Introduction
Debating Military Masculinity

> We talked of war. JOHNSON. "Every man thinks meanly of himself for not having been a soldier, or not having been at sea." BOSWELL. "Lord Mansfield does not." JOHNSON. "Sir, if Lord Mansfield were in a company of General Officers and Admirals who have been in service, he would shrink; he'd wish to creep under the table." BOSWELL. "No; he'd think he could *try* them all." JOHNSON. "Yes, if he could catch them: but they'd try him much sooner."[1]
>
> *The Life of Samuel Johnson* (1791)

In this fragment of conversation, James Boswell records an exchange of views with Samuel Johnson about the relationship between eighteenth-century masculinity and eighteenth-century militarism. Johnson's opinion, that every civilian man 'thinks meanly of himself', permits the military man, whether solider or sailor, to hold himself in high regard. The man who has experienced military service, whether on land or at sea, is entitled to feel that he is more than adequate as a man, Johnson suggests, whereas the civilian knows that he is lacking, that he is somehow insufficient. With this, Johnson generalizes both military service and masculinity. As Boswell goes on to note, when Johnson pronounced on the lives of soldiers and sailors in their separate services, he could cast praise and censure on either, but 'when warmed and animated by the presence of company, he, like other philosophers, whose minds are impregnated with poetical fancy, caught the common enthusiasm for splendid renown.'[2] Of course, Johnson's confident assertion that every non-military man feels inadequate is coupled with his recognition that military service was, to many men, insufficiently tempting. Johnson's everyman had every opportunity to experience military service in the long eighteenth century; with each of the wars fought

[1] James Boswell, *The Life of Samuel Johnson*, 2 vols. (London: Charles Dilly, 1791), II, p. 211.
[2] Boswell, *The Life of Johnson*, II, p. 212.

during this period, the ranks and decks of the nation's services required ever greater numbers. The practical demands of assembling and equipping, directing and sustaining ever-expanding military forces weighed heavily upon often fractious and factional parliaments.[3] Little wonder, then, that Boswell counters Johnson's opinion by invoking Lord Mansfield, the Lord Chief Justice and a conspicuous political figure. With his swift rejoinder, Boswell asserts that a modern professional man, a man in a position of authority and influence, has no reason to be embarrassed for not having seen military service. Whereas Johnson maintains that militarism and manliness are interconnected in a way every man necessarily understands, however reluctantly, Boswell dismisses any such connection as idealistic and outdated.

It has been some time since David Morgan, in what was a pioneering collection of essays for the emerging field of masculinity studies, asked scholars to pay greater attention to masculinities formed in relation to military service: 'of all the sites where masculinities are constructed, reproduced and deployed, those associated with war and the military are some of the most direct.'[4] In recent years, valuable work on the social and cultural history of military service in the eighteenth century has been undertaken, notably by Margarette Lincoln, Matthew McCormack and Catriona Kennedy.[5] However, the history of men and war can all too easily become, as McCormack puts it, 'an assumption rather than a subject for gender history in its own right.'[6] The assumption may well be rooted in the fact that military service was for centuries an exclusively (at least in theory) male occupation, but it may well be nourished by the way that, as

[3] Jeremy Black weighs the significance of government administration in creating British military power in *Britain as a Military Power: 1688–1815* (London: UCL Press, 1999). See also John Brewer, *The Sinews of Power: War, Money and the English State, 1689–1783* (London: Unwin Hyman, 1989).

[4] David H. J. Morgan, 'Theatre of War: Combat, the Military, and Masculinities', in *Theorizing Masculinities*, ed. by Harry Brod and Michael Kauffman (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE, 1994), pp. 165–82 (at p. 165).

[5] Margarette Lincoln, *Representing the Royal Navy: British Sea Power, 1750–1815* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2002); Matthew McCormack and Catriona Kennedy, *Soldiering in Britain and Ireland, 1750–1850: Men at Arms* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012); Catriona Kennedy, *Narratives of the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars: Military and Civilian Experience in Britain and Ireland* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013).

