Making Imperial Futures: Concepts of Empire in the Anglo-Spanish Sphere, 1762-71

By

David James Stiles

A thesis submitted in conformity with the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Department of History
University of Toronto

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Abstract

My dissertation, Making Imperial Futures: Concepts of Empire in the Anglo-Spanish Sphere, 1763-71, engages the grand narrative of exploration at the point at which that very concept was reaching the point of exhaustion and argues that the rough completion of European cartographical knowledge of the world had a profound impact on the evolution of the imperial experience. I examine the evolving concept of empire within a context of cross-imperial knowledge and rivalry, Enlightenment ideals and the changing ways in which Europeans related to the concept of a progressive future. Furthermore, I challenge the historiographically dominant notion that the British and Spanish experiences of empire are best categorized and isolated as distinct historical subjects.

The first section shows that British successes in the Seven Years’ War energised the British imperial imagination, generating a broad-based debate on how best to exploit the situation and opening up the opportunity to put more than one approach into action when Britain and Spain went to war in 1762. But the Peace of Paris brought discord, and a perceived need for the government to discipline the imperial imagination and to establish an approved
pathway for the future of empire in the Atlantic world. The second part looks at how the Spanish government applied state power in direct pursuit of the pan-Atlantic imperial project. In particular, it re-examines the expulsion of the Jesuits from the Spanish empire in 1767 and makes the argument that the expulsion was a response to the perceived Jesuit threat to pan-Atlantic imperial norms.

My third section suggests that the experimental burst of modern, state-centric imperialism that began in the wake of the Seven Years’ War suffered a reversal during the Falklands Crisis of 1770-1, during the general historical moment in which Europeans finished constructing their shared cartographical conception of the world. Although the growth of state power and impetus was temporarily reversed to some extent in the 1770s, this period helps prefigure the more extensive shift from empires primarily based on exploration and tenuous consolidation to empires that depended on dense, active exploitation to lend validity to their ontological claims.
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Introduction

The Resurrection of Apocryphal Imperial Futures

Let us talk about the future – not about what lies ahead for us in the twenty-first century, but about potential imperial futures that once resided in the imaginations of eighteenth-century Britons and Spaniards. I have chosen this approach to the historical study of imperialism because looking forward is far more endemic to the human experience than looking back. In the succinct words of philosopher Barry Dainton, “our deliberations are oriented toward the future, not the past. No one spends time wondering about what to do yesterday.”¹ If we show concern about past events, it is largely because we are concerned about how they will affect our futures. So it should follow quite reasonably and intuitively that a considerable part of scholarly inquests into the history of human thought and ambition should also be focused on the problem of what people of past eras thought was going to happen next, in spite of the fact that the world never unfolds precisely as anyone predicts. In fact, the dynamic asymmetries and dissonance between differing visions of the future are important factors in ensuring that the actual unfolding of the human experience is distinct from what any given person anticipates.

The temporal knowledge asymmetry – our knowledge of past but not future – makes it far easier to write about what has come before than about what might happen next. It is also a problem for historians, as it creates a bias that strongly privileges events that actually occurred over the many additional imagined futures that may have seemed equally valid to the denizens of past eras. If we want to construct a more nuanced and textured understanding of the factors that have driven human history, it is important to work at the reconstruction of a complete temporal context – a sense of how past

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¹ For a succinct explanation of these and several other temporal asymmetries in the human experience, see Barry Dainton, *Time and Space*, 2nd Edition (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queens University Press, 2010), 45-7.
people viewed their unknown futures. This effort is particularly important for the history of the past few hundred years. I will suggest in these introductory pages that the mid-eighteenth century represents a pivotal moment in the history of the Atlantic world because it was home to an important shift in how people throughout that sphere interacted with both time and space. The Atlantic sense of reality, and the boundary between the known and the unknown, was irreparably transfigured from one primarily oriented toward space to one that was primarily oriented toward time. By the end of the 1760s, almost the entire world had become known, measured, and mapped, and the sublime terror of unknown geographical reaches was rapidly fading away. As a consequence of that development, all potential utopias and apocalypses had to be relocated from exotic spaces into exotic times – because of the knowledge asymmetry, almost always into some possible future. Perhaps the best way to show what this idea means is to refer to the fantastical works of two French writers, one from the mid-seventeenth century and the other from the mid-eighteenth. They are important, representative signposts that shine some light on the evolution of the conceptual interface between the known and the unknown over the century between them.

Signposts of a Transformation

The first of these two men is Jacques Guttin, whose romance *Epigone, histoire du siècle futur* (*Epigone, Tale of a Future Century*) arrived on the scene in 1659. While broadly judged to be the first novel of its kind – the prototypical futurist work – Guttin’s novel was not yet truly focused on displacement in time. As Paul K. Alkon astutely points out, it is not especially important that *Epigone* takes place in some distant future century. Guttin wanted to create a distant, exotic space to set his story, one that was primarily concerned with lampooning French customs and the more general state of European affairs at the time. Just as Jonathan Swift and Daniel Defoe would go on to illustrate in English-
language literature in the early eighteenth century, separating one’s audience from one’s characters by placing them in a faraway land makes it possible to critique society in an oblique but purposeful manner.

Guttin took this idea even further – he amplified the sensation of distance by adding temporal displacement to the already obvious spatial displacement that came from setting his story in an exotic, non-European location. This rationale, which continues to be well-understood and utilized by writers of contemporary speculative fiction, is fundamentally about space and about removing the audience from their immediate, personal spatial context, thereby making them more receptive to social criticisms that apply as much to their own society as to the imagined, exotic one.

Much changed over the next hundred years. In 1771, Louis-Sébastien Mercier’s L’An 2440: rêve s’il en fut jamais (The Year 2440: a Dream if There Ever Was One) became the first literary work to explicitly show a future version of a well-known European locale. Mercier’s contribution differed from Guttin’s in two crucial respects. First, it pioneered the use of a specific future year as the setting (and title) of a story – a practice that would later be most famously repeated by George Orwell’s Nineteen Eighty-Four (1949). Secondly, it provided readers with a protagonist who was from their own time – a Parisian man whose long slumber leads him to wake hundreds of years in the future, in a much improved and far more secular Paris with wide boulevards and happy, reason-loving people. This tale was no idle fantasy. It did not merely seek to obliquely attack French society with vague analogues. Rather, it drew a clear and undeniable connection between France in the era that immediately followed the Seven Years’ War (1756-63) and one of the many possible future destinies for that country. Mercier did not claim to be a prophet. His vision was based on a reasoned extrapolation of how Paris might evolve over the centuries to come, and it was rapidly consumed by an audience with a clear thirst for

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2 Paul K. Alkon, Origins of Futuristic Fiction (Athens, Georgia: The University of Georgia Press, 1987), 18-9. The works of Defoe and Swift that I refer to are, of course, Robinson Crusoe (1719) and Gulliver’s Travels (1726).
such speculations about the future. By the end of the eighteenth century, L’An 2440 had gone through eleven editions in the original French, and had been translated into English, Dutch, Italian and German. By the time of Mercier’s death in 1814, it had sold something on the order of 63 000 copies. Its status as a book of great importance was further emphasized by how it infuriated authorities, who banned it in France immediately upon its first publication and subsequently in Madrid in 1778. The author, who was fully aware of the reaction that he was likely to get, initially published the book anonymously and did not officially take credit for his work until 1791, when the rising tide of the French Revolution had considerably altered the political scene.³

French and Spanish authorities did not appear to fully appreciate that Mercier’s work, and the others that followed in his wake, were not the source of such agitated speculation about the future. It was merely a symptom of another conceptual awakening. As David Wilson discusses in The History of the Future, the eighteenth century was the period in which the notion of progress – “the triumph of technology and reason over nature and passion” – truly came into its own as a force in human affairs.⁴ Mercier’s futurist dream was simply reflecting what was going on around him in the European world. During the French Revolution, the Comte de Volney and the Marquis de Condorcet solidified the basis of this new temporal-utopian genre by publishing similar works that reinforced the optimistic ideal that progress and rationality would offer a brighter future for humanity, even as the radical terror of the revolution wrapped itself around them. As Wilson explains, they cherished “the assumption that human nature was infinitely malleable and could therefore be programmed for perfection.”⁵ In Future: A Recent History, Lawrence S. Samuel also acknowledges the three-way connection between the Enlightenment, the idea of “progress,” and the active practice of futurism as it began to be practiced by the likes of

³ Alkon, 117.
⁵ Wilson, 153.
Louis-Sébastien Mercier and hungrily consumed by the literate public. He also points the way back to Alkon’s critical observation that an important transfiguration from the exploration of space to the exploration of time was underway. “The Age of Discovery,” Samuel tells us, “recast mythologies of space to those of time, changing the very dimensions and parameters of the imagination and leaving the future as the only true realm of the unknown.”

Perhaps more to the point, the end of that age brought about a host of important changes that collapsed the early-modern European meta-spatial reality and initiated a transition into the modern meta-temporal reality.

Throughout my study, I refer to the concept of unknown geographical space, and to the idea that the late eighteenth century saw a closing of that space. In doing so, I am not attempting to imply that this period saw human beings achieve complete geographical mastery of the world. Nor am I trying to suggest that Europeans no longer had places to expand their economic and political influence. They clearly did, as the nineteenth century imperial rushes into Africa and Asia demonstrate. The difference is that those places were already known in at least a rough sense to European geography. The reasons why they had not been formally incorporated into imperial polities are complex, and tell a story about the limitations of European power and of other adverse factors (disease, remoteness, strong and effective local resistance etc.) that restricted the early modern form of empire. But while the Age of Discovery was still in progress, it was plausible to seriously consider completely imagined places – large islands or even continents that were yet to be discovered and that might be easily and profitably incorporated into a seagoing empire. The rough completion of European cartographical knowledge and the simultaneous waning of those geographical imaginings lie at the heart of the conceptual shift that took place as the early modern period came to a close.

