/161 Lieutenant William Edward Fiott’s receipt from I.W.Norie 9th July 1819.
631 Lewis, *Dillon’s Narrative*, 22.
physical and social environment, and the ways in which this might impact on the mind of a man. Experience on board ship was continually discussed as being the primary way through which men would pick up the skills of seamanship and thus gain primacy in their profession. One had to be at sea in order to gain the practical experience necessary to win battles, to navigate, and to command a crew. Captain Thomas Charles Brodie was judged in 1808 as being ‘rather rum in his nauticals’ as he ‘had not his foot on board a ship since he was a lieutenant’.632 Meanwhile, more than one academy in London offered experience in sailing as well as navigation, in order to make young men an ‘expert by actual duty in heaving the log, soundings, and working a vessel at sea’. The academy of J. Bettesworth on Paradise Row in Chelsea even boasted ‘a large ship that moves round on a swivel, and trucks; with three masts, yards, rigging, sails, &c. large enough for 24 gentlemen to go aloft at one time’.633

The problem was thus not that the skills required for sailing negated gentlemanly learning and polish, but rather that the ship as a lived environment often made reading and studying impracticable. As N.A.M Rodger has pointed out, the Royal Navy was different to its continental counterparts in that the service required men to learn their profession at sea. This meant that from a young age, officers would have been aboard ship learning seamanship, a skill in which they took intense pride, and which they never ceased to stress was the essential foundation of a naval career.634 However, despite this pride, the navy was deficient in providing a theoretical education outside of the

632 Huskisson, *Eyewitness to Trafalgar*, 180.
634 Rodger, ‘Training or Education’, 5.
necessary navigational skills. Those who learned at the Royal Naval Academy at Portsmouth were seen to have some advantage in their education due to the institution’s focus on monitoring student progression and the inclusion of a wide syllabus. However, only around 2% of officers would pass through the Academy’s doors, leaving the large part to garner their education whilst living as a resident of a naval man-of-war. It was often the realities of this residence which meant that ongoing processes of studying were halted, and seamanship took precedence. A naval career was understood to stunt gentlemanly education, and to halt scholarly ambitions over and above what was needed in order to guide the ship. The Reverend Halloran, when proposing opening his own London-based naval academy in 1801, wrote that despite officers’ abilities in using navigational skills, and in seamanship, the large majority ‘possess a scientific knowledge of theory of an ant, which is the basis of our national Greatness, & security’.

Similarly, the Reverend Edward Mangin, on arriving aboard HMS Gloucester noted the ways in which the naval ship made writing and reading an impossibility. Upon trying to write in the gunroom, Mangin found that even a ‘common letter’ was impossible to compose, thanks to the ‘rambling and rioting in the Gun-room, and by seamen perpetually passing and repassing, and stretching themselves out over the stern-ports (our only windows)’. Mangin thought that he might find a quieter spot in the wardroom with the lieutenants,


\[637\] CL CRK/6/105 Letter from Reverend Halloran to Benjamin Tucker 7th August 1801.
only to find it ‘not exactly adapted for study’ and plagued by most of the
distractions he had found in the gun room. The Reverend thus found his
transition on to the ship as a man of learning extremely difficult. Mangin noted
that although he had been ‘long accustomed to the Society of the polite, the
learned and the effeminate’, he now saw his position as doomed to associate
with a group of lieutenants ‘to whom not any of those epithets could possibly
be applied’. A chaplain’s role, he claimed, was completely at odds with life
aboard a naval ship, as ‘every object around him is at variance with the
sensibilities of a rational and enlightened mind’, and only the ‘complex and
ingenious’ modes of warfare are considered worth knowing.638 The Reverend
William Price similarly noted that he had been provided with no space in
which to ‘prosecute his studys for the Good of the Souls committed to his
Charge’ for several months.639

The naval vessel seemed therefore to counteract attempts at solitary or
individual learning, and rather gave itself over to interruption and raucous
conversation. Although on larger ships there were spaces in which
midshipmen could study quietly within the cockpit, it often appears that
shipboard life and routine disrupted studies with far greater frequency than it
encouraged them. Writing in the 1830s, Lieutenant Edward Bryant petitioned
the Navy Board stating that he was ‘imperfectly’ educated in the Navy, and thus
had been unable to enter into correspondence about his mess debt during the
Napoleonic Wars. Bryant claimed he had not been given a chance to argue his

638 Thursfield, Five Naval Journals, 8.
639 TNA ADM 106/1202/316 Letter from William Price to the Navy Board 1st
January 1771.
case with naval authorities due to a paucity of formal education, pointing out that it was 'tolerably well known that the Cockpit was not in those days a very good literary school'.\textsuperscript{640} Life as a midshipman then was not experienced as conducive to study, even in some cases to the extent of being unable to participate in written correspondence. On boarding HMS \textit{Gibraltar} during 1812, one schoolmaster found that the lieutenants were so keen to converse on deck and tell 'anecdotes' that he was 'but seldom occupied by either Book or pen, unless bad weather confined me below'.\textsuperscript{641} In his attempts to educate his young charge in mathematics the realities of being at sea also tempered his scholastic aims. Finding he could make 'little progress' without the necessary books, which were not present on board, the schoolmaster instead educated him in the much more practical reading of maps.\textsuperscript{642} Schoolmasters were generally considered to be of inferior social and professional standing on board ship, and there were few relative to the number of midshipmen. As H. W. Dickinson has argued, their waning role was a 'humble' one, relating to the 'acquisition of basic, professional skills' rather than an education in academic and literary pursuits.\textsuperscript{643}

This perhaps accounts for why, after being at sea for over a decade, Lieutenant Graham Moore found himself a very 'superficial scholar'.\textsuperscript{644} Whilst waiting on board the \textit{Dido} in 1787, Moore longed to return to his father's home, which he judged to be an 'instructive' conversational environment. The only reason for

\textsuperscript{640} CL COD/21/4 Petition of Lieutenant Edward Bryant (undated - 1830s).
\textsuperscript{641} CL JOD/148 Diary of Mid Pysent 1809-1811, 4 (verso).
\textsuperscript{642} Ibid, 7 (recto).
\textsuperscript{643} Dickinson, \textit{Educating the Royal Navy}, 31.
\textsuperscript{644} CUL MS Add. 9303/3, 91.
his staying aboard was that of ‘gaining experience in my profession’, but he relied for ‘good sense, and good taste’ on letters sent to him by his friend Doctor Currie, and the promise that he might soon return to his father’s side.645 There is a sense running through Moore’s diaries that the experience gained in his profession, and the time spent on board, correlates with a decline in the education which he prizes in other men such as his father and Currie. The worry over access to a gentlemanly education is perhaps the cause of James Trevenen’s previously noted desire to make his ‘improvements in science’ before boarding. The living arrangements and cramped personal spaces which the naval vessel provided were ill-suited for study, and it seems to have been generally understood that setting sail was in many respects antithetical to the education which a man of upper and middling social status would be furnished with on shore.

It was not just the architecture of the ship which caused consternation amongst many naval officers. It was understood during this period that it was ‘sufficient and desirable for young officers to be taught by practical seamen whilst afloat’.646 When young gentlemen boarded naval vessels, they were initially required to ‘learn the ropes’ and gain a grounding in the tenets of seamanship. Every officer started his career berthing on the lower deck, and had his first initiation into seafaring life through contact with able seamen.647 As has been demonstrated, this seamanship was understood to be central to naval officer identity, and to supply, along with navigational prowess, the

645 CUL MS Add. 9303/3, 113-114, and 104.
646 Dickinson, Educating the Royal Navy, 31.
647 Rodger, Wooden World, 263.
mental artillery of the late eighteenth-century naval officer. The ways in which seamanship needed to be learned, however, were far more physical and tactile than for navigation, which could be mastered in an Academy or in the comfort of one’s home by employing manual and instrument. Seamanship required direct physical contact with the ship as an environment, and climbing the masts in order to be taught by seamen was considered ‘indispensable’.

As the Reverend Edward Mangin observed, ‘The midshipmen lay out the yards with the seamen and do quite as much of the work, which enables them to better understand the nature of their duty’. Here, knowing the ship through touch and practice was explicitly important. Unlike through navigational practice, taking daily observations, or learning with a schoolmaster, this form of learning and knowing one’s profession saw young gentlemen engaging in intensely physical work with labouring men. Climbing aloft, reefing, furling, learning how to knot and splice, all required a practical engagement with the vessel and what we might term a form of praxic rather than theoretical knowledge. Learning through repeated practice, known as ‘river discipline’, was supervised by ‘sea daddies’. These were ratings who were charged with imparting their hard-earned experience and wisdom to young gentlemen, and who accompanied them aloft, as well as often berthing near them below. It was understood that contact with these men and using them as educative tools on board ship was central to the development of a young gentleman’s career.

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648 Rodger, Wooden World, 42.
649 Thursfield, Five Naval Journals, 464.
Just as the ship as a space could be understood as deleterious to gentlemanly modes of learning, so continual contact with seamen aboard ship was understood to fray manners and gentlemanly ambitions. Although some believed this ‘rough company’ and the skills which could be gained from it was considered the making of a good officer, there were limits to the positive spin put on interacting with ratings.\(^{650}\) In his advice to his son Charles, Alexander Cochrane insisted that going to sea should come second to studies in ‘genteel accomplishment’. He added that Charles must ‘avoid by all means swearing or immodest conversation’, as this form of sociability would ‘degrade a man to a level with the dregs of the people’.\(^{651}\) Here Cochrane begs his son to spend more time in the Academy where he is resident, and not to put out to sea before he has gained some fluency in genteel behaviour.

Worries over the ship acting as a site of socially degenerative influence were expressed by several men who had lived aboard a naval vessel. The letters of Lieutenant William Webley to his mother show that this fear of socio-cultural contamination stemmed from continual close contact with ‘the people’ in the closed environment of the ship. As a young lieutenant, Webley wrote home informing his mother than he feared he would not again be able to converse within ‘amicable society’ due to his extended time away acquiring reluctantly ‘the rude uncultivated manners of a Tar’. Webley hoped that his family and companions at home would still allow him to spend time with them, and that


\(^{651}\) CL TRO/3/8 (8) Letter from Sir Alexander Cochrane to Charles Cochrane 24\(^{\text{th}}\) September 1810.
he could perhaps ‘learn to imitate their great and good examples’.

Unlike other professions ascribed as suitable for a man of means, a naval career meant that a large part of early training was spent with labouring men in the tops or below decks. Although this was considered a necessity in order to get men used to the work required in sustaining the ship as a physical environment, and in ensuring safety aboard, voices such as those of Webley and Cochrane signal that this form of masculine association was not always to be deemed constructive of a respectable form of masculinity.

Indeed, many discussions of polite education during the eighteenth century centred around an understanding that interaction with other learned men buffed and polished one’s character, shaping it into a more perfectly educated and socially easy model. As R. H. Sweet has argued, it was conversation and interaction that had the power to ‘smooth the roughness of manners and develop other proper qualities of complaisance and civility’.

Paul Langford meanwhile has pointed out the role of politeness in creating a social environment for commercial transactions amongst the middling sort. This form of politeness also needed to be continually shaped by the ‘polish that derived from social contact’ and its implementation in creating networks for trade and professional development.

This analysis, however, is predicated on the assumption that men of the middling sort and elite only associated with other men of the same status. For young gentlemen who boarded naval ships, masculine interaction was as frequently with men who were considered to be

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652 CL WEB/3, Letter from William Webley to his mother 30th March 1796.
‘vulgar’ as with other midshipmen and officers. Admiral Vernon feared that if officers were to develop ‘courage’ and action which the sea service was often equated with, they would be in danger of being ‘level’ with the ‘common seaman’. The learning process of time spent aboard then, whilst seen as central to becoming proficient in seamanship, was understood to have the potential for social degradation and the unlearning of gentlemanly comportment. Whilst masculine interaction within polite society on shore could breed manners and conversational skills with which to showcase an education, the realities of life aboard ship had quite a different effect. As George III wrote to his son William, at sea in 1784, ‘the natural attendance whilst at sea certainly has no advantage to your manners’.

Spending the early parts, and importantly educational parts, of one’s professional career living cheek by jowl with ratings, and being taught from their own experiential skill was thus seen as corrosive of manners and refinement. Continual association could be judged as a potentially contaminating force, liable to render men such as William Webley stunted in their society through association with labouring men. Learning, and the education acquired aboard a naval ship, was understood to be in continual opposition with many precepts of elite and middling masculine identity on shore. Knowledge was not purely a boon, but could prove problematic for masculine identity and it seems that certain types of understanding could

655 J. Hanway, *The Seaman’s Faithful Companion; Being Religious and moral advice to the officers in the Royal Navy; masters in the merchants service; their apprentices; and to seamen in general* (London:1763), ii.

656 Quoted in Cavell, *Midshipmen and Quarterdeck Boys*, 70.

657 Ibid, 69.
create an apparent ‘levelling effect’. Just as the cultural currency of navigational knowledge could face obstacles when put in to practice on board the naval ship, so creating the foundations of knowledge in seamanship opened men up to a critique of social degradation in the eyes of their shorebound counterparts.

For seamen, however, social standing and success was accompanied by a steadily increasing evidence of their interaction with the ship’s ropes, planks and sails. Lived experience was the cornerstone of lower-deck understandings of different degrees of knowledge. Whilst older midshipmen were often looked on as pitiful figures - unable to gain patronage or secure promotion through their examination - older seamen were prided on their ability to weave a yarn and their ingrained knowledge of ship work. As seen in Chapter Three, officer identity was also reliant on experience, and the ability to perform duty during warfare. However, for ratings, legitimate masculinity was dependent on a deep knowledge of the ship and the sea as physical environments as well as the brief flashes of glorious service which battle could bring. Although most ratings were in their late twenties, many joined as boys, meaning they were already steeped in nautical knowhow. Storytelling shored up a man’s knowledge of the world and tales were often punctuated with memories of battles, tempests, and far flung climes. The act of sharing this information provided a performance on the forecastle.

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658 Rodger, Wooden World, 114.
659 Linebaugh and Rediker, The Many Headed Hydra, 160 and Leech, Thirty Years, 73.
Experience was also made manifest in being able to glean an understanding of the ship’s location without navigational instruments. Indeed, this was invoked by satirists of the period. Figure 5.5 depicts an altercation between a lieutenant and several seamen. One of them has broken the compass, and the lieutenant asks how the ‘blundering bogtrotter’ who has broken it now expects him to steer his vessel. Whilst one xenophobic stereotype of a Scottish seaman attempts to cover for his friend by introducing his ‘Scotch loose’, which will purportedly show the true north, allowing them to construct another compass. Alongside this bluffing, however, our attention is drawn to the seaman dropping the lead in to sea and saying, one must assume quietly as no one notices him, ‘By the deep Nine’.

