

Editor's Introduction

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This is the last issue under my editorship. I would like to thank the council of the North American Conference on British Studies for all its help, as well as my assistant editors over the years: Justin Biel, Rachel Neiwert, Ellen Arnold, and Jennifer Young. My gratitude is owed as well to the associate editors: Ruth Mazo Karras, Eric Carlson, John Watkins, and Andrew Elfenbein. The book review editors, Claire Schen and Pat McDevitt, who work independently, have also done an excellent job. The new editors will be Brian Cowan and Elizabeth Elbourne at McGill University, and the new book review editors will be Amy Froide of the University of Maryland, Baltimore County, and Gail Savage of St. Mary's College of Maryland.

The question of honor has been an important theme for our early modern articles.¹ We find another valuable contribution in Andrew James Hopper's "The Self-Fashioning of Gentry Turncoats during the English Civil Wars." During the English Civil War, a number of officers changed sides, a few more than once. For a gentleman, this would seem to violate the prevalent civic humanist and Stoic notions of constancy and self-control. However, an older notion of honor based on a noble pedigree and military valor persisted. Through a close reading of many self-representations of turncoats, Hopper has found that some men who changed sides appealed to this older notion of honor by arguing that insults and slights impelled them to change sides. Although most turncoats were scorned, some persuaded their new allies of their honor with these self-representations.

Three of our articles concern the ability to traverse space and location for extraordinary purposes: tourism, disease treatment, and prostitution. All three reveal anxieties about the transgression of boundaries. In "Tourism and the Development of the Modern British Passport, 1814–1858," Martin Anderson puts forth a persuasive new rationale for the invention of the passport. Scholarship on passports in continental Europe has argued that governments instituted passports as a means of surveillance to control their populations. But in Britain, the story was quite different. British passports, first issued in the early eighteenth century, were intended as convenient letters of introduction for aristocrats and diplomats known to the foreign secretary. Anderson argues that after the Napoleonic Wars, the wish of middle-class British tourists to travel freely around Europe conflicted with the

¹ For example, see Linda Pollock, "Honor, Gender, and Reconciliation in Elite Culture, 1570–1700," *Journal of British Studies* 46, no. 1 (January 2007): 3–29; John Smail, "Credit, Risk, and Honor in Eighteenth-Century Commerce," *Journal of British Studies* 44, no. 3 (July 2005): 439–56.

need of continental states to control their populations. However, the tourists prevailed on the British government, and the British passport became a privileged pass for the free movement of British tourists.

In “Perambulating fever nests of our London streets’: Cabs, Omnibuses, Ambulances, and Other ‘Pest-Vehicles’ in the Victorian Metropolis,” Matthew L. Newsom Kerr traces the fascinating story of the development of ambulances in nineteenth-century London. Until the 1880s, many patients with smallpox and infectious fevers were conveyed to hospitals in regular hackney cabs or, even worse, in omnibuses, which exposed their fellow passengers to the risk of infection. The anxieties surrounding this practice were not just about the actual transmission of disease, Newsom Kerr notes, but also about a more diffuse concern with the mixing of classes on London streets, since only poor and working-class people went to hospitals; people from the middle class were presumed to stay at home until they recovered or died. Even when conveyances for the sick were gradually introduced in the 1860s and 1870s, it was still thought that the sight of a smallpox patient through the window of a carriage could infect an onlooker. These general anxieties persisted through the 1880s, when the Metropolitan Asylums Board systematically created a fleet of purpose-built ambulances. Newsom Kerr thus integrates a culture studies analysis of urban visibility with the history of medicine.

In “Containment: Managing Street Prostitution in London, 1918–1959,” Stefan Anthony Slater recasts our view of prostitution in the twentieth century. Contemporary commentators and those few historians to address the issue have assumed that prostitution declined in the interwar period, only to surge forth in London streets after World War II, leading to the Wolfenden Report and a rethinking of policies toward prostitution. However, Slater has found that prostitution probably did not decline in the interwar period. The rise and fall in the number of prostitutes had more to do with changing police policies. In general, the police preferred to arrest a steady number of women, almost a quota, until scandals erupted. If police complicity with prostitution was revealed, or when a respectable man was apprehended, they would refrain from arrests—but they would ramp up policing when streetwalking became too visible in certain neighborhoods. Redressing the usual focus on the West End and Soho, Slater also examines prostitution in Stepney, which was more casual yet more prevalent than previously thought. The postwar crackdown on prostitution, he argues, derived not from increasing sexual commerce but from changing concerns around sexuality and policing.

We are glad to have another article that puts military history in a wider context.² In “Duty or Crime? Defining Acceptable Behavior in the British Army in South Africa, 1899–1902,” Stephen M. Miller explores the discipline of soldiers during the Boer War. The Breaker Morant incident, when Australian soldiers shot an unarmed Boer prisoner, is the best-known and most controversial example of military discipline. Miller has also systematically studied the regular discipline during the war for major offenses such as shooting prisoners, looting, and rape but also for more minor offenses such as drunkenness. The British military faced the

² Also see Christopher M. Bell, “The King’s English and the Security of the Empire: Class, Social Mobility, and Democratization in the British Naval Officer Corps, 1918–1939,” *Journal of British Studies* 48, no. 3 (July 2009): 695–716.

new international context of the Hague Conventions and, increasingly, civilian standards for behavior, so it tried to present the volunteer force as disciplined in order to meet its public image.

We also have two articles on the interwar period that demonstrate that authorities had to contend with voices from outside the establishment. In 1934–35, a majority of 11.5 million Britons cast their votes in favor of peace. In “Democratizing British Foreign Policy: Rethinking the Peace Ballot, 1934–1935,” Helen McCarthy interprets this vote not as an example of appeasement but as an exercise in the democratization of diplomacy. Activists had called for diplomacy to be conducted with transparency and in response to public opinion, rather than behind closed doors. They successfully mobilized hundreds of labor, religious, women’s, local, trade union, and other groups to carry out the Peace Ballot. However, this intense public engagement was short-lived. By the time of Neville Chamberlain’s ill-fated trip to Munich, McCarthy finds, the dream of engaging the public had vanished and had been replaced by a determination to manipulate them.

Marc Matera’s article, “Colonial Subjects: Black Intellectuals and the Development of Colonial Studies in Britain,” makes an important contribution by revealing the interplay between black intellectuals and academic scholarship in interwar Britain. This was a time when the Colonial Office worked closely with anthropologists and other scholars to study African cultures in the interests of what they saw as more efficient policies. But intellectuals who came to London from the West Indies and Africa criticized their imperial and racist bias. At the same time, these intellectuals were engaged with anthropologists such as Bronislaw Malinowski and produced their own contributions to scholarship. But white publishers rarely published their books, and they were blocked from academic positions.