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Replacing the reality of the Age of Discovery was no easy task. Unveiling new space was relatively straightforward – you pointed your ship in the right direction and found out what lay beyond the horizon. But the future is not constant. It is always nebulous and too-easily victimized by propagandistic efforts. So as temporal investigations flourished and spatial explorations stagnated in a complex environment, it became more important to take a strong hand with the future. In the absence of any clear and obvious victor among the many possible futures that seemed to present themselves, Europeans of power and influence would begin to take it upon themselves to attempt the grandest, longest-lasting, and perhaps most radical schemes of human improvement ever conceived. They would pursue the construction, not of a future, or a set of futures, but of the future. It is, perhaps, in the beginnings of that effort that we see the massive structural applications of power over the individual elements of societies that permeate the earlier works of Michel Foucault, or the simulation and hyper-reality that so haunted the thoughts of Jean Baudrillard. As long as space was the primary canvas of the unknown, these phenomena were significant but not critical. With the arrival of the supremacy of time as the great unknown, they became our collective everything. To master the future, one had to organize and discipline the space that had already been revealed, and the peoples within it. As we have found since the eighteenth century, such attempts to discipline might be well-meaning on some level, but the results have often ranged from stagnation to absolute horror.

This Modern Age of Disciplined Futurity

Our discussion of these matters must also interact with the eighteenth-century knowledge revolution that scholars refer to as the Enlightenment. As a movement, it makes a claim to be the productive basis of our present-day intellectual and scientific environment. The more recent turn toward post-modernism shows us that although there may well be hard physical realities to the universe
that can be revealed through the Enlightenment’s positivist framework, it still rests with us to construct our own realities within that grand arena. The issue of how twenty-first century human beings should confront the Enlightenment and its impact on Western society remains both difficult and complex. One way of attempting to surmount this problem is to pursue a broad-based meta-analysis of how it is that the Enlightenment era changed the human experience.\(^7\) I argue that aside from the importance of method and reason, beyond the rise of the ideas of progress and liberal commerce, we can find a useful meta-identity for the Enlightenment that focuses on the futurity of European society. By futurity, I refer to the basic attitudinal disposition that a society has toward the future. How does that society see the future? Is it flexible, dynamic and multi-faceted, or does it remain static in the embrace of a certain traditional, utopian or even apocalyptic vision of the future? Does it even perceive that the future will be different from the present in any meaningful way?

As the collective, sublime terror of the unknown moved away from space and into the domain of time, it opened the door to a seemingly chaotic discourse on the future that threatened the stability of the eighteenth-century Atlantic World. I argue that it is in this development that we find the social and cognitive heart of the Enlightenment. Rationality and the methodical investigation of nature do not have their origins in the eighteenth century. Those ideas were already on their way during the time of Rene Descartes (1596-1650), whose separation of the mind and the body into distinct problems to be approached in radically different ways gave European thinkers the tools they needed to promote the

\(^{7}\text{There are a great many potential pathways for the investigation of this question. An interesting and important recent attempt is by Iain McGilchrist, in The Master and His Emissary: the Divided Brain and the Making of the Western World (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2009). McGilchrist suggests that the Enlightenment has brought about a widespread privileging of the left hemisphere of the brain, sacrificing or subordinating the right hemisphere’s empathy, flexibility and humanity – once considered the higher form of reasoning – for the more rigid, focused and mechanistic rationality of the left hemisphere. The Enlightenment, in his judgement, provided an intellectual and cultural framework that made this subordination possible.}}
growth of reason as an intellectual and social phenomenon.\textsuperscript{8} Whereas the thinking mind and soul remained safely in the realm of God and beyond the reach of human analysis, the body became a mere physicality that was open to investigation and discovery.

So the application of reason is not a product of the Enlightenment; it is a cognitive phenomenon that experienced its social flourishing through the auspices of that movement. It is also a critical tool for the imagination, one that transforms mere fancy into structured, plausible imaginings. As the available space for the exotic unknown was closing in the eighteenth century, structured reasoning combined with the human imagination to become an important transformative factor. The coming modernity would be about the flourishing of imaginative possibilities about the future, but it would also be about the inevitable attempts by those in power to control and restrict those imagined futures. In the second half of the eighteenth century, that conflict brought the British Empire to the brink of seeming collapse, while leaving the Spanish Empire scrambling to comprehend and adapt to the emerging constructed truths of the Atlantic World. It led the French, perhaps the greatest sufferers of all, into the abyss of social revolution as conflicting, progressive dreams clashed with equally dissonant terrors about the future.

In his book \textit{Seeing Like a State}, James C. Scott tackles the problem of understanding how modern states have taken on massive projects of human improvement, only to see them consistently fail. Scott argues that four conditions are necessary for such failed projects to occur in the first place: the “administrative ordering of society,” the firm embrace of a “high-modernist ideology” that focuses on

\textsuperscript{8} Here, I refer to the well-known and often-discussed Cartesian conception of the mind-body dichotomy. Although Descartes was by no means the first thinker to identify the mind-body problem (it already existed in ancient times), his dualistic construction provided an important opening for reason to begin to describe and explain the physical world. In effect, it made the simple problems surmountable by separating them from the complex problems that were far beyond the state of human learning at the time. This dichotomy is by no means without its problems, as investigators from various disciplines have since come to see, but it nonetheless represents an important moment in intellectual history.
the scientific investigation of natural law, the presence of an authoritarian regime willing to use its power in pursuit of the project, and a “prostrate civil society that lacks the capacity to resist these plans.” In Scott’s view, the basic underlying problem is that human improvement simply cannot be structurally engineered on a massive scale. Instead, it is the embrace of “practical knowledge, informal processes, and improvisation in the face of unpredictability” that drives us into unknown terrain. He goes to great pains to point out that this stance does not amount to a triumphal endorsement of structured Capitalism, which ultimately attempts to rationalize and standardize the world every bit as much as state-driven schemes.⁹ If we reframe this issue from the perspective of futurity, we can suggest that it is the free and open discourse on the unknown future that creates rapid change in society, and that attempts to standardize and control the future lead down the road to stagnation or even outright tragedy.

The Path Ahead

It is completely understandable that late-early-modern political institutions, accustomed to the pursuit of power and still flush with their successes in the Age of Discovery, would intuit the transfiguration of the unknown from space into time as a potential threat, and would act to harness and discipline their empires’ nascent futurities for their own uses. That concept, as applied to the British and Spanish empires, lies at the centre of this study. In pursuing it, my narrative simultaneously addresses several distinct historiographical traditions. I examine the evolving concept of empire within the context of the Enlightenment and the changing ways in which Europeans related to the concept of the progressive future. I engage the grand narrative of exploration at the point at which that very concept

was reaching the point of exhaustion. Furthermore, my study challenges the historiographically dominant notion that the British and Spanish experiences of empire are best categorized and isolated as distinct historical subjects.

My first section, titled “British Confrontations,” examines the British experience of empire in the wake of the *annus mirabilis* of 1759 – the climax of the Seven Years’ War (1756-63). Chapter one shows that the great military successes of that year energised the British imperial imagination, generating a broad-based debate on how best to exploit the situation and opening up the opportunity to put more than one approach into action when Britain and Spain went to war in 1762. But as my second chapter illustrates, the Peace of Paris brought discord, and a perceived need for the government to discipline the imperial imagination and to establish an approved pathway for the future of empire in the Atlantic world. For a brief but influential period, it seemed as though there was a vast opportunity to not simply exist in the world, but to imagine how the British Empire could successfully remake it. Yet these new energies of futurity brought internecine conflict and eroded what had previously seemed to be an imperial consensus. My third chapter examines the broader contours of the British understanding of empire from a political, economic and aesthetic point of view, and shows how that understanding informed British actions around the world in the years after the Seven Years’ War – especially in places where they conflicted with Spanish territory and interests.

The second part of my study, titled “Spanish Assimilations,” looks at how the Spanish Empire negotiated the period after the Seven Years’ War. Chapter four explores various facets of the interplay between the Spanish and British, which flowed in both directions. I suggest that each imperial experience fundamentally informed the other throughout the eighteenth century, to the point that the two must be analyzed together in order to be fully understood. My fifth chapter shows the consequences of the application of state power in Spain in direct pursuit of that shared imperial project.
In particular, it re-examines the expulsion of the Jesuits from the Spanish empire in 1767 within the common context of Atlantic empire and makes the argument that the expulsion was a response to the perceived Jesuit threat to pan-Atlantic imperial norms – once again, an act of disciplining the imperial future.

My third and final section, titled “Atlantic Ententes,” hints at the coming disintegration of the early-modern form of empire as the availability of unknown space for further expansion came to an end and the major European players engaged in one final standoff, centered on the recently-discovered Falkland Islands. They were a major strategic point in the South Atlantic and part of the gateway to the Pacific Ocean. But there, with every strategic reason to fight over the islands when viewing the scenario through the lens of early modern meta-spatial imperialism, the tide of determined state-directed imperialism seemed to temporarily recede. In essence, the experimental burst of modern-style imperialism that began in the wake of the Seven Years’ War was coming to an end. The ebbing of that crisis, and the near-abandonment of the islands at its center, tells an important story about how imperialism was changing in the late eighteenth century. Although the growth of state power and impetus was temporarily halted and even reversed to some extent in the 1770s, this period helps prefigure the more extensive shift from empires primarily based on exploration and tenuous consolidation to empires that depended on dense, active exploitation to lend validity to their ontological claims.

**Futurism and Historical Investigation**

This study’s methodological framework is centered on the concept of futurism. The goal of a futurist framework for historical investigation is simply to ask us to consider how people thought about the future in the past. As Ged Martin implores us in his book *Past Futures: The Impossible Necessity of*
History, “historians must expand and recast the questions that we ask.” As Martin argues, there are serious problems with centering historical analysis on the concept of identifiable causality. We will never be able to completely reconstruct all of the evidence needed to build satisfactory accounts of the causal networks behind past events. Human beings have such a hazy idea of the causality that lies behind our own decision-making processes that we are rarely even aware of how or when a decision has been made. We often pride ourselves on our reason and method but conveniently ignore the emotion, intuition and futurity that underlie our conceptions and decisions. The endemic fetish of rationality asks us to pretend that we look backward when we make decisions even as we actually look forward.