Fig. 5.5. Thomas Tegg  Making a compass at sea – or the Use of a Scotch Louse  225 x 324 mm  National Maritime Museum, Ref.: PAG8606
This is testament to both the perceived inability of commissioned officers to navigate without the instruments provided for them by the Royal Navy, and the more ancient knowledge which seamen were seen to possess. The ‘deep nine’ refers to submerging a knotted rope in to the sea in order to ascertain the depth of the ocean, and thus aid navigation in inshore waters. Although naturally less accurate that many of the newer methods, it was nonetheless a reliable way of discovering whether the seafloor was suitable for anchoring, and how close they might be to shore by the number of fathoms measured. Importantly, these methods were also not liable to malfunction or breakage, unless under the unlikely circumstance that a ship ran out of rope. Indeed, nestled in between instructions on the use of the sea compass and the quadrant in William Emerson’s 1764 edition of *Navigation; or, the Art of Sailing upon the Sea* lay the advice that, ‘The way the ship makes may be nearly estimated by an old experienced seaman; or it may be known by the distance of two marks on the ship’s side’.660

Indeed, it was movement throughout the ship and the ability to estimate the ship’s place through tacit experience which seems to have been the aim of learning aboard naval ships for ratings. Although once aboard ship, many would be asked to ‘box the compass’, meaning to name all the points shown on a compass card, Robert Hay found on his arrival on board HMS *Eling* in 1803 that being able to ‘steer in moderate weather, heave the lead, go expeditiously aloft, and to be of some service once I was up’ made up the large part of his

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660 W. Emerson, *Navigation; or, the Art of Sailing upon the Sea* (London: 1764), 6.
training. Over the course of his naval career, Hay’s enquiring mind would result in his picking up of charts and borrowing of instruments from his superiors. However, to access the observations of midshipmen and the workings of their charts, Hay found himself having to ‘throw’ himself in the way of any ‘little errands’ which would place him with the wardroom sentinel whenever they were to be passed to the captain. Far older modes of maritime knowledge co-existed alongside the developments in eighteenth-century navigational technology, and were often seen to be invested in the hands and minds of ‘experienced’ seamen. Whilst young gentlemen and lieutenants were expected to have a good working knowledge of the seamen’s basic skills, this was to be a small part of their portfolio of learning, and had potential to corrode the other forms of knowledge they were expected to embody. For seamen on the other hand, the tacit knowledge of working with the ship was the central pillar of their labour. Seamen did not necessarily procure and own objects in order to measure distances and depths, but rather their work required an understanding of the ship as a whole object and environment.

Indeed, it was working aloft which prompted Hay’s crewmates to claim that he was in danger of ‘getting spoiled’ by his newfound ‘nautical knowledge’. His encounters with charts and quadrants meanwhile, seem to be clandestine and individually motivated events. Half a century before Hay, another seamen

661 Hay, Landsman Hay, 58.
662 Ibid, 68.
663 Ibid, 92.
664 Hay, Landsman Hay, 58.
named William Spavens would set foot on a naval vessel for the first time. Although pressed from the merchant service in the 1750s, Spavens recalled the ‘pleasure’ he felt when initially boarding and being told by the boatswain he would ‘become a sky-lark and mount up aloft’. Spavens began ‘flattering’ himself, much like Hay on board the *Eling* that he would ‘make great improvement as a sailor’. Indeed, there was a certain level of pride in being selected to go aloft. The skill of a seaman was graduated and men were divided into those who worked in the afterguard and the waist of the ship - undertaking hauling and acts of collective labour - and topmen who were chosen to work aloft with the sails. As Denver Brunsman has argued, although their efforts were not appreciated as transferrable to land, ‘topmen commanded deep respect at sea’. Part of Brunsman’s intervention within the historiography on eighteenth-century seamen is to assert that although impressment took away manly independence, this group of men took immense pride in being able to work aloft. The work itself was highly skilled, and required men to balance ‘like trapeze artists, with their feet on ropes hanging below and their chests pressed against the yards’.

Lieutenant Graham Moore recorded stationing one of the seamen of HMS *Perseus* in the main top ‘in order to make something of him’, whilst rating William Richardson described his feelings of ‘fortune’ in being made captain of

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668 CUL MS Add. 9303/2, 16 (recto).
the main top. This fortune, however, was not mere gratitude to the officers who anointed them as topmen. There is also evidence that the skill gained in the tops could be used as leverage against those with more official authority on board the vessel. The experience of being in the tops, and of working high above the ship, deftly swinging and climbing, clearly filled men with a sense of the value of their labour. Seamen recognized the gravity of this skill, and, importantly, recognized that they could do things which the large majority of officers could not. During the turbulent summer of 1797, eighteen seamen and two marines belonging to the HMS Sandwich were tried for attempting to form mutinous assemblies whilst in port. One of the prisoners William Gregory had handed a pilot a written bill, desiring it be printed and ‘put upon Pillars of the Exchange in London or other publick places’. The bill presented the wrongs that the crew had fallen foul of, and the ‘slavery’ under which they were forced to toil. One of the main points aimed at the public was:

“Shall we, who amid the rage of the Tempest, and the war of Jarring Elements, undaunted climb the unsteady cordage, and totter on the Top Masts dreadful heights, suffer ourselves to be treated worse, than the dregs of London’s streets?”

Gregory and his shipmates were clearly working on the understanding that they, not the officers, and not the public at home, possessed the skills to ‘undaunted’ traverse the ‘dreadful heights’ of the ship’s masts. Most important

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669 CL JOD/156/2, 27.
670 TNA ADM 1/5340 6th July 1797.
here is that this group of seamen saw this skill set as a reason they deserved to be treated better than they currently were by the captain and officers. There was an understanding that maritime labour trumped officer professionalism when it came to actual situations of danger, and seamen clearly understood that their skills were worth a considerable amount. This is evidenced further in William Richardson’s testimony. After the ‘fortune’ of being instated as the captain of the main top, the Marquis of Huntly arrived on board and practiced climbing the rigging with the second lieutenant. Richardson was tipped off that as captain of the main top he would be able to make the Marquis ‘pay his footing’. Having followed the Marquis up there, he ‘mutter’d out something about fastening people there who had not paid their footing’ until the Marquis paid him half a guinea.671 Once again, knowing the tops was articulated as giving seamen influence predicated on what they knew, and others did not. Once again, the danger of the work is emphasised, and Richardson was effectively threatening the Marquis, alluding to his advantage over him as a seasoned climber. As with the threats of sedition in the shrouds discussed in Chapter Three, those who were able to properly climb and use the ship as a vertical space could claim some ownership over the ship as a site of dissent. Seamen who could learn the ropes and master climbing above as topmen were able to garner respect, as well as using spaces not usually accessed by officers to hold potentially subversive conversations.

However, we must always keep in mind that these were men for whom work and social space were continually overlaid and intertwined. Reefing and furling

671 CL JOD/156/2, 32.
the sails often took place in violent storms, and men were frequently known to meet their fate by falling from the masts on to the deck. There was thus a degree of trust needed between men when working aloft together: a slipped foot or wobble due to someone else’s mistake could have fatal consequences. Furthermore, the songs which accompanied their work suggests that maritime labour was conducted as a coherent ensemble, relying on each other’s rhythms of work to inform their own. Trust here was essential, and working achievements were less the individual acts of heroism ascribed to naval officers, and more a coherent series of actions reliant on a large group of men working together. As outlined in Chapter One, the cellular communality which existed below decks was maintained by repeated practices of sharing food, tales and leisure time together. As men tended to be organized in the same shifts as they were messes, it is likely that those who worked together knew each other intimately through months of sharing the same collective ‘berth’. It seems likely therefore that those bonds of trust needed for the dangerous work in the rigging had their foundations in the relationships which men formed through quotidian contact and the sharing of the berth. The domestic and the labour-based were not two different types of masculine identity, but rather nurtured each other, meaning that seamen continually invested the ship with meaning through movement and relational identity.

Indeed, the physicality of seamen was liable to being shaped by maritime labour just as their social relationships were. Seamen were frequently

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described on shore as an almost alien race. They are often pictured as
displaying a form in popular culture very different to that of the upright
gentleman officer. Jack Tar on shore was invariably stout and stocky in satirical
representations; the hardy, plain-dealing defenders of Old England. In reality
as well, seamen appeared physiologically different to other men, be they
gentlemen or agricultural labourers. A recent excavation of the skeletons of
seamen at Greenwich Hospital has proffered evidence that as a group, these
men would have had a distinctive appearance. The sample uncovered show a
large number of unusual fractures and bone deformities due to falling from
aloft and down hatchways, flat feet from balancing on ropes, and injuries from
heavy objects being crushed against them in turbulent weather. They were
commented on as walking differently from balancing in time with the
movement of the ship on the ocean swell; Robert Hay remembered the
‘practice’ it took to walk on land after a few years at sea. The day to day
rituals of work on board the ship altered the human form of seamen and
marked them out as possessors of a specific set of labour-based skills. This
form of embodied knowledge saw seamen literally shaped by the rigours of
maritime technology and the architecture of the ship, and meant that they
would have been immediately recognisable to each other as well as to the
wider public.

673 C. Boston, “Those in peril on the sea”: Trauma in Two Eighteenth- to Early
Nineteenth-century British Royal Naval Skeletal Assemblages’ in C. Knüsel and
M. J. Smith (eds.) Routledge Handbook of the Bioarchaeology of Human Conflict
674 Hay, Landsman Hay, 156.
The marks which hauling ropes left on the bodies of seamen could also attract unwanted recognition. During the latter part of the eighteenth century and the early years of the nineteenth century, press gangs and crims swarmed port towns, attempting to locate men to feed back into the naval machine. However, as Denver Brunsman has demonstrated, these gangs were not searching for inexperienced men of simply any profession. Rather, press gangs targeted men they believed to be experienced seamen who were skilled in reefing, furling and hauling, and who would not need to be broken in. In order to identify this subset of port communities, press gangs often asked to see the hands of men whom they suspected to have experience amongst the waves. In 1744, the surgeon Robert Spotswood found himself in Wapping. He was quickly picked up by a press gang who were trawling the taverns and brothels of the area, and they asked immediately to see his hands. The naval officer who was present tried to prove that Spotswood’s hands ‘had been pulling or hauling ropes for years’, although he ‘evidently saw it was not the case’. At the beginning of the nineteenth century, Robert Hay was accosted near a sailor haunt in Tower Hill and had his hands examined. Despite Hay’s protestations, his hands were found to be ‘hard with work, and perhaps a little discoloured with tar’, resulting in the press gang remanding him for closer examination, and eventually imprisoning him on board a ship. The physical manifestations of maritime labour were unique, and unlike those even of miners or farm labourers in the specific marking and shaping of the body which working at sea

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created. Seamen were clearly recognised as such, and little argument could be made against the observance of tarred and hardened hands.

Maritime labour shaped their bodies, and made many who had been at sea for some time entirely recognizable as deep sea sailors. Seamen were described as creations of the deep; as ‘Amphibious Creatures’ who could not ‘live long out of water’.678 They were beings who could appear ‘more like a seal than a man’ after years of hard service.679 We also find within contemporary comment, seamen described as having bodies that were physical mirrors of their working environment. Ned Ward wrote in his Wooden World Dissected of seamen waking on board, gazing on a new day at sea as they ‘hawl’ open their eyes until they find their ‘top-lights’ shine, and scratch their ‘poop’.

Several scholars have elucidated the value of examining how practice shapes human-object relationships, rather than seeing the physical world only as a series of signs and indicators. In his study of hierarchies of power in modern grasslands Cameroon, Jean-Pierre Warnier borrows the psychoanalytic term ‘anaclisis’ to describe the way in which actions and bodies are shaped by the material world.681 Warnier defines what he calls a ‘sensori-motor culture propped up against material culture’.682 For the purposes of studying a modern African society, Warnier examines the everyday practices, such as movement around and in the palace of the chief, which propped up power relationships and

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682 Ibid, 1.

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political organisation. In his analysis, power can be formed through ‘procedural knowledge’, which is gained only through repeated practice and ritual, and constitutes a symbiotic process between the formation of the psychological and physiological. This exploration of the ways humans can be shaped by the material in physiological reactions and movements, is echoed in some historiography for this period, but needs to be expanded upon. Although authors who engage with the practice turn examine ritual and repeated motion, there is a need to look at how the body as well as the mind were impacted, and the ways in which physical difference could behave as an organising social and cultural category. This is a salient argument for any study of seafaring and learned or embodied knowledge, as it is clear that the ship as a physical space impinged on modes of learning and impacted movement and action.

However, for naval seamen, it seems that the relation between the material world and the body goes even beyond this. Seamen were being shaped permanently by a series of repeated quotidian actions and engagement with their working and living environment. Their specialist set of skills and retinue of knowledge, and the repetition of practice which it took to gain this as experience, was represented in their physical form. The body of the gentleman officer, holding his instrument for observation, denotes a form of material interaction with learning which could be dissociated. Instruments, charts, books and manuals could be picked up and put down. Whilst one needed to change the positioning of one's body in order to use the instrument correctly,

683 Ibid, 9.
this was a short-term alteration in ‘sensori-motor culture’. Seamen, however, were shaped by the deep in the long-term, leading to the supposition that they were creatures rather than men. For naval ratings, the boundaries between body, space and materiality were continually being blurred and faded, and men must have understood their own and their messmates bodies to be bound physiologically to maritime labour.

