Celebrities of an Age of War, 1739-1815

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Preface

Acknowledgements

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Abbreviations

BMS British Museum Satires

BMPD British Museum Prints and Drawings

BMCM British Museum Coins and Medals

BMPE British Museum Prehistory and Europe

ECCO Eighteenth Century Collections Online

Conventions

All quotes are ad verbatim.

Introduction

In 1808, the eminent poet Samuel Coleridge had little praise for his early nineteenth-century peers. In the April of that year he remonstrated to his literary counterpart Matilda Betham on the 'sad, sad, state of the present […] the rage for personality – of talking & thinking ever and ever about A. and B. and L. – names, names, always names!'[1] With these words Coleridge paid tribute to the partiality of his generation to gossip and to celebrate the individual; yet, it was not merely in his era that the Georgian British populace displayed such a penchant for granting certain figures public prominence. Within the boundaries of the many wars fought between 1739 and 1815 the martial hero was frequently the subject of this type of popular discussion and adoration; at certain times, such adulation led him to transcend his military status to become the leading celebrity of his day.

Indeed, the eighteenth century is recognised by many scholars as the birthplace of celebrity, for it witnessed the rise of the Habermasian public sphere, the print media, a consumer culture, and the waning of the Hanoverian court as the nucleus of patronage.[2] However, none see the foremost military heroes of its plethora of wars as contemporary exemplars of the phenomenon. Simon Burrows, following Linda Colley, considers the age's 'cult of celebrity' to have dissolved at the end of the 1780's in lieu of 'a shift of style from peacock to sombre man of action'; Stella Tillyard does not deem eighteenth-century England 'to have been a world full of celebrities'; and Simon Morgan completely neglects the host of Georgian martial leviathans to parade civilian figures like the Duchess of Devonshire and John Wilkes as the foremost celebrities of the age, whilst positing that 'celebrity culture'

[1] Samuel Coleridge, cited in Jason Goldsmith, 'Celebrity and the Spectacle of Nation', in *Romanticism and Celebrity Culture, 1750-1850*, ed. by Tom Mole (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), p. 23.
[2] Simon Burrows, 'The Chevalier d'Eon, Media Manipulation and the Making of an Eighteenth-Century Celebrity', in *The Chevalier d'Eon and his Worlds: Gender, Espionage and Politics in the Eighteenth Century*', ed. by Simon Burrows (London: Continuum, 2010), pp. 13-23 (p. 13); Chris Rojek, 'Celebrity', in *Encyclopaedia of Social Theory*, ed. by George Ritzer, 2 vols (Thousand Oaks, CA/USA: SAGE Publications, 2004-05), I (2004), pp. 83-86 (p. 85).

existed in two periods only: from 'roughly 1776-94 and from 1832 onwards'.[3] It is the purpose of this thesis to challenge such assumptions, and to reveal them to be misplaced.

In order to substantiate the eighteenth-century military hero as a paragon of modern celebrity, a range of both primary and secondary sources will be utilized. Throughout this thesis, Georgian newspapers, periodicals, books, diaries, and prints will appear most prominently and will be immensely beneficial to gain a contemporary perspective, yet care will be taken to appreciate their potential to proffer a biased standpoint. These will be married with the works of current and past historians that have resolved to focus on the cultural aspects of era or the four chosen figures in detail – an efficacious method to acquire broader and more nuanced assessments respectively; though, once again, one must recognise the possible agendas of the author and the context in with the material has been written. Most significantly, and somewhat uniquely, sociological theories and evaluations related to celebrity will be amalgamated with historical matter to produce novel conclusions on the subject. Further, they will help to legitimise the assertions of this work, for in the relevant existing historiography, any reference to the 'celebrity' of a heroic martial man tends to be employed glibly in the descriptive sense, and is not substantiated by a definition of any kind; by including the findings of the latter discipline, one will be able to definitively discern as to why such luminaries deserve their celebrity classification.

The crux of the debate will revolve around four men who rose to prominence in different periods of war in Georgian Britain: Admiral Edward Vernon amidst the War of Jenkin's Ear; General James Wolfe during the Seven Years War; Admiral August Keppel within the framework of the American Revolutionary War; and Admiral Horatio Nelson

[3] Simon Burrows, 'The Chevalier d'Eon', in *The Chevalier d'Eon*, ed. by Burrows, p. 13; Linda Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation: 1707-1837*, 2nd edn (London: Yale Nota Bene, 2005), p. 187; Stella Tillyard, '"Paths of Glory": Fame and the Public in Eighteenth-century London', in *Joshua Reynolds: The Creation of Celebrity*, ed. by Martin Postle, (London: TATE PUBLISHING, 2005), pp. 61-69 (p. 62); Simon Morgan, 'Celebrity: Academic "Pseudo-Event" or a Useful Concept for Historians?', *Cultural and Social History*, 8:1 (2011), pp. 95-114 (p. 110) <http://0-dx.doi.org.wam.leeds.ac.uk/10.2752/147800411X12858412044474>.

during the conflict versus Revolutionary and Napoleonic France. Close analysis of each figure will justify the overarching suppositions that these individuals deserve to be labelled as celebrities, that 'celebrity culture' was a pervasive tenet of British society within the context of these international conflicts, and that that eighteenth-century celebrity was a multifaceted phenomenon that should be attributed to a variety of factors. Henceforth, each chapter of this work will focus upon separate strains of argument, and employ a chronological structure to ensure recurrent and evolving themes can be exposed. The primary section will consider the importance of the overt methods of contemporary public veneration, the commodification of the hero, and the era's social and cultural structures; the second will discuss structuralist theories of celebrity, how celebrity was manufactured within the nascent public sphere and the significance of such a process; whilst the third will highlight the crucial role of the hero's public image, and how the context of the century ensured it was central to their popularity and to their celebrity status. Ultimately, this is an efficacious framework, for it allows one to theorise on the broader aspects of celebrity and heroism, and the extent to which a 'militarization' of British society may have occurred during the mid-to-late Georgian epoch.

I

The Military Hero as a Celebrity

> *The Bulk of Mankind [...] are caught by Noise and Shew. The pompous Sound of Titles and Glitter of Ornaments strike their Senses, attract their Attention, raise their Admiration, and extort from them all that Reverence and Regard, that are due only to eminent and distinguished Merit*.[4]
>
> John Holdrop, 1741

This insight by John Holdrop on the countenance of the common people of Britain – though uttered by the Yorkshire rector in 1741 – is remarkable for its prescience. From his generation well into the early decades of the nineteenth century, the British public demonstrated a willingness to venerate their military heroes in a grandiose and overt fashion, a penchant for ostentatious celebration that married with a voracious output of information, products and plays paying homage to the likes of Edward Vernon, James Wolfe, Augustus Keppel and Horatio Nelson to create an early modern 'celebrity culture' in times of war.[5] As to what precisely constitutes 'Celebrity' is a matter of scholarly debate, however. Amongst the many interpretations that have been submitted, Chris Rojek's consideration that celebrity is 'the attribution of glamorous or notorious status to an individual within the public sphere' is perhaps the most succinct; though, as he himself admits, this is too reductionist a formula to be useful.[6] Yet, in a recent work published on the concept Simon Morgan has collated the various theories on offer and has proposed a more nuanced supposition. In detail, the juncture at which a public figure reaches the zenith of 'celebrity':

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[4] John Hildrop, *An Essay on Honour, in Several Letters* (London: Timothy Hooker, 1741), p. 13.
[5] Jürgen Hamerbas, 'The Public Sphere: An Encyclopaedia Article', *New German Critique*, 3 (1974), pp. 49-55 (p. 49) <http://www.jstor.org/stable/487737> [accessed 14 February]; Gillian Russell, *The Theatres of War: Performance, Politics, and Society 1793-1815* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1995), p. 18.
[6] For other definitions see Simon Morgan, 'Celebrity', *passim*; Chris Rojek, *Celebrity* (London: Reaktion, 2001), p. 10.

> Is the point at which a sufficiently large audience is interested in their actions, image and personality to create a viable market for commodities carrying their likeness and for information about their lives and views; it is then that they become […] 'public subjects'.[7]

For Morgan, celebrity is a 'cultural and economic formation which plays a wider role in society as a whole', wherein 'individuals function as nodal points around which the broader apparatus of celebrity culture coalesces'.[8]

Translating these hypotheses onto Georgian society, a novel conclusion can be reached: that the foremost military heroes of the epoch deserve to be considered as celebrity figures. In their respective eras, men of the ilk of Vernon, Wolfe, Keppel and Nelson became 'marketable commodities', whilst an avid appetite for information about themselves and their exploits is clearly visible. Likewise, they were cruxes around which a 'celebrity culture' could unite – not only becoming the much-discussed subjects of the media organs of their day, but more importantly the 'nodal points' of communal festivities and collective methods of celebration; traits that, as Gillian Russell has rightly discerned, were dynamic and fundamental aspects of contemporary wartime culture.[9] Such propositions validate the additional premise that they were the very first of their kind in British history, for subsequent to the eighteenth century, the social structures needed to generate stardom did not exist, and 'were only capable of producing *pre-figurative* forms of celebrity'.[10] In the words of Mary Luckhurst and Jane Moody:

> The eighteenth century is widely recognised as the historical moment when fame takes a recognisably modern form. The rational for this argument arises from the conviction that

[7] Morgan, p. 97.
[8] P. David Marshall, *Celebrity and Power: Fame in Contemporary Culture* (Minneapolis, MN/USA: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), p. 71; Morgan, p. 97.
[9] Russell, p. 18.
[10] Rojek, *Celebrity*, p. 105.

> celebrity is above all a media production: only in the eighteenth century does an extensive apparatus for disseminating fame emerge.[11]

Thus, these martial luminaries were the specific products of their age, and should be separated from earlier military 'great men' such as Robert Blake and the Duke of Marlborough to be categorized as celebrities of the early modern period.[12]

Over the course of the eighteenth century, British society underwent a most remarkable transformation. With the expiration of the Licensing Act in 1695 – 'something of a legislative accident' – the foremost legal constrictions that had previously hampered the expansion of the national press promptly dissipated, spawning 'the explosion of print culture' that was to run parallel with and exacerbate the rise of the era's Habermasian public sphere.[13] The pace of this metamorphosis should not be underestimated: pre-1700 virtually no provincial printing press was licenced to publish material, in 1800 'nearly every major town' could boast of producing at least one local newspaper.[14] By 1790, fourteen morning broadsheets were in circulation in the capital, periodicals of the ilk of the *Gentleman's Magazine* and *The London Magazine* filtered through the literate ranks, the novel and the history had risen 'to achieve mass circulation', and further 'liberalisation' of printing law had provoked the widespread proliferation of plays, ballads, engravings, pamphlets and cartoons.[15]

From the second-quarter of the century, these relentlessly evolving media outlets began to exhibit an intermittent yet noticeable interest in their nation's 'imperial project' together with matters of war both European and global; a curiosity that, according to Marie Peters, experienced a short-lived 'upsurge' in the early years of the War of Austrian

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[11] Mary Luckhurst and Jane Moody, 'Introduction: The Singularity of Theatrical Celebrity', in *Theatre and Celebrity in Britain, 1660-2000*, ed. by Mary Luckhurst and Jane Moody (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), pp. 1-11 (p. 3).
[12] Morgan, p. 109.
[13] John Brewer, *The Pleasures of the Imagination: English Culture in the Eighteenth Century* (London: HarperCollins, 1997), p. 131; Rojek, *Celebrity*, p. 103; Hamerbas, 'The Public Sphere', pp. 49-50.
[14] Rojek, *Celebrity*, p. 103.
[15] *Ibid*., p. 103.

Succession and subsequently re-intensified from the 'mid-fifties' to become 'widespread and more sustained'.[16] The publicity this accorded Vernon, Wolfe, Keppel and Nelson contributed substantially to their celebrity, for it allowed them and their military endeavours to become the focus of the national news. In a similar vein, their renown was exacerbated by the willingness of the contemporary press to broadcast and record the public festivities and celebrations held in their name, and to report their manifestation in all regions of the country.[17]

The role of the era's embryonic industrial revolution was of equal importance. This transformative cultural upheaval gave birth to a 'consumer boom' where 'men, and in particular women, bought as never before', leading to the emergence of 'the first of all the world's consumer societies'.[18] Conspicuous expenditure became the order of the day, and luxuries that had previously been unattainable or unaffordable permeated communities as their inhabitants strove to emulate their societal betters. This cross-generational exhibition of 'emulative spending bred by social emulation' had a marked impact upon the military celebrity, for it allowed him to become a widely distributed mass market commodity, and to triumphantly invade both the marketplace and the domestic environment by adorning the wares and the fashions of the country's great and good.[19]

The first man who stood to capitalise on these socio-political advances to advance to the realms of celebrity was Admiral Edward Vernon of Westminster, London. Indeed, retaining faith in the validity of the sociological analyses of Morgan and Luckhust and Moody, he should be seen as the very first celebrity of not merely modern military history,

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[16] Kathleen Wilson, 'Empire of Virtue: The Imperial Project and Hanoverian Culture, c. 1720-1785', in *An Imperial State at War: Britain from 1689 to 1815*, ed. by Lawrence Stone (1994), pp. 128-64 (pp. 132-36); Marie Peters, 'Early Hanoverian Consciousness: Empire or Europe', *English Historical Review*, 122:497 (2007), pp. 632-68 (pp. 640, 663) <http://0-ehr.oxfordjournals.org.wam.leeds.ac.uk/content/CXXII/497/632> [accessed 20 March 2013].

[17] Kathleen Wilson, 'Empire of Virtue', in *An Imperial State at War*, ed. by Stone, p. 132.

[18] Neil McKendrick, John Brewer and J.H. Plumb, *The Birth of a Consumer Society: The Commercialization of Eighteenth-Century England* (London: Hutchinson, 1983), pp. 9-13.