[6] *Public Men: Masculinity and Politics in Modern Britain*, ed. by Matthew McCormack (Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan, 2007), p. 3. See also Karen Harvey, 'The History of Masculinity, circa 1650–1800', *Journal of British Studies*, 44 (2005), 296–311. Mention must also be made of Karen Hagemann's work on masculinity and European militarism: 'The Military and Masculinity: Gendering the History of the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars, 1792–1815', in *War in an Age of Revolution*, ed. by Roger Chickering and Stig Förster (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), pp. 331–52; *Masculinities in Politics and War: Gendering Modern History*, ed. by Stefan Dudink, Karen Hagemann and John Tosh (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2004).

Paul Higate observes, 'the archetypal warrior figure tends to be constructed in opposition to a range of others, marginal masculinities, femininities, and civilians.'[7] Higate's point is that gender historians tend to idenfity the military man as the bearer of a distinct, clearly-defined masculinity, albeit one that jostles for hegemonic status with other masculinities and femininities in any historical period. This study takes a different approach. Rather than focus on the military man's relationships with 'others', the following chapters identify competing versions of the military 'self' and argue that these versions can reveal the currency of different conceptualizations of masculinity during the long eighteenth century. In other words, this study takes as its starting point the notion that ideas about militarism, like those forwarded by Johnson and Boswell, are predicated upon, and so become vehicles for, ideas about masculinity, and more specifically about whether masculinity can and should be understood as an essence, lodged within and made manifest by a 'naturally' sexed body, or as a contingent, malleable and commodifiable construction. In practice, this entails mapping accounts of militarism forwarded by critics and commentators who conceptualize gender as a 'natural', in the sense of essential, product of the apparently timelessly sexed body, and those who are able to see gender as something acquired and enacted, that is, arguments that can be termed proto-constructionist.

To study a century in which Britain was so often at war is to find an abundance of representations of and discussions about military men, but the following chapters are primarily concerned with those representations and discussions that can be positioned in relation to two narratives that are long-standing within eighteenth-century studies. The first of these is the late seventeenth and early eighteenth-century investment in civic humanism. In his classic work *The Machiavellian Moment*, J. G. A. Pocock argues that at the time of the Restoration, and for much of the century that followed, civic humanist thought was a powerful weapon in the hands of those anxious to arrest the spread of what they considered to be the new and dangerous forms of corruption that had emerged with the return of monarchical power and the emboldening of courtier politicians. Throughout this period, Pocock argues, the self-consciously civic-minded saw themselves as 'a classical *populus*, a community of virtue, … their virtue as consisting in their freeholds.'[8] To these civic thinkers, property

[7] *Military Masculinities: Identity and the State*, ed. by Paul R. Higate (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2003), p. 201.

[8] J. G. A. Pocock, *The Machiavellian Moment: Florentine Political Thought and the Atlantic Republican Tradition*, 2nd ed. (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1975; repr. 2003), p. 408.

ensured liberty, for the freeholder was protected from dependence and so secured against all forms of tyranny, but with the status of the independent citizen came the responsibility to defend the nation from other kinds of attack. Machiavelli's seventeenth-century predecessors clung to the idea that the purest way to discharge that responsibility was, as it had been in the classical past, through participation in a national militia, and in the years after the Revolution of 1688, when the issue of the relationship between power and the people was pressing, 'the myth of the English militia became potent'.[9] The efforts to revive the militia throughout the century that followed have been documented by J. R. Western and, more recently, Matthew McCormack, but it might be fair to say that the eighteenth-century's civic thinkers are better known to eighteenth-century studies as the Jeremiahs who railed against 'luxury', for as Emma Clery has shown, eighteenth-century anxiety about the increasing importance of urbane sociability and leisured consumption was also anxiety about the growing acceptability of the feminization of male manners.[10]

Drawing on Pocock's account of civic thinking, my discussion begins with the argument that the civic investment in the militiaman was also an investment in the essential 'nature' of masculinity. Pocock observes that the civic thinkers of the late seventeenth and eighteenth century did not see, or perhaps more accurately did not acknowledge, any anachronism in appealing to the classical past for models that might serve to reform the present. In Pocock's words, 'the civic or participatory ideal … acknowledged to exist mainly in the past … employed a theory of social personality in which virtue was held to be civic and was grounded on material bases which could not be bartered away without the loss of virtue itself.'[11] The fundamental importance of 'material bases' for the 'participatory ideal' can be extended from the materiality of property to the materiality of the body. As Pocock states, in the classical republic each propertied citizen was a 'participant in the authority by which he was ruled; this entailed relations of equality which made in fact extremely stern demands on upon him, but by premising that he was *kata phūsin* [according to nature] formed to participate in such citizenship it could be said that it was his 'nature',