It is difficult to ascertain what men felt about this. Clearly, being picked up by a press gang because of one’s undeniable appearance was not a positive experience. Men’s attempts to desert were likely continually frustrated not only by their outer wear but also by their ways in which their bodies lumbered and hunched on land, and the unmistakable meaning of ‘hardened’ hands. However, the weight seamen placed on experiential knowledge, and in having been, seen, touched and done, perhaps points to a way in the physical marks of a long life at sea may could be translated in to social capital on board and in the seafaring communities of eighteenth-century Britain. As demonstrated in Chapter Three, men were able to recognise each others’ scars and whip marks. Being able to read the body, and to read physical, tactile, maritime experience into it may have helped in ‘knowing one’s own’ on shore, and in recognising the hard-won experience which could stem from years of experience living cheek by jowl with other maritime labourers. The lack of testimony from common seamen on their understandings is, as always, frustrating here. However, it does not seem to be a huge leap to assume that at least on some level, the seaman’s body could act as a source of social pride, as well as physical difference.
Conclusion

Knowledge on board the late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century naval ship was thus social and material as much as it was theoretical. What one knew, and how one learned it, shaped the ship as a social space and was liable to cause animosity and anxiety. The mastery of certain objects, such as the quadrant, and the material environments, such as the shrouds, allowed men who were not necessarily given a place in the ship's official hierarchy some leverage on board. In this sense, knowledge was not purely the currency of those who walked the quarterdeck, but was mediated on multiple levels for different ends. The overlapping spaces and cramped conditions of the naval ship meant that different ways of understanding the ship as a space of work and profession often intersected and interacted, sometimes causing conflict and disruption to social formations. Masculinity on the ship was always being constructed and contested. Through turning to knowledge formation and learning, it is evident that the tenets and displays of gentlemanly education for men on shore were frequently untenable at sea. This led to a process of repeated individual negotiations over the social standing of the profession and the way it fitted in to shorebound masculine conduct. However, studying the ways in which knowledge was produced and practised on the ship also reveals that naval men understood the merit of hands-on skills, and did not prize the theoretical alone. This both detracts from assumptions about the eighteenth-century gentleman as a practitioner of solely polite forms of learning, and asserts that newer forms of understanding the world through scientific development had to exist in relation to older practical forms of knowing.
For elite men and would-be officers, the honing and performance of knowledge could be inhibited by the physical breakage of instruments and the lack of space in which to read and write. Reverends Mangin, Halloran and Price all expressed concern over the unsuitability of the naval ship for nurturing the minds of young gentleman and allowing for study or reflection. These were men who inhabited respected professions on shore, and had an expectation of the time allowed a man to hone his education. The ship’s limited space and light, and the necessity that men be attentive to their martial and practical duties, resulted in an environment where this expectation could not be fulfilled. The physical and social nature of the naval ship placed limits on, as much as it proffered opportunities, to an idealised form of professionalised naval knowledge. Whether they liked it or not, the forms of knowledge which a life spent intermittently at sea inculcated set all members of shipboard society apart from the men who resided in the towns of their mother countries.

Maritime and navigational knowledge thus shaped men physically and psychologically, as different skills and practices were worked out in daily life. It is necessary to see this form of differentiated masculine conduct as being formed through daily social practice rather than through the grand narratives of cultural improvement and scientific progress. Most male understanding of what they knew, should know, and what that meant, was not forged in the achievements of the Royal Society, or necessarily in the leaps in technological and natural philosophy during the period. Although such developments are important to our understanding of the eighteenth century, it is key that in
order to understand learning we examine how this was enacted on a daily basis, and how it intersected with the material, spatial and social. Science has been seen by many historians of masculinity as the history of self fashioning and performance. As I hope this chapter has demonstrated, fashioning the self had limits, which were contingent on the specific spaces in which men interacted with each other. This is not to claim that the men who went to see were failures in creating and sustaining a legitimate masculine identity, but rather to draw attention to the uncertainties and difficulties which were attendant for men in perfecting the refined self. Although the naval ship was a very specific place, it seems likely that midshipmen and officers were not the only professional groups of men whose daily life could be at odds with the performance of a learned masculine knowledge.

As well we placing limitations on learning, elite men were also faced with negotiating a set of skills at which men of a lower social standing were more proficient. Different understandings and forms of knowing the ship and the sea co-existed, albeit awkwardly, and had to be recognised in tandem by those aboard. Indeed, training as a midshipman alongside ‘sea daddies’ was a fundamental admission that seamen had a legitimate form of knowledge which they, and only they, could impart to the commanders of the future. This set young elite men on an uneasy footing in relation to the men they would share a ship with. Much social prescription of the day touted that manners and taste were polished through company. As seen in Chapter Two, berthing alongside seamen was one thing, but the acquirement of knowledge and skill from labouring men seems to have discomfited young gentlemen and their families.
However, just as knowledge could cause social anxiety, it could also cohere. The understanding of how to operate a quadrant served as an important social adhesive on the quarterdeck. For midshipmen and officers, the learned performance of navigational instruments bound them together as belonging to a profession who could buy into the codified knowledge of the quadrant and its handbook, and were thus rightful members of the wardroom and the quarterdeck. The shared knowledge of the common seamen resulted in an extension of a culture of fraternal trust and a physically palpable association with each other in terms of their physical appearance. It is important here to flag up the existence of labouring knowledge, not merely as an ancient and unchanged form of work, but also as a conduit for quiet resistance, fraternal bonding, and perhaps social pride. For both ratings and officers, the ship provided a space in which daily life required continual enactment of varying strands of knowledge. To see these as merely performances learned from shore and repeated on board, as in a vacuum, would be to deny the specific masculine identities of naval men, and the peculiarities of the naval ship as a space. In the next chapter, space and masculinity will be identified as they meet shore, and men who had inhabited the ship were reconnected with the realities of terra firma.
Chapter Five: Ship-Shore Economies

The records left by naval officers from the latter half of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries make frequent reference to the difference between the ship whilst under sail and the ship in port. Captain Edward Codrington, cruising off Spain’s eastern seaboard in 1811, wrote to his wife that the difference between this and being anchored just off Mahon in Menorca was akin to 'leaving town for a country life'. In making this comparison, Codrington was attempting to illuminate the scale of the change in shipboard society when a naval vessel dropped its anchor. Although not positioned directly alongside the coast, the traffic of boats, both belonging to the naval ship and those of interlopers on to it, meant that the naval vessel was transformed from a closed society into a hub of social and economic interaction. Indeed, the comparison between the ship’s movement and the progression between town and country was in many ways a pertinent observation. Depending on whether stationary in home waters or abroad, ships were besieged with new victuals and provisions, curious visitors, men and women of different ethnic backgrounds, sellers of trinkets, women providing sexual services, and a seemingly unending procession of boats selling local delicacies and fruit.

When at sea, shipboard society was firmly closed. As N.A.M Rodger has pointed out, the wooden world worked in part because life whilst under sail required every member’s strict adherence to their prescribed role; if orders were

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684 CL COD/21/1/B/1 Letter from Admiral Edward Codrington to his wife 11th – 16th February 1811.
disobeyed and work routines not followed, the lives of every man on board were at stake.\textsuperscript{685} Once anchored, however, ties of duty and deference were partially severed. As the ship’s exterior boundary became permeable, shipboard society became far more cluttered and chaotic: more akin to the urban street than the country estate. Dropping anchor opened the ship as a space and created opportunities for a constellation of social and material interactions disallowed whilst at sea due to the nature of the ship’s physical isolation. Naval seaman Samuel Leech remembered a ship’s entrance into port as being ‘materially different’ to whilst under sail. ‘At sea’, Leech claimed, ‘a sense of danger, an idea of insecurity, is ever present in the mind; in harbor a sense of security lulls the sailor into indulgence’.\textsuperscript{686} For both rating and officer, port represented a relaxation of the strictures of maritime labour. Importantly, vessels spent almost half their time in port, meaning that for those who resided on board, the experience of the open ship was a commonplace one.\textsuperscript{687} British naval ports were invariably described as a hubbub of activity in the eighteenth century. Naval surgeon Peter Cullen remembered his first arrival at Plymouth with ‘awe and amazement’, observing a state of activity unlike anything he ‘had ever seen before, or imagined’. Cullen recalled the sight of hundreds of men restocking ships ready for departure, fitting out, and swarming insect-like against a seascape ‘crowded with men-of-war’.\textsuperscript{688}

\textsuperscript{685} Rodger, \textit{Wooden World}, 44.
\textsuperscript{686} Leech, \textit{Thirty Years}, 113.
\textsuperscript{687} Rodger, \textit{Wooden World}, 37.
\textsuperscript{688} Thursfield, \textit{Five Naval Journals}, 52.
Peter Barfoot and John Wilkes’s *Universal British Directory of Trade* similarly depicted Portsmouth as a hurried place; unpleasant for those not employed in some facet of maritime trade. Their account informed readers that ‘the men of war being often paid here, renders it always full of people, and makes those people seem always in a hurry, so that the inns and taverns are perpetually crouded’.\(^{689}\) In Plymouth meanwhile, the two men wrote of a place dominated by its naval involvement, with many of the houses being given over to naval officers’ residences, and the dry dock holding up to five 80-gun ships.\(^{690}\) The flurry of trade which naval ships brought has been immortalised in Thomas Rowlandson’s *Portsmouth Point*, shown in Figure 6.1. Although a highly satirical version of the town, this caricature demonstrates the bustle which accompanied a ship’s arrival in home port, and the myriad opportunities for dealings with a cast of women, shopkeepers, moneylenders and fellow revellers. Arrival in foreign ports also created a new set of opportunities for men. Shopping was undertaken; visits were made; culturally interesting sights were observed and related to friends and family at home. On his arrival just off Cape Town in February 1801, midshipman Thomas Huskisson’s crewmates took the opportunity to dine on shore, have the ship refitted and restocked, purchase fruit for the journey ahead, as well as find time to ‘be acquainted with the monkeys’.\(^{691}\)


\(^{690}\) Ibid, 261-265.

\(^{691}\) Huskisson, *Eyewitness to Trafalgar*, 21-22.
The examination of the relationship between the ship and shore is not a new pursuit within the study of the eighteenth century, and histories of those embarking on imperial and scientific overseas missions have multiplied in the last couple of decades. Many historians have explored the expeditions undertaken by Captain James Cook to the South Pacific. This has been a conversation which largely focuses on misunderstandings, with Cook’s contact often framed as a project of misguided Enlightenment ideals. Kathleen Wilson sees Cook’s experience of the Tahitian coast as being one predesigned to ballast a sense of enlightened masculinity, whilst others have pointed to the

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centrality of the objects which were exchanged and appropriated in the creation of understandings of the other, both for those who were there and those at home.\textsuperscript{693} Indeed, the orders given to Cook from the Admiralty stated the crew should, on encountering indigenous people, begin by ‘making them Presents of such Trinkets as you may have on board and they may like best’ and ‘inviting them to Traffick’.\textsuperscript{694}

As Nicholas Thomas has shown in his excellent discussion of material culture and object exchange in the Pacific, these material exchanges often proved unstable in their meaning. Drawing on the arguments put forward by Arjun Appadurai, Thomas challenges the static nature of objects, and suggests that as they move through time and space, the meanings attached to material things are rattled loose. These changes occurred through the exchanges and gift networks which tended to accompany early Pacific exploration, and were central to the development of imperial relationships and understandings from Cook’s time to the twentieth century. For Thomas, the point of contact between European ship and Polynesian shore bore a cornucopia of possibilities for new value attachments to material goods. As objects changed hands, the value which they had been held in one culture was transmuted by their appropriation within another set of understandings and beliefs.\textsuperscript{695} Indeed, as


\textsuperscript{694} Clayton, Islands of Truth, 8.

\textsuperscript{695} Thomas, Entangled Objects.
this chapter will seek to discuss, the movement of men around the globe which so dominated eighteenth-century imaginings of the self, often recalibrated the social and cultural connotations attached to objects, and their meaning became fluid. That these movements could impact on how men themselves were framed is starkly evident in the historiography surrounding Joseph Banks. His apparently overly-keen interest in the exotic had him pinned by eighteenth-century observers as a ‘botanizing, foppish curioso’, a ‘Macaroni of the South Pacific’ for whom contact with distant shores had effeminized rather than legitimized to audiences at home. Clearly then, even for men of respected social standing, the communication of experience abroad had to be managed and mediated in order for it to relay the correct messages about experience and identity.

In addition, the port or coast itself has recently come to be discussed as a discrete space within historical and geographical thought. In 2006, Lambert, Martins and Ogborn drew on the work of Greg Dening and Michael Taussig to assert that the beach acted as a ‘social and material space’. Both Dening and Taussig have treated the beach as a space in between spaces; a liminal arena in which encounter is shaped by the geography of the meeting of sea and land. For Dening particularly the beach represents the ultimate site of relativity, one in which ‘tradition is as much invented as handed down’ and in which the

propensity for its inhabitants to behave out of normal social and cultural contexts are multivalent. Coastlines could also serve to cement as well as subvert cultural understanding. Stephen J. Hornsby’s discussion of spaces of power in North America has demonstrated that ‘the relationship between metropolis and frontier depended to a great extent on the nature of the link’. Hornsby’s discussion of the Atlantic port cities of America describes the way in which imperial power was manifest in the arrangement of militaristic architecture and personnel. More recently, projects such as the ‘Port Towns and Urban Cultures’ research project at the University of Portsmouth have received funding to explore the specificities of place in British cities which bordered the sea. The recognition that ports were spaces in which ethnic, class, and gendered identities intersected with the realities of maritime life is an extremely important one, and a further testament to the importance of the lived environment in the understanding of the self.

Building on the foundations of recent scholarship, this chapter considers how the individuals who went to sea in men-of-war interacted with the shore, and how these material and social exchanges played a part in the expression and consolidation of masculine identity. Although unlike Cook and Banks, most naval men discussed here were not actively engaged in processes of imperial knowledge expansion or the circumnavigation of the globe, they remained a group for whom brief periods of contact with shorebound communities were a

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defining experience. When under sail, the ship operated to all intents and purposes as a quasi-institutional space; men could not leave, and were bound to stick to strict routine to keep their temporary homes afloat and functioning.

As has been demonstrated in previous chapters, social interaction and the uses of space and objects were organised along various hierarchies, which brought attendant tensions and possibilities for subversion. Arrival off dry land, however, opened up the society of the ship’s ratings and officers, and thus widened the horizons for how naval identity might be consolidated and comported. Such a shift in the strictures which held a society of men together could also act as disruptive force; destabilising the routines of work and which largely characterised a naval ship under sail. The interactions which took place on the ship’s arrival in port were often defined by the exchange and procurement of objects, and connection with shore allowed for the refurbishment of broken belongings as well as the chance to purchase new items. Material things were thus formative of naval men’s expectations and experiences of approaching land, and this chapter takes seriously the ways in which social relationships were shaped by material exchange.

The chapter will take in to account ways in which men's interactions with objects were fundamentally affected by place and space, as well as locating the intricacies of how shipboard society fundamentally altered when the vessel arrived in port. Rather than create a dichotomy between foreign and home ports, this chapter will instead consider these issues as three related categories: curiosity, consumption, and contact with women. Whilst ‘curiosity’ will examine the objects men acquired overseas and how they imagined this
accumulation, ‘consumption’ will examine how men spent their pay both aboard and when on shore leave in Britain. ‘Contact with women’ meanwhile, will examine the role which female presence played in relation to the lower deck whist the ship was in port. Each section will examine a series of social and material interactions which shaped the way naval men imagined themselves in relation to shipboard society and importantly, in relation to the various masculine identities and performances of eighteenth-century Britain. Not every port in which men would have spent time is considered here. The aim of this chapter is to provide a survey of how the opportunities presented by the ship reaching port were utilized and understood by naval men, rather than an analysis of specific locales.  

In order to investigate these opportunities, this chapter draws upon a wide range of source material, intended to examine both officers and ratings. The letters of midshipmen and officers to their families and friends at home are used to create a picture of how men wanted to communicate the experience of foreign shores, but also to provide accounts of how they chose to represent themselves and their understandings of life aboard ship. This chapter also draws on published and unpublished personal accounts, diaries, and memoirs. These ego documents often provide rich accounts of occurrences which took place when ships came in to contact with land, as well as recording some of the cultural and social significance which men attached to events surrounding arrival in port. These documents are supported by a number of official records

701 Portsmouth is something of an exception due to its characterization throughout the period as an area dominated by naval presence and interest.
such as log books; punishment records; port order books; records of courts martial cases; and official regulations. Using these documents, this chapter will attempt to enliven the meanings of the ship in port as a built space, and the ways in which the traffic of objects and people on and off it could underline understandings of the masculine self.