[19] Serda Brauns, *Cultural Transformation in the Consumer Society: Emergence of the Victorian Music Hall as a Popular Entertainment Industry* (Munich: GRIN Verlag oHG, 2011), p. 3; McKendrick, p. 60.

but modern British history as a whole. [20] On 22 November 1739, amidst the early stages of the War of Jenkin's Ear, the Admiral dramatically procured the Caribbean port of Porto Bello from the Spanish with only six ships of the line; it was not long before British newspapers 'teemed with information' on his person and his exploits.[21] A wide variety of publications covered Vernon in detail, from metropolitan broadsheets like the *London Evening Post* and the *Gentleman's Magazine*, southern provincials such as the *Salisbury Journal* and the *Norwich Mercury*, to the northern bulletins of the *Leeds Mercury* and the *Newcastle Courant*.[22] Indeed, over the coming years he became 'the most popular & best loved man in England'; the popular adulation reaching its apex with the widely reported celebrations of his birthday in November 1740.[23] In Peterborough the occasion 'was celebrated… with ringing of Bells, Bonfires… a Day of great rejoicing'; in Huntington mass 'Demonstrations of Joy' were followed by 'the greater Part of the Burgesses' convening to revel and drink his health, while in Lymington 'the Populace' were party to a 'large bonfire', 'curious fireworks' and large portions of Stout Beer' amidst 'extraordinary rejoicings'.[24] Crowds in Stratford gathered to attend a civic Bonfire built in his honour; in Surrey, the 'Gentlemen' and 'the populace' together drunk the Admiral's health in 'the greatest Harmony and Joy imaginable'; and in Essex the 'joy had so extended itself as to reach even to a couple of lonesome Cottages on a Heath, which had club'd together for a few Bushes and a Heap of Fern to make a

[20] Though the Duke of Marlborough could stake a claim, his political connections, the vehemence of the post-Cromwellian 'antistanding army ideology', and the dearth of the necessary social and technological progressions 'dimmed' his popularity and glory, thus preventing his ascent to the realms of the 'unambiguous national hero'. Lois Schwoerer, '*No Standing Armies!': The Antiarmy Ideology in Seventeenth-Century England* (London: John Hopkins University Press, 1974), p. 3.
[21] David Marley, *Wars of the Americas: A Chronology of Armed Conflict in the New World, 1492 to the Present* (Santa Barbara, CA/USA: ABC-CLIO, 1998), p. 252; Kathleen Wilson, *The Sense of the People: Politics, Culture and Imperialism in England, 1715-1785* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), p. 160.
[22] This attention was continuous throughout the first half of 1740 and more intermittent thereafter, arising most conspicuously in November 1740, and the May and November of 1741. Kathleen Wilson, 'Empire, Trade and Popular Politics in Mid-Hanoverian Britain: The Case of Admiral Vernon', *Past and Present* 121:1(1988), pp. 74-109 (p. 82) <http://past.oxfordjournals.org/content/121/1/74.full.pdf+html> [accessed 20 March 2013].
[23] William Pultney to Edward Vernon, 16 June 1741, in Bryan McLean Ranft, ed., *The Vernon Papers* (London: Navy Records Society, 1958), p. 240.
[24] *London Evening Post*, 13-17 November 1740, Gale Document Number: Z2000641602.

Bonfire to his Memory'.[25] Within the month, communal celebrations of Vernon and his achievements had been recorded at Ipswich, Norwich and Bristol, Coventry, Chester, Birmingham, Liverpool, York and Leeds along with 'other considerable places in the North'; in total tribute to the Admiral transpired in no less than twenty-five counties and fifty-four towns between 1740 and 1742.[26]

It was in this context that Vernon became a 'marketable commodity'. In the aftermath of his conquest of Porto Bello print and book sellers stocked a surfeit of ballads, prints and poems on the Admiral and his accomplishments, whilst on his birthday the city shops were 'full of favours' paying homage to his name – especially medals, of which more were struck on his behalf than for any other individual in the eighteenth century.[27] His image, meanwhile, spawned 'a minor revolution' in the manufacture of pottery, germinating the most abundant production of commemorative items seen for generations with 'virtually all' the major craftsman from the likes of Lambeth, Brighton, Bristol, Stafford, Leeds and Liverpool producing 'Vernon ceramics'. [28] Henceforth, 'plates, mugs, teapots, bowls, jugs, inkpots and punchbowls' adorned with his likeness all flowed to the stores of the British merchant, tradesman and shopkeeper.[29] Elsewhere, in the dramatic sphere, substantiating Gillian Russell's conviction that war and theatre were inextricably connected, productions of the ilk of *The Play of the British Hero; or, Admiral VERNON's Conquest over the Spaniards* were commissioned to capitalise upon his glory. [30] As the *London Evening Post* noted: 'Admiral Vernon… shines with unborrow'd Lustre […] so entirely has that worthy Gentleman gain'd

[25] *Ibid*.
[26] Gerald Jordan and Nicholas Rogers, 'Admirals as Heroes: Patriotism and Liberty in Hanoverian England', *The Journal of British Studies*, 28.3 (1989), pp. 201-24 (p. 204) <http://www.jstor.org/stable/175570> [accessed 3 March 2013]; Wilson, *The Sense of the People*, pp. 142-45.
[27] Kathleen Wilson has surmised that 102 alternate designs were cast in his honour between 1740 and 1743, with traders ingeniously fashioning many into badges to be worn on jackets, coats and hats. Wilson, 'Empire, Trade and Popular Politics', pp. 82-86; Horace Walpole to Sir Horace Mann, 12 November 1741, *The Letters of Horace Walpole Earl of Orford 1735-1797*, 6 vols (London: Richard Bentley, 1840), I (1840), p. 93. Google eBook.
[28] Wilson, *The Sense of the People*, pp. 146-47.
[29] *Ibid*., p. 146.
[30] *Ibid*., p. 147.

the Affections of the People […] they would have celebrated every Day in the Year to him'; many astutely recognized this public fervour as a source of healthy revenue.[31]

Thus, for a brief instance in history, Vernon became the fulcrum of several strains of contemporary celebrity culture. He became the focus of far-reaching press coverage, the object of ostentatious collective celebration and the very matter of merchandise and theatrical production. As such, he provided the prototype for the modern celebrity and set the benchmark for later celebrities of the Georgian age.

Approximately two decades later, the Seven Years War spawned its own protagonist, though the case of General James Wolfe needs to be handled with a greater care. Wolfe is exceptional in that in life he had no tangible celebrity by Morgan's definition of the phenomenon; rather, it is instead that he 'acquired a celebrity in death', finding fame in the wake of his glorious conquest of Quebec in October 1759.[32] Again, in large part this was facilitated via the media, for the conflict had attracted sustained coverage in the daily and periodical press.[33] Wolfe's momentous vanquishing of the French forces of the plains of Abraham, therefore, was thus circulated throughout the country in substantial fashion, ensuring he was celebrated on a national scale and with considerable ardour. Tobias Smollett detailed how the news provoked 'rapture and riot; all was triumph and exultation, mingled with the praise of the all-accomplished Wolfe, which [the people] exalted even to a ridiculous degree of hyperbole'.[34] In London, Oliver Goldsmith reflected on the public carnival that followed the news of his success, admiring 'the artificial day that was formed by lights placed

[31] *London Evening Post*, 13-17 November 1740.
[32] Stephen Brumwell, 'The First Trans-Atlantic hero? General James Wolfe and British North America', in *The Historian*, ed. by Ian Mason et al., 117 vols (London: The Historical Association, 1983-2013), LXXXIV (2004), pp. 8-15 (p. 10).
[33] Kathleen Wilson, 'Empire of Virtue', in *An Imperial State at War*, ed. by Stone, pp. 134-35.
[34] Tobias George Smollett, *The History of England, from the Revolution to the Death of George the Second*, 5 (London: T. Cadell and R. Baldwin, 1800), p. 74, in *Eighteenth Century Collections Online ECCO* <http://0-find.galegroup.com.wam.leeds.ac.uk/ecco/infomark.do?&source=gale&prodId=ECCO&userGroupName=leeds_uni&tabID=T001&docId=CW3302106902&type=multipage&contentSet=ECCOArticles&version=1.0&docLevel=FASCIMILE> [accessed 26 February 2013].

in every window' of Fleet Street illuminations, and that every face was 'dressed in smiles' amongst the shouting of 'the mob'; in Bath balls were ordered to be held; and in Stratford-upon-Avon bonfires were erected around which men gathered to toast Wolfe's name.[35] As Elizabeth Montagu ruminated:

> The encomiums on Mr Wolfe run very high […] he took the public opinion by a coup de main, to which it surrenders more willingly than to a regular siege […] he is the subject of all people's praise. [36]

Unsurprisingly, in the years after his death a plethora of 'patriotic ballads, poems, paintings and artefacts' commemorating the General inundated the public sphere; indeed, before October had concluded three poems related to Wolfe had already been published, with sentimental titles such as *A Monody, on the Death of General Wolfe*, and *Daphnis and Menalcas: A pastoral Sacred to the Memory of General Wolfe*.[37] Information of his private life abruptly appeared in periodicals such as the *London Magazine* and the *Annual register*, whilst his portrait was in such demand wily vendors sold images of 'just about any military person' to a populace so full of ardour and so desperate to commemorate they were seemingly 'indiscriminate' as to the true nature of the figure.[38] Prints portraying him in profile in a bold, dramatic pose were circulated along with medallions and wax busts of his

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[35] Oliver Goldsmith, 'Unacknowledged Essays: Essay I', in *The Works of Oliver Goldsmith*, ed. by Peter Cunningham, 3 (London: John Murray, 1854), pp. 263-66 (p. 261). Google eBook; Stephen Brumwell, *Paths of Glory: The Life and Death of General James Wolfe* (London: Hambledon Continuum, 2007), p. 293.
[36] Elizabeth Montagu to Lord George Lytteton, 23 October 1759, in Elizabeth Montagu, *Elizabeth Montagu, the Queen of the Bluestockings: Her Correspondence from 1720 to 1761*, 2 vols (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011, first pub. 1906), II (2011),p. 172.
[37] Stephen Brumwell, 'The first trans-Atlantic hero?', in *The Historian*, ed. by Mason et al., p. 9; Brumwell, *Paths of Glory*, p. 295.
[38] 'Character, with some Particulars, of the late Major-General JAMES WOLFE, *London Magazine: Or Gentleman's Monthly Intelligencer*, November 1759. Google eBook; 'Character of General Wolfe', in *Annual Register*, 21 vols (London: R. and J. Dodsley, 1758-1855), II (1760), p. 281, in *The Internet Library of Early Journals* <http://www.bodley.ox.ac.uk/cgi-bin/ilej/image1.pl?item=page&seq=2&size=1&id=ar.1759.x.x.2.x.x.281> [accessed 17 March 2013]; Alan Mcnairn, *Behold the Hero: General Wolfe and the Arts in the Eighteenth Century* (Montreal: McMill-Queen's University Press, 1997), p. 193.

torso, whilst biographic literature to be hawked by merchants 'gathered momentum'.[39] As with his likeness, a haste for profit replaced the dignity of accuracy: though the General's first biographer, John Pringle, had merely 'industriously ransacked the newspapers' in the eyes of the *British Magazine*, it was of little import to the vibrant contemporary 'Wolfe market'.[40] Ultimately, it is Alan Mcnairn that encapsulates the point: Wolfe had the immense fortune to perish in an age 'when it became possible to reach a huge audience through print, music, theatre, pictures, and other affordable consumer goods'; together with a prurient press and mass public ardour, this conspicuous culture of consumption saw the General crowned the new celebrity of the mid-century.[41]

The continual growth of the public sphere, the press, and the notion of the crowd as the 'voice of the community' only augmented the status of Wolfe's successor, Admiral Augustus Keppel, who rose to prominence in the midst of the American War of Independence in the late 1770s.[42] In the wake of an 'inconclusive engagement' with the French off Ushant in August 1778, he stood accused by his subordinate officer, Sir Hugh Palliser, of 'misconduct and neglect of duty' at a trial of court-martial held in Portsmouth in the Spring of 1779.[43] The trial, however, captured the imagination of the public, and for five salacious weeks the eyes of the nation fell upon the city, with the proceedings of the court saturating the pages of the press 'to the exclusion of other topics' until 'Keppel […] fill'd the

[39] Richard Houston, *Major General James Wolfe* (London: Robert Sayer, 1759-1775), *British Museum Prints and Drawings* (*BMPD*), reg. no.: 1902, 1011.2730; Richard Purcell, *Major General James Wolfe* (London: Robert Sayer, 1746-1766), *BMPD*, reg. no. 2010,7081.2704; John Kirk, *Medal* (British Isles: Isaac Gosset, 1759), *British Museum Coin & Medals* (*BMCM*), reg. no.: M.8649.
[40] McNairn, pp. 191, 41.
[41] *Ibid*., p. xii.
[42] Nicholas Rogers, 'The Dynamic of News in Britain During the American War: The Case of Admiral Keppel', *Parliamentary History*, 25 (2006), pp. 49-67 (p. 66) <DOI: 10.1111/j.1750-0206.2006.tb00621.x>.
[43] Though Keppel himself considered the battle to be 'in every beneficial respect, equal to a victory'. Wilson, *Sense of the People*, p. 256; Augustus Keppel, cited in Sir George Otto Trevelyan, *George the Third and Charles Fox: The Concluding Part of the American Revolution* (Kila, MT/USA: Kessinger Publishing Co., 2004, first published 1912), p. 138.

mouth of every Englishman'.[44] By this point in time approximately one in six British adults perused the papers on a consistent basis, and this healthy readership was kept abreast of the hearing's proceedings via prompt and detailed accounts from a multiplicity of newspapers throughout the country, from the capital's *General Advertiser*, which promised a 'regular, circumstantial and daily Account of the TRIAL, by EXPRESS', to provincial publications such as the *Bath Chronicle* and the *Cumberland Pacquet*, which devoted over a third and a half of their issues to events as a verdict was neared.[45] Needless to say, this extensive coverage dramatically raised Keppel's profile, and did much to turn him into a great celebrity figure.