So once again we arrive at the importance of what might have been. There are worlds of nuance and depth to past eras that lie not in any potential explanation for what ended up happening, but in the imagined futures that fuelled people’s hopes and dreams. We must remember that for the people of the past, what actually turned out to happen later is totally irrelevant. For them, every imagined future was still equally valid, and they perceived and acted accordingly. As Martin argues, we must “at least attempt to classify the attitudes to the future held by the people whom we study” if we are to endow them with fully developed temporal contexts. When we restrict their futures to a single outcome that has actually transpired, we truncate their senses of possibility and figuratively lobotomize our perception of their moment in time. When we place futurity at the heart of the Enlightenment, this issue is further magnified. Even before that time, perceptions about what was likely to happen next were central to human thinking. As David Wilson puts it when he considers the idea of a society without a forward-looking mentality in The History of the Future, “without a sense of the probable consequences

11 Martin, 5.
of our actions, we would be fumbling in the dark; without hope, we would succumb to blind despair."  

But it becomes even more central when we introduce a translocation of the exotic unknown from space to time. In the eighteenth century, people clearly began to think and write about the future in an even more structured, purposeful way. So let us proceed with our exploration of one small part of that burgeoning futurity, and the ways in which it affected the destinies of the British and Spanish empires in the crucible of the Seven Years’ War.

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12 Wilson, 29.
Part I

British Confrontations
Prologue: Dressing the Imperial Set

Perhaps the most striking aspect of European expansion into the Americas in the early-modern period is its heavy reliance on imperial projects that were conceived, planned, and carried out by enterprising individuals and non-state corporate entities. The Spanish and Portuguese monarchies, and subsequently the French and English crowns, provided some support and oversight of these operations, but generally showed little interest in or capacity for the direct management of their new territories throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. For the most part, these early-modern imperial forays were driven by the initiative of a few and carried out in the name of the powerful. In the beginning, the archetypal imperial figure was the Spanish conquistador. These men generally came from the hidalgo class, which had previously provided much of the muscle used to oust the Muslim kingdoms that had once ruled over much of the Iberian Peninsula. They were lower nobility in Spain, holders of titles but sometimes as impoverished as the common labourers. Unlike the upper aristocracy, which was growing rich from its vast land holdings and felt little incentive to support overseas voyages, the hidalgos were willing to try their luck in the Americas.¹ The early sixteenth century was well-populated by these characters. In 1519, Hernán Cortés travelled to the Valley of Mexico and quickly usurped the hegemony that had once been the exclusive province of the Aztecs. In 1532, Francisco Pizarro set out from Panama on an expedition that would similarly disrupt the vast Inca Empire.

The Europeans who travelled across the ocean to encounter the Americas depended on their imaginations to interpret and understand what they found upon their arrival. Conquistador fantasies

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¹ The character of the conquistadores that left Spain for the Americas has been extensively discussed in existing literature. One of the most elegant of those discussions can be found in the classic text J. H. Elliott, Imperial Spain, 1469-1716 (London: Pelican, 1970), 64.
were essentially late-medieval in character and were heavily dependent on a cultural environment that included romances of chivalry. They were driven forward into unknown territory less by conceptions of grand empire-building than by the tantalizing whiff of the exotic, the promise of golden treasures, of fearsome, mythic foes and of achingly beautiful women. Even after the extraordinary spectacles of Mexico and Peru, Spanish adventurers continued to chase after exotic cities and cultures that were never found to exist, such as the ferocious female warriors known as the Amazons. When they wrote about the new world that was unfolding before them during the first century of the Spanish presence in the Americas, they were not burdened by a sense that they were required to be faithful recorders of their new empire’s actual or objective character. Just as the writings of Marco Polo had credited the Asian continent with many wonders that the writer had imagined but not actually seen, Spanish writers infused their observations with imaginative fiction. It was what they imagined they wanted their empire to be, and had a real influence on what they believed they actually saw before them. It was also increasingly a liability as changing circumstances applied new geographical pressures, gradually squeezing the romantic, unknown territories out of existence as empires increasingly came directly face to face around the world.

The classic English figures that roamed the early-modern Atlantic World also tended to be individualist adventurers, but their initial explorations did not yield the precious metals that the conquistadores found in Mexico and Peru. Their failure to simply stumble upon gold and silver was a profound factor in shaping the English mode of operation in the early days of Atlantic empire. As Niall Ferguson amusingly put it, “there was only one thing for it: the luckless English would simply have to rob

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the Spanish.”⁴ Or to put it another way, the English supplemented their colonization activities with a healthy dose of piracy. Private naval warfare had many advantages. Without a formal declaration of war, the British could slowly drain the Spanish of their ample supply of precious metals. In those heady early days of the Spanish Empire, it was not difficult to find burgeoning Spanish trans-Atlantic projects (and the fleets that returned their treasures) with which enterprising Englishmen could meddle. But the English also suffered from other disadvantages. In comparison to the Mediterranean powers, they initially lagged behind in navigational skills and naval technologies. They could neither outmanoeuvre the quick Iberian caravels nor outgun the heavier Mediterranean galleons.⁵

This technological gap would not last. The English improved quickly when the Spanish did not. Throughout the seventeenth century, English predations on Spanish shipping became increasingly effective, and eventually territories in the Caribbean began to fall under English control as they established settlements in places where the Spanish had not yet established a permanent presence. In the Treaty of Madrid (1670), Spain agreed to recognize English rule over places where they had already settled in the Caribbean, in exchange for an English promise to rein in their privateers. This treaty, which established formal English rule in Jamaica and the Cayman Islands, was an important step in the process of the geographical rationalization (bringing de facto and de jure rights of possession into alignment) of the English and Spanish Empires, a concept that we will examine in greater detail throughout this dissertation.

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⁵ Ibid, 11-2.
The Eighteenth-Century Scenario

The War of the Spanish Succession (1701-14) offered direct evidence of what was already generally understood. Over the century that had passed since the failure of the Spanish Armada (1588), Spain's hegemony in the Atlantic World had stumbled and passed largely into French hands. Meanwhile, British power was only beginning to rise. In 1707, the Act of Union formally created the political entity of Great Britain by uniting the parliaments of England and Scotland.6 The Glorious Revolution of 1688 had initiated a period of political change and opened the way for Dutch financial innovations to make their way to London, where they began to revolutionize the British ability to translate economic strength into military force. As John Brewer has argued, the early eighteenth century saw an important shift in British financial mentality. Instead of focusing on a policy of continually eliminating public debt, the government introduced the concepts of long-term debt management and perpetually-funded public debt that was more attractive to investors. The British government was subsequently burdened with unending financial responsibilities to its bondholders, but it was amply compensated with a vastly improved ability to raise large amounts of money over a short period of time.7 During times of war, this new capacity could make victories out of even the most improbable scenarios. It was one of the most important reasons for the rise of British strength in the eighteenth century.

After the matter of its succession was settled in 1714, the new Bourbon Monarchy in Spain also aimed to strengthen its presence on the international scene. From the beginning of Philip V's reign, the Bourbons aimed to regain their kingdom's status as an international power and to reacquire the territories that had recently been lost to Britain, with a particular focus on the recovery of the

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6 The two countries had already shared the same monarch since James VI of Scotland took the English throne as James I of England in 1603.
strategically important town of Gibraltar. But how, in the face of Spain’s considerably reduced stature, did the Bourbons plan to accomplish their goals? In contrast to Britain, Spain suffered from fiscal practices that discouraged investment and prevented the gathering of sufficient financial resources to properly defend its far-flung empire. The Bourbons inherited an effective body of bureaucrats from their Hapsburg predecessors, but they continued to suffer through problems with regionalisms and aristocratic privilege.

Unlike London, which combined the seat of British political power with a bustling international commercial and financial complex, the Spanish capital of Madrid was an economic albatross that coercively reorganized and drained the stagnant central Iberian economy to satisfy its needs. It helped stunt the development of nearby cities, such as Toledo, and encouraged a culture that provided a life of idle leisure for its many resident aristocrats but did nothing to renew the vitality of the Spanish Empire. The Bourbons’ chosen solution was to provoke a massive increase in revenue from Spain’s possessions in the Americas. In the narrowest sense, they were undeniably successful. Over the course of the eighteenth century, the crown vastly increased its share of colonial income – from two percent to forty percent. But as John Lynch memorably put it, “they gained a revenue and lost an empire.” The Bourbons stepped up the taxation of their colonies, attempted to impose more direct political and economic control, and jealously struggled to prevent foreign interference. Their policies were well-equipped to

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8 Ricardo García Cárcelet al., Historia de España Siglo XVIII: La España de los Borbones (Madrid: Cátedra, 2002), 20.
11 Lynch, 21.
increase the crown’s share of the wealth, but they were not as successful at the more important task of mobilizing those resources to generate lasting economic development.

Even as the Bourbons earnestly hoped for a resurgence of the Spanish Empire, they recognized the reality that both French and British power had grown to represent a pervasive threat to the security and even the survival of Spanish America. In the first half of the eighteenth century, Spanish officials did whatever was in their power to shield their American possessions from foreign scrutiny. Severe restrictions on official foreign travel to Spanish America had already been in place for centuries, but Spanish fears and isolationist impulses mounted as their colonial elites began to develop cosmopolitan connections that cracked the shell of Hispanic isolation and forged linkages with a broader world culture and economy. It was a losing battle. Still, colonial officials generally did whatever was in their power to obstruct or prevent foreign meddling in their jurisdictions. Even when the Spanish crown relented and allowed foreign expeditions, such as the La Condamine scientific mission that set out for South America in 1735 to collect data on the earth’s geometry, Spanish officials fretted and obsessed over concerns about French espionage and foreign contamination. There was some substance to their worries. As all of the major European imperial powers would discover over the century that followed, internationally-connected colonies that were not politically and economically dependent on their imperial parent countries would chafe at metropolitan governance and exhibit a distinct preference for independence.

Perhaps the most central question for the early Spanish Bourbons revolved around the degree to which foreign models and influences would be used to revive the Spanish Empire. Lynch argues that French influence, although of paramount importance before the Treaty of Utrecht was signed,

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diminished rapidly after the end of the military conflict in 1714.13 Bourbon Spain was often an ally of France throughout the eighteenth century, but it was not a satellite state. Ricardo García Cárcel characterizes Spain's eighteenth century as being dominated by an ongoing debate between those who supported French influence and policies, and those who supported a government that was more traditionalist and authentically Spanish.14 By the middle of the century, this tension permeated many aspects of life in Madrid and broadly divided society into two general categories. The fashionable perimetros and perimetras embraced all things French, while the deliberately fiery and virile majos and majas strove to be as authentically Spanish as possible.15 British diplomats in Madrid watched this political and cultural conflict with great interest as they attempted to promote their own interests and ideologies, and to drive a wedge between the French and the Spanish. Accordingly, they tended to sympathize much more with the faction that they referred to as the “Old Spaniards” than with officials who were obvious Francophiles, such as the Marqués de Grimaldi. The traditionalists were a strong enough influence in Spain that even in 1760, with the British and French empires already at war, it was not obvious that Spain would enter the war in support of France.16 Their caution was prudent, for there was little value in exposing the Spanish Empire to the possibility of British attacks simply to support France’s floundering war effort.