[9] Pocock, *Machiavellian Moment*, p. 414.
[10] J. R. Western, *The English Militia in the Eighteenth Century: The Story of a Political Issue, 1660–1802* (London: Routledge, 1965); Matthew McCormack, *Embodying the Militia in Georgian England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015). For the 'luxury debate' see John Sekora, *Luxury: The Concept in Western Thought, Eden to Smollett* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1977) and Emma Clery, *The Feminization Debate in Eighteenth-Century England: Literature, Commerce and Luxury* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004).
[11] Pocock, *Machiavellian Moment*, p. 436.

'essence' or 'virtue' to do so.'[12] In other words, the civic citizen-soldier who acts militarily in accordance with his responsibility to do so is virtuous in the sense that he does what he ought, but also in the sense that he, and specifically 'he', does what he is 'formed' to do. This reading of Pocock's argument can be reinforced by turning to McCormack's history of the 'New Militia'. According to McCormack, efforts to revive the militia in the mid-century were motivated by fears for the nation's masculinity as much as its safety. Thus, the desire to embody the militia reveals the mid-century's enthusiasm for embodying a notion of masculinity that could combat the ever-present threat of national decline via the slippery slope of 'politeness' into the abject abyss of effeminacy.[13] Beginning with the importance of virtuous-because-amateur citizen-soldier as a idealized model for masculinity and militarism, then, this study tracks the argument that the military man does what he is formed to do by positioning the militiaman as one of several models for militarism that are equally invested in the timelessness of men's essential 'nature', models I gather together with the term 'old hero'.

Historians of eighteenth-century gender have long held the view that the century saw a hardening of attitudes with regard to the relationship between gender and the sexed (and sexual) body.[14] The most significant work on eighteenth-century understandings of the body is still to be found in Lacqueur's study of the epistemological shift from the 'one-sex' to the 'two-sex' model, that is, from the idea that male and female bodies were inverted versions of each other to the idea that they were differently formed and opposite in nature.[15] Lacqueur's thesis underpins Dror Wahrman argument that the 1770s and 1780s saw the transition from an '*ancien régime* of gender', in which gender was understood to be 'learned, imitated, performed, donned, and doffed at will', to a 'new sex-gender regime' in which gender was understood to be 'innate, essential, and predetermined by sex.' For Warhman, the *ancién regime* is characterized by

[12] J. G. A. Pocock, 'Virtues, Rights, Manners: A Model for Historians of Political Thought', in *Virtue, Commerce, and History: Essays on Political Thought, Chiefly in the Eighteenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), pp. 37–50 (at p. 43).

[13] McCormack, *Embodying the Militia in Georgian England*, esp. pp. 13–32.

[14] For an overview of this argument see Robert B. Shoemaker, *Gender in English Society, 1650–1850: The Emergence of Separate Spheres?* (London: Longman, 1998). For the argument that the eighteenth century saw the naturalization of heterosexuality, see Randolph Trumbach, *Sex and the Gender Revolution*: Vol. 1: *Heterosexuality and the Third Gender in Enlightenment London* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998); Tim Hitchcock, *English Sexualities, 1700–1800* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1997).

[15] Thomas Lacqueur, *Making Sex: Body and Gender from the Greeks to Freud* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1990).

'gender play' and the arrival of the modern moment by 'gender panic'.[16] And yet, Lacqueur's history of the body can equally be read, not as a linear narrative of transition, but as a single history told in two stages. Lacqueur asserts that the 'one-sex' model, the belief that male and female sex organs were the same but inverted, sustained a hierarchy in which women were lesser. In the 'two-sex' model, the idea of fundamental difference between male and female sex organs sustained a hierarchy in which women were 'other'.[17] In both cases, gender positions are prescribed and inequality justified on the basis of binary oppositions 'read into a body that did not itself mark these distinctions clearly', a body 'burdened with the cultural work done by these propositions.'[18] In both stages, then, the physical body is made into meaning, or to put it another way, neither the 'one-sex' nor the 'two-sex' model offers a narrative in which meaning is not contrived from the physicality of the body.