In addition, Keppel became a champion of the political Opposition, and met with a nation-wide fanfare post-acquittal. As with his Vernon and Wolfe before him, these affairs were 'popular events' engaging 'large sections' of a populace, wherein the martial hero became the crux of extravagant collective festivity.[46] Keppel became the personal figurehead of two 'well-publicized' processions – firstly in Portsmouth and subsequently in London, where events 'proceeded amidst the general acclamations of a greater number of persons than almost ever remembered'.[47] In Plymouth, the 19 February stood as 'a day set apart in [his] honour', on which two thousand dockworkers processed through the town, singing for their 'conquering hero' with a model of his ship *Victory* 'extended on [their] shoulders, with colours flying'.[48] This 'very grand' spectacle received 'the great approbation of upwards of ten thousand spectators, who all joined in cheers with them', whilst the town in general was 'grandly illuminated, ornamented, with paintings […] with fireworks, to the honour of a

[44] Trevelyan, p. 159; Norwich radical Philip Martineau describing the fervour in March 1779, cited in Wilson, *Sense of the People*, p. 256.
[45] 'Morning Intelligencer', *General Advertiser and Morning Intelligencer*, 7 January 1779, Gale Document Number: Z2000428461; Nicholas Rogers, *Crowds, Cultures and Politics in Georgian Britain* (New York: Clarendon Press, 1998), p. 129.
[46] *Ibid*., pp. 139-40.
[47] Keppel, pp. 184-85; 'London', *Gazetteer and New Daily Advertiser*, 22 February 1779, Gale Document Number: Z2000388928.
[48] 'Extract of a letter from Plymouth', *London Evening Post*, 27 February-2 March 1779, Gale Document Number: Z2000698910.

brave, gallant, and judicious Admiral'.[49] In the City of London, the response was more spontaneous: by ten o'clock on the evening of 11 February – the day the news first filtered through – 'most of the principal streets of the city and their avenues… were illuminated', and the mob were in their element, 'firing sky-rockets, squibs, crackers… till near day-light'.[50] Similar 'rejoicings', according to William Burney, 'took place in every part of the kingdom' and 'were never exceeded on account of the most brilliant victories'.[51]

As in the preceding decades, entertainers and entrepreneurs swiftly 'cashed in' on the new *beau* of British society.[52] The 'Admiral Keppel' became the 'favourite sign' of inns throughout that land as publicans strove to entice customers through their doors; engravings of his picture 'were to be seen in every print shop'; and those who frequented the theatre in the trial's aftermath were confronted by an assortment of dramatic productions publicising his fate.[53] The crude likeness of his image emerged upon a variety of ceramic goods, medals and medallions with jubilant phrases such as 'ADMIRAL KEPPEL FOR EVER' and 'JUSTICE TRIUMPHANT and MALICE DEFEATED', whilst the great Wedgewood pottery had 'little difficulty' in hawking 'thousands upon thousands' of cameos, busts and seals portraying the Admiral's robust physiognomy.[54] In fact, Josiah Wedgewood despaired at the time lag it took to order a picture of the man prior to casting for he ruminated ruefully – and quite prophetically – that his salesman 'says he could sell *thousands* of Keppel at any price. Oh

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[49] *Ibid*.
[50] 'Morning Chronicle', *Morning Chronicle and London Advertiser*, 12 February 1779, Gale Document Number: Z2000851061; 'Extract of a letter from Buckinghamshire', *St. James's Chronicle or the British Evening Post*, 20-23 February 1779, Gale Document Number: Z2001286943.
[51] William Burney, *The Naval Heroes of Great Britain* (London: Richard Phillips, 1806), p. 307; Nicholas Rogers has considered that at least 168 villages and towns participated in public celebrations, a statistic that succinctly illustrates the depth of the national devotion. Rogers, *Crowds, Cultures and Politics*, p. 140.
[52] *Ibid*., p. 150.
[53] See the comedies of *The Illumination* and *The Liverpool Prize*, which always 'concluded with a chorus commemorating his acquittal', or the 'burlesques' of the *British Admiral, or the City in Uproar*. Thomas Keppel, *The Life of Augustus Viscount Keppel: Admiral of the White, and First Lord of the Admiralty in 1782-3*, 2 vols (London: Henry Colburn, 1842), II (1842), pp. 193-94. Google eBook; Rogers, *Crowds, Cultures and Politics*, p. 150.
[54] Michael Archer, *Delftware* (London: The Stationary Office, 1997), p. 123; *Medal* (1779), *BMCM*, cat. number: MB3p52.221; *Medallion* ('18th C (late)'), *British Museum Prehistory and Europe* (*BMPE*), reg. no. 1937,0211.1; Rogers, p. 150; Trevelyan, p. 155; See *Portrait Medallion/Cameo* (Stoke-on-Trent: Wedgewood and Bentley, 1779), *BMPE,* reg. no. 1853, 1104.7.

Keppel Keppel [...] 'I am perswaded if we had our wits about us […] we might have sold £1000 worth of this gentleman's head in various ways'.[55] To a nation mired in the gloom of an unsuccessful war, Keppel proved to be the focal point of widespread press coverage, mass joy and revelry, and a subject of commercial viability; thus he deserves his place in the eighteenth-century celebrity pantheon.

Unquestionably, though, the most prominent celebrity of the early modern age was Lord Admiral Horatio Nelson. Brought to the attention of the nation by his daring actions at Battle of St. Vincent in February 1797, the nature of his victory at Aboukir Bay on 1 August 1798 ensured he was quickly 'immortalised' by the public at large.[56] The triumph triggered a national torrent of 'parades […] ox-roasts, concerts, bunting, illuminations, ringing of church bells [and] impromptu balls, and his name was 'echoed from street to street'.[57] The arms given him in reward for the victory, engraved autographs – ironically of both hands, and his battle plans were displayed in broadsheets, prints, and newspapers, which likewise filled their pages with accounts of all the subsequent communal celebrations across Great Britain and throughout the Empire.[58] Stalls and shops were soon filled with 'Nelsonia', and his image glinted from an assortment of engravings, prints, 'mass-produced' pottery, enamelled boxes, and other goods such as handkerchiefs, fans, medals, brooches and watches.[59] In conjunction,

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[55] Josiah Wedgewood, cited in Neil McKendrick, 'Josiah Wedgwood: An Eighteenth-Century Entrepreneur in Salesmanship and Marketing Techniques', *The Economic History Review*, 12.3 (1960), pp. 408-33 (p. 422) <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2590885> [accessed 26 February 2013].

[56] Countess Lavinia Bingham Spencer to Lord Horatio Nelson, 2 October 1798, in Nicholas Harris Nicholas, ed., *The Dispatches and Letters of Vice Admiral Lord Viscount Nelson*, 7 vols (London: Henry Colburn, 1845), III (1845), p. 74. Google eBook.

[57] *Ibid*., p. 74; David Armine Howarth and Stephen Howarth, *Nelson: The Immortal Memory* (London: Conway Maritime Press, 1998), p. 200.

[58] Kathleen Wilson, 'Nelson and the People: Manliness, Patriotism and Body Politics', in *Admiral Lord Nelson: Context and Legacy*, ed. by David Cannadine (Basingstoke: Palgrave McMillian, 2005), pp. 49-66 (p. 56).

[59] Colin White, '"His Dirge our Groans – His Monument our Praise": Official and Popular Commemoration of Nelson in 1805-6', in '*Trafalgar 1805-2005': History, Commemoration and National Preoccupation*, ed. by Holger Hoock (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), pp. 23-47 (p. 27); Marianne Czisnik, 'Nelson and the Nile: The Creation of Admiral Nelson's Public Image', *The Mariner's Mirror*, ed. by M. S. Partridge, 88:1 (London: The Society for Nautical Research, 2002), pp. 41-60 (pp. 43-46); *Cameo/Brooch* (England: Filippo Rega, 1798), *BMPE*, reg. no.: Gere et al 1984.874; *Medal* (British Isles: Conrad Heinrich Kuchler, 1798), *BMCM*, reg. no.: MB3p106.447; James Daniel, '*...Distinguished Action of the Gallant Nelson'* (London: James Daniel, 1798), *BMPD*: Parker 122, m Number: CS67246949.

his private life became a source of interest: details of Lady Nelson were published in the *Gentleman's Magazine,* whilst he received a nine page spread in the *British Public Characters of 1798*.[60]

Over the coming years, Nelson's celebrity continued to mature, a point epitomised by the public response to his tour of the West Country in 1802. Ostensibly to accompany Sir William Hamilton in the inspection of his estate at Milford, the journey became an act of public veneration.[61] His every movement was covered in minute detail by the press, whilst great 'demonstrations of joy' were held for him in every town that he passed through from Oxford to Coventry, leading the *Morning Post* to remark that 'it is a singular fact, that more *éclat* attends Lord Nelson in his provincial rambles than attends the King'. [62] It is somewhat ironic, then, that George III declined to attend the Admiral's state funeral in December 1805 on the basis that 'such national marks of gratitude […] should be exclusively paid to royalty, and not lavished on men who […] fight the battles of their country'.[63] However, it is in fact the public reaction to Nelson's death that betrays the existence of another element of celebrity culture in the 'para-social relationship', a term which defines an intimate, emotive connection between a celebrity and their audience conjured through the proliferation of their image in the media and the public sphere.[64] Despite the one-sided and wholly impersonal nature of the accord, the process gives the strong illusion of subjective interaction; by the time of Nelson's

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[60] 'Whitehall, October 6', *The Gentleman's Magazine: and Historical Chronicle*, November 1798, ProQuest document ID: 8380987; 'Lord Nelson', in Anon., *British Public Characters of 1798* (London: R. Phillips, 1798), pp. 507-16, in *ECCO* <http://0-find.galegroup.com.wam.leeds.ac.uk/ecco/infomark.do?&source=gale&prodId=ECCO&userGroupName=leeds uni&tabID=T001&docId=CW105972898&type=multipage&contentSet=ECCOArticles&version=1.0&docLevel=FASCIMILE> [accessed 4 March 2013].

[61] James Harrison, *The Life of the Right Honourable Lord Viscount Nelson*, 2 vols (London: Stanhope and Tilling, 1806), II (1806), pp. 379-83. Google eBook

[62] *Ibid*., pp. 379-83; Czisnik, p. 53; *The Morning Post and Gazetteer*, 4 September 1802, Gale Document Number: R3209455150.

[63] Baron Henry Edward Holland, ed., *Memoirs of the Whig Party During my Time*, 2 vols (London: Brown, Green and Longmans, 1852-54), II (1854), p. 31. Google eBook.

[64] Donald Horton and R. Richard Wohl, 'Mass-Communication and Para-social Interaction: Observations on Intimacy at a Distance', *Participations: Journal of Audience and Reception Studies*, 3:1 (2006) <http://www.participations.org/volume%203/issue%201/3_01_hortonwohl.htm> [accessed 21 March 2013].

death it is clear from contemporary popular rhetoric that a rapport of this kind had been established.[65] As Robert Southey stated on reflection:

> The death of Nelson was felt in England as something more than public calamity – men started at the intelligence and turned pale, as if they had heard of the loss of a dear friend. An object of our admiration and affection, of our pride and of our hopes, was suddenly taken from us; and it seemed as if we had never, till then, known how deeply we loved and reverenced him.[66]

Needless to say, this common psyche ensured his death produced 'an unparalleled (and never equalled) outpouring' of tributary goods, though by then Nelson's celebrity had been long established.[67] His fame ignited by his glorious conquest in the Nile, he subsequently grew to become the centre of civic acts of worship, the most viable commercial image of his era, and the 'media darling' of his age.[68]

In conclusion of the chapter, it is prudent to return to Simon Morgan's definition of celebrity, for it underwrites its content, and indeed this thesis as a whole. Morgan declares that an individual becomes a celebrity – a 'public subject' – when a market for products bearing their likeness and for information related to their person becomes apparent in the contemporary public sphere, and views celebrity as a cultural and economic configuration, with the adored as nodal points around which the wider components of 'celebrity culture' coalesce.[69] Holding these assertions to be correct, one sees that the cults of heroism that surrounded the likes of Admiral Edward Vernon, General James Wolfe, Admiral Augustus Keppel, and Admiral Horatio Nelson in the Georgian period of British history were in fact cults of celebrity,

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[65] *Ibid*., p. 215.
[66] Burney, p. 434; Robert Southey, *The Life of Nelson*, 2nd edn (London: George Routledge and Sons, 1886, first published 1813), p. 279.
[67] Kathleen Wilson, 'Nelson and the People', in *Admiral Lord Nelson: Context and Legacy*, ed. by Cannadine, p. 70.
[68] Mark Moss, *The Media and the Models of Masculinity* (Plymouth: Lexington Books, 2012), p. 31.
[69] Morgan, p. 97.

bearing striking resemblances those of modern day idols such as Marilyn Munroe and John Lennon.[70] They were among the earliest examples of people allowed to become the subject of collective adoration, prurient journalism, and mass merchandise by the rise of the Habermasian public sphere, the media, and a culture of consumption; the crucial social innovations required for celebrity to thrive. Indeed, Vernon stands alone as the very first celebrity in British history in its entirety, for such obligatory societal structures simply did not exist for those of fame and fortune in previous eras.[71]

Henceforth, in times of war a celebrity culture existed within eighteenth-century Britain. In addition, analysis suggests that celebrity was a phenomenon that evolved in tandem with the maturation of the organs of the public sphere, so that by the early years of the nineteenth century it was possible for a 'para-social relationship' between the celebrity and the fan to be established.[72] Yet, was it merely an amalgamation of martial victory and social progress that granted these illustrious figures their historical standing? Closer scrutiny reveals the significance of the subtler influence of the human hand.

[70] Rojek, *Celebrity*, pp. 77-78.
[71] Mary Luckhurst and Jane Moody, 'Introduction: The Singularity of Theatrical Celebrity', in *Theatre and Celebrity in Britain, 1660-2000*, ed. by Luckhurst and Moody, p. 3.
[72] McNairn, p. xii; Horton, p. 215.

