Koepoort in Leiden by Paulus Constantijn La Fargue ~1770

<u>Enduring Identification</u>
Perceptions of the Dutch among the British middling sorts in the late eighteenth century*

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Recently Linda Colley and others have studied "the identity, actions, and ideas of…[British] men and women" who experienced the eighteenth century to argue that the British nation, as "an imagined political community," emerged in this period along with more well known phenomena such as the industrial revolution and the British Empire.[1] While

1   Linda Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation 1707–1837* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2009), 1.

historians now recognize the importance of uncovering how the British made sense of their world, interpretations of the British experience during this century have often been restricted to their interactions with the French.[2] Throughout the long eighteenth century, of course, France and Britain engaged in the second Hundred Years War, a rivalry which reinforced the states' opposition: Britain was Protestant, "free," and commercial, while France was Catholic, absolutist, and territorial. The focus on the French in studies of the "creation of the British nation" has been justified by historiography and broader social scientific literature that argues such an identity can only be formed in opposition to some "Other."[3] While it is impossible to deny the attention that these states paid to each other, I argue that the British experience of the 18th century should not be merely reduced to a British–French binary. In an era of increasing communication and travel, the British interacted with a variety of European and extra-European peoples, and these interactions played a role in the creation of a British national identity in the long 18th century.

Recent scholarship has better situated the British experience in an international (or, at least, European) context, drawing attention to Britain's "under-recognized connections with the rest of Europe."[4] Stephen Conway, Steve Pincus, and others make it clear that these connections were not always ones of opposition or difference.[5] Conway states that while "the British were perfectly capable of thinking and acting in national terms, they could also…see themselves as Europeans."[6]

This scholarship rightfully asserts that in order to understand the 18th-century British identity, we must pay attention to how one state with which the British frequently interacted and perceived a variety of peoples, even if their relationships with them were as much ones of similarity as ones of difference.

One state with which the British frequently interacted with throughout the 18th century was the Dutch Republic. In contrast to the more consistently antagonistic relationship between the British and French in the 18th century—they were, after all, formally at war for nearly half of it—the Anglo–Dutch relationship was much more variable.[7] Between 1688 and 1815, the two states allied with each other, fought against each other, and meddled in each other's internal political affairs, all against a background of changing levels of economic and cultural exchange.[8] As such, it might be expected that British perceptions of the Dutch varied much more over the course of the 18th century than their perceptions of the French. While various authors have paid some attention to the relationships between the Dutch and British, they have rarely done so in a sustained manner, and their focus is often limited to the first half of the 18th century—when the political, economic, and religious connections between the two countries were clearest.[9] What little that has been written about the Anglo–Dutch relationship in the 18th century has focused almost exclusively

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2   Colley is the perhaps the most well-known example of this, in *Britons* as well as "Britishness and Otherness: an argument," *Journal of British Studies* 31 (1992). See also Paul Kennedy, *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers* (New York: Vintage Books, 1988) and Gerald Newman, *The Rise of English Nationalism: A Cultural History 1740–1830* (Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 1987). On the subject of a nation as an "imagined community," see Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (New York, NY: Verso, 2006.).

3   Colley asserts this argument quite forcibly in both *Britons* and "Britishness and Otherness," as does Stefan Collini, *English Pasts: Essays in History and Cultural* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 1999). A small sampling of the very broad historiography and social scientific literature on this subject, which is particularly important in colonial studies, includes E.J. Hosbwam, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1990), especially 91; Peter Sahlins, *Boundaries: The Making of France and Spain* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1898), especially 270-271; Doreen Massey, *Space, Place and Gender* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press), 168-170; Tzvetan Todorov, *The Conquest of America* (New York, NY: Harper Perennial, 1996).

4   Stephen Conway, *Britain, Ireland, and Continental Europe in the Eighteenth Century: Similarities, Connections, Identities* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 2.

5   Steve Pincus, *1688: The First Modern Revolution* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2009).

6   Conway, *Britain, Ireland, and Continental Europe*, 2.

7   This is not to say the Anglo-French relationship was totally antagonistic throughout the period, but that it was much more so than the Anglo-Dutch relationship. See Isabelle and Robert Tombs, *That Sweet Enemy: Britain and France: The History of a Love-Hate Relationship* (New York, NY: Vintage Publishing, 2008), for a statement on how in the Anglo-French relationship "rivalry, enmity, and misapprehension" mixed with "envy, admiration, and genuine affection."

8   The only example of these interactions that will not be addressed at all in this paper is the British suppression of the Dutch Patriot Revolt in 1787. For an introduction to this topic, see Jonathan Israel, *The Dutch Republic: Its Rise, Greatness, and Fall 1477–1806*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), 1113–1119.

9   See, for example, John Brewer, *The Sinews of Power: War, Money and the English State, 1688–1783* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1988) and Jan De Vries, *The Economy of Europe in an Age of Crisis, 1600–1750* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976). Some cultural historians, such as Conway and Tony Claydon in *Europe and the making of England, 1660-1760* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2007), have treaded on this ground as well, though they are few in number.

on either high politics or colonial practices in Asia.[10] In contrast, I will examine the Anglo–Dutch relationship from the perspective of some of the British middling sorts—non-aristocratic, bourgeois "merchants, financiers, businessmen and women, and even minor shopkeepers"—rather than merely British ministers.[11] A large portion of these middling sorts resided in London, where most of my source base of periodicals, travelogues, newspapers, and treatises originate. Thus the sentiments identified may have been limited to London, though this seems unlikely in light of London's impact on the rest of Britain, particularly England.[12]

In this paper, I will trace the ways in which some Britons understood the Dutch throughout the 18th century, with emphasis on the 1770s and 1780s, a time when many of the connections that had existed between the British and Dutch had either already broken down or were breaking down. I will argue that some Britons, particularly Londoners, identified with the Dutch throughout this period, but that such identification now had a tone of warning rather than one of optimism, as had been the case in the first half of the century. I will then argue that the English used this sense of identification with the Dutch to avoid having to confront the possibility, and then the reality, that the whole of the continental Atlantic seaboard was allied against them in the American Revolutionary War. This argument will thus add to scholarship that suggests that Britons, at least through 1785, did not create their "nation" as an isolated island or Empire formed solely in opposition to France, but rather fashioned it, at least in part, through a sense of fraternity with the Dutch, probably among other European states as well.