In contrast, British aggression against the Spanish Empire was accelerating. By the mid-eighteenth century, members of the British elite eagerly plotted how they might go about accelerating the dismemberment of the once-mighty Spanish Empire. Successes against France in the Seven Years'

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13 Lynch, 52.
14 García Cárcel, 22.
16 This idea is supported by much of the British diplomatic correspondence from Madrid from the period leading up to the Spanish entry into the Seven Years’ War. See, for example, British National Archives (BNA), State Papers (SP) 94/161, Bristol to Pitt, Aranjuez, 9 June 1760. In this letter, Lord Bristol discusses French attempts to favourably influence the Spanish crown by sending jewels for the Queen of Spain.
War, most especially in 1759, further emboldened British confidence. At the same time, the shaky and humbled French Bourbons were unleashing a stream of anti-British propaganda, warning of the economic and political catastrophe that might come about if Britain were allowed to dominate the seas and the world’s trade. The French warned that British commercial and military power had to be actively balanced in order to avoid the formation of a new hegemony.\textsuperscript{17} When Spain yielded to such concerns and reluctantly entered into a third family compact with the French Bourbons in 1761, some voices in British government began to ring out in favour of a new, decisive offensive that would break Spanish power once and for all. Yet opinions on the matter were not immediately unanimous. The elder William Pitt was compelled to resign from government in part because his cabinet balked at the master statesman’s plans to open a massive campaign against the Spanish Empire.\textsuperscript{18} But war against Spain came soon enough, and by the Cabinet meeting of 6 February 1762, Britain’s ministers found themselves choosing between numerous strategies of attack against Spain’s imperial possessions.

So the stage was set, not merely for a clash of armies and navies, but of the very ideas about the future of empire that ran throughout both the British and Spanish Atlantic worlds. The first section of this study, titled “British Confrontations,” primarily investigates forward-looking ideologies and practices of empire in the British world at the time of the Seven Years’ War. It shows that there was a difference of opinion within the British Empire, including the domestic political scene in London, over the degree of direct state leadership in imperial matters and all that it implied. When the war ended, this conflict became more intense. It also spilled over into the relationship between the British and Spanish Empires, as the government in Madrid struggled to understand British behaviour in the various places where their imperial spheres overlapped. On a larger timescale, the entire Atlantic World was closing in on a series

\textsuperscript{17} Mario Hernández Sánchez-Barba, \textit{Historia de España, La Época de la Ilustración, Volumen II, Las Indias y La Política Exterior} (Madrid: Espasa-Calpe, S.A, 1988), 19.

of massive upheavals. The American Revolution, the French Revolution, and the subsequent disintegration of most of the Spanish Empire in the Americas were all right around the corner. But let us remember for a moment that in 1762, that future did not exist. The early modern concept of empire was still filled with possibility. There was plenty of room to freely imagine what might come to pass, and to make plans that might help realize a broad range of ambitions.
Chapter I

Sorrows to the Stones: Havana/Manila, 1762-5

Therefore I tell my sorrows to the stones,
Who though they cannot answer my distress,
Yet in some sort they are better than the tribunes,
For that they will not intercept my tale:
When I do weep they humbly at my feet
Receive my tears and seem to weep with me.

*Titus Andronicus*, III, i

In a time of war, there is plenty of room to imagine a great range of possible imperial futures. This chapter is about two invasions that not only offer some insight into British imperial mentality with respect to the future of the Spanish Empire, but that also served as major points of debate for both governments in the critical years that followed the Seven Years’ War. In 1762, when Spain finally entered the war, it exposed itself and its empire to a nation that had already achieved a massive superiority at sea. The potential dangers were acute. But in the end, the British crown chose fairly conservatively when plotting its angles of attack. Setting aside ambitious plans to conquer as far afield as Mexico City (via Veracruz) and Buenos Aires, the Cabinet opted for major assaults on Havana and Manila.¹ They hoped that these provinces of the Spanish Empire would be “insulted and plundered” by Great Britain. Rather than aim at the complete and immediate destruction of the Spanish Empire, they

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¹ Alan Frost, “The Spanish Yoke: British Schemes to Revolutionize Spanish America, 1739-1807,” in Frost and Jane Samson, eds., *Pacific Empires: Essays in Honour of Glyndwr Williams* (Carleton South, Victoria, Australia: Melbourne University Press, 1999), 36. Britain also made plans to invade Louisiana at this time, which was originally a French colony but had been legally transferred to Spanish control in 1762. However, Spain did not actually take *de facto* possession of its new territory until after the end of the war, partly because the French colonists were hostile to the idea of becoming part of the Spanish Empire.
hoped that vastly more favourable terms of trade would be secured in the ensuing peace settlement.\textsuperscript{2} These ambitions were nothing new. As the next two chapters will explore in greater detail, British commercial ideology was oriented toward free trade, a practice that kept new markets open for exploitation by British traders, ideally backed up by their nation’s considerable naval might. But the precise nature and purpose of state power in this basic ideological formula was not always agreed upon.

The situation lent itself to various different ways of deploying force. Certainly, the British military found itself with an unprecedented opportunity to show the world what kind of force a hegemonic, seafaring power was capable of projecting while it still enjoyed a moment of dominance over French and Spanish naval forces and overseas outposts. The cities of Havana and Manila were unfortunate enough to be among Britain’s last victims in a global war that had already essentially been fought and lost by France and its allies. They were beautiful cities – colonial fortresses that watched over island possessions of the Spanish crown. There has been a tendency for historians to assume that the effects of the Seven Years’ War on Cuba and the Philippines were roughly equivalent.\textsuperscript{3} But a more elaborate examination shows that the experiences of the two territories and their capitals under the force of the British offensive were extremely dissimilar. Perhaps more to the point, the British experiences and ambitions that led to their captures were also strikingly different and represented two distinct approaches to the development and execution of empire.

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\item[2] Ibid, 37.
\item[3] For a recent example of this kind of assumption, see J. H. Elliott, \textit{Empires of the Atlantic World: Britain and Spain in America, 1492-1830} (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2006), 294. Although most of Elliott’s analysis of the Anglo-Spanish interaction during the Seven Years’ War is thoughtful and well-founded, it is not fully considered on this particular point. Elliott characterizes Spain’s “ill-judged intervention” as “a disaster” and cites the British expeditionary forces in Havana and Manila as “a devastating blow to Spanish prestige and morale.” Elliott’s characterization is almost certainly accurate with respect to Havana, but word of the Manila capture and subsequent events in the Philippines had not even arrived in Europe in time for the bulk of the peace negotiations. Even more importantly, although Elliott is right to say that Manila was a key to Spain’s “trans-Pacific trade,” the value of that trade was dubious. To put it simply, the Spanish presence in that territory was a money-losing proposition at the time of the Seven Years’ War and not of immediate economic or strategic benefit.
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Throughout the colonial era in Latin America, Havana was one of the most strategically important sites in the Spanish Empire, particularly because of its central roles as a political, economic and military hub. Along with the Spanish city of Cadiz, it formed the primary axis of Spain’s trans-Atlantic trade. From Havana, massive trading fleets would depart for Spain, laden with the treasures of the Americas. Its location at the gateway to the Gulf of Mexico made it militarily indispensable and useful as a centre of political authority for other Spanish possessions in the Caribbean. The loss of the city and its heavily-defended fortress to Britain in 1762 was an unacceptable strategic collapse for the Spanish Empire, and its recovery in the Peace of Paris was not optional. In the immediate post-war years, the Havana debacle brought on a period in which the Spanish crown focused on assigning blame and on planning changes that were designed to prevent any future reoccurrence of Spain’s colossal military failure.\(^4\) In stark contrast, Manila was a city of almost no importance whatsoever in a larger strategic sense. Spain had established a permanent settlement there in 1570, but the city had never developed any real economic or military importance. Unable to collect enough duties on trade with Manila to cover costs, the Spanish government regularly subsidized the government of the Philippines with shipments of silver from Acapulco. There was profit to be had, but most of it went to the Chinese and other East Asian traders. Some wealth was also leaked to the British, who sold Indian goods to Asian merchants in exchange for Spanish silver acquired at Manila. From the Spanish crown’s point of view, the real importance of maintaining a presence in the Philippines was religious. The church was dominant on the

\(^4\) See Allan J. Kuethe, *Cuba, 1753-1815: Crown, Military, and Society* (Knoxville, Tennessee: The University of Tennessee Press, 1986), especially 1-23. Kuethe argues convincingly that the Spanish crown began a fundamental reimagining of its imperial military strategy as a result of the loss of Havana. The basic essence of that change was that the government in Madrid began to accept that what had worked in the past could not be effective against rapidly growing British strength. In particular, the empire’s defence could not be managed by Spanish army units alone – properly trained and equipped colonial forces would also be required. Kuethe argues that the subsequent reorganization was an important factor in Spain’s later victories (1779-81) against Britain at Baton Rouge, Mobile, and Pensacola (see page 78).
political scene in Manila, and as much as half of the colony’s Spanish population belonged to one of the Catholic religious orders.\(^5\)

Given the vast differences between Havana and Manila in the mid-eighteenth century, it is not surprising to find that British plans for their respective invasions developed from different motivations and unfolded along different lines. The invasion of the Cuban capital had its genesis at the highest levels of the British aristocracy, and the relevant tactical problems had been carefully studied and considered by the British military for years before the siege of 1762. The crown selected the men who would lead the secret expedition with the utmost care, ordered them to collect British military assets from throughout the Atlantic theatre of war, and generally treated the matter as the serious and strategically vital enterprise that it was.\(^6\) In contrast, the expedition against Manila was proposed and led as not much more than a personal project of William Draper, an ambitious and enterprising officer who had recently returned from British India. The strategic benefits of the assault were not obvious, and Draper had to rely mostly on troops of the East India Company, with limited support from the main body of the British military.