II

Structuralism and Celebrity in Eighteenth-Century Britain

As we have seen, in every period of war throughout the age the British populace displayed a willingness to collectively celebrate and venerate their military heroes, an ardour fuelled by a burgeoning media and a ubiquitous consumer culture. These were the necessities that allowed military heroes of the ilk of Vernon, Wolfe, Keppel and Nelson to become celebrities; yet their status as such should not merely be accredited to fundamental societal advancements and customs or, indeed, to their martial endeavours. In many respects, their celebrity was a product of construction, manufactured *within* the nascent public sphere and *via* the ever expanding press either by themselves or by others. Vernon, for instance, owed much of his remarkable renown to the efforts of the British mercantile class and glib Country politicians, who transformed him into a popular symbol of 'Blue-Water' and anti-government politics. Likewise, ostensibly realising that 'everyone can endure to give praise to a dead man', it was William Pitt who seized the opportunity in 1759 to both dramatically magnify Wolfe's achievements in Quebec and manipulate his body and his image to fashion his very own imperial icon.[73] Keppel's rise to stardom, meanwhile, was wholly instigated by the actions of others, his identity fashioned by those who merrily disseminated their opinions via the newspapers of the Opposition. Brought into the public eye, he was commandeered to represent all who despised Lord North's unsuccessful and ostracised ministry; his national adoration followed as a result. Ever a paradigm of celebrity culture, Nelson is the notable exception. His unprecedented fame arose almost in spite of his peers rather than due to them, and he was to prove adept at overtly advertising his achievements via an assortment of media outlets. Indeed, he became 'his own best publicist'; by constantly propagating an image of

[73] Montagu, p. 172.

humility and piety, he ensured the populace construed him in the manner he desired.[74] These perceptions resonate with the 'structuralist' approach to analysing modern celebrity, which argues that celebrities:

> Are constructed by cultural intermediaries, such as entertainment impresarios, moguls, and publicists, in alliance with media personnel. The construction of celebrity is designed to captivate public interest for pecuniary gain, but it can also aim to engineer political incorporation.[75]

As such, they further validate the premise that the foremost martial heroes of the eighteenth century were the celebrities of their day.

Though sparked by his achievements in the Caribbean, Admiral Vernon's unprecedented popularity was in many ways an 'ideologically constructed' repute, a creation of the energies of the external political dynamics of his age, namely the 'patriot' Opposition to Prime Minister Robert Walpole and the mercantile orders of the nation at large.[76] The contemporary commercial ranks existed as a recently embittered proportion of society, lately disillusioned by the consequences of the Treaty of Pardo, signed on 14 January 1739, which had ostensibly weakened the international standing of the British trading community.[77] The widespread rancour it had precipitated ensured Walpole's denigration from many quarters, hence William Pitt's consideration of the treaty as:

[74] Kathleen Wilson, 'How Nelson Became a Hero', in *The Historian*, ed. by Ian Mason et al., 117 vols (London: The Historical Association, 1983-2013), LXXXVIII (2005), pp. 6-19 (p. 10).
[75] Rojek, 'Celebrity', p. 85.
[76] Jordan and Rogers, p. 202.
[77] *Ibid*, p. 205.

> Nothing but a stipulation for national ignominy; an illusory expedient to baffle the resentment of the nation […] a surrender of the rights and trade of England […] The complaints of [the] despairing merchants, and the voice of England, have condemned it.[78]

The middling orders thus viewed Vernon's capture of Porto Bello as an exoneration of their clamour for a more assertive, forceful 'Blue Water' diplomacy, and saw him as the man that 'alone has maintain'd the Glory of the British Flag' through 'the great Care he has taken to preserve and cultivate our Trade in the American Seas'.[79] He was swiftly cast as the liberator of 'the principal Tradesman' of the country, and thus gained a fan-base eager to shower him with praise for the potential restoration of their profit margins, explaining the repeated outbreaks of public worship in parishes and municipalities with trading affinities across the land, and why subscriptions from the business caste heavily contributing to the financing of the communal festivities that celebrated the Admiral.[80]

In addition, as a staunch critic of the government, Vernon's heroic exploits were immediately invoked by the Opposition in parliament to reveal the supine character of a ministry apparently unwilling to defend British interests on a global stage. 'We shewed how much time & how many opportunities had been lost', William Pultney gleefully disclosed to Vernon shortly after the affair, '& what ignominy this nation has suffered by our former timidity'.[81] The Opposition press were even more acerbic: 'a certain Great Man', muttered the *London Evening Post* on Walpole, 'should interpret all the *Applauses* heap'd upon

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[78] William Pitt, cited in William Cobbett, *Cobbett's Parliamentary History of England: 1737-1739*, 36 vols (London: R. Bagshaw, 1806-20), X (1812), p. 1283. Google eBook.
[79] 'Blue-Water' political strategy was an aggressive foreign policy predicated upon a large navy, a small army and control of the seas, best summarised by Walter Raleigh's famous 1667 statement: 'Whosoever commands the see commands the trade, whosoever commands the trade of the world commands the riches of the world and consequently the world itself. 'Extract of a letter from Wrexham in Denbighshire, 13 November 1740', *London Evening Post*, 20-22 November 1740, Gale Document Number: Z2000641632; 'Extract of a Letter from Coventry, 20 November 1740', *ibid*.; Stephen Pincus, 'The English Debate over Universal Monarchy', in *A Union for Empire: Political Thought And the British Union of 1707*, ed. by John Robertson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), pp. 37-62 (p. 41).
[80] Wilson, *Sense of the People*, p. 145.
[81] William Pultney to Edward Vernon, 17 August 1740, in Ranft, p. 119.

Admiral Vernon as so many *Satires* upon himself'.[82] From this juncture, Vernon was moulded into the doyenne of all those lusting after political vicissitude in the years preceding the 1741 elections, and the figurehead of a Country agenda based on 'patriotism, trade, commercial expansion, and reform'.[83] Indeed, it is in the context that the mass circulation of Vernon memorabilia can be understood, as by purchasing such items contemporaries may not have necessarily been conveying their admiration for the Admiral's heroic naval endeavours, but instead employing his likeness to unsubtly express and broadcast their desires for political change to the rest of society. Such a theory is corroborated by events, as after Wapole's resignation on 11 February 1742, one notices a substantial decline in Vernon's acclaim.[84] 'Our hymns are not so tumultuous as they were some time ago to the tune of Admiral Vernon' it was remarked that June; by January 1743 he had 'outlived all his popularity'; and post-Culloden, reflecting on 'the mortality of fame and popularity', Horace Walpole gaily reported how Vernon's head had been 'almost universally replaced' upon the inn-signs of British publicans by the Duke of Cumberland's robust visage.[85] This regression suggests his momentous victories can bare only partial responsibility for the scale of his renown; to a great extent, his was a celebrity fashioned by contemporary 'cultural intermediaries': a bellicose British mercantile class who cast him as their hero, and a parliamentary Opposition keen to utilize his image and popularity for national 'political incorporation'.

External political powers likewise played their part in the construction of the cult of General Wolfe, for Pitt, now a Prime Minister whose political credibility essentially hinged

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[82] *London Evening Post*, 29 March-1 April 1740, Gale Document Number: Z2000640631.
[83] Jordan and Rogers, p. 210.
[84] William Cobbett, *Cobbett's Parliamentary History of England*, XII (London: T. C. Hansard, 1812), p. 404. Google eBook.
[85] The cutting tone of Walpole's observations can be explained by the fact the author was the son of the very Prime Minister cast as the sinner to Vernon's saint. Horace Walpole to Sir Horace Mann, 24 June 1742, in W. S. Lewis, ed., *The Yale Edition of Horace Walpole's Correspondence* (New Haven, CT/USA: Yale University Press, 1937-1983), XVII (1954), p. 466, in *The Lewis Walpole Library Online* <http://images.library.yale.edu/hwcorrespondence/page.asp> [accessed 28 March 2013]; Horace Walpole to Horace Mann, 6 January 1743, in *ibid*, XVIII (1955), p. 135; Horace Walpole to Henry Conway, 16 April 1747, in *ibid*, XXXVII (1974), p. 266.

on the success of a pugnacious foreign policy, artfully manipulated the media and the public after the acquisition of Quebec in 1759 to transform the General into his own imperial hero.[86] In a 'calculated move' to augment Wolfe's bravery and magnify public fervour, despite knowing of victory the day prior to the publication of his triumph in the London press Pitt handed an edited version of the latter's latest report to the *London Gazette*, which told of operations that were 'much greater than we had reason to expect, or could foresee', and disseminated a distinctly pessimistic overtone in its description of events.[87] Thus, when the news of a glorious result broke on the 17 October 1759, the juxtaposition of British fortunes dramatically amplified Wolfe's celebrity and the public ardour; as Walpole stated: 'the notification of a probable disappointment in Quebec came only to heighten the pleasure of the conquest'.[88] Swift to encourage civic celebration, the government ordered the Park and Tower guns to be fired immediately, financed several substantial illuminations within the capital, and stoked the fires of national sentiment by pronouncing the 29 November 'a Day of General Thanksgiving to Almighty God, for the signal Successes of His Majesty's Arms'.[89]

With the nation mourning the loss of their saviour, and seemingly awake to the 'piercing sorrows' of Wolfe's now desolate mother and fiancée, the ministry now played to the gallery of public sensibility.[90] Wolfe's public funeral was an orchestrated '*tour de force* of grief': beginning at seven o'clock on 17 November, his corpse took two hours to be transported by barge to the Point at Portsmouth 'attended by 12 twelve-oar'd barges […] in a

[86] Joan Coutu, *Persuasion and Propaganda: Monuments and the Eighteenth-Century British Empire* (London: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2006), p. 110.
[87] *Ibid*., p. 110; 'Letter', *The Gentleman's Magazine: and Historical Chronicle*, October 1759, ProQuest document ID: 8359935; Horace Walpole to H. S. Conway, 18 October, 1759, Walpole, *Letters*, III, p. 486.
[88] Walpole to Sir Horace Mann, 19 October, 1759, *ibid*, p. 487.
[89] The day of thanksgiving was also to commemorate recent other advances in North America, and naval victories off Cape Lagos and the coast of Africa. 'Bp. of Worcester to preach on the Thanksgiving Day', *Journal of the House of Lords*, 64 vols (London: History of Parliament Trust, 1767-1830), XXIX (1756-60), pp. 543-53 (n. p.), in *British History Online* <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=114474> [accessed 9 March 2013].
[90] 'Lines Occasioned by the Death of Gen. Wolfe', *Scots Magazine*, October 1759, ProQuest document ID: 6195156.

train of gloomy silent pomp' to the booms of minute guns from the ships at Spithead.[91] Once on land, a hearse paraded the body through the garrison in view of 'many thousands of people', all hushed by the 'muffled bells that rang 'in solemn concert with the march'; the pageant eventually concluded at the Landport Gates, whereupon the carriage – 'escorted by a mourning coach' – proceeded to Greenwich for the final entombment.[92]

Widely recounted in the press, Wolfe's procession successfully piqued the emotions of the populace, providing a platform for Pitt's grandest piece of political propaganda, the *Monument to General Wolfe*. On 20 November – the very day after the burial – Pitt promptly announced his intentions to immortalise the General with a state-funded monument, an immensely rare tribute in mid-eighteenth-century Britain.[93] The sculpture was to be placed in the 'most public indoor space' in the country in Westminster Abbey, a deliberate ploy to augment Wolfe's renown as this was a sanctuary permanently 'filled with crowds', and one of the few spaces where 'the lowest sort of people' could mix with the wealthy and the educated to form one homogenous body of worship.[94] His populist propensities were further exposed in the choosing of the design, for it was his influence that persuaded the Duke of Devonshire, the man selected to pluck a winner from numerous artistic proposals, to ignore his primary inclination for the architecture of James Athenian Stuart and approve the more expedient work of Joseph Wilton.[95] This, as Joan Coutu has recognised, he did primarily since it stood as an explicit piece of 'jingoistic propaganda', typified by the insertion of the

[91] Joan Coutu, 'Legitimising the British Empire: The Monument to General Wolfe in Westminster Abbey', in *Conflicting Visions: War and Visual Culture in Britain and France, c.1700-1830*, ed. by John Bonehill and Geoff Quilley (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005), pp. 61-84, (p. 64); 'Character, with some Particulars', *London Magazine*.
[92] *Ibid*., p. 580.
[93] The only two previous parliamentary commissions had been the monuments to Admiral Sir Cloudsley Shovell, at the behest of Queen Anne, and Captain James Cornewall, whose sculpture was pushed through parliament by the Grenville Cousinhood in 1747. Matthew Craske, 'Making National Heroes? A Survey of the Social and Political Functions and Meanings of Major British funeral Monuments to Naval and Military Figures, 1730-1770, in *Conflicting Visions: War and Visual Culture in Britain and France, c.1700-1830*, ed. by John Bonehill and Geoff Quilley (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005), pp. 41-60, (p. 53); Joan Coutu, 'Legitimising the British Empire', in *Conflicting Visions*, ed. by Bonehill and Quilley, pp. 65, 74.
[94] Pierre-Jean Grosley, *A Tour to London, or New Observations on England and its Inhabitants*, 2 vols (London: printed for Lockyer Davis, 1772), II (1772), p. 205. Google eBook.
[95] Coutu, *Persuasion and Propaganda*, p. 118.

French flag at the feet of the triumphant General in an unambiguous 'vulgar display of victory'.[96] Further, it characterised 'a new style for a new empire', its synchronisation of modern and antique dress allowing a British audience to equate their global demesne to be 'on a par with or even surpassing' the illustrious Roman Empire of ancient times, whilst the image of death in the moment of conquest would perpetually rekindle public sympathy for an ostensibly righteous conflict.[97] By substantiating Pitt's personal imperial aspirations, 'it was as much a monument to himself as it was to Wolfe'.[98]

Thus, Wolfe's celebrity and his lasting stereotype as a glorious imperial hero were in many senses political constructed. His death, his body, and his image were repeatedly publicised and exploited to suits the needs of his Prime Minister, who sought to manipulate the feelings of the multitude in the hope of stimulating support for his own personal political agenda. Not only does this pattern of events bear striking similarities with Vernon and his Opposition benefactors, it once again conforms to and vindicates the structuralist interpretation of celebrity propagated by many modern sociologists.