I will begin, however, with an overview of the Anglo–Dutch relationship and the British perception of that relationship in the first half of the 18th century, in order to establish the sense of identification that the British had with the Dutch during this period. This identification was facilitated by a variety of political, economic, and cultural connections between Great Britain and the Dutch Republic.

Perhaps the most obvious connection between the English and the Dutch in the first years of the 18th century was the fact that the English king, William III, hailed from the Dutch Republic. The story of William's accession to the throne suggests the depth of connections that existed between the British and Dutch by 1688. By 1688, it was clear that James II was trying to align England with France and modernize the state along the centralized, bureaucratic, and absolutist lines of France.[13] This process invited deep resentment towards James II, particularly among those who proposed an alternative, Dutch version of state modernization.[14] The English turned to William III as an alternative to James II because his Protestantism, commercial mentality, and shared hostility towards the French aligned well with the sentiments of the populace.[15] Pincus argues convincingly that William did not "invade" England during the Glorious Revolution, but rather was encouraged at every step by the English people.[16] While the connections between the English and Dutch arguably have deeper roots, the warm welcome William III received in England marks the beginning of an affinity that would define the relationship between these two states for several decades to come.[17] Long-established trade and political connections between the states, for example, deepened in the decades following the Glorious Revolution.

While much has been made of the economic competition between the Dutch and British that existed in the 18th century, that should not hide the fact that close connections existed, and were perceived as existing, between the economies. Through roughly the 1760s, European trade was far greater than extra-European trade for all countries, including Britain.[18] The Dutch Republic was a key partner in this trade.[19] In fact, it seems that the British and Dutch, in addition to trading greatly with one another, cooperated in order to establish a division of labor in European trade: the Dutch led trade in the Baltic, while the British led trade in the Mediterranean.[20] The connections established by the trade of goods were furthered by substantial financial connections. The Dutch, in particular, were significant investors in British

10   See, for example, Daniel A. Miller, *Sir Joseph Yorke and Anglo–Dutch Relations 1774–1780* (The Hague: Mouton, 1970); John Ehrman, *The British Government and Commercial Negotiations with Europe 1783–1793* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1962); Bob Moore and Henk van Nierop, eds., *Colonial Empires Compared: Britain and the Netherlands, 1750–1850* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2003), particularly Parts I, III, and IV; and Jur van Goor, "The Colonial Factor in Anglo–Dutch Relations, 1780–1820," in *Unspoken Allies: Anglo–Dutch Relations Since 1780,* ed. Nigel Ashton and Duco Hellema (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2001), 17–33.

11   Colley, *Britons*, 65.

12   E.A. Wrigley, "A simple model of London's importance in changing English society and economy, 1650 – 1750," *Past & Present* 37 (1967).

13   Pincus, *1688*, 475

14   Pincus, *1688*, 6. Who actually proposed this is an issue outside the scope of this paper. See Pincus, *1688*.

15   See Pincus, *1688*, particularly chapters 8–11.

16   Pincus, *1688*, 241.

17   The Dutch migrated in significant numbers to East Anglia in the 16th century, England supported the Dutch during the Eighty Years War, and the two had entered into many commercial treaties throughout the 16th and 17th centuries. On the first see Charles Wilson, "Cloth Production and International Competition in the Seventeenth Century," *The Economic History Review* 13 (1960): 209–220; on the second and third see Israel, *The Dutch Republic*.

18   Both Colley (*Britons*, 69) and Conway (*Britain, Ireland, and Continental Europe*, 91) allude to this date.

19   Conway, *Britain, Ireland, and Continental Europe*, 87.

20   Israel, *The Dutch Republic*, 713. See also Richard T. Rapp, "The Unmaking of the Mediterranean Trade Hegemony: International Trade Rivalry and the Commercial Revolution," *The Journal of Economic History* 35 (1975), 499–525.

securities. Dickson estimates that the Dutch held 15% of the British national debt in 1750, and Dutch investors held large amounts of East India Company stock.[21] Securities in the Dutch Republic attracted British money as well, though the extent of such investment is less well known.[22]

Perhaps more importantly for the purposes of this paper, there is evidence that the British were well aware of these economic connections, and saw a natural affinity between British and Dutch economic interests, rather than merely competition. Such a statement is strongly made by one pamphleteer in 1721, who writes that the trade of the Dutch and English "is reciprocally advantageous."[23] He continues, warning, "The Loss [Britain] should suffer would be unspeakably GREAT…[from] the Decay [of the Dutch Republic's trade]."[24] In an era when "mercantilist ideology," which dictated that trade was a zero sum game among states, was largely accepted, such a characterization of the economic relations between two countries is remarkable.[25] The pamphlet, written in response to the threat of competition from an Austrian East Indies trading company, was probably intended for the London mercantile community, a group that encompassed a wide variety of the middling sorts.[26] The London author of this pamphlet clearly saw the Dutch as an economic partner rather than a rival and may have expressed the interests of the London mercantile community more generally.