Put simply, the attack on Havana was truly a state enterprise that emanated from the highest levels of imperial government during a time of war. The attack on Manila was also very much a genuine expression of the British Empire, but it represented a more individualized way of planning and expanding the borders of empire – one that made use of state power to further personal aims. These two strategies are intertwined with two distinct ideological stances that I will refer to in this study as state-vanguard imperialism and commerce-vanguard imperialism. While both of these approaches were


interested in maintaining the power of the British Empire and the flow of its commerce, they differed with respect to how that effort was best initiated and carried out. State-vanguard imperialists believed that the role of the state was to lead the expansion of empire by occupying new territories and preparing them for economic exploitation and settlement. Commerce-vanguard imperialists believed that British trade should lead the way into new territories, and that the state’s role should be restricted to removing obstacles that prevented the free operation of British commerce, such as the uncooperative forces of hostile European governments. The planning for expeditions to Havana and Manila showed elements of both strategies, but in the end it was the state-vanguard approach that was predominant during the year of war with Spain. At the same time, the two expeditions yielded vastly different results, largely because the attack on Manila was conducted more as an exercise in personal avarice than as an expansion of state interests. That lesson is unlikely to have been lost on the British crown in the years following the war.

**Imperial Plans for War: Commerce Vanguard and State Vanguard Perspectives**

Even before war broke out between Britain and Spain in 1762, proposals for the destruction of Spain’s empire in the Americas poured into the office of the prime minister, then occupied by John Stuart, the Earl of Bute. British subjects who had personal experience in the Americas were particularly vociferous in their calls for action. They clearly expressed their frustration and anger with what they saw as a mixture of Spanish obstruction and active interference with British commerce and settlement. A number of commerce-vanguard imperialists were among them. One good example is Peter Collinson,
whose family’s cloth business had extensive commercial experience in the Americas.\(^7\) He urged the government to take steps to gain control of St. Augustine in Florida. In his view, the Spanish port was a perpetual “thorn in our sides” that provided a safe haven for escaped slaves and “our bad people,” who were running away from debts and creditors in British colonies. It was also, in his opinion, a base for Spanish ships to conduct illicit trade and to revel in “depredations” against British settlements along the coast of North America, as far north as the Carolinas. For Collinson, control of St. Augustine would give Britain the dominance that it would need to safely expand settlement into the more southern parts of North America.\(^8\) As an imperialist with a commerce-vanguard orientation, Collinson was not advocating massive military occupations. He simply wanted an active Spanish threat to British commercial interests removed.

Other influential commerce-vanguardists were even more aggressive in their proposals, as William Pitt had been in the fall of 1761. For example, Alexander Wright of Bath, who claimed extensive personal experience with various Spanish colonies, believed that Britain had the capacity to bring about an almost total collapse of the Spanish Empire. He advised Lord Bute that the Kingdom of Chile, where he accused the Spanish of lazily enjoying the enslavement of the indigenous peoples, was almost totally undefended. He imagined that Britain could gain unchallenged control of the South Seas by seizing it from Spain.\(^9\) Wright also expressed his belief that Spain would be “utterly unable to prosecute” a war against Great Britain “if an effectual stop (was) put to the introduction of treasure from the Kingdoms of Mexico and Peru.” In his opinion, this weakness could lead to huge gains, including economic and political domination of the entire Caribbean by Great Britain, and the reductions of Havana and

\(^7\) For more on Collinson and his connections (he was personally acquainted with Lord Bute through his work as a botanist), see Douglas D. C. Chambers, ‘Collinson, Peter (1694–1768),’ *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004 [http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/5964, accessed 10 Sept 2009].

\(^8\) Bodleian Library, Oxford University (Bodleian), Western Manuscripts (WM), MSS. North b.6, Peter Collinson to the Earl of Bute, 5 February 1762, ff. 47-50.

\(^9\) Bodleian, WM, MSS. North b.6, Alexander Wright to the Earl of Bute, 20 February 1762, ff. 60-78.
But like Collinson, Wright did not imagine that Britain would formally incorporate many of these territories into its empire – it was more a matter of freeing Spain’s colonies from their metropolitan master, thereby allowing the introduction of British commercial and political influence.

The more persuasive and specific visions of Britain’s imperial future in 1762 came from Britons who employed a state-vanguard perspective. One of the most carefully reasoned views came from William Paterson, who was Britain’s surveyor-general in the Leeward Islands. His orientation was very much in favour of state power, even at the expense of short-term, individual business interests. Paterson pointed out that the French navy was in no shape to prevent Great Britain from taking and keeping whatever it wanted in the Americas. Consequently, he believed that Great Britain should do whatever it could to completely eliminate the French presence along the western side of the Atlantic. He maintained that Britain should keep not only its new Canadian conquests, but also all of the valuable French sugar islands in the Caribbean. Doing so would temporarily harm British sugar interests in existing colonies, but Paterson believed that those costs were worth bearing in the short term. He offered two main reasons for this position. First, he argued that the French were likely to seek revenge against Britain’s American possessions at the first possible opportunity, and that it would be far more difficult for them to do so if they were deprived of all of their American bases of operation. He also argued that, aside from the obvious damage to France’s overseas economy, the French navy would be deprived of its “greatest nursery for sailors,” and would be slower to rearm and threaten British interests.

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10 Ibid, f. 158.
11 Bodleian, WM, MSS. North b.6, William Paterson to an unspecified friend, Barbados, 2 November 1761, f. 17.
12 Ibid, f. 17 verso.
Paterson also had extensive prescriptions for dealing with the Spanish. He warned against any attempt to attack Mexico or Peru, as it would be too difficult to hold the port cities and then to also venture inland to secure the mines. His preferred strategy was to harass the Spanish navy off the Iberian coast so that Spanish trade would be disrupted and the Spanish military would be unable to reinforce their garrisons in the Americas. But more than anything else, he declared: “let us exert our utmost to get possession of the Havanna, and Island of Cuba, which is a very practicable scheme,” which could be achieved “at a much cheaper relative rate both in men and money, to our great benefit, and to the great loss and mortification of the Spaniards.”

Paterson had an excellent understanding of Havana’s high strategic value. He noted that its relative proximity to Britain and to the British North American colonies meant that it could be more easily integrated into the British supply and economic system. But most importantly of all, he recognized that as long as Britain maintained its status as the supreme sea power in the Atlantic, a British Havana would enjoy “absolute control and command” over Spanish and French trade in the region. Many Europe-bound ships would leave the Caribbean via the Gulf of Florida because riding the Gulf Stream was by far the easiest and safest route out of the region in an era when all ships remained dependent on wind and currents to get them to their destinations. Havana was perfectly situated to watch over and potentially to interdict any shipping that came through that channel. If British fleets were stationed both in Jamaica and in Cuba, Paterson anticipated that Britain “should, at all times, be able to greatly distress” both Spain and France “in case of any difference or dispute.” It was, in short, a proposal for hegemony in the Atlantic World.

Others of the state-vanguard type offered similar understandings of the broader strategic implications of a British attack on Havana. Henry Ellis, a popular and successful former governor of

14 Ibid, f. 20.
15 Ibid, f. 19.
Georgia, was an important voice on colonial affairs in London during the latter part of the Seven Years’ War. Ellis believed that Britain was nearly at a financial breaking point and could not survive in a state of war for much longer without sustaining serious political and economic damage. But in order to achieve peace, he advocated following the path that would be “the easiest, the least expensive, ... the most effectual towards embarrassing our enemies” and “the most certain way of giving security to our numerous colonies, which will otherwise require great assistance, for none of them are capable of defending themselves” without British military support. For Ellis, these goals could best be achieved by an assault on Havana. He argued that British possession of Havana would remove Spain’s ability to threaten a wide range of British colonies, from the Carolinas and Georgia to the Bahamas to Jamaica.

The long-term benefits for the nation’s commerce were also attractive. Like Paterson, Ellis argued that a British Havana was the key to the domination of oceangoing commerce in the Caribbean region. In a letter to the Earl of Egremont, he laid out his case. “It will be obvious to your lordship,” he said, “that whatever power is in possession of the Havana” and a superior force at sea would be able to intercept shipping at will in the Gulf of Florida. The prospect of acquiring such a position made Ellis believe that Britain could deal severe and lasting harm not only to Spanish but also to French economic power in the Americas:

That France has a large share in the commerce of Spain is universally known. It is evident, therefore, that whatever suppresses, or even interrupts and endangers that traffic, must essentially affect and distress both those nations, and nothing is clearer than that. This may be effectually done by the conquest of the Havana, and perhaps by that only.  

17 Bodleian, WM, MSS. North b.6, “About the Havana,” Henry Ellis to the Earl of Egremont, King’s Bench Walks, 16 January 1762, f. 28.
18 Ibid, f. 38 verso.
In essence, both Paterson and Ellis offered a vision of one possible British Empire that could indefinitely dominate the Atlantic world by robbing the Spanish and the French of all of their most valuable overseas possessions. The key to doing so was to establish an outpost of British governance and power at Havana, from where the British navy could keep vigilant watch over the flow of traffic out of the entire Caribbean and Central American region.

**The Trials and Triumphs of Havana**

Whether or not there was broad elite support for a permanent British annexation of Havana, the concept of an attack on the city was already on many other influential minds before the assault of 1762. British eyes had watched the city for many years before they found themselves in a position to deprive the Spanish Empire of such a valuable prize. The most recent British attempt to take the city had taken place during the War of the Austrian Succession (1740-8), but Spanish forces had successfully repelled the invasion. When war broke out again between the two empires in December 1761, it did not take long for British ambitions to translate into action. The most immediate advocate for an invasion in 1762 was William, Duke of Cumberland and uncle of King George III. But the plan also enjoyed support from many of the key players in the British military and government, including Viscount Anson, First Lord of the Admiralty, and Lord Ligonier of the War Office.19 Perhaps most importantly of all, it was precisely the kind of action that William Pitt had already been advocating with considerable vigour prior to his departure from office several months before. To put it simply, the idea had already been circulating for some time at the highest levels of the British government. The outbreak of war provided the window of opportunity that its advocates needed to put it into action. To be sure, many members of the British

19 For a detailed description of the various political and military leaders who lent their support to the Havana invasion, see Keppel, 4-8.
political and military elite had long seen the idea of a British seizure of Havana as a major part of the empire’s long-term strategic plan in the Americas. If there was any ambition that was nearly synonymous with the will of the state, this was it. Accordingly, it is not surprising to see that even though there was considerable booty to be had, there was very little need to justify the expedition on economic grounds. It was primarily a naked exercise in state power, and the desire to insult took priority over the desire to plunder.