However, that celebrity can be attributed to the machinations of others rather than oneself is best exemplified by Admiral Keppel. In reality this 'Conquering Hero' was not born on the high seas but in the pages of the Opposition press, his renown a by-product of public sphere involvement in state proceedings facilitated via a media which had just begun to free itself from the chains of noble patronage and uncompromising parliamentary practices of prosecution.[99] Indeed, it was no wish of Keppel's to publicise the Battle of Ushant or initiate its subsequent scandal; despite 'privately censuring' the conduct of his subordinate and friend of the ministry, Sir Hugh Palliser, and blaming him for the conflict's stalemate, his

[96] *Ibid*., *Persuasion and Propaganda*, p. 119, Joan Coutu, 'Legitimising the British Empire', in *Conflicting Visions*, ed. by Bonehill and Quilley, pp. 68-70.
[97] *Coutu, Persuasion and Propaganda*, p. 105.
[98] *Ibid*., *Persuasion and Propaganda*, p. 105.
[99] Rogers, *Crowds, Cultures and Politics*, pp. 123-26.

diplomatic account of the battle had spared the latter disrepute.[100] Nevertheless, the journalistic field continued to keenly debate the topic in the aftermath of the conflict, and on 15 October 1778 the *General Advertiser*, an Opposition newspaper, published a transcript by Lieutenant George Berkeley revealing 'the principal cause of Mr. Keppel's not re-attacking the French […] was *Sir H---- P-------*'s not joining him' in line.[101] Incensed at this stain on his honour, Palliser wrote to Keppel requesting he publically 'contradict those scandalous reports'; receiving no reply, he published his account in the *Morning Post*, and on 11 December, at his behest, the Admiralty ordered a trial by court-martial to take place.[102]

Keppel's friends were outraged, now considering their comrade's previous 'extreme tenderness' toward the plaintiff to have been misguided – 'The rascal!', cried Admiral John Campell, 'He knows that Keppel has his head in his pocket'; yet they need not have worried, for it was precisely the redolent air of injustice that won their man the affections of the people.[103] Opposition journalists were quick to scent corruption, believing the trial to be a nefarious effort on the part of the ministry to ruin the career of a political enemy; the *Public Advertiser* going so far as to tell Keppel of Lord Sandwich's fruitful involvement:

> Your popularity was odious in the Eye of the A[dmiralty] Minister, and every base Means was used to destroy you […] You have been told that Twitcher has not interfered. It is false: He was [up] the greatest Part of the Night with P[alliser] forming the Articles of your Charge.[104]

To the suspicious, 'the galiant [*sic*] Admiral' had 'been sacrificed to the low artifices of the *selfish* junto'; henceforth, with a discontented populace keen to vent their frustration at an

[100] William Laird Clowes, *The Royal Navy: A History*, 7 vols (London: Sampson Low, Marston and Co., 1897-1903), III (1898), p. 425.
[101] 'To the editor of the General Advertiser', *General Advertiser and Morning Intelligencer*, 15 October 1778, Gale Document Number: Z2000427725.
[102] Keppel, II, pp. 77-79.
[103] Admiral John Campbell, cited in A. Francis Steuart, ed., *Last Journals of Horace Walpole*, 2 vols (London: J. Lane, 1910), II (1910), p. 223.
[104] 'Veteran', cited in *Public Advertiser*, 22 December 1778, Gale Document Number: Z2001165998.

administration unsuccessful in war and seemingly craven in character, Keppel's popularity soared.[105] The Admiral became the idol of all who opposed the administration in society and in politics; indeed the Rockingham parliamentary faction slyly tied him to their anti-government cause, and treated the trial 'as an affair of party rather than as a national one […] as if it were the first interest of the nation to vindicate Keppel'.[106] Many of the subsequent public celebrations of the acquittal were even privately sponsored by members of the Opposition, several of whom who were likewise caught egging on the hordes that desecrated the houses of Palliser and his associates in the riots that followed the Admiral's exoneration.[107] Throughout the debacle, energetic and overt attempts were made by the Opposition press in their commentary and by his followers in the public sphere via outbursts of veneration and the purchase of Keppelian commodities 'to raise him into something more than a hero'.[108] These proved to be successful, for they ultimately transformed him into a celebrity symbol.

Such commotion, and such social standing, was thus neither created nor sustained by Keppel's own hand. Lady Pembroke even reasoned that the furore 'must have distress'd him terribly & made him feel small, for tho' he had done as well as he could […] there was nothing very great done'.[109] Indeed, that he 'alone seemed pensive' amidst his Portsmouth parade, eschewed 'the mantle of Wilkes' by entering the capital 'after dark to avoid the crowds of people who were prepared to usher him into town', and, though thanking them often, expressly instructed the London mob to refrain from their destructive exuberance when

[105] 'House of Commons', *General Advertiser and Morning Intelligencer*, 4 December 1778, Gale Document Number: Z2000428146.
[106] Horace Walpole, cited in Steuart, II, p. 237.
[107] Earl Russell related years later how Thomas Grenville was a notable 'partner in the frolic', whilst Lord George Bentinck was cited by John Dalby as 'encouraging the [London] mob by pulling off his Hat and Huzzaing & saying that is well done my Lads'. Trevelyan, p. 152; Rogers, *Crowds, Cultures and Politics*, p. 135.
[108] John Charnock, *Biographia Navalis* (London: R. Faulder, 1794), p. 345, in *Open Library* <http://archive.org/stream/biographianaval00chargoog#page/n354> [accessed 28 March 2013]; Rogers, *Crowds, Cultures and Politics*, pp. 122-51.
[109] Lady Elizabeth Pembroke to Lord Henry Herbert, 18 February 1779, in Henry Herbert, Tenth Earl of Pembroke, ed., *The Pembroke Papers: 1734-1780* (London: J. Cape, 1942), p. 149.

told of the riots convened in his name, substantiates the notion he had no wish to be a great celebrity, or revel in the aftermath of a disputed victory.[110] Much in the manner of Vernon and Wolfe, then, the Admiral's stardom can be in great part accredited to the actions and the influences of members of the public and political spheres; 'cultural intermediaries' that allowed a man of 'aristocratic airs and mediocre abilities' to be raised to the pantheon of military celebrities in spite of his management of an engagement that even Opposition journalists cast as an 'undecisive affair'.[111]

Interestingly, Lord Nelson, as in so many aspects of his life, proved to be the exception to the rule. Unlike his much-admired forebears, it was he that constructed his own repute, and he that manipulated the media and the masses to garner the renown he craved; a lust for fame that stemmed from his fever educed epiphany on the *Dolphin* in 1776, when in 'a sudden glow of patriotism' he had exclaimed his ambition to 'be a hero'.[112] He conspicuously betrayed his desires in the early stages of the Revolutionary Wars, when, annoyed at the lack of eulogium he received in the publically disseminated dispatches of the siege of Calvi in 1794, he declared to his sister that his superiors 'have not done me justice in the affair […] but, never mind, I'll have a Gazette of my own'.[113] Though he did not take steps to rectify such a slight, three years later he refused to replicate such restraint. Ensconced at falling foul of similar neglect in Admiral Jervis's official accounts of the Battle of St. Vincent on 14 February 1798, he sent his own report – highlighting his audacious victory-inducing manoeuvres – to a 'well-placed' friend in Captain William Locker, with the

[110] John Wilkes was a famous popular political hero in the 1760s. Keppel, II, pp. 185-96; Rogers, *Crowds, Cultures and Politics*, p. 135; 'Extract of a letter from Staines, April 12', *London Evening Post*, 16-18 February 1779, Gale Document Number: Z2000698867.
[111] 'To Admiral Keppel', *Public Advertiser*, 22 December 1778, Gale Document Number: Z2001165998; Rogers, *Crowds, Cultures and Politics*, p. 123.
[112] Horatio Nelson, cited in Robert Southey, *The Life of Nelson*, 2 vols (London: John Murray, 1813), I (1813), p. 24. Google eBook.
[113] Horatio Nelson, cited in Harrison, II, p. 127.

message he was 'at perfect liberty to insert it in the newspapers'.[114] Locker fittingly acquiesced, and it was this act, along with the printing of two other anonymous exposés, that produced enough publicity for the *Times* to describe him in 1797 as a man 'who so much distinguished himself in the late glorious Victory over the Spaniards'.[115]

The prestige he attained after St. Vincent was an important step to the more overt celebrity achieved in the wake of victory at the Nile. Yet, even in the latter instance, Nelson played a crucial part in constructing his image and amplifying the veneration of the masses; on this occasion via the crafty wordplay of his finest work – his dispatch to Jervis in the wake of victory. Aware that Admiral Duncan had been lavishly praised for his piety in the wake of his triumph at Camperdown on 11 October 1797, and keen to style his spectacular victory as a righteous, Protestant conquest over an Atheistic foe, in a 'calculated move' he sent his commander a potent masterpiece saturated with the Christian tenets of 'humility, faith and loyalty':

> Almighty God has blessed his Majesty's Arms in the late Battle, by a great Victory over the Fleet of the Enemy […] nothing could withstand the Squadron your Lordship did me the honour to place under my command […] the judgement of the Captains, together with their valour, and that of the Officers and Men of every description […] was absolutely irresistible.[116]

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[114] Timothy Jenks, *Naval Engagements: Patriotism, Cultural Politics, and The Royal Navy, 1793-1815* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), pp. 190-91; Horatio Nelson to Captain William Locker, 21 February 1797, in Sir Nicholas Harris Nicolas, ed., *The Dispatches and Letters of Vice Admiral Lord Nelson*, 7 vols (London: H. Colburn, 1845-46), II (1845), p. 354. Google eBook.

[115] The two other tracts were Colonel J. Drinkwater Bethune's *A Narrative of the Battle of St. Vincent; with Anecdotes of Nelson, Before and After the Battle* that he published anonymously in 1797, and a 'Letter from an Officer on Board his Majesty's Ship Orion' that was published in the *Times* on 9 March 1797. See Czisnik, *Nelson and the Nile*, pp. 41-42; *The Times*, 21 March 1797, p. 2 <http://0-find.galegroup.com.wam.leeds.ac.uk/ttda/infomark.do?&source=gale&prodId=TTDA&userGroupName=leedsuni&tabID=T003&docPage=article&searchType=BasicSearchForm&docId=CS34216053&type=multipage&contentSet=LTO&version=1.0> [accessed 18 March 2013].

[116] Jenks, p. 191; Kathleen Wilson, 'How Nelson Became a Hero', in *The Historian*, ed. by Mason, p. 10; Horatio Nelson to Admiral John Jervis, 3 August 1798, Nicholas, III, pp. 56-57. Google eBook.

As expected, the public melted in response. The author Philip De la Motte revealed how Nelson's 'unassuming and humble manner […] produced general admiration', with his prose so 'properly adapted to the state and feelings of the public mind' that he excited 'the adoration of Providence' by representing himself 'as merely the instrument of its interposition'.[117] His 'fervent and sincere piety' stood as a bastion of righteousness against the 'despicable and profane hypocrisy' of the irreligious Gallic hordes; thus the manifestation of Nelson as the people's Christian saviour swiftly became 'one of the major meanings attached to his celebrity image'.[118]

This is not to state that the political classes did not endeavour to use Nelson to promote their own political platforms. In the wake of the Nile he served both as an 'antidote to "old corruption"' and an emblem of loyalist patriotism – most notably depicted in print hauling the Francophile radicals Charles Fox and Richard Sheridan to George III as trophies; whilst in the radiant aftermath of Trafalgar, the ministry laboured to pin his 'god-like' persona to the loyalist mast through a gloriously hyperbolic state-funded funeral.[119] Yet, it is rather that he sought to be – and had to be primarily – the master of his own celebrity, as he reminded Pitt when he frankly told him:

> That not having been bred in Courts, I could not pretend to a nice discrimination between use and abuse of Parties; and, therefore, must not be expected to range myself under the Political banners of any man.[120]

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[117] Philip De la Motte, *The Principal, Historical, and Allusive, Arms, Borne by Families of the United Kingdom* (London: J. Nichols and Son, 1803), p. 294.
[118] Lord Gilbert Elliot Minto, cited in James Stanier Clarke and John McArthur, *The Life and Services of Horatio Viscount Nelson* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), p. 156; Jenks, p. 191.
[119] *Ibid*., p. 194; Isaac Cruikshank, *The Gallant Nellson* [*sic*] *Bringing Home Two Uncommon Fierce French Crocodiles from the Nile as a Present to the King* (London: S. W. Fores, 1798), *British Museum Satires (BMS*), no. 9251; James Stanier Clarke and John McArthur, eds., *The Naval Chronicle*, 40 vols (London: Bunney and Gould, later Joyce Gould, 1799-1818), XIV (London: Joyce Gold, 1805), p. 499. Google eBook; For a discussion of Nelson's funeral in greater depth see Colin White, 'His Dirge our Groans', in '*Trafalgar 1805-2005'*, ed. by Hoock, *passim*.
[120] Horatio Nelson, cited in Nicholas, V (1845), p. 371. Google eBook.

Thus, Nelson inverts the structuralist methodology, though he does not contradict it. Devoid of affiliation or political assistance, he became his own personal 'cultural intermediary', constantly utilizing publically reprinted dispatches and other media outlets to advertise his achievements and propagate a façade he knew to be popular. Though one can be cynical and state it was for 'pecuniary gain', is more likely, given his propensity for decoration and adulation, that the reward he sought was always the celebrity status that he eventually attained.[121]

It should be evident by this juncture that eighteenth-century celebrity was somewhat of a multifaceted phenomenon, attributable to a variety of causes, triggers, actions and deeds. The preceding chapter has highlighted the importance of the epoch's social and technological developments together with its customs of wartime celebration to producing the martial celebrity as a concrete entity. Of equal note, as this particular section has recognised, is the activity of those who sought to exploit such advances for their own ends, and to manufacture celebrity within such parameters. In the 1740s, Vernon was moulded into a champion of British commerce and erected as a figurehead of the Opposition cause by the mercantile and political castes, whilst a decade hence, the very nature of Wolfe's passing allowed William Pitt to 'magnify such a Death', and recast his image into an embodiment of his imperial project.[122] Later in the century, Admiral Keppel likewise reaped the acclaim of a 'Conquering hero' thanks to the efforts of external political forces, his celebrity fashioned by the Opposition factions of his day, though Lord Nelson, ever the renegade, was the notable exception to the rule. He 'never was a *party man*', and granted little early succour on his path to fame, he quickly realised the necessity of personally broadcasting his own achievements,

[121] See Kathleen Wilson, 'How Nelson Became a Hero', in *The Historian*, ed. by Mason, *passim*.
[122] John Pringle, *The Life of General James Wolfe, the Conqueror of Canada* (London: Anonymous, 1760), p. 25, in *ECCO* <http://0-find.galegroup.com.wam.leeds.ac.uk/ecco/infomark.do?&source=gale&prodId=ECCO&userGroupName=leeds uni&tabID=T001&docId=CW3307956098&type=multipage&contentSet=ECCOArticles&version=1.0&docLevel=FASCIMILE> [accessed 25 March 2013].

doing so with notable aplomb.[123] As he justified to his Danish friend Count Waltersdorff: 'If we have talents […] we have no right to keep them under a bushel, they are ours for the benefit of the Community'.[124] Thus, to a great extent, these military celebrities were products of construction, their identity fashioned and their status augmented via the organs of the nascent public sphere to achieve political or personal gain; the very ethos of the structuralist vision of what constitutes celebrity. Indeed, they were moulded to personify political objectives and symbolize certain causes, which amplified their popularity and facilitated their rise to celebrity status. The notion of the celebrity as a symbol is one that the final chapter will take to fruition by exploring the personal rather than the political, and by considering the importance of each hero's public image in the cultural context of the century.