In addition to being commercial powers, the two nations shared a further commonality in their religion. The Protestantism of the Dutch Republic and the British meant that they saw themselves jointly as the principal protectors of Europe from the tyranny of the "Popish Interest."[27] Religion was certainly crucial to self-understanding, and thus the importance of this element of identification between the nations cannot be overstated.[28] Protestantism seems to have enabled further cultural exchange, as demonstrated by the large numbers of British students who graduated from the University of Leiden in the Dutch Republic: over 1,500 between 1700 and 1750.[29] Conway suggests that even though enrollment of British students was much higher at Oxford and Cambridge, the difference between the numbers of students graduating was much lower, and, thus, Leiden was a significant source of British graduates.[30] This was particularly true of Scottish students, though, according to Conway, Englishmen such as "George Colebrook, later chairman of the East India Company; William Dowdeswell and Charles Townshend, future chancellors of the exchequer, and John Wilkes, the popular libertarian" also attended Leiden.[31] Only Townshend came from an aristocratic family. Thus the relationship between the Dutch and the British seems not to have been confined just to the aristocracy, but rather permeated the middling sorts as well.

The many shared interests and commonalities between the two nations manifested themselves in and were reinforced by the countries' alliances in three major wars between 1689 and 1748: the Nine Years War, the War of Spanish Succession, and the War of Austrian Succession. Friendly relations and similarities between the nations seemed to have allowed for some British to closely identify with the Dutch. A British government correspondent wrote from the Dutch Republic, "Most of our British merchants residing here, consider themselves Dutch."[32] John Brewer asserts, however, that the British may have done more than merely identified with the Dutch. Rather, it seems that many in Britain may have looked to the Dutch as an example for how a small country could rise to be a great power.[33] The Dutch financial system, joint-stock companies, and impressive navy had, in the 17th century, helped the Republic grow into a global commercial empire and become one of the most powerful states in Europe. Britain, with a similar culture, religion, and resource endowment, seems to have looked to the Dutch Republic as a model upon which to build their own Empire.

In the second half of the 18th century, however, the Anglo–Dutch relationship changed in multiple dimensions. The political and economic weakening of the Dutch vis-à-vis the British and French was a significant factor in their disengagement from broader European affairs, beginning

21   P.G.M. Dickson, *The Financial Revolution in England: A Study in the Development of Public Credit, 1658–1756* (London: Macmillan, 1967), 322; H.V. Bowen, "From Supranational to National: Changing Patterns of Investment in the British East India Company, 1750–1820," in *Colonial Empires*, ed. Moore and van Nierop, 131–144.
22   Conway, *Britain, Ireland, and Continental Europe*, 85.
23   *The Importance of the Ostend-Company Consider'd* (London: E. Say, 1726), 6. Gale's Eighteenth Century Collections Online (CW104205765).
24   *The Importance of the Ostend-Company*, 16.
25   Brewer, *The Sinews of War*, 169.
26   Colley, *Britons*, 65.
27   *The Importance of the Ostend-Company Consider'd*, 6.
28   Colley, *Britons*, 6.
29   Figures calculated from Conway, *Britain, Ireland, and Continental Europe*, Figure 4. Originally obtained from Edward Peacock, *Index to English Speaking Students who have Graduated at Leyden University* (London: 1883).
30   Conway, *Britain, Ireland, and Continental Europe*, 138.
31   Conway, *Britain, Ireland, and Continental Europe*, 138.
32   Wotlers to Sandwich (22 January 1765) in *The Private Papers of John, Earl of Sandwich, First Lord of the Admiralty, 1771–1782, Volume I*, ed. G.R. Barnes and J.H. Owens (London: Navy Records Society, 1938).
33   In the words of Brewer, "The example to which most of the nation looked was the Dutch. In the seventeenth century that amphibious group of United Provinces had demonstrated conclusively that a small but rich country could be a great power." (Brewer, *The Sinews of War*, 189).

in 1748.[34] This disengagement is confirmed several statistics showing decreasing interaction between the Dutch and British. Dutch holdings of East India Company stock fell almost continuously from 1756 to 1791, and, between 1750 and 1800, only 370 British students graduated from Leiden, compared to 1,500 in the first half of the century.[35] Additionally in this period, particularly after the Seven Years War, the British were increasingly distracted by their growing Empire. This resulted in a broad British turn away from Europe and towards their Empire in the second half of the century, up until 1789.[36] Thus, it appears that, beginning in the early years of the second half of the century, the real political, social, and economic connections that had facilitated the close identification of the British with the Dutch began to break down.

 While these real changes have attracted the attention of historians, much less attention has been paid to how the British people reacted to them.[37] After many years of clearly identifying the Dutch as the nation whose interest most closely aligned with their own, the sudden divergence of those interests necessitated a response from the British people in the way in which they talked about and depicted the Dutch. In the rest of this paper, I will argue that at least some of these responses were conditioned by contemporary British anxieties. In the early years of the 1770s, these anxieties were centered on Britain's newfound empire, and, in the later years of that decade and the early years of the next, they were centered on wariness over Britain's diplomatic isolation during the American Revolutionary War.

 The 1760s were a time of great change in the British Empire and in how Britons perceived it. The Seven Years War, often considered the first world war, resulted in British imperial power expanding around the world; Canada, Florida, Senegal, various outposts in India, and islands in the Caribbean all came under British rule. Additionally, the East India Company won control of the rich Indian state of Bengal between 1757 and 1763, and Captain Cook returned to Britain with recommendations to establish a colony in Australia in 1770. Thus, the British Empire expanded greatly in a very short period. Indeed, this is the first time that the term "British Empire" came into common use.[38] However, such growth was not accompanied by ballyhooed optimism. Rather, it was feared that adapting to the new responsibilities required by a far-flung empire would corrupt the nation.[39] The anxiety caused by Britain's newfound empire seems to have played a role in the manifestation of three more specific concerns of the people: the foreign-ness of the British ruling elite, the avarice displayed by an increasing number of the middling sorts, and the high taxes required to rule such an empire. Londoners—the middling sorts, especially—may have been particularly concerned about these things, for they witnessed them most consistently. Two travelogues on the Dutch Republic, one written by Joseph Marshall in 1772 and the other by John Williams in 1777, reflect these exact concerns in their criticism of the Dutch.[40]