Curiosity

Several years after HMS *Investigator* and her captain Matthew Flinders had sailed the coast of Australia, amassing natural specimens and detailed coastal charts as she cruised, an eleven year old George Perceval was tussling with a small Mediterranean bird. In what would be the beginning of a long line of attempted gifts home to his family, midshipman Perceval had managed to capture a bird as it landed, only for it to fly out of his grasp. Writing home from Cadiz to his father, Perceval begged ‘tell Mama I tried to keep a Bird for her but it flew away. I assure you it was a very pretty one’. This particular letter also included a brief description and history of the ‘Rock of Gibraltar’, as well as a request that his parents send him ‘some more verses and Nelson’s Private Life also a watch and chain of Ribbons which ever you think best’. This mode of exchange of words and objects across oceans was common amongst eighteenth-century midshipmen and young lieutenants. As their ships anchored in foreign waters, many men seem to have offered up a relic of the places they visited to their families at home, sometimes alongside a desire that an item be sent back to them. Whilst both were based in Gibraltar in 1805, Sarah Susannah Middleton meanwhile wrote of her husband Captain

702 CL PER/1/11 Letter from George Perceval to his father 25th February 1806.
Middleton’s desire to send back seeds and roots to their families in England of the ‘most curious plants’.

There is a sense in much naval correspondence home that an express need existed to collect and transmit mementos or relics of the places with which the ship made contact. These were send either alongside letters, with descriptions of the place of acquisition, or sent in care of others back to home shores. Moreover, young naval men often applied a term to these objects which had far-reaching implications throughout the eighteenth century. At the end of a letter which emphasized the barbarous and money-hungry nature of the Sardinian natives, newly made Lieutenant Henry Walker John Sibthorp wrote to his father that:

“as the Alligator is not one of the ships that are going to Egypt, I am afraid it will not be in my power to procure you any Egyptian curiositys; from one of my messmates I have begged you a small peice [sic] of Pompeys pillar.”

The term curiosity was used time and time again by midshipmen and new lieutenants to describe a range of both natural and ancient artefacts. Sophie Thomas has argued that over the course of the eighteenth century, the word

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703 CL MDT/6 Letter from Susannah Maria Middleton to her sister 7th December 1805.
704 LRO SIB/2/4/9 Letter from Henry Walker John Sibthorp to his father 30th November 1802.
had ‘very particular and multivalent’ meanings.\textsuperscript{705} Curiosities could be artefacts of natural, ethnographic or historic worlds. The meaning binding these seemingly disparate items together seems to be that they were accumulated for their representation and embodiment of a place or culture which existed outside of everyday lived experience in Britain. Over the course of the eighteenth-century, the gathering of curiosities was moving away from an association with natural philosophy and ‘virtuoso culture’,\textsuperscript{706} and by the last quarter of the century was more commonly referred to in travel writings sent back from the Grand Tour and other forms of leisured and cultured masculine travel.\textsuperscript{707} The museum was another space which came to define the collection and transmission of curiosities from overseas during the eighteenth century. Nigel Leask has identified the British Museum as a ‘cabinet of wonder’ in this period, one not too different from the ‘shows of London’ until in to nineteenth-century.\textsuperscript{708} Sophie Thomas meanwhile has examined the ways in which the curiosities which Cook brought back to Britain were subsumed into museum collections and there took on new meanings as repositories of imperial power relationships.\textsuperscript{709} Much historiographical discourse on the collection of curiosities has thus been to place the objects in to narratives of scientific and


\textsuperscript{708} Ibid, 30-31.

\textsuperscript{709} Thomas, ‘Feather Cloaks’, 87.
popular institutions, and to examine what these exchanges can tell us about eighteenth-century cultural life and imperial encounter.

However, their collection was also socially charged, and could result in the character assassination of specific individuals. Collecting curiosities could be, as in the case of Joseph Banks, a prompt for accusations of effeminacy, and Nicholas Thomas has demonstrated that the collecting of curiosities and ‘licentiousness’ were ‘uncomfortably connected’.\(^{710}\) The meaning of curiosity collecting was shifting, and Thomas points out that men struggled to ensure that the practice was understood as legitimate. Whilst tying an interest in unusual objects to the development of science and the public good could be framed as an appropriate pursuit, collecting for one’s own individual purposes and the ‘competitive pursuit of novel objects’ were on far shakier ground in terms of cultural acceptability.\(^{711}\) This suggests that the amassing of curiosities had intensely personal as well as broader cultural significance in terms of natural philosophy, travel writing and museum curation. As this section of the chapter will demonstrate, curiosities were understood to have the power to prop up imaginings of legitimate masculine identity, just as they could detract from it. The men discussed here were tangential collectors of curiosities – their primary aim in going abroad being neither exotic travel nor scientific exploration. However, the objects they collected were invested with powerful meanings and potentially allowed them to secure social and cultural bonds even at a great distance.


\(^{711}\) Ibid, 136.
Over a period of four years at the beginning of the nineteenth century, George Perceval insisted in his letters home that he would be able to find ‘curiosities’ to send to his family. On the 21st May 1807, writing whilst his ship was stationed at Alexandria, Perceval insisted that he had not received any of the money sent to him by his parents, and that if he had he ‘should be able to buy some Curiosities’.712 Two months later and still off Alexandria, Perceval wrote promising he would send some pebbles home to his mother. One year on and George’s desire to procure objects to send home was far from sated. Writing on his way to Cadiz, he reminded his mother to write to him if there was ‘any thing in Particular in the curiosity line that Grand Mamma or any at home wishes for’.713 To his father in January 1811 meanwhile, Perceval noted that he had send by Captain Mitford ‘some curiosities’ from a small island to the West of Spain which were ‘made out of the wood which grew in the cave in which Don Quixote was surprised and taken’.714

Just as with Sibthorp’s ‘power to procure’, Perceval’s collecting of curiosities seems to have been concerned with the transmutation of pieces of the natural and ancient world in to handily sized gifts which could be packaged and sent home to appease family and friends. The lowering of the ship’s anchor in European waters represented a chance for naval men to collect gifts which they saw as tokens of the country they had sailed to. Sadly, the return letters

712 CL PER/1/23 Letter from George Perceval to his mother 21st May 1807.
713 CL PER/1/32 Letter from George Perceval to his mother 1st November 1808.
714 CL PER/1/40 Letter from George Perceval to his father 1st January 1811.
from home to ship do not accompany the letters written by naval men, so there is little sense of to what extent certain pieces were specifically requested by those at home. There are, however, indicators that these objects were supposed to be subsumed in to the household. In 1805, John Martindale Powell, a sailor of good background, wrote to his mother that he would ‘not forget to bring home a piece of the rock’ from Gibraltar. He outlined his plan to use this rock to adorn his ‘Ivory Coach’ once he arrived home and was settled, suggesting that he hoped his experiences abroad would be written in to and displayed as part of his daily life when back on shore.\(^{715}\) George Perceval meanwhile requested to know if the stones he had sent his grandmother had been placed in ‘her grand Armoury’.\(^{716}\) Sibthrop’s power to procure was also concerned with curiosities percolating in to domestic life, and in his letter to his father from just off Corfu he notes his desire to send ‘some boxes of curiosities’ home as soon as possible.\(^{717}\)

Through the collection, handling and transmission of these natural and ancient artifacts from foreign shores to familiar hands in England, midshipmen and lieutenants were able to articulate their experience abroad as that of travel. In sending home ‘curiosities’, they were opening up a discussion of the ship as progressing through time with clear landmarks of progress, as well as allowing themselves room to describe their surroundings and remark on the differences

\(^{715}\) CL AGC/P/17 Letter from John Martindale Powell to his mother 12th June 1805.  
\(^{716}\) CL PER/1/20 Letter from George Perceval to his mother 21st December 1806.  
\(^{717}\) LRO SIB/2/4/10 Letter from Henry Walker John Sibthorp to his father 25th January 1803.
between home and abroad. This assertion of distance through the gifting of curiosities is fundamentally entangled with ideas about eighteenth-century masculinity, and the consolidation of legitimate masculine identities. As discussed in Chapter Two, independence was the cornerstone of elite and upper-middling masculine identity during this period and had manifold but interrelated connotations; to govern freely and without corrupting influence within the political sphere;\(^{718}\) to act as the head of a patriarchal household unit;\(^{719}\) the ability to manage a household;\(^{720}\) and the qualities of self-governance and manly authority over religion, home life, and work.\(^{721}\) The strictures of life aboard ship serving under a captain and the rigors of maritime work did not leave much room for independence to be enacted amongst midshipmen and lieutenants. One might suppose that their wage and the golden goose of prize money would have allowed lieutenants to support a family remotely.

However, as outlined in Chapter Two, this economic and patriarchal independence was sorely lacking for many of the men who went to sea to make naval careers, and time away was time not spent shoring up practices of home making and ensuring cultural and social legitimacy. One of the most common ways in which young men asserted their independence during the mid to late eighteenth-century was the Grand Tour. This, alongside public schooling, was seen as part of extracting elite and upper-middling men from the bosom of

\(^{718}\) McCormack, *The Independent Man*, 27.


\(^{720}\) Harvey, *The Little Republic*, 23.

\(^{721}\) Barker, ‘Soul, purse and family’, 12-35.
family, and thrusting them in to the world in order to achieve what Henry French and Mark Rothery describe as ‘independence and integrity’. The trials and tumults of travelling within Europe without direct parental support, and the cultural encounters which the trip necessitated, were seen to create a well-rounded masculine figure, one whose established independence could then be applied to other spheres of life and learning. In letters home from the Grand Tour, men outlined the landscape and peoples of the continent as well as accruing mementos to take home with them. Collecting was seen as a part of this cultural tourism, as was the sending of artefacts which acted as souvenirs of this leisured travel. In 1775, the Duke of Wharton wrote home from the Dijon leg of his tour, promising to send home a receipt for the frogs he had eaten. Despite the alarming nature of the meal, the receipt, he wrote ‘will be at least a curiosity’.

Just as the original cabinets of curiosity had sought to represent the world in miniature, so the dispatching of ‘curiosities’ home from travel abroad was designed to create a static emblem of the peculiarity and cultural difference of lands overseas. That naval men only seem to have referred to ‘curiosities’ primarily when cruising off mainland Europe suggests that they identified the gifts they were sending with the gendered cultural work of the Grand Tour. The fact that the items denoted as curiosities were generally parts of the natural world, or artefacts from ancient sites, suggests an awareness that the

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act of removal and collection transformed these small gifts from part of the landscape into a culturally valuable object – material artefacts able to assert a narrative of distance, travel, and the experience of everyday life on foreign shores. As Igor Kopytoff has argued, objects move in and out of different value attachments throughout their ‘life history. In Kopytoff’s understanding, commodities are made culturally and cognitively; objects can be removed from their usual use and reappropriated as exceptional purely through the act of an individual or group collecting them. Kopystoff notes that mundane things collected become ‘more singular and worthy just by being collected’. Those pebbles, rocks, pieces of wood, and fragments of ‘Pompeys pillar’ were not salable in Britain, and were not meant as a transmission of material wealth. Rather, through the appropriation of these objects, naval men were establishing themselves as removed from the hearth of their parental home and thus asserting a form of independence which was legitimized by the Grand Tour. Although we should not assume that young naval officers were attempting simply to ape the elite group who travelled Europe, we might see their sending of curiosities as an attempt to locate their experience abroad as one of leisured travel, not purely warfare and work.

Moreover, although these objects were designed to fix experiences as a form of tourism and translate them to family and friends, they also required emotional participation from the recipient. Items from foreign shores were sent largely without the request of a return other than the appreciation and subsumption

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into the home. Rather, it seems the sending of these items was designed to create an audience who were complicit in the manufacturing of an independent identity. If we take Marcel Mauss and Chris Gregory’s findings that the making of an object in to a gift creates a deficit of social obligation on the part of the recipient, and that there is always a time-lag in repaying this debt, the tokens which naval men sent home to their families can be placed in a different light.\textsuperscript{725} The debt incurred by the gifts of curiosities was not material but social; its transmission asked that family members at home identify their absent son or husband as a contributor to family life, whilst also allowing the sender to culturally align themselves with the practices of the Grand Tour through the collection of artefacts. Naval men sent curiosities home, often with the express direction that they be incorporated in to the household which they had left behind months or years before. Their aim was to create a personal audience for their travel within the domestic sphere; embedding their experience of travel materially within the bosom of the homes they had vacated for their profession. It was a method of ensuring they were remembered at home in a specific way. The lieutenants and midshipmen who sent items like this home were usually young men, and there is no evidence to suggest that captains participated in the same specific form of gifting. It therefore seems clear that this practice was an indicator of a moment in the masculine life cycle, during which mastery over one’s own household and social network was unstable due to distance and occupational income.

Consumption

Aside from natural and ancient objects, naval men also consistently sent home gifts purchased from foreign countries. Rather than being small objects which had been picked up and transmuted into a ‘curiosity’ by the process of sending and receipt, these value of these objects was in their cost, and they were sent by captains and admirals, as well as lieutenants. Sojourns overseas could be used to pick up valuable gifts for mothers, sisters, daughters, wives, fathers, and brothers. It is telling that the men who invested in these gifts tended to be of higher rank than those sending curiosities. This would of course be in part due to their larger incomes, and shores up the analysis that young midshipmen and lieutenants sending home curiosities were attempting to legitimize themselves as adult men. Gifts that were purchased in ports still did not seem to have required a return token, and thus some of the basic aims of these may have been the same; reminding family of their role in providership and allowing men to discuss their naval service as a form of tourism rather than as the practical lived realities of a career aboard a man-of-war. The expense of these presents is often emphasized, as well as their exoticism, allowing men to open up an audience at home for their wealth and success. Henry Jenkinson, a confident lieutenant on board the 36-gun Inconstant wrote home to his mother during the autumn of 1811 telling her of the ball which the officers planned to attend at Ramsgate, and another which was to be held on the Monmouth. Wrapping up his letter, he mentioned he had procured ‘five pieces of Handkerchiefs’ from an East Indiaman, and that he would save as many as he
could for his father as ‘They are only fit for gentlemen’. Jenkinson also wrote accounts of other things he would try to buy for his father: arrowroot, Madeira, ‘Segars’.