[123] James Harris, First Earl of Malmesbury, cited in James Harris, Third Earl of Malmesbury, ed., *Diaries and Correspondence of James Harris, First Earl of Malmesbury*, 4 vols (London: Richard Bentley, 1844), IV (1844), p. 350.
[124] Horatio Nelson to Count Waltersdorff, 13 January 1804, in Colin White, ed., *Nelson: The New Letters* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2005), p. 35.

III

Context, Character, and the Importance of the Public Image

> *To you, Britons, then I call; to you my countrymen and Fellow subjects: Rouse yourselves up like Men, like the Offspring of antient and brave Heroes […] Let not Effeminacy, Luxury, nor any other unmanly Vice lodge within your Gates; thrust them out as Vagrants, esteem them a nauseous, pernicious and most destructive Guests; then primitive Heroism will take possession of your noble Souls; then Liberty and Property will be the Theme; then Dulcia est pro Patria mori, and Nemo impune lacessit, will be the Mottos of your Standards.*[125]
>
> Friend to the British Flag, 1755

As this emotive piece of mid-century panegyric suggests, this Age of War was a period of history in which British male character suffered from intense public examination, a scrutiny that stemmed from an innate desire to construct an identity unique and superior to all nations, whether they be European or otherwise.[126] Particularly, as Kathleen Wilson has recognised, sections of society were immensely concerned that continental influences had penetrated the psyche of those who held the reins of authority in the political and martial spheres, creating an 'effeminate' ruling class that had traded the masculine tenets of 'courage, aggression, martial valour, [and] strength' for the effete and selfish trappings of wealth, fashion and luxury.[127] In times of unsuccessful conflict, these social behaviours were repeatedly seized upon and enthusiastically blamed by the populace for producing a 'weak and enervated fighting-force'.[128] In parallel, the era bore witness to the rise of a 'patriotic critique of corruption' – a largely 'middle-class' movement that similarly castigated the higher ranks;

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[125] Friend to the British Flag, *Some Material and Very Important Remarks Concerning the Present Situation of Affairs between Great Britain, France and Spain, in Regard to Their East and West India Settlements* (London: C. Corbett, 1755), pp. 6-7, in *ECCO* <http://0-find.galegroup.com.wam.leeds.ac.uk/ecco/infomark.do?&source=gale&prodId=ECCO&userGroupName=leeds_uni&tabID=T001&docId=CW106081394&type=multipage&contentSet=ECCOArticles&version=1.0&docLevel=FASCIMILE> [accessed 12 March 2013].
[126] Kathleen Wilson, 'Empire of Virtue', in *An Imperial State at War*, ed. by Stone, p. 155.
[127] *Ibid*., p. 146.
[128] *Ibid*., p. 146.

though in this instance for corroding the sacred structures of government with their repeated abuses of patronage and power.[129] Together with the perpetual rhetoric of 'effeminacy', this social discourse had a significant impact upon the individual cults of Vernon, Wolfe, Keppel and Nelson, as the context they provided and, more importantly, the comparisons they initiated, ensured the qualities of each individual's public image were crucial to their popular appeal. Indeed, they came to symbolize what were perceived as the specifically British virtues of manliness, integrity, honour, patriotism, and magnanimity; in doing so, by shedding their own 'subjectivity and individuality' to become 'an organizing structure for conventionalised meaning', they further conform to the celebrity stereotype.[130] In the words of P. David Marshall: 'the celebrity *represents* something other than itself. The material reality of the celebrity sign – that is, the actual person who is at the core of the representation – disappears into a cultural formation of meaning'.[131]

British fears the aristocracy were infecting the military with their effeminate mannerisms had existed since the early decades of the eighteenth century, yet by the 1730s the situation was considered so parlous the very monopoly the nobility held over martial matters was brought into question, with some critics asking how exactly 'the antient *British* Fire, Spirit, and Bravery' was to be supported by a class whose young were 'so debauch'd with Effeminacy and Italian Airs' they 'dwindle almost into women?'[132] Amidst this atmosphere of uncertainty, Admiral Vernon's manly comportment and 'bluff' manner became key reasons for his celebrity, and led to his veneration as a bulwark of British masculinity in a time of 'fops' and 'mollies', a scourge of the 'fine gentlemen' of his class who 'could not […] bear

[129] *Ibid*., p. 155.
[130] Marshall, p. 56.
[131] *Ibid*., pp. 56-57.
[132] Kathleen Wilson, 'Empire of Virtue', in *An Imperial State at War*, ed. by Stone, p. 141; Anon., 'To the H– ble Sir J – B –' (London, 1734), in *Two Dissertations on the Theatres*, by Theophilius Cibber (London: Mr Griffiths, 1756), Appendix, pp. 65-81 (p. 73). Google eBook.

the smell of gunpowder'.[133] In the wake of his victory over the Spanish in 1739, raunchy refrains and common drinking shanties typecast him as '"a Man ev'ry Inch" and a "True Cock of the Game"', a strong, virile example of manhood who had forced *la bella* Porto Bello to '"submit to his Pleasure"' in the Caribbean.[134]

In conjunction, he was recognised as 'an honest soldier' in an era of political corruption, a man frequently commended for his criticism of injustice and contempt of rank and show.[135] In 1732, he won many friends with his public derision of the unpopular reintroduction of the salt duty, a levy he considered to be an 'unequal tax' introduced 'only to ease the rich at the expense of the poor'; likewise, he was praised for his selfless distribution of the spoils of victory post-Porto Bello, and his blunt rejection of a knighthood in 1742.[136] Deeds such as these saw him revered as a bastion of integrity in 'a mercenary and venal age', a paradigm of virtue who stood defiantly in opposition to the 'sly State Rogues' of a ministry loathed for its blatant abuses of political patronage, and an Admiralty that had a history for forgetting the 'natural affection and duty they ow'd their country' and replacing it with a 'chief care […] to get mony [*sic*] for themselves'.[137] In the prints that immortalised his exploits he was frequently cast as a '*true Briton*', '*a Brave & honest Man*' – the very antithesis of an iniquitous Walpole, who, in one engraving, is shown parallel to Vernon's

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[133] Jordan and Rogers, p. 207; Philip Carter, *Mollies, Fops, and Men of Feeling: Aspects of Male Effeminacy and Masculinity in Britain, c. 1700-1780* (Oxford: D. Phil. Thesis, University of Oxford, 1995), *passim*; Edward Vernon, cited in Anon., *The History and Proceedings of the House of Commons from the Restoration to the Present Time*, 14 vols (London: Richard Chandler, 1742-44), VII (1742), p. 166. Google eBook.
[134] Jordan and Rogers, p. 206.
[135] Oliver Goldsmith, *A History of England in a Series of Letters from a Nobleman to his Son*, 2 vols (London: J. Newbery, 1764), II (1864), p. 171.
[136] Edward Vernon, cited in Anon., *The History and Proceedings*, p. 165; Romney Sedgwick, *The House of Commons, 1715-1754*, 2 vols (London: Published for the History of Parliament Trust by H.M.S.O, 1970), p. 497; John Barrow, *The Naval History of Great Britain; with the Lives of the most Illustrious Admirals and Commanders, from the Reign of Queen Elizabeth*, 4 vols (London: printed for James Rivington et al., 1758), IV (1758), p. 58, in *ECCO* <http://0-find.galegroup.com.wam.leeds.ac.uk/ecco/infomark.do?&source=gale&prodId=ECCO&userGroupName=leeds_uni&tabID=T001&docId=CB129393959&type=multipage&contentSet=ECCOArticles&version=1.0&docLevel=FASCIMILE> [accessed 23 March 2013]; Kathleen Wilson, 'Empire, Trade, and Popular Politics', p. 103.
[137] *Ibid*., p. 103; George Bickham, *A Skit on Britain* (London: Anon., 1740), *BMS*, no. 2423; Anon., 'An Inquiry into the Causes of our Naval Miscarriages', in William Oldys, ed., *The Harleian Miscellany, or, A Collection of Scarce, Curious, and Entertaining Pamphlets and Tracts*, 2 vols (London: Thomas Osbourne, 1744-46), I (1744), p. 550. Google eBook.

conquests defecating on a map of England, whilst basking in the devotion of three parliamentary '*Place-men*' and pointing to a lackey holding a cheque of '£10,000 *for your Borough*'.[138]

Furthermore, the Admiral was though to epitomise magnanimity; the very trait that ostensibly distinguished 'free-born Englishmen' from their continental cousins.[139] His decisions to both forbid the plunder of Porto Bello and to 'preserve to the Spaniards the conditions of their capitulation' in the wake his triumph in 1739 saw him heartily acclaimed as 'the generous Hero', and a man 'tender of the national honour […] and the nature of an Englishman'.[140] Indeed, this penchant for altruism left contemporaries unsure as to 'whether his 'conduct, courage, or humanity' were to be the most admired, for he embodied 'all […] in their greatest lustre'. [141] Moreover, Vernon's benevolent public persona married with his other qualities to fit neatly with the ideal 'Patriot' political candidate of the early 1740s: an individual classified by 'his unalterable Affections for the Publick Good, his approved Ability to serve her in his Councils, and a steadfast Integrity, not to be seduced by Temptations or Menaces'.[142] A proven apostle of these qualities, it comes as no surprise that he was nominated for no less than six parliamentary constituencies in the elections of 1741, returned for three, and 'might have been chosen in twenty more'; as one constituent cried: 'We wish that every Member in the ensuing Parliament might be a VERNON, or animated by like Spirit: We should see our Country flourishing at home, and giving Laws abroad'.[143]

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[138] Anon., 'The English Lion Let Loose, or Vernon Triumphant', in *Catalogue of Prints and Drawings in the British Museum*, ed. by F. G. Stephens, 11 vols (London: Chiswick Press, 1870-1954), III (1877), pp. 299-301; Bickham, *A Skit on Britain*.
[139] Nicholas Rodgers, *The Wooden World: An Anatomy of the Georgian Navy* (London: William Collins Sons and Co. Ltd, 1986), p. 88.
[140] Barrow, pp. 59-61.
[141] 'On Admiral Vernon's Birth-Day', *London Evening Post*, 13-15 November 1740, Gale Document Number: Z2000641602.
[142] Anon., *An Impartial Enquiry into the Properties of Places and Pensions as they Affect the Constitution, Humbly Inscribed to the Serious Perusal of the Electors of Great Britain* (London: H. Gorham, 1740), p. 37, in *Open Library* <http://archive.org/stream/impartialenquiry00youruoft#> [accessed 23 March 2013].
[143] Jordan and Rogers, p. 204; William Pultney, cited in Ranft, p. 240; *Newcastle Courant*, 2 May 1741, cited in Wilson, 'Empire, Trade, and Popular Politics', p. 105.

Thus, in a period rife with concern that the nation was degenerating at the hands of a knavish and unmanly elite, the Admiral's public image – that of a 'rough' hewn soldier replete with moral decency and unquestionable patriotism – transformed him into a symbol of true Britishness and a saviour of a desperate populace; together with his political connections and the willingness of the mercantile orders to celebrate him as their hero, this was but a recipe for stardom.[144]

The public anxiety, however, did not dissipate. The 1750s were in fact defined by a cultural panic in which administrations were charged with practicing 'corrupt, wicked, and nefarious' politics, when the nobility once again were 'filled with follies and vices of every kind', and who, from 'their corruption of manner […] most dangerous mischiefs, and almost incurable usurpations of ill acquired power, threaten[d] destruction to a free-born people'.[145] Many blamed the loss of Minorca to the French in 1756 – a tragedy that had seemingly 'dismember'd' the English Imperial Lion – on Admiral John Byng's 'Effeminate and soft' demeanour, which, in the logic of the day, had led to his ineptitude and cowardice in the heat of the fray.[146] Similarly, the early fiascos of the Seven Years War were ascribed to:

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[144] Goldsmith, p. 171.

[145] Anon., *A Tract on the National Interest and the Depravity of the Times: in which the Subjects Claims to Certain Rights in R – P –, are fully Considered and Digested* (London: J. Shepheard, 1757), p. 14, in *ECCO* <http://0-find.galegroup.com.wam.leeds.ac.uk/ecco/infomark.do?&source=gale&prodId=ECCO&userGroupName=leeds uni&tabID=T001&docId=CW105060470&type=multipage&contentSet=ECCOArticles&version=1.0&docLevel=FASCIMILE> [accessed 12 February 2013]; Anon., *A Modest Address to the Commons of Great Britain, And in Particular to the Free Citizens of London* (London: J. Scott, 1756), p. 4. Google eBook.

[146] Anon., *The English Lion Dismembered or the Voice of the Public for an Enquiry into the Loss of Minorca* (London: The Printers of London and Westminster, 1756), in *John Carter Brown Library* <http://jcb.lunaimaging.com/luna/servlet/detail/JCBMAPS~2~2~202~100048:THE-ENGLISH-LION-DISMEMBER%E2%80%99D-Or-the> [accessed 25 March 2013]; Anon., *Admiral John Byng and the Elysian Shades: A Poem* (London: printed for R. Withy and J. Ryal, 1757), pp. 6-7, in *ECCO* <http://0-find.galegroup.com.wam.leeds.ac.uk/ecco/infomark.do?&source=gale&prodId=ECCO&userGroupName=leeds uni&tabID=T001&docId=CB126092322&type=multipage&contentSet=ECCOArticles&version=1.0&docLevel=FASCIMILE> [accessed 24 March 2013].