 One such criticism was that the Dutch ruling elite were becoming more French. Marshall and Williams both describe the ruling elite of the Dutch—those that "support themselves without trade"—as "imitators" of the hated French.[41] This group, Marshall asserts, "are all more or less French, or imitators of them; they speak that language, dress in the French taste, eat in the same, and give themselves some airs."[42] Williams agrees that the Dutch "nobles…endeavor to imitate the French in their manners, their dress, and even in their gallantry."[43] Marshall, however, makes it clear that "we must not take our ideas of the national character from [these people], because they carry in their very face the marks of being but bastard Dutch."[44] In the eyes of Marshall, the ruling elite do not "exhibit the true Dutch character," and thus in a sense are not truly Dutch.[45] He says that they, and thus the Dutch government, have rather fallen under the "domineering disposition of France."[46]

 This criticism of a "Frenchified" ruling elite seems to

34 Jur van Goor, "The Colonial Factor in Anglo–Dutch Relations, 1780 –1820," in *Unspoken Allies*, ed. Ashton and Hellema, 18–19.

35 On the first set of statistics, see H.V. Bowen, "Investment and Empire in the Later Eighteenth Century: East India Stockholding, 1756 –1791," *The Economic History Review* 42 (May 1989): 200–204; on the second, see Conway, *Britain, Ireland, and Continental Europe*, 139.

36 See, for example, Conway, *Britain, Ireland, and Continental Europe*, 89–93.

37 See, for example, Charles Wilson, *Anglo–Dutch Trade and Finance in the 18th Century*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1941); Bowen, "From Supranational to National," P.J. Marshall, "The British State Overseas, 1750–1850," in *Colonial Empires*, eds. Moore and van Nierop; in comparison to the cultural histories of Eliga Gould *The Persistence of Empire: British Political Culture in the Age of the American Revolution* (Greensboro, NC: The University of North Caroline Press, 2000), who mentions the British perceptions of the Dutch once, and Kathleen Wilson, *The Sense of the People: Politics, Culture, and Imperialism in England, 1715–1785* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1998), who does not mention them at all.

38 H.V. Bowen, "British Conceptions of Global Empire, 1756–1783," *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 26 (1998), 1–27.

39 Colley, *Britons*, 102.

40 See Joseph Marshall, *Travels through Holland, Flanders, Germany, Denmark, Sweden, Lapland, Russia, The Ukraine, and Poland in The Years 1768, 1769, and 1770* (London: 1772). Hathi Trust. John Williams, *The Rise, Progress, and Present State of the Northern Governments* (London: 1777). Hathi Trust.

41 Quotation taken from Marshall, *Travels through Holland*, 42. See also Williams, *The Rise, Progress, and Present State*, 72–74.

42 Marshall, *Travels through Holland*, 42.

43 Williams, *The Rise, Progress, and Present State*, 74.

44 Marshall, *Travels through Holland*, 42.

45 Marshall, *Travels through Holland*, 43.

46 Marshall, *Travels through Holland*, 352.

have been prevalent in Britain, as well. Starting in the mid–18th century, the British upper classes were accused of corrupting the British nation through their affinity for French culture.[47] Similar to Marshall's description of the Dutch upper classes, the British upper classes spoke French, wore French clothes, and adapted French culture.[48] Gerald Newman has shown the virulence of middle-class attacks on such actions, clearly pointing to the fact that contemporary writers thought that the upper classes' embrace of French culture ran contrary to the true British character.[49] One such playwright brings out this disgust with the last lines of a poem published in 1756: "Rouse! Re-assume! Refuse a gallic reign, / Nor let their arts win what their arms could never gain."[50] The concern of this writer is clearly that French "Trulls, toupees, trinkets, bags, brocades, and lace" will "win" them England by transfixing the English upper classes and bringing them under the control of the French. Thus in a very similar sentiments can be identified in Britain and in Marshall's description of the Dutch—the elites of both nation were betraying their national identity, while the middling sorts preserved it.

More generally, the 1760s and early 1770s were a period when Londoners were concerned that state, and the national identity bottled up with it, were being eroded by the upper classes.[51] Both Marshall and Williams, writing in London, would have been quite aware of the accusations made by men like John Wilkes and his supporters: that the ruling elite were foreign by both and action. [52] The attention these authors pay to the "French influence" in the Dutch Republic thus seems to have been conditioned by a similar sentiment in their hometown, that the ruling elite were somehow displaced from the true national character. While the Dutch were perhaps more prone to such influence because of their proximity to France, the wide appeal of Wilkes and his campaigns for "Englishness" suggest that some Londoners were concerned by the possibility of an alien influence in their own government.[53] Thus, while the Dutch represented a nation that was similar to England, they also represented what could happen to the nation if the government were to become even more foreign, in the manner of the Dutch upper class—the state would be under the control of a foreign power, perhaps even the dreaded French.