Whereas Wahrman takes Lacqueur's argument to mean that gender was able to float freely until it was netted and pinned to the body at the end of the century as part of the new 'identity regime', this study appeals to Lacqueur's narrative in order to suggest that the body was available as a foundation for conceptualizations of gender throughout the eighteenth century. Given that the connection between matter and meaning is far from 'natural', as the shift from the 'one-sex' to the 'two-sex' model indicates, this study also encounters the inescapable tension within arguments that extract gender from the body. The argument that bodily matter can and should be understood to be the basis for gender is simultaneously an appeal to the physicality of body – that which is, apparently, 'real' – and an assertion that there is something that exceeds the mere physicality of human flesh and blood – that is, the qualities and characteristics that are said belong to, or are produced by a specifically male or a specifically female body. In other words, an argument for 'natural' gender relies on the tangible 'truth' of bodily matter to give substance to that which must be more than just a mass of tangible material. Such an argument is inevitably an exercise in high-wire rhetoric, ever prone to wobbling and, ultimately, falling in on itself.

As mentioned at the start of this introduction, this study is concerned with competing versions of the military man. Though eighteenth-century

[16] Dror Wahrman, *The Making of the Modern Self: Identity and Culture in Eighteenth-Century England* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2004), pp. 48, 41.
[17] Lacqueur, *Making Sex*, esp. pp. 148–54.
[18] Ibid., pp. 61–2, 153.

civic thinkers denied the anachronism of returning to classical models, their appeal to the virtuous citizen-soldier was to come under pressure from the rise of the 'modern' soldier. The idea that a 'military revolution' occurred in Europe between 1500 and 1800 was proposed by Michael Roberts and established as a master narrative for military history by Geoffrey Parker.[19] The military revolution thesis holds that over the course of three centuries the technologies and tactics, the funding and administration and the social and cultural significance of military service, on land and at sea, changed such that by the end of the eighteenth century all that was 'old' had been replaced by that which was 'new'. As Azar Gat argues, the military revolution, made possible by the revolution in European trade and commerce, 'paralleled … Europe's wider, sweeping transformation during those same centuries: indeed, … it formed an "aspect" of early modernization.'[20] As such, the narrative of the military revolution is also an account of the modernization of the men who served in the increasingly permanent, professionalized armies and navies. Certainly, the introduction of new weapons, designed to be wielded in newly structured battles, whether on land or at sea, required the increasing numbers of soldiers and sailors, deployed in the service of global imperial ambition, to be moulded by new kinds of discipline and training. Following Parker, Michael Duffy asserts that the growth in the size of countries' permanent military establishments is the crucial marker of the change from pre-modern to modern, since higher numbers prompted the development of state machinery able to finance, equip and sustain the increase, as well as authorities to manage these modernized military men.[21]

When Roberts introduced the idea of the military revolution he forwarded it as the 'great divide separating medieval society from the modern world', one aspect of which was to replace military men who were 'individualist[s]' with those who were standardized.[22] With this, Roberts

[19] Michael Roberts, 'The Military Revolution, 1500–1660', in *The Military Revolution Debate: Readings on the Military Transformation of Early Modern Europe*, ed. by Clifford J. Rogers (Boulder, CA: Westview Press, 1995), pp. 13–35 (first publ. (Belfast, 1956)); Geoffrey Parker, 'The Military Revolution 1560–1660 – A Myth?', in *The Military Revolution Debate*, pp. 37–54 (first publ. *Journal of Modern History*, 48.2 (1976), 195–214.

[20] Azar Gat, 'What Constituted the Military Revolution of the Early Modern Period?', in *War in an Age of Revolution*, pp. 21–48 (at p. 23).

[21] Geoffrey Parker, *The Military Revolution: Military Innovation and the Rise of the West, 1500–1800* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988); *The Military Revolution and the State, 1500–1800* (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 1980), ed. by Michael Duffy, pp. 1–9.