> The luxurious and effeminate Manners in the higher ranks […] [which] have produced a general Incapacity, have weakened the national Spirit of Defence […] and thus [seem] to have fitted us for a Prey to the Insults and Invasions of our most powerful Enemy.[147]

Against this backdrop, Wolfe's public image equally became a significant reason for his popular appeal. It appeared clear to the British public post-Quebec that his success must have stemmed from a character devoid of all the excesses of the ineffective and depraved aristocracy; consequently he was idolised as 'a paragon of bourgeois rectitude' in life: within the home a doting son and fiancée, amongst his martial brethren the very 'Pourtrait [*sic*] of a Christian Soldier' – gallant, punctual, disciplined, a man who 'merited the Esteem of his Equals, and was honoured with the Commendation of his Superiors'.[148] Furthermore, his patriotism was absolute; in direct contrast to his many frivolous companions – the '*Toast and Butter* Captains who spend their times at tea tables, china shops, masquerades and brothels' – recreation and pleasure 'never so prevailed over him as to make him forget what he owed to himself and his Country'.[149] This imposed identity – that of the perfect martial male – was such an innate part of his celebrity over a decade after his demise he was still employed as an antidote to the inanity of high society. In June 1773, *Town and Country Magazine* published a letter from 'Amico' that wistfully told of a 'manly' Wolfe, who once publically cut off his hair 'to give the strongest discouragement to [the] effeminate manoeuvres' of several young officers who were being 'more attentive to the out-sides of their heads than he imagined they

[147] John Brown, *An Estimate of the Manners and Principles of the Times*, 2 vols (London: printed for L. Davis and C. Reymers, 1757), I (1757), pp. 181-82.
[148] Nicholas Rogers, 'Brave Wolfe: The Making of a Hero', in *A New Imperial History: Culture, Identity, and Modernity in Britain and the Empire, 1660-1840*, ed. by Kathleen Wilson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), pp. 239-59, (p. 242); Pringle, p. 12.
[149] 'London', *Gazetteer and London Daily Advertiser*, 24 August 1756, Gale Document Number: Z2000337499; Pringle, p. 13.

ought to be'; no doubt pleasing to contemporary readers who lived haunted by the pretentious 'Macaroni Manners' of their own elite.[150]

As with Vernon, the General was esteemed for his supposed magnanimity, a virtue still held by mid-century Britons to be 'the true *Characteristick* of a FREE PEOPLE'.[151] According to the *Annual Magazine* 'he searched after objects for his charity and beneficence: the deserving soldier never went unrewarded, and even the needy inferior officer frequently tasted of his bounty'.[152] Indeed, his encomiastic biographer, John Pringle, extolled his 'extensive Spirit of Benevolence, which glowed in him, to promote the universal Good of Mankind', whilst the contemporary press cast him as a staunch critic of scalping, a deplorer of 'irregular violence', and the nemesis of those who committed needless atrocities against innocent civilians.[153] These imagined qualities are decidedly ironic given Wolfe actually despised the North American natives, and went so far as to inform Lord George Sackville 'it would give [him] pleasure to see the Canadian vermin sacked and pillaged and justly repaid their unheard-of cruelty […] "*Homme brutal et sanguinaire!*"'.[154] Nevertheless, to his adoring fans he was 'generous, gentle, complacent, and humane; the patron of the officer, the darling of the soldier'.[155]

Wolfe was construed as a true patriot, who even in death could be a credit his nation with his 'BRITISH FORTITUDE'.[156] The *Royal Magazine* acclaimed him as a martyr who perished 'the most happy that can be imagined' and pamphleteers extolled how he cried 'I die

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[150] 'To the Printer of the Town and Country Magazine', *Town and Country Magazine*, June 1771, ProQuest document ID: 6263190; See Paul Langford, *A Polite and Commercial People: England 1727-1783* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), pp. 565-615.
[151] 'Postscript, Vienna, 17 October', *London Evening Post*, 1-3 November 1759, Gale Document Number: Z2000663520.
[152] 'Character of General Wolfe', *Annual Register*, II, p. 282.
[153] Pringle, p. 10; Nicholas Rogers, 'Brave Wolfe: The Making of a Hero', in *A New Imperial History*, ed. by Wilson, p. 252.
[154] *Ibid*., p. 252; James Wolfe, cited in Beckles Willson, ed., *The Life and Letters of James Wolfe* (London: W. Heinemann, 1909), p. 389, in *Open Library* <http://archive.org/stream/lifelettersofja00willuoft#page/389/mode/1up> [accessed 25 March 2013].
[155] Tobias Smollett, cited in McNairn, p. 38.
[156] 'Postscript, Vienna, 17 October', *London Evening Post*, 1-3 November 1759.

contented' when informed of victory, whilst Pringle most explicitly shone a light upon his conduct by concluding that is was precisely his exemplary behaviour exhibited in the moment of his passing which placed him above his departed brethren:

> If we search the Records of History for a Death like that of WOLFE, shall we find one, in all Respects, so Noble? Many have fought for their Country, and died in its Defence […] but how few, under his Circumstances, have graced Death with such attractive Charms, that what commonly is abhorred as an Evil, seems pleasing, welcome, and desirable?[157]

Wolfe's public image, then, was an immensely important facet of his contemporary celebrity. Built by Pitt into an imperial icon, the public swiftly imprinted upon his memory a wholly British, somewhat fictitious disposition worthy of his eminence as their deliverer; thus he became a tonic to luxury, a bastion of honour, a credit to his country, and a joyful martyr for the cause.

In 1779, Keppel rose to fame within a similar context, for the same resent that had permeated the previous eras of conflict yet lingered on the lips of contemporary commentators. As in the past, poor performance in war, whether against Colonial America, France or Spain was ascribed to a depraved upper echelon, and critics remained rueful that their 'men of rank and fortune' had 'exchanged sexes with the soft and fair', leading them to become 'fribbles and maccaronies, and not soldiers and heroes'.[158] The endurance of character as a national topic of discussion greatly benefited the Admiral's cause though, for his celebrity was almost wholly predicated upon his disposition, and specifically its

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[157] 'From the Royal Magazine', *The Beauties of all the Magazines Selected for the Year 1763*, 1763, p. 25. Google eBook; Gentleman in an Eminent Station on the Spot, *An Accurate and Authentic Journal of the Siege of Quebec, 1759. By a Gentleman in An Eminent Station on the Spot* (London: J. Robinson, 1759), p. 40, in *ECCO* <http://0-find.galegroup.com.wam.leeds.ac.uk/ecco/infomark.do?&source=gale&prodId=ECCO&userGroupName=leeds_uni&tabID=T001&docId=CW105196159&type=multipage&contentSet=ECCOArticles&version=1.0&docLevel=FASCIMILE> [accessed 25 March 2013]; Pringle, p. 25

[158] 'Maccaronie' was a derogatory term used to describe men who had a deference for ostentatious contemporary Italian fashions. *Norfork Chronicle*, 18 July 1778, cited in Wilson, *Sense of the people*, p. 254.

comparison to those that accused him of 'misconduct and neglect of duty'.[159] Indeed, the Admiral who took the lead at his trial of court-martial, Vice-Admiral Montagu, firmly emphasised that the court 'should not attend to forms of law, but to justice' in its deliberations, and that the issue at hand was Keppel's conduct, not 'legal technicalities'.[160] Witnesses were repeatedly asked if they considered the latter to have 'tarnished the honour of the British navy' with his behaviour – a subjective question which essentially negated the factual – and thus the attributes of 'courage and reputation' quickly adopted as much magnitude in the proceedings as the 'strategic niceties' of his command.[161] This was immensely fortunate, for in a public battle of integrity there could only be one victor between a defendant lauded for his 'magnanimity' and a plaintiff in Sir Hugh Palliser widely suspected of 'Envy and Malevolence', as Edmund Burke reveals when he chronicled the court audience's reaction to events on 12 January 1779:

> Adml Keppel, urging something, said it was necessary, as he was on trial for his Life and for what was much dearer to him his honour – a loud clap followed. Sir Hugh said his honour too was at stake; Which was no less dear to him – A dead and sullen silence.[162]

As touched on in the previous chapter, throughout the debacle Keppel was presented as a figure of righteousness fighting a malicious pack of ministerial heathens headed by Lord Sandwich and his 'creature' the Vice-Admiral.[163] The former was said to have a soul 'so blackened by vicious discourse' he could not 'do a deed of virtue', and was charged with having spent 'near five months deliberating in cold Blood' how to best ensure Keppel's

[159] Sir Lewis Namier and John Brooke, eds. *The House of Commons, 1754-1790*, 3 vols (London: Published for the History of Parliament Trust by H.M.S.O., 1964), III (1964), p. 10.
[160] Walpole, cited in Steuart, II, p. 235; Rogers, *Crowds, Cultures and Politics*, p.130.
[161] Keppel, p. 117; Rogers, *Crowds, Cultures and Politics*, p. 130.
[162] Trevelyan, p. 163; 'Agrippa', *Public Advertiser*, 21 December 1778, Gale Document Number: Z2001165989; Edmund Burke to Miss Frances Pelham, 12 January 1779, in *The Correspondence of Edmund Burke*, 10 vols (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1958-78), VI (1963, pp. 37-38 (p. 38).
[163] Rogers, *Crowds, Culture and Politics*, pp. 142-43; Walpole, cited in Steuart, II, p. 197.

execution.[164] The latter, meanwhile, would be forever tarnished by revelations that three of the naval log-books he employed during the trial to substantiate his version of events could not be trusted, having either 'received alterations' to their contents or had crucial pages 'torn out' from their stems.[165] Henceforth, he was cast by the public as the '*The Modern Judas*', a living monument of 'FRAUD, TREACHERY and CUNNING' who had 'rendr'd himself an object of CONTEMPT and DEVASTATION to every true Englishman […] [with] the DUPLICITY and TREACHERY of his NEFARIOUS conduct'.[166] He had betrayed his countrymen with his conduct and had sullied the British name; Keppel's exoneration, therefore – at least in the eyes of Opposition factions – exonerated the nation:

> The public, almost to a man, are consentaneous in one opinion […] that there is virtue enough still left in this country to render personal courage, high honour, and great professional abilities, superior to all the left-handed designs, and secret machinations, of a powerful corrupted administration.[167]

Again, it was character in the spotlight, and once more it was specifically British virtues that were on show. In Parliament, Keppel's 'distinguished courage, conduct and ability' were thanked by both Houses, with Colonel Isaac Barré going so far as to inform his colleagues that it was precisely this 'honest' hero's 'great abilities', 'integrity', 'known independent spirit and love for [his] country' that had seen him targeted by a vindictive establishment.[168] In the public sphere, meanwhile, the masses acclaimed their 'BRAVE, HONEST KEPPEL';

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[164] 'Agrippa', *Public Advertiser*, 21 December 1778; Alfred, 'To the *Lord* Sandwich', in *London Evening Post*, 30 January-2 February 1773, Gale Document Number: Z2000684328; Lord John Campbell, *The Lives of the Lord Chancellors and Keepers of the Great Seal of England*, 7 vols (London: John Murray, 1845-69), VI (1847), pp. 390-91.
[165] Keppel, pp. 112-28; Trevelyan, p. 162.
[166] 'Newcastle', *General Advertiser and Morning Intelligencer*, 24 February 1779,
Gale Document Number: Z2000428802.
[167] *General Advertiser and Morning Intelligencer*, 11 February, 1779, p. 3,
Gale Document Number: Z2000428701.
[168] '*Die Martis*, 16 *Februarii*, 1779', in *The Parliamentary Register: or, History of the Proceedings and Debates of the House of Commons*, 62 vols (London: J. Almon, 1775-96), XIV (1779), p. 125; Colonel Isaac Barré, cited in *The Parliamentary Register*, XII (1779), p. 302-03.

his friends in the press lauded his 'honour and humanity'; whilst in one contemporary Irish print, *Merit Rewarded, or the Brave Keppel in Triumph*, it was explicitly emphasised that 'honest sailors' carried the Admiral aloft during his procession through the streets.[169] As Burke recollected years later, 'the general flow of national joy' was not a celebration of his martial deeds but of 'the justice done to his virtue', and herein lies the crux: Keppel's celebrity was centred upon his popular personae of a righteous man wronged; publicised by Opposition factions, it was this – not his labours at Ushant, which garnered him fame.[170] Much in the manner of his predecessors, then, the Admiral prospered from the willingness of his culture to critique character and corruption, to compare the hero with the villain, and to deem the national traits of honesty, integrity and humanity as deserving of applause.

There was to be little respite for the British nobility as the century concluded, for *fin-de-siécle c*ontemporaries mortified by the futile campaigns of the Revolutionary wars still resolutely imputed the nation's martial woes to an effeminate aristocracy – who this time had seemingly been weakened as much by the pervasive cults of sensibility and chivalry that had infiltrated British culture in the late century than by their age old deference for '*French manners*' and '*French fashions*'.[171] Thus, the most emasculating campaign of the era – the Duke of York's fruitless foray into the French Netherlands in 1799 – was satirised as the inevitable consequence of his impractical infatuation with polite and chivalric ideals:

The gallant Duke shall go

And Carmagnals shall know

What he can do

[169] Rogers, *Crowds, Cultures and Politics*, p. 145; 'Newcastle', *General Advertiser and Morning Intelligencer*, 24 February 1779, Gale Document Number: Z2000428802; Padhraig Higgins, *A Nation of Politicians: Gender, Patriotism, and Political Culture in Late Eighteenth-Century Ireland* (Madison, WI/USA: University of Wisconsin Press, 2010), p. 63.
[170] Edmund Burke, *The Works of the Right Honourable Edmund Burke*, 6 vols (London: Oxford University Press, 1906-07), V (1907), p. 76.
[171] Anon., 'To the Author of the Anti-Jacobin', in *Poetry of the Anti-Jacobin*, ed. by George Canning (London: W. Bulmer and Co., 1801), pp. 73-77 (p. 73). Google eBook.