Cruising off the west coast of Spain in 1805 meanwhile, the much esteemed Captain Robert Barrie found time to collect an array of gifts for his sisters. Barrie bought ‘otto [attar] of Roses’, an extremely popular perfume in eighteenth-century England, and a painting made by the ‘Ladies of the Sergalio’. On reaching Malta, Barrie also sent a ‘shawl & gold trinkets’ for his mother and sisters back with a returning ship. These were consumable items of considerable quality, and allowed men to display a degree of refinement in their choice. Amanda Vickery and John Styles have demonstrated the importance of good taste for eighteenth-century men and women, noting that the appropriation of bought items was often a balancing act between demonstrations of wealth and virtue. Margot Finn meanwhile has demonstrated the central role of gifting to masculine exchange economies in the eighteenth century. Finn points out the purchasing power and understanding of value which eighteenth-century men wielded, and questions the framing of women as the primary consuming force during this period. The gift exchanges of naval men are in many ways akin to the small-scale quotidian gifts which dominate Finn’s narrative. Finn highlights the social value of ‘petty

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726 CL JEN/2 Letter from Henry Jenkinson to his mother 1st September 1811.
727 CL JEN/2 Letter from Henry Jenkinson to his mother 9th June 1811.
728 CL BIE/1/1 Letter from Robert Barrie to his mother 12th October 1805.
729 CL BIE/1/3 Letter from Robert Barrie to his mother 2nd April 1809.
consumer activities' during the eighteenth century, prior to the development of a market-orientated consumer culture in the next century. Finn has also explored the transnational importance of gifting, examining how Anglo-Indian kin networks in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries were sustained through object-exchange. The sending of gifts here fed an emotional economy which 'surmounted substantial spatial, temporal and cultural boundaries' to strengthen both familial and political connections across seas. Similarly, naval men seem to have purchased objects to uphold ties with those they had left behind. Furthermore, gifts were intended to be integrated into cultural value economies hundreds of miles away and to assert themselves within the households they had vacated. Choosing pieces must have been a careful negotiation of local values and influence and imagined opinion at home. Indeed, when Lieutenant William Webley wrote home to his mother, he was keen to couch the objects he planned to send in terms of their value in England. As winter drew in off the coast of Gibraltar, Webley attempted to buy a Persian shawl but found they were ‘very expensive as much as 30 £’. He wrote again six months later, asking his mother to remind his sister that she had not been forgotten in his ‘travels' and that he was collecting ‘two trifles worth her acceptance’, as well as some things for his mother's mantle.

\[733\] CL WEB/3 Letter from William Webley to his mother 25th January 1796.
\[734\] CL WEB/3 Letter from William Webley to his mother 1st June 1796.
There is also evidence that gifting could be fuelled by demand. Admiral Cochrane sent diamonds back for his wife, only to receive a letter from his daughter Jane asking him to send her ‘those Diamonds such as you sent Mama’. The letter finished with 'You must send Mama a few more of them to complete her set ... Put mine in a Box by themselves & direct them to me'. Clearly the diamonds had been well received, and Jane Cochrane saw her chance to use her father’s profession as a means to acquire her own jewels. These luxury objects were clearly markers of men’s, to use Webley’s term, ‘travels’, just as curiosities were employed for younger men. However, more established officers were able to afford gifts of higher monetary value; diamonds, gold, perfume, expensive shawls, wines and cigars. In both cases, men were attempting to marry the expectation of masculine provision with the realities of a life of shipboard travel. Exercising choice over luxury goods tapped into a form of adult manhood which allowed the exercise of good taste and knowledge of value. Although more established officers, captains, and admirals were more likely to have an existing independent households on shore, and income was less likely be a looming concern, the purchase of gifts was still an important strategy for maintaining spousal and kin relationships at home. Each purchase must have been made through a negotiation of what was on offer locally, what was deemed valuable at home, and what would be practicable to send. Indeed, Webley’s letters which promised gifts for his mother’s mantle came with a caveat warning his family that the objects may well become ‘broken’ in their transit home. Webley went on to say that if they failed to reach... 

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735 CL TRO/3/8 (6) Letter from Jane Cochrane to her father, Alexander Cochrane 13\textsuperscript{th} October 1809.
her as a whole, she should still ‘say all the civil things to your neighbours for me’. Naval officers were continually engaged in processes of securing and moulding relationships at home, and we should see them as forging masculine identity in the distance between ship and home, using gifts to enable them to assert their identity within a household, even when absent.

Midshipmen and lieutenants also used their ship’s coming in to port as an opportunity to exercise purchasing power. This seems to have been more pronounced in home ports, where prize money and the paying off of ships gave men surplus cash to fit themselves out with necessaries, as well as cabin furnishings and trinkets. Portsmouth, and to a lesser extent Plymouth, were famed for their provisioning of specifically naval wares. The Portsmouth Gazette and Weekly Advertiser advertised ‘To Officers of the Army and Navy, &c.’ restorative balms, ‘Balsamic Drops’, and refitted medicine chests, whilst the Portsmouth Telegraph notified readers of new books on naval architecture. John Doidge set up shop as a ‘Sword-cutler & Gunsmith’ in Plymouth dock, and George Stebbing joined the already numerous mathematical instrument makers in Portsmouth. Adverts were specifically targeted at naval officers, and products were framed as allowing for durability and the overcoming of constraints enforced by the naval ship. An advertisement for ‘kitchen furniture’ aimed at naval officers for example, stressed that it was ‘not being liable to rust, nor to want new Tinning’ due to its

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736 CL WEB/3 Letter from William Webley to his mother 1st June 1796.
737 The Portsmouth Gazette and Weekly Advertiser (Portsmouth: 14th October 1799), 1.
manufacture of 'strong double-block Tin'.

Plymouth's shops also stocked sturdy camp furniture and 'Green Chairs', painted to withstand the elements. Orange's Restorative Balsamic Drops meanwhile came accompanied with a promise that they were specifically recommended to naval officers as they would 'retain their virtue many years, and in any climate'.

Portsmouth also had many retailers who would fix items which had fared badly after a spell at sea. George Stebbing cleaned chronometers, timepieces, and telescopes, and could replace parts in a marine barometer. A Mr. Eyre recovered boxes, and 'Army & Navy Clothiers' made and repaired uniforms. Naval men shopped in London when ashore too; Admiral Thomas Fremantle seems to have chosen the capital for purchases of silver and tableware, whilst Lieutenant William Edward Fiott opted for Oxford Street to have his trunk lined with striped linen. However, overwhelmingly there was a sense that Portsmouth was shopping capital for fitting out for sea in style. When the MP William Baker sought advice for how to fit his son out for sea in 1793, Captain John Duckworth advised him that 'the things wanting for

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740 CL KEI/L/164 Personal inventory of Lord Viscount George Keith 1797.
741 The Portsmouth Gazette and Weekly Advertiser (Portsmouth: 15th July 1793).
742 CBS D-FR/41/3/10 Admiral Thomas Fremantle's bill from Mr. Eyre 30th August 1810.
745 CL HAR/161 William Edward Fiott’s bill from Woodhouse & Son 28th October 1819.
his Equipment can be procured at Portsmouth’.  

Baker then passed this message on to his son Edward, telling him that ‘at Portsmouth many of the most essential articles must be had. Particularly a sea chest, in which a variety of things will be arranged & assorted a la mode de Marine’. To join this sea chest were buckles, buttons and uniforms; all to be collected in Portsmouth rather than London. Captain Edward Codrington meanwhile was forced to assure Lord Arden that his son must leave London in order to ready himself for a career at sea. Codrington wrote that ‘my little friend should not have any cloths made for him in town, because there is an air of fashion even in a jacket, which London doesn’t understand’. Uniforms, chests, bedding, and ‘Black silk neckcloths’ were all apparently better bought on the coast, and Codrington was insistent that the young Arden shop at Portsmouth where ‘his wants are better known & understood’.  

Indeed, Rear-Admiral Bartholomew James recalled the ‘ridiculous figure’ cut by the tailors in Falmouth for himself and his fellow midshipmen in 1770. He remembered the mismatched swords and uncomfortable clothing provided by those not used to the naval trade, an ordeal which only ended when his captain told him to go and be ‘made decent by the Plymouth tailors’.  

The belief that only Portsmouth, and to some extent Plymouth, could furnish men with items which were ‘a la mode de Marine’ identifies a form of

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746 CL Xduc/27/5 Letter from William Baker to Captain Duckworth 13th January 1793.
748 CL PER/1/46 Letter from Edward Codrington to Lord Arden 7th July 1805.
749 Laughton, Rear-Admiral Bartholomew James, 7-9.
consumption which actively separated itself from other gentlemanly or polite shopping arenas. Naval needs were seen be specific, and could only be furnished by those who 'understood' naval life. Both David Hussey and Margot Finn have demonstrated the breadth of men's consumer acumen, and the 'easy, skilled familiarity' with which their male diarists negotiated markets for furniture and food. Both have also helped us to imagine networks of consumption which did not merely orbit London's sun of luxury consumables. An analysis of naval men can further our knowledge of men and consumption practices through the identification of a discrete group of male consumers, who used their shopping not only to assert their gendered identity within the household and community, but also to mark themselves as members of specific professional grouping. In Portsmouth, we see a group of men whose spending was channelled by the requirements of their profession. We should not assume that this was limiting. The ways in which captains and admirals expressed this to the seemingly unknowing Baker and Arden, and that James's captain saw a stop in Plymouth as necessary to make naval recruits 'decent', suggests that shopping in port could be a socially cohesive process. Men were able to exercise spending power through legitimate avenues and engage in browsing and the physical act of shopping for men which Helen Berry has show to be a cornerstone of refined polite masculinity. 

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751 Berry, ‘Polite Consumption’, 375-394.
However, at the same time midshipmen and lieutenants could assert their
difference from gentlemanly tropes of the shore, and ally themselves with their
brother officers through their spending. Indeed, as a young naval officer Henry
Jenkinson wrote that at Portsmouth he could ‘compleat myself with everything
I want’, recounting his daily trips to the dockyard to stock himself with ‘small
expenses’.752 The emphasis on durability which advertisements employed, and
Codrington’s assertion that ‘London doesn’t understand’ signposts a form of
masculinity which whilst ultimately aspiring to gentlemanly status, literally
bought into its reputation as differentiated. Although in many ways not
independent, and for much of the year lacking the polite society which
according to historians often seems to have dominated eighteenth-century
male life, naval men had access to practices and objects which affirmed their
distance from effeminacy and their matter-of-fact masculinity. Military
masculinity in this sense was about much more than warfare. Instead, it relied
on processes which emphasised the differences between naval officers and
shorebound ideas about gentlemanliness through practice and performance.
Consumption was arguably one such process, and the dropping of the ship’s
anchor allowed midshipmen and admirals alike to fill their wooden worlds
with objects ‘a la mode de Marine’.

These processes, however, were not as simple as buying an object and
performing an identity. As outlined in Chapter Two, objects carefully selected
could easily be ruined by salt and water. Furthermore, lieutenants who had yet
to receive their share of the prize money could find themselves with limited

752 CL JEN/2 Letter January 21st 1810.
funds. This was the case with Graham Moore, who as a midshipman found himself ‘in want of cash’ off Dublin Bay, and again at Cork, where he noted in his diary that he ‘was rather short of cash, and of course could not have much amusement’. On his arrival in the naval service meanwhile, Thomas Huskisson found himself ‘worse furnished with real requisites than anyone else on board’, and unable to go back on shore to buy linen, pens, and ink due to the ship’s imminent departure. Even when objects had been bought, the actual logistics of getting them on board ship could prove immensely difficult. As a midshipman Henry Jenkinson spent months during 1809 anchored off the coast of England and attempting to get his new chest delivered to him, concluding in June that ‘my troubles about my Baggage will never be at an end’.

Things were also left on ship which were needed once on shore. Nelson not only accidentally left his sword aboard during 1799, but a year later found that he had ‘none of the little things either out of the tabled drawer or out of the drawer of the Chest of Drawers’ which had been left in his previous cabin. The naval vessel could make a frustratingly unpredictable temporary home, and the relationship between consuming on home shores and the actual appropriation of goods into shipboard life could be strained. Bought goods

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753 CUL MS Add. 9303/2, 4 (verso) and 8 (recto).
754 Huskisson, Eyewitness to Trafalgar, 10.
755 CL JEN/1 Letter from Henry Jenkinson to his mother 12th July 1809.
756 CL BER/6/5 Letter from Admiral Nelson to Sir Edward Berry 28th October 1799.
757 CL BER/6/10 Letter from Admiral Nelson to Sir Edward Berry 5th December 1800.
were often missed, coveted possessions seemingly lost, and opportunities for spending not always ample. Thus the connection between ship and shore was as fraught with difficulties as it was with opportunities. The ship’s distance from port could complicate the appropriation of articles bought during shore leave, and mean that for naval officers, purchasing in home ports was not a process which had a definite performative outcome.

Off the coast of European, West Indian, and East Indian land meanwhile, entire micro-economies existed which served to bridge the distance between ship and shore. On arrival in foreign ports, boats of men and women would often crowd around an approaching vessel, offering up fruit, rice, vegetables, meats, and liquour. Whilst attempting to desert his ship off the coast of India during the 1790s, new naval sailor William Robinson found an opportune moment to escape during a flurry of salesmanship on the part of the native people, hiding himself in the headsheets whilst the ‘long canoe came along side to sell fruit’. Although one of the fruit sellers eventually noticed him, the officers were far too busy looking at what they could buy for the voyage ahead. Off Madeira too, Robinson remembered the usual offering of wine being complemented by ‘Pine apples, Grapes, Pears, Oranges, Cucumbers, Onions &c’ from the shoal of small local boats which surrounded the man-of-war. As the naval ship sailed between continents, it came into contact with a variety of consumables which could be purchased in order to augment a relatively homogenous naval diet. However, for many, money was not readily available to enter in to these

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758 CL JOD/156/1, 256.
759 CL JOD/156/2, 166.
transactions. Prizes were generally paid off in home ports, and depending how long a ship had been at sea, men's financial reserves were often depleted. Furthermore, as Daniel Defoe's depiction of Robinson Crusoe reminds us, money could be ‘useless stuff’ when in distant lands.\footnote{D. Defoe, \textit{Robinson Crusoe} (London: 1719), 131.} In order to make purchases, men often had to trade the objects that they had on their person or in their chest or cabin. This must have involved a process of revaluation of objects in order to introduce them into new value economies. Igor Kopytoff's argument is extremely salient here. He posits that objects which can gain exchange value can move in and out of being classed as commodities. Commodities here are not specific objects, or even types of object, but refer to the stage in the life cycle of an object during which it is appropriated for the purpose of its value in relation to other objects. Moments of exchange require a process of the homogenization of value of certain objects, as it necessitates both parties to understand a commonality of worth. This theory encapsulates well what was happening between naval ships and local people as the ship traversed the globe.\footnote{Kopytoff, ‘The Cultural Biography of Things’, 73.} More recently, Paula Findlen has discussed the ways in which the early modern period witnessed myriad new understandings of objects in a world ‘increasingly defined by long-distance trading ventures, overseas colonies and dreams of empire’.\footnote{Findlen, ‘Early Modern Things: Objects in Motion, 1500-1800’, 5.} At the borders of maritime ventures, contact with other cultures meant that value had to be renegotiated beyond an object's meaning and value in eighteenth-century England.
This process has been explored in relation to Pacific exploration. Daniel W. Clayton’s work on imperial British presence in Vancouver Island includes an impressive discussion of gift exchange with the native Nuu-chah-nulth people. Clayton discusses the exchanges between British explorers and native islanders, noting the strains put on relationships by the discrepancies created by differing value judgements. Beaver skins were exchanged for a 'New Broad Sword', allowing a brief understanding of reciprocity before tensions arose over the gifts: were they homage payments or signs of a mutually respectful relationship? Naval men also undertook exchanges in a similar vein. In Sumatra, seaman William Spavens remembered his ship's crew approaching a group of men who lived in wigwams who 'took our trinkets in exchange for oranges, melons, paroquets &c. and so parting with them in friendship, we returned to the ship'.