On 15 February 1762, King George III issued secret instructions for the invasion of Havana to Lieutenant-General George Keppel, better known as the Earl of Albemarle. In response to what he saw as “the haughty and imperious conduct of the court of Spain,” the king informed Albemarle that there would be war, and that the crown had chosen him to be the primary instrument of Britain’s secret campaign against Spain’s possessions in the Caribbean.²⁰ George III ordered Albemarle to assume command of a broad range of forces that would be taken from Britain, and from units that were already operating in the Americas, including whatever could be spared from the British forces that had been fighting for possession of the island of Martinique, under the command of Major-General Monckton. Albemarle would also be joined by about four thousand officers and men from North America, from the command of Sir Jeffrey Amherst, thereby completing the collection of military assets from every major theatre of operation in the Americas.²¹

The supreme importance of Albemarle’s task force was made clear to General Monckton in a letter from Lord Egremont, who ordered Monckton to suspend his attack on Martinique if it was still in progress, and to only leave behind enough supplies and troops to defend what had already been

²⁰ British National Archives (BNA), Colonial Office (CO) 117/1, George III to the Earl of Albemarle, St. James, 15 February 1762, f. 14.
²¹ BNA, CO 117/1, George III to the Earl of Albemarle, St. James, 15 February 1762, f. 27-8.
Egremont was certain to make the crown’s position on the importance of the Albemarle expedition abundantly clear:

The success of the intended expedition against the Havana is of such high importance to the King’s service in this most critical conjuncture, and the urgency of the present situation of affairs is so great, that the King has judged it most indispensably necessary that all other enterprizes should yield to this one object, ... (and) in case ... this letter shall reach you before you have been able to make yourself master of any ... principal fort at Martinico, ... you do withdraw from the further prosecution of any operations against that island, which can, any ways, obstruct or interfere with the full execution of the orders now sent you.”

The crown’s message was simple: the entire available weight of the British military in the Atlantic world was to be thrown against the Spanish garrison at Havana. Everything that could be spared would go. Any other objectives, including those that were already in progress, were secondary. Although Monckton’s forces had already completed their conquest of Martinique by the time Egremont’s orders arrived, the British crown’s willingness to suspend their pursuit of such a valuable French sugar island is startling, and emphasizes the government’s determination to shock and intimidate the Spanish with the maximum possible force.

The crown’s ambitions were intensely focused on the city of Havana, but they were by no means limited to the Cuban capital. Albemarle’s orders demanded that he was to make every possible effort to capture his primary target, but they left ample room to pursue other Spanish targets once Havana had fallen into British hands, or if the assault on the city had obviously failed. George III made it clear that if at all possible, Albemarle should leave a sufficient garrison at Havana and then proceed farther into Spanish America to make additional military gains. The king left the selection of specific targets to his commanders in the field, but he made specific mention of Pensacola, St. Augustine and – most strikingly of all – Vera Cruz. Elsewhere, Sir Jeffrey Amherst had his own orders to follow up the siege of Havana

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22 BNA, CO 166/2, Egremont to Major General Monckton (Most Secret), Whitehall, 5 February 1762, f. 4-5.
23 Ibid, f. 6.
24 BNA, CO 117/1, George III to the Earl of Albemarle, St. James, 15 February 1762, f. 29.
by taking a force of some eight thousand men to attack Louisiana, an assault for which Albemarle was ordered to release his North American troops if at all possible.\(^{25}\)

The resulting operation was an impressively complex endeavour. On 6 June 1762, British army and naval forces arrived off the Cuban coast under the command of Albemarle and Vice-Admiral Sir George Pocock, with additional naval support from Commodore Augustus Keppel. The British came in force, ready for the largest amphibious operation of the Seven Years’ War. The fleet carried out a successful landing of almost 12,000 army personnel, vastly outnumbering the Spanish defenders.\(^{26}\) The impact of the British numerical superiority was enhanced by the fact that the Spanish were caught completely unaware of the operation until enemy ships were spotted on the horizon. Worse yet, Governor Juan de Prado and Spanish military leaders in Cuba had been hampered by an outbreak of yellow fever and had not made any significant progress on developing a plan for the defence of Havana, in spite of knowing about the possibility of a British attack.\(^{27}\) Overwhelmed and wilting under fire from British warships, the Spanish were unable to prevent the landing of enemy soldiers, and went on to fight a valiant but ultimately futile battle to prevent the capture of the Cuban capital.\(^{28}\) On 14 August, the British accepted the surrender of the Spanish defenders. To make matters worse for Spain, British forces captured and took possession of a full twenty percent of the Spanish navy in Havana harbour, along with considerable military stores and stockpiles of tobacco and sugar.\(^{29}\) It was a crippling blow to Spanish morale, a severe obstruction of the Spanish imperial economy, and a mortal blow to the Spanish war effort.

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\(^{25}\) Ibid, f. 30 verso-32.


\(^{27}\) Celia María Parcero Torre, _La perdida de la Habana y las reformas borbónicas en Cuba_ (1760-1773) (Junta de Castilla Y León, Consejería de Educación y Cultura: Ávila, 1998), 113.

\(^{28}\) See Keppel, 29-38.

\(^{29}\) Keppel, 78-80.
The Age of Domination

The eleven months that followed are known to Cuban History as “la época de la dominación” (the Age of Domination). For the first time in the city’s history, Havana was severed from Spanish control and entered into a severe identity crisis. It is generally agreed that the British occupation had a serious, long-term impact on the city, but the precise nature of that impact is complex and was almost certainly not fully understood by either the British or the Spanish at the time. However, we can find a good starting point by observing that the key tension in British-controlled Havana mirrored the emerging normative conflict that afflicted much of the Spanish Empire in the eighteenth century – the rising tension between the religious function of empire and its commercial function as the government in Madrid struggled to cope with an increasingly Anglo-centric and commercialized Atlantic. In that sense, it reflects not only the normative distinctions between the British and Spanish empires, but also the rapidly sharpening normative conflicts within Spain’s imperial borders.

Havana’s religious community had a decidedly negative take on the British occupation. The British attitude toward Catholic institutions in Havana was somewhat cavalier. The Earl of Albemarle occupied numerous colleges, hospitals, monasteries and churches, often using them to provide temporary support facilities for British troops. Angered by the British attitude toward church property in the city, Bishop Pedro Agustín Morell de Santa Cruz quickly became the most significant public figure to fight against the occupation, and the dominant symbol of resistance against the British occupation. Bishop Morell made it a priority to offer Albemarle studied displays of disobedience and continued to exercise his authority without consulting the British or considering their interests. The articles of

30 Parcero Torre, 158.
31 Ibid, 159-61.
capitulation from the Spanish surrender had included a British promise to respect the authority of the Bishop of Cuba and to not interfere with his collection of church monies, but with the condition that “the appointment of priests, and other ecclesiastical officers” would only be done “with the consent and approbation of his Britannick Majesty’s Governour.”\(^{32}\)

It quickly became obvious that the relationship between Albemarle and Bishop Morell was not going to function as well as the British officers had hoped. By early November, Lord Albemarle’s continued frustration led him to the decision to exile the bishop, on the grounds that he had proved incapable of living within the confines of the articles of capitulation. “The Bishop of Cuba has at last given me a good pretence for removing him from this island,” Albemarle reported to Lord Egremont. “He has taken every opportunity of being troublesome and impertinently litigious in every point which I had to transact with him.” The British governor felt that, unlike most of the secular element of Havana’s elite, the bishop continued to behave as though he was a subject of Spain, as though the invasion and the articles of capitulation had never happened.\(^{33}\) On 3 November, Albemarle took action. He posted a public notice that denounced Bishop Morell as “a most disrespectful man” whose attitude and actions were taken in “a most seditious manner.” As a consequence, the governor let it be known that he “thought it absolutely necessary to remove the bishop from (the) island,” so that “tranquility may be preserved in the town and that harmony and good understanding may be kept up betwixt his Majesty’s old and new subjects, which the Bishop, in so flagrant a manner, has endeavoured to interrupt.”\(^{34}\)

The Bishop of Cuba soon found himself imprisoned in a British warship, on his way to be deposited in Florida. As he sparred with Albemarle, Morell seemed to be living in a previous era, one in

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\(^{32}\) BNA, CO 117/1, Articles of Capitulation, enclosed with Albemarle to Egremont, Head Quarters near the Havana, 21 August 1762, f. 124.

\(^{33}\) BNA, CO 117/1, Albemarle to Egremont, Havana, 4 November 1762, f. 184.

\(^{34}\) BNA, CO 117/1, Declaration by Lord Albemarle, 3 November 1762, f. 243.
which the power and influence of the Catholic Church had not yet been diluted by the realities of a more commercialized and state-oriented Atlantic world. Accordingly, he would complain to and manipulate whatever authorities of state were most advantageous to the interests of the church and the mission of the Catholic faith. He had no love for the British, but likely also felt a good deal of frustration at the Spanish failure to protect his powers of appointment when Governor Juan de Prado signed them away in August 1762. Looking beyond the many differences between the ways that the British and Spanish crowns executed the business of empire, here was something that they agreed on in a practical sense in 1762: the powers and affairs of the church were decidedly subservient to those of the state, and could be suppressed or negated in international treaties when it was expedient to do so. As we will see in a later chapter, this same lesson had already been learned by the Jesuits in South America during the previous decade, and would once again be learned more harshly than ever in only a few short years.