He'll give them such a Fright,

When clad in armour bright,

Like some brave ancient Knight,

He bolts in view.[172]

In this context, Horatio Nelson's brash, bold, and aggressive demeanour came into its own. His daring manoeuvres and his earnest transmission of 'an ardent, animated patriotism panting for glory' 'vindicated British manliness' in the eyes of the populace.[173] At St. Vincent in 1797, he had showcased his intrepidity by impetuously wearing out of line and brazenly heading the boarding of the *San Nicholas* and the *San Joseph*, an act so unique it was glorified as a 'patent bridge for boarding first rates' in the fleet and in the press.[174] A year later, this was overtly married with determination and indomitable spirit, for his 'incredible and stupendous' victory at Aboukir Bay was but the grand finale of a dogged pursuit of Napoleon across the Mediterranean that had lasted several months and had been blighted by 'ill fortune'.[175] Moreover, as Nelson existed as the very embodiment of patriotic sacrifice – none could ignore the fact he had 'had lost a precious eye, and a powerful arm, [and] was covered with the scars of wounds received in his country's cause' – he was perceived as the archetypal British male warrior, a man unconcerned with the trivialities of personal safety whose body attested to his desire to give his all for his nation.[176] After the century's turn, this masculine image would be further buttressed by the affection he scandalously exhibited towards his mistress Emma Hamilton. Though it sullied his repute amongst high society – she

[172] Peter Pension, *The Duke of York's New March* (London: R. Lee, 1799). Google eBook.
[173] William Fergusson, cited in Harrison, II, p. 294; Timothy Fulford, *Romanticism and Masculinity: Gender, Politics and Poetics in the Writings of Burke, Coleridge, Cobbett, Wordsworth, De Quincy and Hazlitt* (New York, MA/USA: Palgrave MacMillan, 1999), p. 7.
[174] George P. B. Naish, ed., *Nelson's Letters of his Wife and Other Documents 1785-1831* (London: Navy Records Society, 1958), p. 317; Kathleen Wilson, 'How Nelson Became a Hero', in *The Historian*, ed. by Mason, p. 9.
[175] Admiral John Jervis, cited in G. J. Marcus, *A Naval History of England: The Age of Nelson* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1971); Horatio Nelson, *The Letters of Lord Nelson to Lady Hamilton: With a Supplement of Interesting Letters, by Distinguished Characters* (Teddington: The Echo Library, 2006), p. 147.
[176] William Kingsbury, cited in Jenks, p. 198.

was both wedded and of low birth – as the masses associated virility with 'strength and endurance, stoical reliability and sexual indulgence', his shameless affair served only to augment his popularity with the common man and substantiate consideration of the man as a celebrity; for as van Krieken has noted: 'celebrity […] can be either positive or negative, including notoriety'.[177]

In addition, as with his predecessors, benevolence and integrity were key facets of Nelson's public image; these amalgamated with his self-propagated guise of a humble Christian saviour to produce a veneration that placed as much emphasis on his character as his great naval glories.[178] Thus, in the wake of his passing, the press mourned the loss of 'the pious, the modest, and the gallant NELSON', a hero intrepid and judicious yet 'moderate and magnanimous in the moment of victory', whilst William Burney's sycophancy knew no bounds:

> This great man's heart […] overflowed with the milk of human kindness. He was emphatically a friend and father to all who had the happiness and honour to serve under his command […] In his humility of heart, in his piety to heaven, and in his humanity to man, he has left an example behind him, more valuable perhaps than even the brilliant exploits which he achieved. [179]

Not only, then, was Nelson a paradigm of masculinity and patriotism, he was an emblem of virtue too; like Vernon, Wolfe and Keppel before him, these specifically British traits would

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[177] Kathleen Wilson, 'How Nelson Became a Hero', in *The Historian*, ed. by Mason, p. 10; Frank O'Gorman, *The Long Eighteenth Century: British Political and Social History, 1688-1832* (London: Arnold, 1997), p. 343; See Isaac Cruikshank, *A Mansion House Treat or Smoking Attitudes* (London: S. W. Fores, 1800), *Royal Museums Greenwich Online*, Object ID: PAF3887 <http://collections.rmg.co.uk/collections/objects/128022.html> [accessed 1 March 2013]; Van Krieken, p. 10.

[178] 'Letter from a Gentleman, Present at the Festivities at FONTHILL, to a Correspondent in Town', *Gentleman's Magazine: and Historical Chronicle*, March 1801, ProQuest document ID: 8139613; Burney, p. 434.

[179] 'The Official Account of the Late Naval Action, which Terminated in the Most Decisive Victory', in *The Times*, 7 November 1805, p. 3, *The Times Digital Archive* <http://0-find.galegroup.com.wam.leeds.ac.uk/ttda/infomark.do?&source=gale&prodId=TTDA&userGroupName=leedsuni&tabID=T003&docPage=article&searchType=BasicSearchForm&docId=CS50735463&type=multipage&contentSet=LTO&version=1.0> [accessed 15 March 2013]; London Courier, 6 November 1805, cited in Kathleen Wilson, 'How Nelson Became a Hero', in *The Historian*, ed. by Mason, p. 10; Burney, p. 434.

harvest the acclaim of a contemporary populace yearning for a saviour to combat the degeneracy of certain members of their military male elite.

In July 1798, in his poem *New Morality,* George Canning deplored the ethics of his age. He longed for the restoration of 'the manlier virtues, such as nerved | our fathers' breasts', and pressed his countrymen to 'scorn the […] soft seductions, the refinements nice, | of gay morality, and easy vice'.[180] One wonders, though, whose fathers he could have possibly have had in mind, for as far back as the very first decade of the eighteenth century contemporaries had disseminated their concerns that society – and in particular the martial sphere – had been infiltrated by a ruinous effeminacy.[181] These fears would subsist to feature most prominently in times of unsuccessful conflict, when it seemed clear that the military's finest had been infected by a deference for French and Italian mannerisms to the detriment of the nation's performance on the battlefield; a wartime discontent substantiated by notions that corruptive practice had 'seeped into the polity' via a knavish nobility, corroding the 'political virtue' of the country and sullying the British name.[182] These anxieties, as Canning illustrates, forced the public to search for saviours, men who could counter degenerates and reaffirm the national identity through their espousal of certain Anglo-Saxon values: masculinity, patriotism, rectitude, and most particularly magnanimity, the characteristic that proved they were 'fairer than the French, less barbarous than the Spanish, more civilised than the savages'.[183]

Henceforth, during the War of the Jenkins' Ear, Edward Vernon was sequestered as an antidote to the depravity of the 'Robinocracy', a hero whose manly 'Fire and Spirit' merged with an honest temper, 'uncommon gallantry', and a 'humane and generous' nature,

[180] George Canning, 'New Morality', in *Poetry of the Anti-Jacobin,* ed. by George Canning and John Hookham Frere (London: W. Bulmer and Co., 1801), pp. 233-56 (p. 256). Google eBook.
[181] Kathleen Wilson, 'Empire of Virtue', in *An Imperial State at War*, ed. by Stone, p. 141.
[182] *Ibid*., p. 155.
[183] *Ibid*., p. 155.

to embody an 'old English Valour' worthy of acclaim.[184] James Wolfe, meanwhile, was fashioned by fretful mid-century Britons into a champion that epitomized 'Fortitude and virtue's conqu'ring power', a noble, manly soul 'actuated by honour, replete with Candour, devoid of Affectation', whose benevolence was known and whose bravery was exemplified in the manner of his sacrifice.[185] Keppel, similarly, would rise to prominence in an epoch where the fripperies of an officer class were blamed for the poor fortunes of the British armed forces; yet in his instance, it was his honour and virtue that were more significant. Seemingly the victim of a nefarious ministerial conspiracy, he stood revered as a 'brave and honest man', a bastion of integrity, who had erred 'only from motives of generosity' towards his compatriot Palliser, not in his conduct in battle.[186] Lastly, in Lord Nelson's case, it was the daring and determined manner of his triumphant seamanship that resonated with the common man, for it restored the national masculinity lost by particular members of the upper echelon on the Continent. In in addition, his body and his sexual exploits stood testament to his patriotism and virility, whilst the magnanimity of his conduct came to be revered as equally as his heroic endeavours.

All four figures thus substantiate Jason Goldsmith's conclusion that there was a 'connection between mass-media acclaim and national integrity' during the epoch.[187] In times where the latter was felt to be compromised, the ostensibly British qualities of these martial heroes were seized upon and glorified by the contemporary populace, amplifying their popularity and the depth of their renown; henceforth, their characters, or more specifically

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[184] The War of Jenkins Ear was fought between Great Britain and Spain and lasted from 1739 to 1748. Anon., *The Good Patriot's Security in the Time of Publick Distress* (London: Printed for T. R., 1740), pp. 32-33, in *ECCO* <http://0-find.galegroup.com.wam.leeds.ac.uk/ecco/infomark.do?&source=gale&prodId=ECCO&userGroupName=leedsuni&tabID=T001&docId=CW123004412&type=multipage&contentSet=ECCOArticles&version=1.0&docLevel=FASCIMILE> [accessed 23 March 2013]; Barrow, p. 59.

[185] Anon., *Britain: a Poem in Three Books* (Edinburgh: Wal. Ruddiman and Co., 1757), p. 83, in *Open Library* <http://archive.org/stream/cihm_20228#page/n99/mode/2up> [accessed 25 March 2013]; Pringle, p. 11.

[186] 'Regulus', *General Advertiser and Morning Intelligencer*, 6 January 1779, Gale Document Number: Z2000428452.

[187] Jason Goldsmith, 'Celebrity and the Spectacle of Nation', in *Romanticism and Celebrity Culture, 1750-1850*, ed. by Mole, p. 28.

their public images – their personal characteristics well known to the populace at large, become important explanations for their mass appeal.[188] More remarkably, from a sociological perspective, by embodying the very traits of British culture, by representing something other than themselves and disappearing into a 'cultural formation of meaning', they conform to the celebrity theories propagated by men such as P. David Marshall, and reaffirm the deduction they should be seen as among the very first celebrities in British history.[189]

[188] It was irrelevant as to whether these characteristics were fictitious or factual; the public chose to believe what they wished to be true.
[189] Marshall, p. 57.

Conclusion

Many studies, both historical and sociological, consider the eighteenth century to be the birthplace of the modern celebrity, the era of British history in which 'the nexus between fame and consumption' – 'the essence of celebrity' – was established.[190] Academics have fawned over the 'celebrity' of literary giants such as Samuel Coleridge and David Hume, political champions in the mould of Charles James Fox and John Wilkes, and prominent women of the ilk of Georgiana, Duchess of Devonshire and the actress Kitty Fisher.[191] However, though happy to discuss such figures and others similar, that existing scholarship neglects to perceive the foremost military heroes of the age in an equivalent light is a conspicuous oversight. For Admiral Edward Vernon was the 'Adam' of celebrity in Britain, becoming a commodity of value in print and in the marketplace, and altogether a 'nodal point' of the broader aspects of contemporary celebrity culture amidst the War of Jenkin's Ear in the early 1740s. Moreover, he was succeeded in this achievement by General James Wolfe in 1759 – the 'Annus Mirabilis' of the Seven Year War; Admiral Augustus Keppel during the American Revolutionary War in the late 1770s; and Admiral Horatio Nelson when the kingdom confronted the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic threats in the early decades of the nineteenth century. These men were the beneficiaries of a nascent bourgeois public sphere, whose members were willing to publicise and capitalize upon their fame via media channels, the artistic domain, developing forms of communal celebration and participation, and a ubiquitous culture of consumption that exacerbated that well established component of the private sphere – 'the realm of commodity'.[192] In addition, in line with structuralist theories on celebrity, they owed much to human machinations, for in part their

[190] Morgan, p. 104.
[191] Jason Goldsmith, 'Celebrity and the Spectacle of Nation', in *Romanticism and Celebrity Culture*, ed. by Mole, *passim*; Morgan, *passim*; Stella Tillyard, '"Paths of Glory"', in *Joshua Reynolds: The Creation of Celebrity*, ed. by Postle, *passim*.
[192] Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society* (Cambridge, MA/USA: The MIT Press, 1991), p. 27-30.

celebrity was crafted by 'cultural intermediaries' within the aforementioned structural parameters, leading them to become venerated as figureheads of political factions and popular movements. Within a broader context, it was their public image that proved the most important .Thanks to an anxious contemporary wartime public, they came to symbolize the essential traits of Britishness; in doing so they transcended the corporeal to epitomize the celebrity sign by becoming 'cultural formations of meaning'.

Such conclusions substantiate that celebrity was and remains a multifaceted phenomenon that should be attributed to a variety of factors. Moreover, they successfully refute the contention that eighteenth-century 'celebrity culture' merely endured within a specific timeframe in the mid-to-late century, for they attest that not only did it exist in every major period of war between 1739 and 1815, but it thrived. Further research involving the plethora of other martial heroes that dominate the epoch will no doubt corroborate this notion, for the likes of Frederick, Duke of Cumberland, the Marquis of Granby, Admiral George Rodney and the General Charles Cornwallis to name but a few all received acclaim that by Morgan's definition would catapult them into the celebrity pantheon.[193]

The popularity of the Georgian military hero also ultimately contributes to wider academic discussions as to whether a 'militarization' of British society occurred during the eighteenth century. The repeated mass mobilization of men throughout the period is often used to validate such a proposal, yet the subject can be viewed from a more nuanced angle.[194] Just as Stephen Conway has reasoned that 'British and Irish society was militarized, not just in the sense that large numbers of adult males went into uniform, but also in that military

[193] One must discount the Duke of Wellington as it was only during peacetime, *after* the climactic events Waterloo, that he truly became 'a celebrity about whom people wanted to know', and one whose likeness grew to be 'very profitable'. S. Durham, 'The Uses of Celebrity: the Attempted Exploitation of the Duke of Wellington, 1819-32', in *Wellington Studies III*, ed. by C. M. Woogar (Southampton: University of Southampton, 1999), pp. 88-116 (p. 88).

[194] The mobilization of men peaked in the Napoleonic Wars, when, according to J. E. Cookson, one in every five eligible men served in some military capacity. J. E. Cookson, *The British Armed Nation: 1793-1815* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), pp. 95.

events fascinated the public', so one can state that it was militarized because *military heroes* fascinated the public.[195] That the latter rose to become the principal celebrities of their respective generations is testament to such a statement. Indeed, no other period in British history has been so decorated with military celebrities, and no contemporary British populace on record has been so prepared to worship their martial heroes with such fervour and ardour as the one that subsisted between 1739 and 1815. In no other era would Edward Vernon, James Wolfe, Augustus Keppel and Horatio Nelson have risen to become Celebrities of an Age of War.

[195] Conway was discussing British society during the American Revolutionary War in the 1770s and 1780s. Stephen Conway, *The British Isles and the War of American Independence* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), p. 128.

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Abbreviations

BMS British Museum Satires

BMPD British Museum Prints and Drawings

BMCM British Museum Coins and Medals

BMPE British Museum Prehistory and Europe

ECCO Eighteenth Century Collections Online

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