Lieutenant Henry Jenkinson presented an old man living off Vera Cruz with a bottle of rum in order to secure safe passage into the man's fishing territory. In Tangier Bay, naval sailor Robert Wilson remembered that in 1805 he had 'Got some fruit there – for a pocket knife you might get a great number of oranges'. Unlike the historiographical narratives of eighteenth-century Pacific exploration, naval men engaged in fairly low risk material exchanged with other culture, and the paths of commoditization and consumption could be well worn. Wilson’s comment that you ‘might get’ lot of oranges for a knife

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765 CL JEN/2 Letter from Henry Jenkinston to his mother 9th June 1811.  
suggests some form of knowledge of a standardised exchange. A knife would have been one of the sailors’ few owned possessions, but not everyone owned one, and knives could also be borrowed from shipmates if traded or lost.\textsuperscript{767} There existed an underlying assumption here then, that a certain amount of oranges was \textit{worth} a knife.

There is further evidence that seamen understood the value of commonplace objects on ship amongst native peoples in Robert Hay’s account of his ship’s time anchored off Penang Island, Malaysia. One of Hay’s shipmates knew that the natives who sent their boats alongside HMS \textit{Culloden} were ‘very partial’ to the red flannel shirts which were provided for the seamen. Using this, coupled with the natives’ ignorance of how the shirt should look packaged, Hay’s shipmate split his shirt in to four pieces and sold the quarters to four different boats as a whole item.\textsuperscript{768} The value of objects in foreign waters was thus inherently unstable. The commoditization of everyday objects and their use in local exchange could be used in order to sustain harmonious trading relationships with those on shore, or, as with Hay’s acquaintance, could be used as an opportunistic manipulation of the discrepancy in native and naval value systems.

Such forms of trickery were not only the preserve of the common seaman. Whilst cruising the islands off Madagascar in 1801, Thomas Huskisson realised

\textsuperscript{767} TNA ADM 1/5304, 3rd February 1770 – Sailors here borrowed a knife from the sailmaker in order to cut their food, which was eventually used as a murder weapon.

\textsuperscript{768} Hay, \textit{Landsman Hay}, 99.
that the native people did not ‘understand the value of money’. This Huskisson gleaned from the small boats surrounding the ship, and their acceptance of shiny buttons as well as coins in exchange for fruit. He and his midshipmen capitalised on what they deemed to be the ignorance of the locals, and soon stripped their waistcoats of buttons. His messmates ‘obtained a stock’ by ‘bartering the like or things of no higher value’. The midshipmen saw the mutability of object value here as working to their advantage. A coin was only worth its appearance, and could easily be supplanted by a silver button.

However, ignorance of the true value of an object was not only ascribed to native peoples. Although well-to-do Thomas Huskisson (who was raised on his father’s estate in Oxley, and his brother married the daughter of an Admiral) felt confident to comment on his exchange with locals as a boon for him and a result of their lack of understanding, four years later Robert Wilson would frame the naval sailor as the victim in the economy of buttons. Whilst stationed in the Aegean sea, an arrival at the Isle of Tenedos caused Wilson to say of common seamen that ‘For a few horn buttons the boat’s crew could get as much wine as they could drink; it was laughable to see their return on board with scarcely a button on their clothes’. Here, Wilson emphasises the farcical nature of the seaman’s excessive love for alcohol, which takes precedence over the practicality of having buttoned clothes. Whilst for Huskisson the removal of buttons from clothing is an act of considered cunning, trumping the limited ‘understanding of the locals’, Wilson frames the same act as a naïve exercise.

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Wilson’s comments on the seemingly foolish economy of common seamen did not exist in a vacuum. Throughout the eighteenth century, seamen were repeatedly represented in comment and in satire as men who did not properly understand value. Although contemporaries recognised the intrinsic value of the British sailor to a nation increasingly based on global military and mercantile domination, satirical prints showing the sailor as a stout heroic figure at sea - the willing henchman of John Bull - were accompanied by images which suggested that sailors were unable to function naturally on land. Figure 6.2 dates from 1772, and depicts a sailor mistaking his horse for a ship on his journey from the coast to London, the patriotic Union Jack billowing in his steed’s mane.

![Image](image-url)

**Fig. 6.2.** Charles Bretherton *The Sailor’s Return from Portsmouth to London* (1772)
22.7 x 33.7 cm
Lewis Walpole Library, Ref: lwlp4737
Part of this commentary was based around an assumption that sailors, once on land and out of their briny work place, were easily tricked by their misunderstanding of how much bought items were worth. This was true both in foreign and home waters. As with the horn button incident, sailors could be considered wholly naïve in their material exchanges; a preference for wine and immediate gratification trumping fruit which might be beneficial for their health and sustenance on the voyage. Robert Hay remembered that bartering with the boats alongside had to be undertaken in an ‘underhanded way’ off the coast of India, as it was assumed seamen would sell off their own clothes for ‘the commodities that came alongside’.\(^\text{771}\) This is borne out to some extent in the actions of his enterprising shipmate, selling his flannel shirt off as four separate packages. However, it was in home ports where the discussion of seamen as naïve consumers truly takes shape. This is due to British shores being where they received their pay, as well as their being granted ‘liberty’ to go on shore for extended periods of time. In Figure 6.3, a sailor sits with an open bag of coins and raised glass, looking rosy, and with a pile of letters to his ‘doxies’ ready to be sent. The supposed attitude of the sailor is summed up in the final couplet below the image which reads:

> ‘Then for his Doxies all he’ll send  
> What’s dearly earn’d he’ll freely spend’

Figure 6.4 meanwhile depicts the implications of Jack’s doxies arriving. The sinister matronly figure in the background holding a punch bowl perfectly marries the widely held assumption over seamen’s weaknesses for prostitutes and alcohol. Seamen were not known as the ‘Lord of Six Weeks’ for nothing. They were understood to spend fervently and unthinkingly whilst in home ports, before having to submit to the rigours of maritime labour again after they had spent dry.\textsuperscript{772}

\textsuperscript{772} Linebaugh, \textit{The London Hanged}, 131.
Seamen were also understood to invest their hard earned pay in objects which were of seemingly very little value. Whilst off the Downs, midshipman John Martindale Powell wrote to his mother of the ‘two hundred Jews’ who came on board in order to try and sell the crew a miscellany of geegaws. Powell recalled that ‘many of the men were fools enough to buy’. Whilst one seaman paid 8 guineas for a watch which immediately broke, another ‘gave thirty shillings for a Hat that was not worth 12’. This thoughtless spending, Powell concluded, was why seamen were ‘always so poor as they usually are’. In contrast, he
related to his mother his own careful choice of a cake and some soap of a
‘strong yellow’ for sixpence.\footnote{CL AGC/P/17 Letter from John Martindale Powell to his mother 12th June 1805.}

This account is mirrored in Thomas Huskisson’s memory of an event which occurred whilst his ship was stationed off Cawsand Bay at the beginning of the eighteenth century. On anchoring, an ‘immense number of Jews and other dealers’ approached the ship and attempted to sell ‘what they could’. In this instance, the lieutenants attempted to stop the dealers boarding, and fired at the men to stop them from selling to the seamen. However, even the shots fired were not enough the stop the force of the traders, with one ‘rascally Jew’ attempting to jump through a lower deck port, before being shot and killed.\footnote{Huskisson, Trafalgar, 89.}

Clearly, coastal communities believed they could profit from common seamen who occupied the lower deck. In ports where ships were paid off, bumboat women, vendors of a variety of foods and consumables targeted naval ships as easy cash cows as well. At the Nore, after two commissioners came aboard HMS Gloucester to ‘pay the people’ in 1812, ‘Innumerable bumboats came from the land’, much to the dismay of the officers. These boats came with the purpose of profiteering from the newly paid seamen, and arrived alongside the naval ship ‘laden with ready-made clothes, books, hard-ware, cakes, etc’.\footnote{Thursfield, Five Naval Journals, 19.}

Samuel Leech wrote that his fellow seaman’s spending, when confronted with
such opportunity on shore, was 'like an uncaged bird, as gay and quite as thoughtless'.

Sailors were seen as liable to fall for trickery, described as spending their money on worthless trinkets which fell apart in minutes, and needing to be 'protected' from those on shore by officers. In Hay's description of occurrences in the Indian ocean, and Huskisson's of events in the English Channel, shipboard authorities intervenes to limit the spending of seamen, suggesting that the men below decks had not the power to do this themselves. Seamen were understood to be dizzied by guineas. John Martindale Powell's account of their spending emphasized his own considered decision to buy soap alongside their frenzied buying. Leech meanwhile, himself a proponent of the rights of the common seaman, commented on the 'spendthrift habits of most sailors', which apparently left them with 'barely a sufficient quantity of clothing, for present purposes, when they ship'.

Indeed, in a century which has been repeatedly noted for the rise of a consumer culture - one in which rational choice and the cultivation of taste took precedent - the seaman's naïve spending seems to fit somewhat awkwardly. The 'consumer revolution' of the eighteenth century has been seen to have swept the British Isles, leaving in its wake a population of polite

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shoppers and paragons of taste. Taste in the eighteenth-century was contingent on a series of choices made to decide whether a purchase might be ‘socially appropriate’ and which might temper criticisms of luxury, which might be seen as another form of irrational spending. Rational consumer choice has also been seen as opening up opportunities for women during this period. Middling and elite women could make choices which were ‘moderate and reasonable’ to assert their moral virtue, whilst a defining feature of the late century Abolition movement was the involvement of women through their abstinence from consumption of slave-grown sugar. John Styles’ examination of consumption among labouring families finds that they too meted out meager surplus wages in order to afford little luxuries determined by a fashion system. The exception Styles emphasizes is a proportion of young single men, specifically deep-sea sailors, who appeared ‘hungry to acquire petty, fashionable luxuries like watches or laced hats, who subsequently discarded them with little concern for accumulation’.

For us to consider these actions, as contemporary commentators seem to have, as the mark of a ‘foolish’ consumer would be not only a gross oversimplification, but also a denial of the ways in which sailors understood their material worlds. Rather than displaying a naivety, sailors were here

780 Ibid, 16.
adhering to their own form of value, one which does not seem to have prized the durability of bought goods. These purchases were not stand alone examples of foolishness, but rather must be linked to the way seamen worked and lived. As discussed in Chapter Two, lower-deck communities founded themselves on the bedrock of fraternal trust; a trust which was continually made manifest in the sharing of objects below deck accompanied by the abstinence from stealing which was elucidated in Chapter Three. As Chapter Four outlined meanwhile, trust and a sense of tightknit group identity was also part and parcel of the nature of maritime labour, as men would have had to rely on each other for their lives whilst up in the rigging. On shore, men used their time in both home and foreign ports to galvanise their cohesion as a differentiated masculine group; a distinguished type who could rely on each other. William Richardson, a common seamen who would move up to become a gunner, wrote with fond memories of his time stationed off the coast of Bombay. Here, he spent his prize money and sold his watch in order to buy gin for the mess, even though he was purportedly ‘averse to drinking spirits’. One of the men who was apparently not so averse was Richardson’s messmate Emmet. On going ashore shortly after gin was brought into the mess, Emmet drunkenly looked into a shop window in Bombay which contained ‘a globe hanging up to the ceiling with gold fish swimming in it & birds hanging about it’. So amazed was Emmet that he threw a rock, breaking both window and globe, before swiftly being charged 800 rupees as a fine. In order the keep him out of jail, the ship’s company all ‘subscribed’ money to pay off the shopkeeper.782

782 CL JOD/156/2, 17-18.
The sharing of provisions and possessions seems also to have applied to pay, and subscribing money to one’s messmate fits in with a bigger picture of seamen as somewhat distributive of their lot. Richardson’s world was one in which consumerism was removed from the individualistic fashioning of the self, and instead became part of a different social practice; group consolidation. Emmet was both incriminated and saved by this consolidation, and sailor spending shows itself time and time again to be geared towards collective enjoyment. After being captured off New York, seaman Samuel Leech bought his messmates ‘some apples and a turkey’ to stage a festive feast, whilst Robert Manley bought two gallons of rum ‘for the mess’ at Christmas time 1797 when they neared shore. Money was spent on things which could be enjoyed briefly and communally in the mess. Indeed, Robert Wilson, the man who commented so scathingly on a seaman’s trade of buttons for wine qualified his statement by commenting that despite their love of alcohol, naval seamen would always ‘willingly…part with their grog’ as payment for favours from their messmates.

As this chapter has shown, officers were specifically marketed to, and bought in a form of durable gentlemanliness. For seamen, however, time on shore was a chance to spend, seemingly without a long-term strategy. It may well have been that seamen, excited by the arrival of their irregular pay, could be duped in to buying a variety of goods and services for more than their value.

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783 Leech, Thirty Years from Home, 154.
784 TNA ADM 1/5340 13th July 1797.
785 Thursfield, Five Naval Journals, 141.
However, seamen also prized group identity and generosity within the group, and their pay seems to have meant less to them as a tool with which to buy long-lasting indicators of wealth, as consumables have often been judged by historians. Deep-sea sailors lived hard, and often short, lives and their concern with instant gratification and fraternal celebration with food and drink may well have made up part of the ‘devil-may-care’ attitude which their working conditions were seen to foster. As Roland Pietsch has shown, seamen often found themselves in a fraternal state of pre-adulthood, their inability to settle resulting in a continuation of a youth mentality. Denver Brunsman has pointed out meanwhile, that property, along with long-term economic freedom, were tenets of adult masculinity denied seamen in the second half of the eighteenth century. Pay was infrequent, and freedom to leave their profession heavily circumscribed. Seamen were therefore forced to occupy a form of masculinity which prized brotherhood and short-term pleasure over investment in domestic luxuries or signifiers of shorebound wealth.