Collaboration/Transformation: Disrupting Havana’s Imperial Aesthetic

Although Albemarle had finally defeated the Spanish forces that opposed his attack, the vitality and spirit of his expedition deteriorated rapidly as his men suffered from the effects of the Cuban climate and from the same yellow fever that had afflicted the Spanish garrison. In the final days of the siege, the heat and disease had nearly defeated the British expeditionary force before it could complete its task. “The army was so very sickly, and that sickness increasing daily,” Albemarle lamented as he reflected on the final days of the battle. “If the North American troops had not arrived” when they did, he feared that he would have been driven “to some desperate attempt to have profited of the little force (he) had left before it was entirely exhausted.”35 The British found little immediate relief for their problems within the walls of Havana. The “churches and convents of the town” were already jammed

35 BNA, CO 117/1, Albemarle to Egremont, Headquarters near the Havana, 21 August 1762, f. 136 verso.
with Spanish casualties, with “upward of three thousand sick and wounded.” Even Albemarle himself was among the sick. “Nobody escapes in this country,” he complained. “I still continue far from well myself and as soon as I have establish’d this government upon a proper footing, I shall profit of his Majesty’s most gracious indulgence to me, and come to England for the recovery of my health.”

The vulnerability of the British position in Havana meant that the British offensive throughout the Atlantic World was effectively over, or had at least dragged to a halt for the time being. In a dispatch to Lord Egremont, Albemarle insisted that he could not send his North American troops to support Jeffrey Amherst’s planned offensive against Louisiana, even though that endeavour could not proceed without them. “My army is very much reduced and the few called well are by no means fit for immediate or severe service,” he reported. “I cannot venture to send back the troops that joined me” from North America until “I see what number are necessary and requisite to garrison the Havana and forts, and for the defence of this part of the island.” As the British occupation continued into the autumn, the situation did not improve. By the beginning of October, Albemarle was still unable to send reinforcements to Amherst and could only report appalling losses due to illness. “We have buried upwards of 3000 men since the capitulation, and I am sorry to say there are many men in the hospitals who are so exhausted by fatigue and the heat of the climate that it is not thought they will recover.” There were barely enough British troops still available for active duty, for the garrisoning of the city and the disciplining of the several nearby towns that lay within Havana’s administrative jurisdiction. Only on 19 October was Albemarle finally able to comply with his orders by releasing Amherst’s forces.

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37 Ibid, f. 137.
38 BNA, CO 117/1, Albemarle to Egremont, Havana, 7 October 1762, f. 149-50.
39 BNA, CO 117/1, Albemarle to Sir Jeffrey Amhurst, Havana, 19 October 1762, f. 176-7.
The British position in Havana was obviously untenable by force of arms alone. To some extent, the occupation had to be structurally reinforced by the incorporation of at least some of the population into the British imperial aesthetic sphere – the realm within which the British defined what a good and proper empire was and how it was supposed to function. Albemarle could not obtain obedience by simply threatening the people of Havana with military retribution – he had to encourage them to actually want to dance to a British beat. In other words, he had to secure enough cooperation from the local elite to introduce the aspects of imperial performance that were most intrinsic and most critical to Havana’s incorporation into the British imperial system, even if it was only to be a temporary arrangement. These were the practices and ideas of the British commercial world – the methods and routines that drove the British trading machine. Introducing them, even for a short time, was a normative shock.

The British generally allowed the Spanish administrative apparatus to remain in place, but they soon made profound changes to the regulations that governed the conduct of commerce. Immediately grasping the financial consequences for the Spanish crown, the defeated Governor Juan de Prado and the other royal officials in Havana attempted to insert a clause in their capitulation that would have allowed a continued flow of money back to Cadiz. Not surprisingly, the British refused. But at the same time, they did not simply seize everything. Rather, they ordered that all of the “European and Creole” inhabitants of Havana would “be left in the free possession and management of all their offices and employments,” so long as “they conduct themselves properly.” They were even invited to continue their normal trading activities, even with parts of Latin America that remained in Spanish hands. But as the weeks and months passed, the British began to implement some major changes. It was, in short, an invitation for the Cubans to try out some of the forms and practices, and mentalities of economic and

40 See BNA, CO 117/1, Articles of Capitulation, enclosed with Albemarle to Egremont, Head Quarters near the Havana, 21 August 1762, f. 124-5.
political life in the British Empire. Although the British Empire was still more or less practicing a form of mercantilism within its borders, it was an extremely open version that allowed for freedom of commerce between British-controlled ports. It represented a far more liberal conception of imperial economics than the highly restrictive Spanish system.\textsuperscript{41}

It was also a system that consciously acknowledged the problems presented by official corruption and presented the ideal of state institutions that could function properly without being lubricated by graft. Albemarle posted public declarations on the topic that were designed to take on an immense but important task: the reorientation of basic Spanish norms of polity and economy. In Albemarle’s view, it had been “the constant practice” in Cuba to give high officials “very considerable presents either in money or valuable effects whenever any causes are to be brought before” them for rulings. He roundly condemned the practice and ordered a drastic change in policy:

This is to inform the Publick that his Excellency positively forbids the continuation of that practice under pain of his displeasure, as he never has nor ... will suffer any money or presents to be received upon that head, being determined to administer justice with the utmost impartiality, shewing no favour either to the High or the Low, the Rich or the Poor, and will dispatch all causes brought before him with as much expedition as the laws of the country will admit to.\textsuperscript{42}

Albemarle’s reforms did not stop there. In December 1762, he issued a set of orders that were designed to normalize the collection of duties for the British crown, and for detailed record-keeping of the goods that entered and exited Havana’s harbour.\textsuperscript{43} In other words, even as many aspects of the city’s day-to-day administration continued unaltered from the Spanish norm, the British administration was slowly

\textsuperscript{41} Guillermo Calleja Leal and Hugo O’Donnell y Duque de Estrada, 1762 – La Habana Inglesa: La toma de La Habana por los ingleses (Madrid: Ediciones de Cultura Hispánica/Agencia Española de Cooperación Internacional, 1999), 185.
\textsuperscript{42} BNA, CO 117/1, Declaration by Lord Albemarle, Havana, 4 November 1762, f. 251.
\textsuperscript{43} BNA, CO 117/1, Declaration by Lord Albemarle, Havana, 24 December 1762, f. 254-5.
but surely remaking the city’s port into an instrument that was typically British, and very much oriented toward a liberal commercial system that was abnormal for Havana.

For the eleven months of the occupation, the city of Havana was exposed to a different set of ideas about how the politics and economics of empire were ideally supposed to function. For better or for worse, the memory of that experience would not be erased when the city was returned to Spain. The relatively smooth functioning of the city’s economic life in this period was partly due to the presence of the two regidores Sebastián de Peñalver Angulo and Gonzalo Recio de Oquendo, who were polar opposites of Bishop Morell and icons of the collaborationist faction in Havana. These two men, who came from old and important Creole families, had more interest in the continued function of the city economy than in the problems of the church. In them, we are able to see the desire for convergence between British and Spanish imperial norms among at least some of Cuba’s economic elite. On 31 August 1762, Albemarle named Peñalver to be the lieutenant governor of the occupied city, thereby formally incorporating him into the British command structure.44

It is no accident that the British were far more successful in finding local residents who were willing to cooperate with their wartime occupation in Havana than they would subsequently be in Manila. The Spanish community in the Philippine capital primarily served a religious function, and the British were not generally friendly toward the Catholic Church. But Havana’s important commercial function meant that at least some of its residents were willing to be receptive to different ideas about commerce and imperial trading. Peñalver was of that community, and appears to have not seen the British domination as an exclusively bad event. Whether or not they recognized that the end of the war would probably mean the return of the city to Spain, Peñalver and the rest of the collaborators made the decision to make the best of the situation and to embrace a brief period of participation in the

44 Calleja and O’Donnell, 161.
British Empire. As we will later see from an examination of Spain’s post-war economic policies, the experiences of 1762-3 generated some enthusiasm in Cuba for the adoption of a more British vision of how empire functions in terms of economic policies. These events were certainly normatively disruptive, and to at least some extent, they were transformative in a more lasting sense. In essence, they allowed the flourishing of an alternate view of the Cuban future.

The British occupation of Havana lasted for nearly a year. It was 5 July 1763 before Major General William Keppel, Albemarle’s brother and successor as governor, ordered the evacuation of British subjects from the city in anticipation of turning it over to the new Spanish governor, the Conde de Ricla. It was, from start to finish, an exercise that was organizationally situated close to the centre of British power. It represented a reliance on a heavily state-centric, top-down methodology of making and managing empire in culturally distinct areas that already had pre-established links to other European empires. Economic gain was certainly not ignored, but it was subsidiary to and expected to be derived from the assertion of political control and the normative influences that came with it. As such, it bears a closer kinship to much of the British imperial expansion of the nineteenth century than to almost anything that had come before, and stands as a significant precursor of that type of imperial management. It was also, as noted above, an episode that saw the British take advantage of the situation to introduce significant political and economic reforms such as the aforementioned anti-graft policies and changes to port administration. They had a small but lasting impact on the norms of commerce in the Spanish Empire, in spite of the relatively short period of occupation.

The Havana episode was also significant to the way in which the Anglo-Spanish relationship evolved in the immediate post-war period because of the extreme alarm that it triggered in the halls of

power in Madrid. Upon his return to Spain, Governor de Prado was treated with scorn and subjected to a court-martial for his apparent dereliction of duty. But the Spanish crown was not content to simply assign blame and then forget about the incident. As Allan J. Kuethe has shown in his research on Cuba in the mid-to-late eighteenth century, the lessons learned from the British attack and occupation led to a program of real military reforms that significantly strengthened Spain’s defensive capacities in the Caribbean and that ultimately proved to be instrumental to Spanish victories against Great Britain during the American Revolutionary War. But for the moment, in 1763, the British state and military elite could not help but be very pleased by what they had accomplished in Havana. It represented a successful state-vanguard expansion of the Empire, albeit a temporary one. Albemarle was able to have a strong and lasting normative influence on the city, one that would have a significant impact on the course of Atlantic imperialism. His success must have registered in London in a distinct and far more positive way than the much more problematic occupation that was unfolding half a world away, in the city of Manila.