Further evidence that contemporary British concerns impacted the way in which Marshall and Williams depicted the

Dutch comes from the different ways in which they describe the Dutch "lower classes." Writing in the late 1760s, Marshall identifies in the Dutch, particularly in those "deeply engaged in commerce," a "close unbroken industry" and contentment with a sober lifestyle, saying they seem "to give the least attention to enjoying more than a very moderate competency."[54] In contrast, Williams, writing in the mid 1770s, claims that this "close unbroken industry" of the people had transformed itself into a general avarice. Avarice is, Williams asserts, the "great vice that predominates [in the Dutch Republic]."[55] In contrast to his criticism of the upper-class Dutch as "Frenchified," Williams claims that avarice was *general* across the Dutch Republic's commercial society, saying, "All ranks of people receive in their infancy…the ideas of avarice and selfishness."[56] These criticisms of avarice were accompanied in Williams's account by the assertion that the Dutch now "give into all kinds of excess and luxury."[57] According to him, they exhibit "the greatest prodigality," which "makes them often appear very ridiculous."[58] This was, Williams notes, particularly true of the mercantile classes. He goes on to say that such greed was not always pursued honestly, but rather that the Dutch were often "vicious and dishonest" in their dealings, as they took advantage of the "ignorance or folly of those [that] they deal[t] with."[59] Indeed, Williams may have been familiar with Adam Smith's recently published *Wealth of Nations*, which asserts that the avarice of the Dutch manifested itself in their "savage policy" in the East Indies, where they had, "by different arts of oppression…reduced the population of several of the Moluccas."[60]

It is possible to account for this change by examining the context in which Williams wrote. Whereas Marshall wrote his work before the East India Company crisis in 1772 and the fallout that accompanied it in 1773, such events were probably well known to Williams. In 1772, the company, fashioned after the Dutch *Vereenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie* (VOC), defaulted on its repayment of loans to the British Crown after its share price had fallen 50% since 1769.[61] While the causes of this fall were complex, many Britons in both Parliament and the middling sorts blamed the avarice of British "nabobs"—young men from the middling sorts who set out for India "certain… of making a fortune" and returned to Britain to "purchase large

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47 Colley, *Britons*, 88.
48 Colley, *Britons*, 88.
49 Newman, *The Rise of English Nationalism*, 63-122.
50 Samuel Foote, *The Dramatic Works: Of Samuel Foote, To which is Prefixed a life of the author* (P. Vaillant: London, 1777), 40.
51 Colley, *Britons*, 110.
52 Quotation from Colley, *Britons*, 110.
53 Wilkes was elected a Member of Parliament (MP) twice throughout this period—in 1757 and 1768—and became Lord Mayor of London in 1774. See Colley, *Britons*, 100–113 for a description of Wilkes's appeal and success.

54 Marshall, *Travels through Holland*, 43.
55 Williams, *The Rise, Progress, and Present State*, 79.
56 Williams, *The Rise, Progress, and Present State*, 80.
57 Williams, *The Rise, Progress, and Present State*, 77.
58 Williams, *The Rise, Progress, and Present State*, 74.
59 Williams, *The Rise, Progress, and Present State*, 77.
60 Adam Smith, *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1976), Volume II, 152.
61 Naill Furgeson, *Empire: How Britain Made the Modern World* (New York: Penguin, 2004).

estate[s], with the most elegant villa[s]."[62] A former East India Company servant writing in a British periodical claimed that these fortunes were made by the expression of "monstrous and unconstitutional powers."[63] He elaborates, "Eastern nabobs possessed the power of doing ill in a greater degree than perhaps was ever known in the annals of time."[64] The difference between Marshall and Williams on this subject suggests that Williams's perspective was affected by the sudden attention paid to "nabobs," and thus was prone to see this contemporary British concern for avarice in the Dutch. Moreover, the generalness of Dutch avarice suggests that Williams saw the Dutch as further along on this path to destructive greed, a path which Britain was on but should avoid. Smith makes this connection more explicitly than Williams does: The English will prove "completely as destructive as…the Dutch."[65]

The high taxes of the Dutch Republic—and the perceived disastrous effects of them—were similarly well-recognized by Britons, and again reflected in contemporary British concerns. Williams asserts, "The taxes in [the Dutch Republic] are at present so heavy and so general, that it is almost impossible to augment the public revenue by this means, without endangering a commotion in the state."[66] These taxes were not only burdensome on the consumers, but more importantly ruined manufactures, according to Smith: "In Holland the heavy taxes upon the necessaries of life have ruined…their principal manufactures, and are likely to discourage gradually even their fisheries and their trade in ship-building."[67] It is clear from appeals and petitions to Parliament that Britions expressed similar worries about their precipitously rising tax rates, claiming that "taxes upon Coals, Candles, Soap…now lie heavy upon…Manufacturers… by which the prime cost of all our Manufactures is so much enhanced that it is impossible for our Merchants to sell them."[68] In an era of mercantilism, the possibility of a state's manufactures disappearing was quite worrisome, and one that the English surely feared. One Englishman from the middling sorts explicitly appeals "to what has happened to the Dutch" on account of their "most abominable and innumerable taxations"—the loss of economic prowess. It is clear that he believes that if Britain follows the Dutch path, they will end up with the same result.[69]

The commonalities between the concerns about British society and the criticisms of the Dutch are striking. They suggest that Marshall and Williams still identify with the Dutch, despite the fraying of political, economic, and cultural ties between the nations. However, the two travelogues seem to suggest that while the British were still on the same path as the Dutch, as they happily had been in the first half of the century, they should now be worried about going further down this path. The travelogues seem tell us that if they continued, the industriousness of the people could be transformed to the most dreadful avarice when they are tempted by luxury, the taxes required for the maintenance of the empire could ruin the metropole's manufacturing capabilities, and foreign influences could infiltrate the ruling elite. The Dutch were still considered an example to look to, but no longer one to follow. Rather, they came to be seen as an example the British believed they would do well to avoid.

In the years of the American Revolution, however, these warnings against following the Dutch path were not as pressing as the possibility of England being isolated in Europe by their traditional Dutch ally joining the side of the French and Spanish. While most histories make only a passing mention of the Fourth Anglo–Dutch War that grew out of the Revolution, I argue that it was a traumatic event for the British people.[70] The Revolution itself caused the British people much anxiety. The war "deprived [the British] a part of themselves," and was fought despite the close economic, political, and cultural ties between the British and the colonists (many of whom were, indeed, British themselves).[71] Worry seems to have also been brought on by the fact that Britain had no continental allies during this war.[72] I will argue that this anxiety over the conflict

62   The first quotation is from "Robert Clive: Speech in Commons on India, 1772," Fordham University: Modern History Sourcebook, accessed December 1, 2012, http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/1772clive-india.asp; the second is from "Memoirs of Mr. Fordyee, a late celebrated Banker," *The Gentleman's Magazine; and Historical Chronicle* (July 1772): 311. ProQuest (8367810).