The purchases made by seamen then, were ascribed a different sense of value, that of a group investment in mobility and fraternal living. That common seamen were aware of the construction and consolidation of this identity is evident in their actions once their feet were on dry land at home. Descriptions of seamen, newly home and ready to carouse, litter eighteenth-century social commentary. This is visual, as in the prints previously shown, but also in

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787 Brunsman The Evil Necessity, 145.
accounts from the period. Robert Hay remembered a crew’s arrival at Portsmouth during 1811:

“An elegant hat of straw, indicative of his recent return from a foreign station, cocked on one side; a head of hair reaching to his waistband; a smart switch made from the backbone of a shark under one arm, his doxy under the other”.\(^{788}\)

Having assembled himself thus, the seamen was now reportedly ‘fitted-out, in “good sailing trim”, as he himself styles it’.\(^{789}\) This image of the swaggering sailor, accompanied by souvenirs of foreign shores and clothing which marked him apart, was not merely something imposed on the seamen as a stereotype. This time spent in Portsmouth was as much a performance of masculinity as the gentleman conversing in Vauxhall Pleasure Garden. As early as 1703, Ned Ward caricaturised men of the ‘tarpauling fraternity’ arriving in groups in London docks, hats ‘half full of money’, though soon to be empty.\(^{790}\) Almost a century later, Samuel Leech’s messmates would return from their ‘liberty’ on shore in Plymouth and mock him for not joining in their raucous time and ‘for being so unlike a man-of-war’s-man; while they felt as big as any man on board’.\(^{791}\) Being granted liberty to go ashore and to act like a sailor amongst others who were not was an essential component of lower-deck identity. It crystallized their ‘tarpauling fraternity’ and allowed them to speak of

\(^{789}\) Ibid, 170.
\(^{791}\) Leech, *Thirty Years from Home*, 111.
themselves as a cohesive group. The carefree spending which went alongside this was part and parcel of a form of masculinity which defined itself against the men they dubbed 'lubbers', and strengthened fraternal labour-based bonds. In this light, we might see seamen as highly rational consumers; their pay going to cement a group identity which was necessary in order to endure a life amongst the waves.

**Contact with Women**

Loose spending, however, was only one opportunity which arrival in to shore brought for naval seamen. Whilst at sea, the man-of-war was in many ways a closed society. The boatswain’s call rigidly segmented the working day, and men were expected to attend to their duty when called, at risk of flogging or dismissal. Weather conditions were often poor at sea, and even the captain routinely needed to keep the deck for days to prevent disaster. With the approach to dry land, however, came the sweet scent of liberty. Watches were abandoned; the work of the ship was considerably lighter due to being anchored; and men were granted the ‘liberty’ of going on shore for varying periods of time. This privilege was granted seamen and lieutenants alike. Many lieutenants took advantage of this free time in order to indulge in vice which had hithero been prohibited. An anonymous 1804 letter from a woman in Plymouth calling herself ‘Incognita’ to Edmund Lockyer of the British army decried the recent prevalence of ‘the destructive vice of Gambling’ in the ‘Navy

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793 Ibid, 43.
Post Office’. The Lieutenant John McGreen meanwhile was tried for breaking in to the home of Plymouth resident Jane Christian in August 1801 and having ‘assaulted and misused’ her whilst her family were asleep, whilst Captain Alfred Burton of the Royal Marines witnessed several of the midshipmen of HMS Rota banging on the doors of Plymouth locals at unholy hours. In Portsmouth meanwhile, ‘young Sea-Officers’ lured in married women with gifts of ‘Velvets, Silks &c.;’ the brevity of their stay resulting in little care being given to the existence of a husband.

For eighteenth and early nineteenth-century sailors, however, ‘liberty’ applied to not only to the ability to go ashore, but also to welcoming women on board. In 1768, seaman John Kempton made ‘several provoking speeches’ to a lieutenant after he was denied ‘the Liberty of having Women on board’. When Lieutenant Wardlaw then struck Kempton, the crew defended Kempton’s assertion, shouting ‘One and all’ along with him. Seamen saw women boarding at home ports as a right which should be allowed them for their service. During the mutiny at Spithead in 1797, one of the eight rules established by the committee of seamen was that women be allowed to come on board, and specifically ‘as many come in as choose’.

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794 Plymouth and West Devon Record Office (PWDRO hereafter) 1/680/33.
795 PWDRO 1/1702/108.
796 CL BUR/2 Letter 20th April 1812.
797 R. Wilkins, The Borough: Being a Faithful, tho’ Humorous Description of one of the Strongest Garrisons and Seaport Towns in Great Britain (London: 1748), 10.
798 TNA ADM 1/5304 12th July 1768.
799 WRO CR114A/329, ‘Rules and Orders’ and ‘Resolutions’ made by the mutineers of the squadron under the command of Sir Roger Curtis in April 1797.
admittance of women on board the ship when anchored in home ports could be a serious bugbear for many officers. When in port, the landscape of the ship was changed not only physically, but also socially. Whilst at sea, the naval ship was, although not entirely, largely homosocial. Although warrant officers and commissioned officers may occasionally have taken a wife or sweetheart to sea with them, this was a pleasure denied common seamen.\footnote{Rodger, \textit{Wooden World}, 77.} Once anchored off English shores, however, boatloads of women approached the ship, some keen to see the men who had left them behind, some touting their services as prostitutes. In 1812, as HMS \textit{Gloucester} departed the Nore, an ‘incredible multitude of women’ appeared in boats alongside to ‘bid adieu to their husbands, receive presents from their admirers, plunder them in various other ways, and wish them a happy cruise’.\footnote{Thursfield, \textit{Five Naval Journals}, 19.} Figure 6.5, an 1809 print by Thomas Rowlandson, depicts the fanfare with which women approached and boarded, whilst the title \textit{Cattle Not Insurable} suggests something of the noncommittal nature of many visits and how they were viewed.
In the eyes of many officers, these women were a deeply destabilizing force, and should at all costs be kept from crossing the ship’s boundary. Women were generally seen by officers as a distraction and a negative influence on seamen. In a court martial case from 7th March 1815, testimony references the master of a ship ordering the boatswain’s mate to ‘leave off playing’ as he was distracted from his work by talking to a bumboat woman pulling alongside.\textsuperscript{802}

As Admiral Cornwallis dressed in his cabin at Spithead in 1794, he chanced to look out of the window to see ‘two wherries pulling up to the ship & full of girls’. Cornwallis immediately ordered them away. However, as soon as he left to go on shore, the women boarded in their multitudes.\textsuperscript{803} This seems to have been the trend in terms of women’s presence on board; it was thoroughly

\textsuperscript{802} TNA ADM 1/5448 7th March 1815.
\textsuperscript{803} CL JOD/156/2, 24.
disapproved of but recognized as unpreventable. Even the prudish Reverend Edward Mangin described it as a ‘necessary evil’, commenting that officers often believed it was better to allow women on than let men go on shore and thus risk desertion.\textsuperscript{804}

Comments were frequently made on the transformative power which these women had on shipboard society. Seaman Robert Wilson, newly pressed aboard HMS \textit{Unité} in 1805, remembered that as the women filtered on board he witnessed scenes which could ‘fill a volume’, but which would not be an ‘agreeable thing to those who never heard of the like, and no new thing to those who have’.\textsuperscript{805} In Mangin’s description too, the presence of women transformed the space below decks, with even some midshipmen taking to the cable tiers with their women.\textsuperscript{806} The notion of the berth and the mess was reconfigured; the residence of women below deck resulting in a confusion of bodies and overlapping personal spaces. Indeed, the lower decks divided berths, which seamen normally up in to distinct and discrete social groupings when at sea, were described once women boarded as ‘crowded’, with Robert Hay commenting that the ‘noise and bustle upon the vessel astonished me’.\textsuperscript{807}

As well as sexual pleasure, women also brought another of sailors’ favoured pastimes on board. Rowlandson’s print gives us a hint of this. Many of the women clutch bottles to their chests as they approach the ship, and one raises

\textsuperscript{804} Thursfield, \textit{Five Naval Journals}, 8.
\textsuperscript{805} Ibid, 131.
\textsuperscript{806} Ibid, 8.
\textsuperscript{807} Hay, \textit{Landsman Hay}, 50-52.
a glass to the awaiting men. Whilst in port, it was ‘strictly forbidden’ for seamen to bring liquor on to ship.\textsuperscript{808} This was partly enforced by the limited liberty granted the crew to go on shore. The demand for liquor on board stationary vessels is demonstrated in accounts of vessels in oceans further afield, where fears of desertion were lessened and thus men were allowed greater liberty on shore. Whilst waiting on a hulk at Bombay, William Richardson’s shipmates were allowed liberty to sojourn on land. Richardson records that ‘plenty of hollands gin soon found its way on board from the shore’. Indeed, despite the best efforts of the lieutenants to check illicit goods were not being smuggled on, men stopped their ship-bound boats next to the scuttle hole and passed in the ‘bottles & bladders’ to their waiting messmates.\textsuperscript{809} Even off Scotland during Christmas 1794, when officers were busy feasting and celebrating, enough ‘Wiskey’ was smuggled on board HMS \textit{Prompte} to make some of the crew ‘half mad’.\textsuperscript{810} When the crew’s liberty was severely circumscribed, however, as it often was in home ports immediately after a pay out, men relied on womenfolk to provide their access to alcoholic beverages.

The women who arrived by the boatload were interlopers, and were able to cross the boundary of the ship whilst still being allowed continual access to the shops and alehouses of the shore. The records of courts martial demonstrate the extent to which women acted as smugglers of banned goods. In 1783, whilst anchored off the Devonport dockyard, the wife of James Shields was

\textsuperscript{808} Ibid, 51.
\textsuperscript{809} CL JOD/2, 14-15.
\textsuperscript{810} CL JOD/2, 38.
searched by order of Lieutenant Joseph Larcom on the deck of HMS *Otter*. Shields responded with what were interpreted as ‘mutinous and seditious speeches’. In the court martial case which ensued, John Squires, the Master of the *Otter* defended Larcom’s actions, stating that it was the ‘general custom’ to search all women boarding the *Otter*. Squires argued that it was necessary to search the woman as there had been ‘great deal of drunkenness on board’, which had also led to the wives of the boatswain and cook being searched just before.\(^{811}\)

Clearly, women were suspected as the primary cause of men’s overt drunkenness on board. The presumption that they had been the ones to supply the liquor suggests that female presence aboard ship was understood to be disruptive to lower-deck order by officers. In Robert Hay’s account of a life spent at sea, he recalls the discovery of the illicit goods which Larcom had presumably expected to find. The corporal of marines aboard Hay’s new ship at Plymouth, on helping a sailor’s wife on board, spotted that her calves were ‘rather more bulky than usual’. Immediately he made an incision in her stocking with his sword, and pierced ‘the bladder that was snugly secured there’. As rum poured out, the woman was sent back on shore without being allowed to talk to her husband. In his relating of the event, Hay also references the lower deck being crowded with women and families ‘day and night’; each one presumably another opportunity for seamen to ferry liquor on board.\(^{812}\) Margarette Lincoln’s findings seem to support the commonplace nature of

\(^{811}\) TNA ADM 1/5323, 21\(^{st}\) November 1783.

cases such as these. She writes that the involvement of women, specifically prostitutes, in theft and smuggling once aboard the anchored ship was believed to be rife.\textsuperscript{813}

It is difficult to say whether these women were in fact the ‘wives’ of the men they came aboard to see, or if they were acquaintances or prostitutes. Hay’s mention of families below deck does suggest emotional ties to the groups of women, although seamen famously named as their wives women with different sorts of connections to them. Indeed, we see the term ‘wives’ used throughout in official reports, such as log books and cases of courts marital; both records in which naval regulations would require men to label the women they were spending with as their wives. Historians have examined these women from several angles. Margarette Lincoln’s account emphasizes the difficulties women faced when their husbands were at sea due to a lack of communication and unstable access to naval pay. Lincoln also outlines the coping mechanisms available to prostitutes and women of the ‘labouring and criminal class’, as she terms them, and finds that the women who worked the harbour had many options for money-making, but were essentially ‘vulnerable’.\textsuperscript{814} David Cordingly meanwhile discusses the travails which faced the ‘Heroines & Harlots’ who associated with seamen. Cordingly’s discussion moves through a number of interactions between women and seamen when ships came into port. However, his dichotomisation between the tawdry prostitute waiting to make money from the visiting seaman and the afflicted

\textsuperscript{814} Ibid, 149.
sweetheart waiting at home for his return is an unhelpful one.\textsuperscript{815} The women who boarded the ship whilst it was in port seem to have played a variety of roles in the lives of the seamen they arrived to see. Whilst many would have traded sex for money or goods, this should not dominate the definition of the role they played below decks. As demonstrated, women were conduits for illicit goods and points of contact with the shore when men were disallowed their liberty. Women would have negotiated with men over goods brought on ship: the wife of James Shields was searched after one of many trips to go and purchase ‘some Necessaries’.\textsuperscript{816}

Indeed, women’s negotiations with men did not stop at procuring inebriants. Whilst anchored at Spithead in 1779, reports of theft were rife amongst the crew of HMS \textit{Invincible}. William Tyrell and Richard Russell both stood accused of stealing slops from the purser and other seamen, and selling them in exchange for liquor, tea, sugar, and potatoes. The men, however, had been refused shore leave. They had therefore relied on a woman called ‘Yankee Bett’, the wife of seaman Thomas Bailey, and another unnamed woman in order to carry out their transactions. Bett had carried the shirts to the mainland in batches over the course of weeks, selling them off in exchange for consumables. Although there is no testimony from Bett, the court martial case seems to make clear that she was deeply embedded as a member of the lower-deck social order. She is described by three of the seamen who give evidence as their ‘messmate’. John Tanswell even repeatedly gave her the key to his sea

\textsuperscript{815} Cordingly, \textit{Heroines & Harlots}, 10-12 and 28-36.  
\textsuperscript{816} TNA ADM 1/5323, 21st November 1783.
chest, which was later found to be the storage site for the stolen shirts, claiming his innocence in the matter by stating: ‘I never went down with her to the Chest as we were all messmates’. As demonstrated in Chapter Two, the term ‘messmate’ was a highly emotive one, and suggested a cohesive social unit of equals below deck. Bett’s husband was also involved in trading with the shore, however he sent a ‘girl’ rather than Bett to undertake the transaction. Thomas Bailey sent this now nameless girl on to shore with his messmate’s silver buckles to sell, and she returned shortly after carrying a ‘Quarter of Mutton, a few Potatoes, and some Onions’. Bailey only knew how much this girl got in return for the buckles due to her relaying it to him: ‘she told me that she got 16 s for the buckles’. Bett meanwhile also seems to have had control over meting out her spoils. She was the sole informant on price and how much various items could fetch on dry land.\textsuperscript{817}

This role seems to have given women a fair amount of leeway in managing the seamen’s pockets whilst they were in shore. Bett and her associate were only two of hundreds of women who made regular trips between ship and shore, taxiing objects to dry land in exchange for liquor and food. Furthermore, the absence of women’s testimony and their complete removal from court martial proceedings demonstrates that they were above shipboard law. Indeed, whilst seamen were often flogged for smuggling alcohol aboard, the wife whom Hay observed was simply sent away on a boat.\textsuperscript{818} With their frequent comings and goings, and their ability to control seamen’s material interaction with dry land,

\textsuperscript{817} TNA ADM 1/531 1\textsuperscript{st} November 1779.
\textsuperscript{818} CL WAR/21 Punishment logs of HMS Dragon for July – September 1813 show seven men given 24 lashes for ‘Smuggling liquor’.
sailors’ ‘wives’ were more than merely the ‘cattle’ or sexual playthings which Rowlandson’s print displays them as. Although their voices are lost to us, that women such as Yankee Bett could be treated as ‘messmates’ suggests an relationship with seamen in which was structured on interaction beyond the sexual. Furthermore, their position as intermediaries between ship and shore may well have provided them with some leverage amongst their seafaring bedfellows, as well as providing possibilities for personal financial gain.