[22] Roberts, 'The Military Revolution', pp. 13, 29.

pre-empted Michel Foucault's account of the emergence of the modern soldier during the eighteenth century:

> Let us take the ideal figure of the soldier as it was still seen in the early seventeenth century … he bore certain signs: the natural signs of his strength and courage, the marks, too, of his pride; his body was the blazon of his strength and valour … By the late eighteenth century, the soldier has become something that can be made; out of formless clay, an inapt body, the machine required can be constructed.[23]

Foucault's argument that the modern soldier was pressed into being, like clay in a mould, concurs with military historians' view that the 'submergence of the individual', as Roberts puts it, occurred during what Martin van Creveld terms the 'Age of Machines', the period in which technological advances in weaponry meant that 'the ability to kill … was no longer directly related to an individual's physical prowess, but tended to become a question of trained, professional skill.'[24] That said, Foucault's description of the standardized modern soldier as a product of what he terms the 'military dream of society' draws out the implications of the phrase 'age of machines', for Foucault holds that whereas the *ancien régime* subjected bodies to power using corporeal punishment, the modern regime understood bodies to be formless clay until inscribed/impressed by power and so exercised power by producing bodies.[25] The modern soul is not trapped within the inscribed body, Foucault asserts, for 'the [illusion of the] soul is the prison of the body.'[26] It is the immateriality of the Foucauldian body, the fact that the "body' in Foucault's discourse does not function as a name of some thing, as a linguistic symbol representing a real object out there somewhere obediently sitting still while it is referred to', that underpins Judith Butler's seminal account of the social construction of gender through performativity.[27] With this in mind, it is possible to see that, whereas the civic militiaman acts because he is formed by nature to do so, the military revolution's modern military man performs, in a Butlerian sense, that which is not supposed or required to be 'natural'. The modern military man is, in Foucault's words, 'above all a fragment of mobile space, before he is courage or honour'.[28]

[23] Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, trans. by Alan Sheridan (London: Penguin, 1975; repr. 1991), p. 135.
[24] Roberts, 'The Military Revolution', p. 29; Martin van Creveld, *Technology and War, from 2000BC to the Present* (New York: Macmillan 1989), pp. 81–149 (at p. 82).
[25] Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, p. 169.
[26] Ibid., p. 30.
[27] Ladelle McWhorter, 'Culture of Nature? The Function of the Term 'Body' in the Work of Michel Foucault', *The Journal of Philosophy*, 86.11 (1989), 608–14 (at p. 613).
[28] Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, p. 164.

Although this study absorbs and combines Foucault's account of the modern military man and Butler's theory of performativity, it does so with due regard to Butler's reservations about 'formless clay.' Butler takes issues with Foucault, and by extension with his historicizing of performativity, for in her view, Foucault's narrative of the emergence of the socially constructed body figures history as a 'writing instrument' and so turns the body into 'a ready surface or blank page available for inscription, awaiting the "imprint" of history itself.'[29] For Butler, the body does not precede performance: performance produces the illusion of 'true' materiality, and with it 'natural' sex/gender. This study historicizes performativity by identifying arguments that treat the illusion as 'real' or 'true', that is, arguments that defend the bodily 'nature' of militarism and masculinity. However, this study also historicizes performativity by exploring how far representations of and discussion about the modern military man were able to conceive of a space between gender and the body. The Lockean turn towards empirical observation by the beginning of the eighteenth century introduced the idea of the blank mind, the *tabula rasa*, waiting to be inscribed by experience; an appropriate corollary to this would be a blank body, a *corpus rasa*, waiting for inscription, perhaps, but no longer pre-inscribed. One way to historicize performativity, then, is to recognize that an awareness of the blank body – a body that is not yet illusion, but is no longer the source of meaning – is the precursor to the Foucauldian/Butlerian mobile, empty space. Such proto-constructionism may not be robust from every angle; some of the texts I examine seem to have difficulty conceptualizing femininity as a construction, for example. However, this approach to historicizing performativity is able to identify arguments that in some way 'trouble' the interiority and naturalness of militarism, and with this, the interiority and naturalness of masculinity.