63   "Part of a Letter written by an Officer who lately served in Bengal," *The Gentleman's Magazine; and Historical Chronicle* (February 1772): 69. ProQuest (8548713).

64   "Part of a Letter," *The Gentleman's Magazine,* 69.

65   Smith, *Wealth of Nations*, II, 153.

66   Williams, *The Rise, Progress, and Present State*, 132.

67   Smith, *Wealth of Nations*, II, 402.

68   Quoted from William Corbbet*, Cobbett's Parliamentary History of England: Volume X* (T.C. Hansard: London, 1812), 89.

69   "An Address to the British Electors," *The Gentleman's Magazine; and Historical Chronicle* (December 1769): 617. ProQuest (8697191). This concern was probably amplified with the expansion of the Empire in the Seven Years War. Pincus and Robinson's early research on British state spending shows that imperial projects on social and economic development attracted a significant portion of the state's budget throughout the 18th century. Steve Pincus and James Robinson, "War and State-Making Reconsidered: The Rise of the Interventionist State" (paper presented at Mellon Conference for British Studies, Chicago, IL, October 11th-12th, 2013).

70   See the limited attention it is given in Christopher Hibbert, *Redcoats and Rebels: The American Revolution through British Eyes* (New York, NY: W.W. Norton and Co., 2002) and Stanley Weintraub, *Iron Tears: America's Battle for Freedom, Britain's Quagmire: 1775-1783* (New York, NY: Free Press, 2005), and Andrew Stockley, *Britain and France at the birth of America: the European powers and the peace negotiations of 1782–1783* (Exeter, UK: University of Exeter Press, 2001). A work that devotes relatively more time to it is Brendan Simms, *Three Victories and a Defeat: The Rise and Fall of the First British Empire, 1714–1783*, (New York City, NY: Penguin, 2007).

71   Colley, *Britons*, 150.

72   Colley, *Britons*, 145.

between having all of their Atlantic neighbors allied against them and the longstanding British identification with the Dutch was responsible for the inability of some Britons to ever see the Dutch as a true enemy, as Britain's other continental enemies—the French and Spanish—clearly were.

The first suggestion that the British were unwilling to accept the Dutch as an enemy comes from the disbelief that some Britons expressed over the possibility of an Anglo–Dutch conflict. While some went as far to claim that the Dutch would eventually join the British in their fight, more claimed that the two nations would at least avoid war. These opinions were expressed in a variety of London newspapers and periodicals. One such periodical contained a story of a Dutchwoman, who fell in love with a "British Officer" stationed in the Republic.[73] While the woman's father (who "could not be more devoted to his wealth") initially prevents them from marrying because the Office has no inheritance, this hesitancy is eventually overcome, allowing the Dutchwoman and British man to be united.[74] This passage, in light of its explicitness of the nationalities and personalities, can be read as a commentary on the relationship between the British and the Dutch. The two nations still have a "true passion" for one another, and such passion will be enough to overcome even the avarice of the Dutch.[75] The British believed that while the Dutch may selfishly pursue profit via trade during Anglo–American hostilities for a time, but eventually they would ally with the British. Indeed, the British seemed to have been justified in this thought, for, in March of 1775 the Dutch Republic prohibited the exportation of war supplies to British dominions in America.[76] While British officials expressed constant worry about the "inadequacy of the Dutch prohibition," some Britons seem to have been convinced that this was the beginning of Dutch assistance in the war.[77]

Indeed, the same periodical was optimistic that the Dutch would come to Britain's aid even as tensions between the two nations mounted and war became more likely. Throughout the late 1770s, several Dutch ships carrying naval supplies had their goods confiscated by the British navy.[78] The most significant of such seizures occurred in December 1779, when a group of Dutch ships was intercepted by one Captain Fielding.[79] While it is unclear who provoked who, the skirmish ended with the Dutch surrendering and Fielding ordering "all the Dutch merchantmen into Plymouth for admiralty court hearings."[80] From this point, war was probably inevitable. Even in the aftermath of this incident, however, the *Weekly Miscellany* published a story of how a Dutch ship had assisted a British ship in fighting off "two French privateers."[81] This story could not be verified in the navy's records, but its message seems to be that the Dutch were indeed ready to join the fight against the French and Spanish. The Dutch, according to this story, were still on the side of the British, despite mounting evidence to the contrary.

While few were perhaps as optimistic as the *Weekly Miscellany*, there does seem to have been a wider belief that the British and Dutch would, at least, not go to war with another. *The General Evening Post*, a London newspaper, claimed, "Of a Dutch war, there is not the smallest probability."[82] A pamphleteer in 1779 claimed that negotiations "would secure the harmony which subsisted between that…republic and Great Britain."[83] From this pamphlet and others like it, it seems that some Londoners were remarkably oblivious to or in denial of the escalating tensions between the British and the Dutch. Despite the widely reported Fielding incident, many people were not at all convinced that such tensions were insurmountable. The British might have dealt with anxieties over the prospect of the Dutch arming against the British by simply refusing to believe that an Anglo–Dutch conflict would ever materialize.