**Conclusion**

On the whole, the lowering of a ship's anchor in port, be it home or away, was transformative of the social structure of the ship. What was at sea a tightly controlled hierarchy became a space whose permeability and opportunities for acquiring new goods opened up myriad opportunities for the men who lived aboard. These opportunities – for collecting, spending and carousing – gave men the cultural space necessary in order to consolidate masculine identities. Importantly, these were continually formed in relation to modes of masculinity on shore. However, the relationship was far from one of parroting legitimate shorebound masculinities. Rather, for both officers and ratings, masculinity was formed in the dialogue between the experience of maritime professionalism and labour, and expectations of those on shore. Midshipmen sent home curiosities, thus creating a framework of reference for their experience which invoked both gentlemanly leisure as well as regimental militarism, whilst officers of all ranks perused the shop-lined streets of Portsmouth, examining consumables which marked them out as superior on
ship and distinct on shore.\textsuperscript{819} Naval officers were thus able to mediate masculine identity through the acquiring and appropriation of objects on shore.

For seamen too, the naval vessel’s time in port proffered up opportunities for masculine self expression. This chapter has attempted to show the ways in which the naval seaman’s seemingly careless spending and brash behaviour in home ports were in fact well-honed exercises in group cohesion. Furthermore, this knowledge of how dress and behaviour might be manipulated could be used in order to elude naval authorities in desertion attempts. Both officers and ratings used contact with the shore as opportunities for crystallizing their masculine identities. This could manifest itself both in the assertion of difference and in the hinting at solidarity with more widely accepted tropes of masculine identity. As well as opportunity, port created a sense of instability, both in terms of the social makeup of the ship and in terms of interpretations of value whilst anchored off foreign shores. The traffic of people approaching ship recalibrated the lower deck in a number of ways. Officers expressed concerns over the presence of women, as their arrival on board transformed the lower deck in to a crowded and disarrayed space. This concern was due to their physical presence and necessary incorporation in to the previously well-defined messes, but also their role as intermediaries for the trafficking of banned goods.

\textsuperscript{819} See Chapter Two of this thesis, 58.
When in port the ship itself was remade, restocked, and refitted, the men who spent their working lives aboard found an array of opportunities for gilding the self with assertions of maritime manliness. This was a chance for officers and would-be officers to acquire a retinue of items which would allow them to frame their profession as one which made easy bedfellow of cultured gentlemanly experience. Furthermore, an analysis of the time which ships spent in port places the ship in its temporal as well as spatial context. A career at sea was defined by movement and instability of place. Men entered in to new and makeshift economies as their floating homes moved across the water and neared new points of contact with other people and objects. The material make-up of the ship thus changed meaning as the vessel moved through time and space, and approaching new land could signal a reassessment of the value attached to the objects which have been examined in the previous chapters of this thesis.

Furthermore, whilst time ashore allowed some men to reinforce individual expressions of masculine identity, the ties which bound shipboard society together were palpably weakened. Order was held together whilst at sea through a series of practices and processes which reinforced strict hierarchy, coupled with the dangerous realities of life at sea if disorder broke out. When in port, many of these bonds were loosened. This highlights how contingent shipboard society was on the rhythms of daily life at sea, as well as alerting us to the ultimately temporary nature of domestic life on board the eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century man-of-war. Indeed, Admiral Codrington's analogy of 'town' and 'country' is here extremely apt: the ship's movement into
port destabilized traditional deferential ties, presented opportunities for 
public performance of the self, opened up avenues for vice and allowed 
labouring women an economic role amongst male counterparts. In this sense, 
port for the ship was urbanization writ small, and arrival in to it was 
transformative of social, spatial and material relationships.
Conclusions

In the 1760 edition of Ned Ward’s *The Wooden World Dissected*, the author claimed that the naval ship was, amongst other things, ‘a floating castle’, ‘the great bridge of the ocean’ and the ‘New-Bridewell of the nation’.820 Here, Ward attempted to describe the experiences on board ship by comparing them with those of spaces which existed on shore. Ward’s introduction to the ship moves quickly through various imaginings, and gives the sense that the ship was an irrational space, one which could not be easily aligned with any on shore. Indeed, over two hundred years later, N.A.M Rodger’s seminal work, with its title derived from Ward’s publication, agreed that the naval ship was a thoroughly alien environment to those who had not inhabited it. Rodger wrote that the naval ship was ‘probably less well-known to men of education than the remote countries described in travel books’.821 Although the image of the naval ship featured prominently in much mass-produced material culture and representations of patriotism during the period under study, the realities of living within its wooden walls remained unknown to the vast majority of the eighteenth-century populace.

This did not mean that the lives lived out within these spaces were irrelevant to the wider course of eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century history. By engaging with the naval ship as a series of lived spaces, this thesis has made important contributions to both naval history and the history of eighteenth-century masculinity, on shore as well as at sea. At the forefront of this

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approach has been an understanding that gendered identities are forged, performed and potentially subverted through the interplay of object, space and repeated practice. In studies of the eighteenth century, this is a series of interactions which historiography is beginning to enliven and connect to complex gendered identities. This is evident in the work of historians such as Karen Harvey, Amanda Vickery, Sara Pennell, Margot Finn, Giorgio Riello and Kate Smith. Work by these and several other historians has helped to answer Frank Trentmann’s 2009 call that eighteenth-century material culture be imagined not purely as resplendent comfort, but as a physical world necessitating repeated practice and allowing for human interaction with the minute and everyday. This historiography, however, needs to be expanded, and the ways in which individuals and groups negotiated spaces and the objects which filled them has an extensive history that still remains to be written.

This thesis has taken seriously the built environment in the formation of masculine identities amongst men previously considered peripheral to histories of the eighteenth century on land. Each chapter has demonstrated a different set of interactions with the ship as a space and its shifting material worlds which both mark naval men as different to their shorebound

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counterparts and demonstrates imagined links with land. Seamen cultivated their collective identity on land as well as on ship, and many of their berthing practices may well have been shared by other labour based groups on shore, such as weavers. Officers were also in a continual emotional dialogue between ship and shore. Their desire for masculine independence and professional success was often contradictory, as time spent away from shore and the pay structures of the Royal Navy repeatedly denied them creating a patriarchal base and home. Men expressed deep concern about the forms of learning which they were unable to undertake whilst on ship, and saw it as an environment deleterious to their educational polish. Chapter Five meanwhile, demonstrated that physical interactions with the shore, through material objects and social exchange shaped the identities of officers and ratings. Contact with other men and women here allowed for an alignment of masculine identity which placed itself in relation to shorebound masculinity. In the case of officers, this was often done through practices of shopping, gifting and maintaining connections, whilst seamen used the shore as a chance to reinforce their group identity through spending and socialising. From the start then, any writing on the naval ship must also look at how material and social dialogues with home were conducted. In doing so, this thesis has asserted the importance of the naval ship as a specific space, whilst also ensuring that naval masculinity is not marooned as a distant and peripheral set of social and cultural identities.

To this end, the thesis has repeatedly drawn on the records of courts martial, letters, diaries and memoirs to elucidate exactly how men used the spaces and
objects available to them on the naval ship during this period, and what this might tell us about social identity, authority and the masculine sense of self amongst different groups. As has been made clear, the naval ship was not a single space, but a series of spaces which were continually given different and often overlapping meanings each day. To walk on to HMS Victory in Portsmouth today is to see a clearly delineated organisation of power and prestige, with seamen sharing a crowded and seemingly unsanitary space, officers provisioned with their own rooms and the captain with quarters provided just for him. However, the wooden boards left behind are not what built the experience of inhabiting a naval ship during this period. The seamen's crowded berths were imagined as holding a cellular communality in which sociability was divided into smaller groups and the berth and the mess held powerful meanings to those who shared them. Chapter Four demonstrated the resonance which the lower deck had as a site of contestation. The fact that men locked themselves below and could use their multiple voices as threat demonstrates that the ship facilitated multiple systems of power. The masts are also representative of a type of authority which is not architecturally clear. Skilled work by topmen brought social prestige and the ability to act authoritatively to shipboard superiors. The masts and shrouds were invested with meaning each day by the men who climbed them, and the ability to move vertically as well as horizontally resulted in another layering of the ship's hierarchy.

Officers meanwhile gained scant individual privacy in the wardroom, and its main function as a space seems to have been curtailing the access of the
uncommissioned rather than an enclave for individual privacy. Indeed, this point is one to dwell on, as it has been one of the main interventions of this thesis. As discussed in the introduction, eighteenth-century masculinity has often been understood in broadly cultural terms. This thesis has demonstrated the need to examine masculinity as forged from quotidian social interaction with other men and women, rather than simply a learned display. On shore, men belonged to clubs, workplaces, societies, households and institutions and passed and met other men and women on the street, in the alehouse, on the country lane and in the field. It is surely these interactions, as well as cultural prescription and individual expectations, which were formative of the male sense of self. Future studies must take into account much more fully the social spaces which men occupied, and take seriously small-scale social interaction as a continual process of making and remaking gendered identity. Men on board the naval ship were in almost constant social interaction with others in a contained space, making them an ideal case study for the ways in which sociability can be examined to understand better how men engaged with complex and variegated masculinities. This thesis has located the importance of group identity and practice in studying eighteenth-century men from all walks of life. Whilst the importance of individual emotional life should not be underestimated, each chapter in this thesis has elucidated the ways in which men's expectations and experiences were shaped by the other men they worked, lived and socialised with. The professional, labour-based, social and cultural categories in which individuals place themselves, and the interactions with others who were deemed to also occupy those categories, can be seen to have shaped a sense of self and facilitated various modes of gendered
performance. This is made manifest in seaman frittering and fighting ashore with crewmates, as well as in officers handing over shillings to purchase new candlesticks for the wardroom table.

Another implication of the largely cultural analysis of men during this period has also been the notion that the male self was fashioned with objects. However, as demonstrated in the study of the naval ship, there was much room for failed performance and subversion, as seen with domestic goods and navigational instruments belonging to officers. Seamen meanwhile, still forged their identities in relation to the material world, but on shore in the shedding of consumables, and on ship in the practice of sharing space and things without stealing from messmates. The relationships between masculinity and the material world were thus hugely variegated and cannot be made synonymous purely with consumption and display. Masculine identities were formed and performed in the repeated use and appropriation of objects, and idealised forms of performance with objects could very easily be halted or changed through the effect which time at sea had on possessions. As demonstrated in Chapter Two, the furnishing of the wardroom and the captain’s cabin was not a seamless application of taste resulting in a calculated performance, but was subject to the ship as an environment. Items were soiled, made damp and grew, like men, ‘old in the service’. The relationship between individual and object was thus far more complex than purchase-display and even luxurious items taken on to the ship were unreliable as the furnishings of an elite masculine identity. That officers could be thwarted in their attempts to outfit

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themselves luxuriously for sea should tell us not only that the material world complicated the relationship of officers to the cultural worlds of the shore, but also alert us to the fact that masculine identities existed which were not wholly reliant on the elaborate display of newly shopped-for furnishings and trinkets.

The recent literature on recycling in the eighteenth century has allowed for an understanding of consumerism which does not place the novel and fashionable at its heart, but this needs to be complicated through analyses of gendered appropriation once objects were already within the home and their use through repeated practice.

Other new ways of approaching masculinity should also be apparent through the course of this thesis. The tenacious tendency to divide men and women in the eighteenth century into ‘plebeian’, ‘middling’ and ‘elite’ in order to analyse various aspects of social and cultural life needs to be augmented by studies that focus on more self-organising groups in order to understand nuances in masculine identity. Professional and labour based masculinities are fruitful territories here. What it meant to affiliate oneself with a group of men or women through continual contact and shared performances and practices needs to be explored in depth. Furthermore, the relationships between different types of men need to be examined. The naval ship has demonstrated this in two ways. Not only is it a discrete set of spaces in which we can study the interaction between drastically different types of men, but it also held by its very nature men who belonged to the same profession. In addition to this zeroing in on discrete groups of men, analysis might also be furthered by exploring the relationships between different types of men. There seems to be
a gap in the historiography in relation to the communication between different types of men and the ways in which this could reinforce or challenge facets of masculine identity. The eighteenth century is broadly held to be a period in which public spaces were expanding: streets were becoming more widely used spaces and various urban arenas were becoming occupied by an increasingly various crowd. Will Tullet has recently touched on this in relation to scent and the fop in the pleasure garden, finding that Vauxhall and Ranelagh were unstable sites for genteel masculinity. However, this analysis might be extended to include interactions between masters and servants and interactions between the middling and poor in urban spaces. If we accept that gender is relational between the two sexes, as much gender theory asserts, then we must also hold that various forms of masculine identity were also shaped in relation to each other. Although the ship heightened these interactions due to its close quarters, it was not the only place where men crossed the paths or their social inferiors of betters, and there needs to be greater enquiry into how this worked on gendered identity.

In this re-examination of the naval ship, this thesis has maintained the case for including those who went to sea in wider discussions of masculine identity and, in turn, seeing how their histories can contribute to realigning the terms on which we discuss masculinities more broadly. The men who trod the decks of naval ships used the spaces and objects available to them to form and reform social groupings which defined the way they saw themselves as men and as part of the world. These spaces were not prescriptive in their

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architecture but liable to have their meanings redefined through movement and the interplay of these groups of men. The naval ship can no longer be understood as purely the locus of imperial prowess and Britannia’s rule of the waves, but rather as a site of multiple and sometimes conflicting masculine identities, continually in process and defined in relation to other men, women, things and spaces. Further scholarship on masculinity should seek to find men in other commonly occupied spaces and to understand how their material and social worlds informed each other through repeated practice and the quotidian use of space.
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