Of course, to follow competing versions of the military man is also to be alert to the conflicts and tensions that are internal to them. The essentialized citizen-soldier and his decedents are unstable, but the 'truth' of antiquity helps conceals contradictions; in comparison, the constructed modern military man is even less secure, for lacking the rhetorical ballast provided by the sexed body, proto-constructionist arguments are inherently vulnerable to attack. That said, it might be though that this study of civic militiamen, in their many forms, and modern military men will resolve itself into

[29] Judith Butler, 'Foucault and the Paradox of Bodily Inscriptions', *The Journal of Philosophy*, 86.11 (1989), 601–7 (at p. 603).

a single narrative of 'change'. Pocock argues that civic thinking was particularly potent in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth century but that it declined from this point. His chronology seems to tally with the military historians' view that the military revolution that began in the sixteenth century was completed by the end of the eighteenth. Historian of masculinity, John Tosh, can be drawn in to this, for in a survey of the period 1750–1850 Tosh notes of the 'bearing of arms', a term that leans towards the civic ideal of citizen-soldiering, not least because he defines this as 'the central attribute of manhood since feudal times', declined in importance: 'Military manliness was still at a premium during the Napoleonic Wars, but it rapidly lost ground after 1815.' Tosh's overarching argument is that change happens slowly, but this is one transition, he argues, that 'bears the unmistakable imprint of bourgeois values in the ascendant.'[30] And yet, Jeremy Black's account of the military revolution raises a note of caution. Black argues that the accepted span of the military revolution could well be narrowed to highlight the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries as the critical period of transition, particularly for Britain and its old enemy, France, but he is equally interested in the fact that all military innovation was subject to constraints, from impassably muddy roads and rotting wooden hulls to poor harvests, making for poor supplies and exacerbating outbreaks of epidemics.[31] Rather than try to forge a neatly linear narrative for modernization in both attitudes to militarism and masculinity, this study examines parallel, or rather seemingly parallel, lines of argument that were shaped by their inherent tensions, by contact with each other and by wider cultural forces. Having stated that this is a study of competing versions of the ideal military man, it must be said that the following chapters are concerned to follow ideals that clashed against, rather than conquered or displaced each other.

The following paragraphs are intended to clarify the structure of this book. The opening chapter offers a close study of the standing army debate which took place in England in the final years of the seventeenth century. The standing army debate was a response to the call for the modernization of the nation's military services and in this first chapter I tease out the ways in which each side in that debate forwarded a model military man and an

[30] John Tosh, 'The Old Adam and the New Man: Emerging Themes in the History of English Masculinities, 1750–1850', in *English Masculinities 1660–1800*, ed. by Tim Hitchcock and Michèle Cohen (Harlow, Essex: Addison Wesley Longman, 1999), pp. 217–38 (at p. 222).

[31] Jeremy Black, *A Military Revolution? Military Change and European Society, 1550–1800* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1991), pp. 35–52. See also Christopher Duffy, *The Military Experience in the Age of Reason* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1987), pp. 313–8.

account of masculinity. Subsequent chapters focus on debate about the military man as conducted in a range of literary texts and in concert with major eighteenth-century cultural concerns: politeness, the gothic, sensibility and celebrity. But although this is a study of representations and arguments, this book also pays heed to Karen Harvey and Alexandra Shepard's warning that historians of masculinity 'need to deal not just in free-floating cultural attributes, but in grounded social or psychic contexts of experience that interact with representations.'[32] To that end, three of the following chapters focus on case studies of naval courts martial: the trials of Admirals Thomas Mathews and Richard Lestock, 1744–6; the trial of Admiral John Byng, 1756–7; and the trials of Admirals Augustus Keppel and Sir Hugh Palliser, 1778–9. The notion of the military revolution is as relevant to the navy as to the army; indeed, for Black, 'navies provide some of the best indicators of change.'[33] By following five naval trials, these chapters are able to bring the cases into dialogue with each other. Furthermore, each case study has been chosen on the basis of the strength of popular interest shown in it, for the navy was the last line of defence against invasion and news of naval failure generated widespread interest in those deemed to be responsible. As Daniel Baugh notes, courts martial 'directed a searchlight of publicity on the conduct of sea officers', and so in focusing on these five trials, I highlight moments in the eighteenth century when a man was called to describe and justify his military actions to a court composed of his peers but also to the public at large.[34]

While some of the texts studied in the following chapters might have had comparatively small readerships, the five naval trials concluded with formal verdicts passed by the court and informal verdicts that circulated in the popular public sphere. My sense of the public sphere derives from Jürgen Habermas' account of the rise and fall of the bourgeois public sphere. By the end of the eighteenth century, Habermas argues, 'the reign of public opinion appeared as the reign of the many and the mediocre' as

[32] Karen Harvey and Alexandra Shepard, 'What Have Historians done with Masculinity? Reflections on Five Centuries of British History, circa 1500–1950', *Journal of British Studies*, 44 (2005), 274–80 (at p. 280).