Even those commentators who appear to have accepted that war would come after the Fielding incident did not accept it enthusiastically. In contrast to the patriotic fervor that had followed the declaration of war against the French just two years earlier, there was much questioning behind the reasoning for the war in public venues such as the London debating societies. In 1780, the various societies debated the merits of the war with the Dutch at least four times.[84] Such questioning was not required when there was a battle with France—a situation which was, by this point in the 18th century, all too familiar. A war with the Dutch was more worthy of debate, because it would signal the disintegration of an alliance on which Britain had relied for the previous 80 years.

Debaters and other writers in London did not merely question the war because of their affinity for Britain's "best natural ally," but also because of the confused legal issues surrounding the war, rooted in treaties signed between the two countries in the 17th century.[85] One debate society questioned

73 "An Affecting Story," *Weekly Miscellany; or, Instructive Entertainment* (12 June 1775), 253. ProQuest (4222335).
74 "An Affecting Story," *Weekly Miscellany*, 253–255.
75 "An Affecting Story," *Weekly Miscellany*, 253.
76 Miller, *Sir Joseph Yorke*, 40
77 Miller, *Sir Joseph Yorke*, 40
78 Miller, *Sir Joseph Yorke*, 88.
79 Miller, *Sir Joseph Yorke*, 88.
80 Miller, *Sir Joseph Yorke*, 88.
81 "A Naval Anecdote," *Weekly Miscellany; or, Instructive Entertainment* (31 January 1780), 426-427. Obtained from ProQuest database, ProQuest document number 4234924.
82 "London," *The General Evening Post* (4 January 1780). Gale's British Newspapers 1600–1900 (Z2000459320).
83 *The history of the war in America, between Great Britain and her colonies from its commencement to the end of the year 1778* (1779), 350. Hathi Trust.
84 Donna T. Andrew (compiled and introduced by), "London debates: 1780*," London debating societies 1776-1799*, British History Online. I say "at least" because some of the debate topics are difficult to interpret and classify accordingly, and because only very brief descriptions of each debate are offered.
85 See footnote 12 above. The quote is from *The Scot's Magazine* 42 (1780): 522.

Figure 1: "The Dutchman in the Dumps" celebrates the British capture of the Dutch West Indies island of St. Eustatius. From left to righ are an English sailor, a Dutchman, a Frenchman, an Spaniard, and an American.

Figure 2: "The Castle in the Moon" shows Spain as Don Quixote, France as a monkey on his horse, and Holland as Sancho.

whether the actions of the government were "consistent with policy and the law of nations."[86] A commentator from London claimed in *The Scot's Magazine,* in reference to the Fielding incident, that "the Seizure of the Dutch convoy was a violent impolitic measure…depriving the Dutch of all the privileges and advantages they enjoyed under those treaties, [and] was not founded in wisdom, nor equity, nor integrity."[87] Another London author stated, "The war of England with the Dutch was entered upon precipitately, harshly, and if I were to add unjustly, I should deliver the sentiments of many wise and good men in this country," suggesting that more than a small minority held this view.[88] To these writers, Britain was not only betraying its "old and natural ally," but it also was doing so in an illegal and dishonorable manner.[89] These debates and criticisms suggest that some Britons did not want to give

up their friendship with the Dutch, pointing to the English anxiety over the prospect of being at war with nearly all of Europe. Thus, even realistic Londoners found a way to express their anxiety about an Anglo–Dutch conflict, basing their assessments on the long-standing diplomatic relations of the states.

Despite this reticence, however, war finally was declared. On December 20, 1780, the British severed diplomatic relations with the Dutch, and ordered the seizure of all Dutch ships, regardless of what they were carrying.[90] Some people seem to have reacted to the Anglo–Dutch conflict by simply blaming the French. In this way, people were able to continue to see the Dutch Republic as their "oldest and best friend," while also accounting for why they were at war with them—if the Dutch were simply under the influence of France, then, in a sense, the British were only continuing to fight their traditional enemy, and not their traditional ally.[91] The impression that the Dutch ruling elite was under the influence of the French was not new, of course, but it was now being used to explain the Anglo–Dutch conflict. This opinion is perhaps expressed most clearly in a history of the Revolution published shortly after its conclusion. "Holland," the author writes, left "her old and natural ally at the mercy of France."[92] That is, not by choice, but rather because of French influence. Dutch actions were solely "in compliance to the French court," he claimed, while the "clamors against the war with Great Britain" emitting from the common people were always strong.[93]

86   Item No. 385, in "London Debates 1780," in *London Debating Societies*, ed. Andrew.

87   *The Scot's Magazine* 42 (1780): 522.

88   *Considerations of the Provisional Treaty with America, and the Preliminary Articles of Peace with France and Spain* (London: 1783), 122. Hathi Trust.

89   *The Scot's Magazine* 42 (1780): 524.

90   Miller, *Sir Joseph Yorke*, 95.

91   *Considerations of the Provisional Treaty*, 122.

92   John Andrews, *History of the War with America, France, Spain, and Holland; commencing in 1775 and ending in 1783*, (London: 1783), 320. Hathi Trust.

93   Andrews, *History of the War*, 319, 320.

Figure 3: In "The Times, Anno 1783," the figures from left to right personify Holland, Spain, France, and England, respectively.

The ruling elite had caused the Dutch to be beholden to the French, while the common people had resisted. Contemporary political cartoons suggest that this was not merely a hindsight assessment of this author, but rather was a consistent reaction to Dutch involvement throughout the war.

One such cartoon, titled "The Dutchman in the Dumps," shows the Dutch lamenting the loss of the port of St. Eustatius, dismayed at the loss of profit they would experience (Figure 1).[94]

The Frenchman, standing in the background like a puppet-master, is alarmed that the "storehouse of the war" is gone.[95] This can be understood in light of the criticisms expressed by Williams. While, as Williams identified, all Dutch were prone to avarice, the cartoon shows that they were not concerned with the war more generally—they did not actually want to fight the British. The grander concerns for the outlook of the conflict were only held by France, Britain's committed enemy. This image was followed a few months later by a cartoon that shows the Spanish as Don Quixote, the French as his monkey, and the Dutch as Sancho, his servant (Figure 2).[96] Regardless of the relationship between the Spanish and French, the Dutch seem to be cast as the follower of the group, simply obliging the orders of their master.