[33] Jeremy Black, 'A Military Revolution? A 1660–1792 Perspective', in *The Military Revolution Debate*, pp. 95–114 (at p. 97). See also Parker, *The Military Revolution*, pp. 82–114; Michael Duffy, 'The Foundations of Naval Power', in *The Military Revolution and the State*, pp. 49–90; Laurent Henninger, 'Military Revolutions and Military History', *Palgrave Advances in Modern Military History*, ed. by Matthew Hughes and William J. Philpott (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), pp. 8–22 (at pp. 13–15).

[34] Daniel Baugh, *British Naval Administration in the Age of Walpole* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1965), p. 144.

'private persons came to be the private persons of a public rather than a public of private persons.'[35] My willingness to employ Habermas' distinction between a public of private persons – the bourgeois public sphere – and the private persons of the public – the popular public sphere – takes note of more recent work on extra-parliamentary politics. Though Habermas recognizes that 'the "sense of the people", "the common voice", "the general cry of the people", and finally "the public spirit" ' are terms that were used from the beginning of the eighteenth century, he warns that 'such occurrences, of course, must not be construed prematurely as a sign of a kind of rule of public opinion.'[36] In contrast, historians of the public, building on the foundations laid by E. P. Thompson's rehabilitation of the eighteenth-century crowd, have sought to document a tradition of eighteenth-century extra-parliamentary protest which reveals, as Black puts it, that 'those who … did not possess the vote, could seek to influence political decisions'. This may not constitute the 'rule' of public opinion, but in recovering the 'sense of the people', the term Kathleen Wilson prefers, scholars have gone some way to identify what Nicholas Rogers terms 'the creative possibilities of the common people in class struggle.'[37] The fact that this public was intensely interested in military as well as party-political matters is indicated by Linda Colley, whose thesis, that British identity was 'an invention formed above all by war', stresses that, by the end of the century, the nation wholeheartedly embraced its military men as heroes.[38]

Of course, this book makes no claim to have comprehensively documented eighteenth-century understandings of militarism or conceptualizations of masculinity. In particular, I am conscious that my approach does not specifically highlight women's views. For some feminist scholars, a Habermasian distinction between types of public sphere fails to take into account women's exclusion from public life: in Johanna Meehan's words, 'Habermas's account suffers from a gender blindness that occludes the differential social and political status of men and women.'[39] That said, it has

[35] Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*, trans. by Thomas Burger (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2006; repr. 1989) pp. 133, 128–9.
[36] Habermas, *Structural Transformation*, p. 64.
[37] Jeremy Black, *Robert Walpole and the Nature of Politics in Early Eighteenth-Century Britain* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1990), p. 65; Kathleen Wilson, *The Sense of the People: Politics, Culture, and Imperialism in England, 1715–1785* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998; repr. 1995); Nicholas Rogers, *Crowds, Culture, and Politics in Georgian Britain* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), p. 7.
[38] Linda Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation, 1707–1837*, 2nd ed. (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2005), p. 5.
[39] *Feminists Read Habermas: Gendering the Subject of Discourse*, ed. by Johanna Meehan (New York: Routledge, 1995), p. 7.

been some time since Amanda Vickery observed approvingly that, 'doubts now circulate within women's history about the conceptual usefulness of the separate spheres framework.'[40] With this in mind, the final chapter considers how proto-feminism responded to accounts of militarism that essentialized masculinity and so reinforced the gender binary. Rather than aim for as wide a survey of attitudes to masculinity and militarism as possible, then, I have narrowed the focus of these chapters to follow seemingly parallel lines of argument: the civic argument that all men are essentially military men and the counter-argument that modern men perform militarism and masculinity. In so doing, I have sought to map the cultural function of the military man, or rather, versions of the military man, as vehicles for ideas about the 'nature' of masculinity in the long eighteenth century.

[40] Amanda Vickery, 'Golden Age to Separate Spheres? A Review of the Categories and Chronology of English Women's History', *The Historical Journal*, 36.2 (1993), 383–414 (at p. 393).