The disconnect between the Spanish and French on the one hand and the Dutch on the other manifests itself in
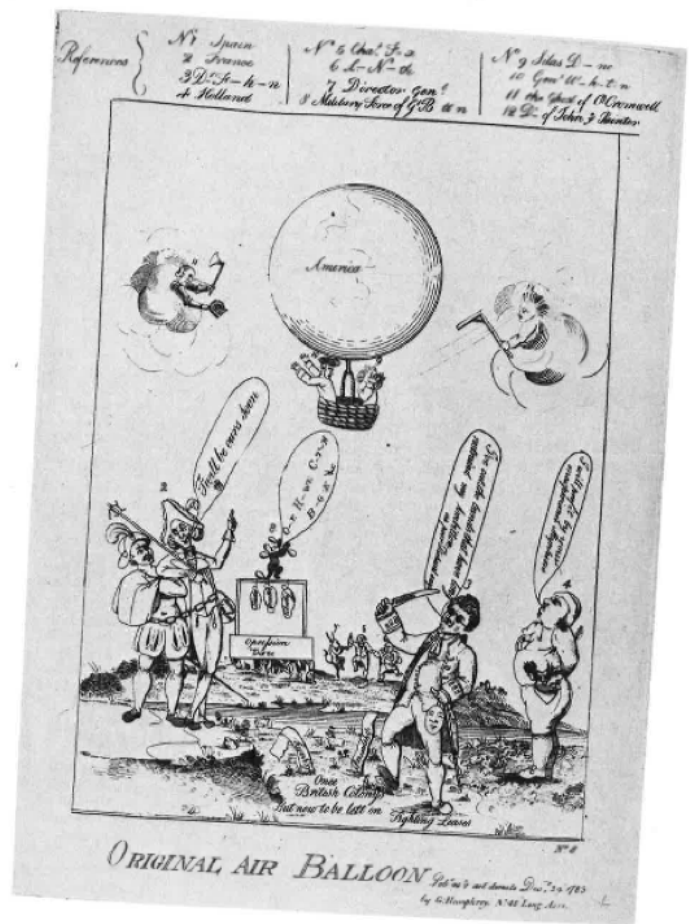
Figure 4: "Original Air Balloon" is full of "cynical resentment at America's success."[97] The larger figures in the foreground personify, from left to right, Spain, France, Ben Franklin, and Holland.

several other political cartoons.[98] In four published in 1783, the Spanish and French are shown standing together in one part of the picture, often holding hands and talking to one another, while the Dutch are drawn standing alone, quite literally separated from the other two (see, for example, Figures 3 and 4).

These images suggest that these cartoonists imagined the Dutch as being quite distinct from the Spanish and French.

94   James Gillray, "The Dutchman in the Dumps" (9 April 1781), in *The English Satirical Print 1600–1832: The American Revolution*, ed. Peter D.G. Thomas (Cambridge: Chadwyck-Healey, 1986), 224–225.

95   Gillray, "The Dutchman," in *English Satirical Print*, ed. Thomas, 224–225.

96   James Gillray, "The Castle in the Moon" (22 August 1782) in *English Satirical Print*, ed. Thomas 248–249.

97   "Original Air Balloon" (29 December 1783), in *English Satirical Print*, ed. Thomas, 276–277.

98   T. Colley, "Peace Porridge all hot. The best to be got" (11 February 1783), in *English Satirical Print*, ed. Thomas, 258–259; James Gillray, "The Times, Anno 1783" (14 April 1783), in *English Satirical Print*, ed. Thomas, 268–269; "Proclamation of Peace" (21 October 1783), in *English Satirical Print*, ed. Thomas, 274–275. "Original Air Balloon" (29 December 1783), in *English Satirical Print*, ed. Thomas, 276–277.

They were a foe that didn't quite warrant the same enmity as the other two nations. Indeed, one cartoon shows the French and Spanish fighting the British with the Dutch standing off behind them, not engaging.[99] The underlying message of these images seems to be that the British were really fighting their traditional enemies, the Spanish and French, while the Dutch were distinct, not true enemies. Rather, they were pawns of Spain and France. In this way, some in Britain may have been able to escape confronting the fact that their traditional ally had turned against them, and that they were now fighting all of their Atlantic neighbors.

In the 1770s and 1780s the traditional sense of fraternity that had existed between the British and the Dutch for much of the previous century was strained. While the two nations seemed to have disengaged from one another, the evidence presented here suggests that some members of the middling class in Britain continued to maintain a sense of identification with the Dutch. Such identification adapted to changing times, however. In the early 1770s, it resulted in some writers suggesting that the British would do well to avoid the Dutch path, while, in the late 1770s and early 1780s, it resulted in apprehension over and disbelief in an Anglo–Dutch conflict. Each of these cases, I have argued, was a reaction to particular English anxieties. This suggests continuity in the Anglo–Dutch relationship, as perceived by the middling sorts, over the course of the 18th century, or at least through the American Revolutionary War.[100] The French were not the only continental nation that the British cared about in the 18th century. In a very different way, they paid equal attention to the Dutch. As demonstrated here, studying this attention allows us to better understand how Britons' affinity for, and fraternity with, the Dutch conditioned how Britons conceptualized *themselves*.

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99   T. Colley, "The Reconciliation between Britannia and her daughter America" (May 1782), in *English Satirical Print*, ed. Thomas, 240–241.
100 This relationship would, of course, change even more dramatically in the last 15 years of the 18th century. Constraints, however, limited this paper to 15 years or so immediately prior to those changes.