The Shadows of Manila

Even today, the distance between Manila and the capitals of Europe is vast. In 1762, it was almost as though it was in an entirely different world. Although the Spanish had already imposed two centuries of rule and active proselytization in the islands, the Philippine capital remained a colonial outpost on a distant frontier, and its extraordinarily remote location was a major factor in the fate that befell it during the final days of the Seven Years’ War. It was not like Havana, which was a dominant presence in both Spanish and British strategic thinking about the Atlantic World. Perched on the

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Kuethe, 78.
western edge of the Pacific Ocean, Manila was too distant and not strategically important enough to generally be included in any prudent calculations of where any of the early-modern empires would attempt to project their military power in times of war. For a time, Pitt had played around with a fanciful strategy that involved a massive attack on Panama that would then split into separate assaults on Havana and Manila. But no matter how much Pitt might have fantasized about such a masterstroke against the Spanish, the plan bordered on the ridiculous when it came to actually assessing feasibility. To attempt to project force against Manila all the way from Central America would have required sailing over 16,000 kilometres – more than a third of the way around the globe – assuming that the initial attack on Panama had gone according to plan. To put it mildly, such an endeavour would have been risky at best. Clearly, if Manila was to be involved in British war planning, another approach was necessary. One British officer, having recently returned from India and China, made himself into the instrument that could deliver that new approach into the hands of the British cabinet. His name was William Draper.

In the mid-eighteenth century, European imperialism had not yet infiltrated Southeast Asia to anywhere near the extent that it would in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century. Much of the region remained largely unknown to the West, even to the traders who were based in India. They only had accurate longitudinal measurements for a handful of places in Southeast Asia, and many of the sea routes in the region remained uncharted, including the route from India to Manila. It was also home to an already extensive political and commercial network that had little to do with the newly-arrived westerners. The farther traders travelled to the east of India, the deeper they would fall into the Chinese sphere of political and economic influence. Early in 1759, after commanding forces at the siege of

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48 Tracy, 2.
Madras, Colonel William Draper set out from India on the *Winchelsea*, a trading vessel that was bound for China before embarking on the long voyage back to England. Also on that voyage for the first four weeks was Alexander Dalrymple, then a bright young servant of the East India Company, who would go on to play a prominent role as a pioneering cartographer and seafaring specialist in the Admiralty Office. Although Dalrymple transferred to another ship at Malacca, then a Dutch outpost in Malaysia, his brief time on board the *Winchelsea* appears to have had a considerable influence on Draper. In his biographical work on the colonel, *Pitt’s Gallant Conqueror*, James Dreaper suggests that Dalrymple provided the initial impetus that ultimately blossomed into a full-blown plan to assault Manila by suggesting that the city could be more directly attached to the British trading system in Asia.\(^{49}\)

After leaving Malacca and venturing into territories that were even more distant from the European sphere of influence, Draper had plenty of time to observe the maritime Far East, and to think about the nature of the limited European presence there. Chinese authorities did tolerate a certain amount of European trading, but only when they perceived that doing so was in China’s best interests. At the time of the Seven Years’ War, this policy translated into a small amount of trade with English, French, Dutch, Danish, and Swedish ships through the port of Canton, and with Portuguese ships through their colony at Macau. Traders of these various nationalities competed fiercely for the small commercial openings that were open to them. But the Spanish Empire was conspicuously absent from China.\(^{50}\) Its absence told Draper something about what the Spanish were doing in the Far East, and is also suggestive of some of the more general realities of the Spanish imperial experience. Spain’s trans-Pacific trading route served a unique and important role in the commercial life of East Asia, linking it with Spanish America and the precious metals that were extracted there. Chinese traders were willing to come to the Spanish in Manila, making it unnecessary for many Spaniards to venture farther into the

\(^{49}\) Dreaper, 52.  
\(^{50}\) Dreaper, 52-3.
Chinese trading sphere. But the Spanish presence in the Philippines was never really profitable, in that the crown was unable to extract enough revenue to cover the costs of colonial governance. The commercial aspect of the operation subsidized the colony’s religious function, and it was the members of Catholic orders – especially the Jesuits – who enjoyed the greatest part of the authority over those matters.

So Manila was an outpost of Catholic conversion and a drain on Madrid’s coffers, but also a nexus of a silver trade that was responsible for supplying much of the raw material for hard currency in the region. It was also poorly defended – real naval help was so far away, all the way across the Pacific in Mexico, that Spanish sea power was a non-factor in the region. Because the Pacific was effectively free of serious naval armaments at the time, the Spanish treasure galleon that delivered the silver to Manila did so without the benefit of armed escorts. This vulnerability made Manila a tempting target for Draper, who was sceptical about the opportunities to prove himself as a military commander back in Europe or in the Americas, and whose damaged finances could be repaired by a triumph against the Spanish colony.\(^{51}\) When he arrived back in the Atlantic in 1760, Draper came in contact with the news that his countrymen had enjoyed an extraordinary string of victories the previous year, placing Great Britain in a commanding position over France and its allies. But the war was not yet over. The peace process with France was embryonic at best, and when it became clear that Spain was going to enter the war, Draper was ready to take advantage of the situation. Amid the chaos that followed Pitt’s resignation in the fall of 1761, Draper presented Lord Egremont with his plan to surprise the Spanish at Manila.

In spite of the major political changes in London in the winter of 1761/2, the British military leadership could not help but be flush with confidence. Their almost miraculous string of victories

\(^{51}\) Dreaper, 54-5.
against France in 1759 made even more extraordinary campaigns seem possible. Draper helped to spur
the British cabinet along by making specious claims that Manila posed a wartime threat to Britain’s
commercial security in the Far East, and by suggesting that the East India Company would be well-
positioned to expand their business all over the region if Great Britain were to gain control over the
Philippines. But he did not limit himself to suggesting a single attack. Like the men who advocated a
dramatic realignment and expansion of the British Empire in the Atlantic through the taking of Havana,
Draper cannily spoke of a new British future in the Pacific – in this case, one that would stretch far out to
the east and ultimately surprise the Spanish with an attack on the west coast of the Americas. His
proposal pointed the way to eventual British domination of the Pacific from a new Philippine base. He
suggested that after the Spanish had been removed from Manila, Britain could establish a new
settlement on one of the other islands. “It is ... imagined,” he boasted, “that from such (a) proposed
settlement the Spanish provinces in the South Seas, both of South and North America may with great
success be insulted and plundered by Great Britain.” This imagining of the British imperial future on
the far side of the world had great appeal back in London, and was treated with seriousness, optimism,
and ambition.

Draper found that his plan quickly gained favour with key military leaders in London, including
Lord Ligonier and First Lord of the Admiralty George Anson, both of whom were also major boosters of
the plan to attack Havana. With their support, Draper won the cabinet approval that he needed. But
unlike Albemarle and the men who were setting off to besiege Havana, Draper was venturing off to a far

52 Dreaper, 67-8.
53 William Draper, “Rough Sketch of an Expedition to Manila, mentioned to Lord Anson on the 8th, 11th, and 12th Inst,” January 1762, Rhodes House Library, Oxford, North Papers, Brit. Emp., S.I, ff. 157-158, as printed in Nicholas P. Cushner, ed., Documents Illustrating the British Conquest of Manila, 1762-1763, Camden Fourth Series, Volume 8 (London: Royal Historical Society, 1971), 12. Cushner’s document collection is an excellent and nearly comprehensive look at the available sources that detail the planning, execution, and aftermath of the attack on Manila, drawn from both British and Spanish archives. I have drawn numerous sources from this collection, and noted both their original archival locations and their positions in Cushner’s collection.
more distant location and without the full support of everybody who would ultimately need to be involved. The East India Company was immediately sceptical about the plan, and its directors worried that further military strikes into Southeast Asia could compromise their security in India. They wrote to the Earl of Egremont to plead their case. The directors unctuously agreed that the taking of Manila would be “a great national object” and that its “continued possession” would “greatly extend the commercial interest” of Great Britain, and assured Egremont that they would “cheerfully assist in carrying this important scheme into execution so far as their abilities and the safety of their trade and settlements may allow.” But at the same time, they advised him that “their affairs in Bengal and Madrass” were “in a very critical situation,” as they remained “surrounded with enemies and false friends” and were forced to expend significant sums simply to protect themselves. They also fretted about the potential disruption to trade, and suggested that they might be “heavy sufferers” if the British Navy were to begin stopping ships in the region.\(^\text{54}\)

One might easily suggest that Draper was simply reckless, and out more for personal gain than for the interests of the British Empire. His individual ambitions were certainly significant. But he was also shrewd enough to write a proposal that was just as deeply steeped in the terminology of British commercial ideology as was the subsequent letter of concern from the directors of the East India Company. In spite of that commonality, the East India Company directors and Draper had very different interests. On the one hand, Draper had little to lose by being bold. He was in financial trouble and had no established interests in Asia. On the other hand, the East India Company had a great deal to lose. Over-committing to an attack on Manila could be ruinous to the Company and would damage Britain’s more general stance in the war if they were lose control of their gains in India. It is not hard to understand why their vision for the future of the British Empire appeared to be more prudent, less

\(^{54}\) BNA, CO 77/20, Secret Committee of the East India Company to the Earl of Egremont, East India House, 14 January 1762, as printed in Cushner, 15-7.
militarily aggressive and not particularly concerned about individual initiative or state power *per se*. They were in the same ideological flow as the war cabinet and William Draper, but viewed empire through institutional, corporate lenses. It is worth noticing that their stance on the issue was very much in synch with a commerce-vanguard perspective, in spite of a long history of deep connections between the Company and British state officials back in London. Empire was about supporting and protecting British commerce in a prudent and effective manner, not about wild stabs into barely explored territories at the far fringe of the nation’s economic sphere, where gains were speculative at best. In other words, commercial expansion must precede the application of military force, rather than being recklessly pulled along in its wake.

The East India Company’s oblique complaints fell on deaf ears. The use of the company’s military forces was integral to Draper’s plan. Once it had cabinet approval, the Company had little choice but to accede to Draper’s wishes with as much enthusiasm as they could muster, and to furnish him with troops for the expedition. Egremont placated their concerns to some extent by promising that because they would “incur a certain expense without any view to a just and proper compensation,” the crown would “make good” the losses to their “train and stores” and promised to compensate the Company for the loss of Manila in the case that it was restored to Spain in the ensuing peace treaty. But the Company directors in London did reserve one right for themselves: they made a subtle statement of their continuing concerns by making their orders conditional – to only be “undertaken by the Company if it shall appear in India consistent with their interest and security under the circumstances.”

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55 This point is a main part of the argument of James M. Vaughn’s *The Politics of Empire: Metropolitan Socio-Political Development and the Imperial Transformation of the British East India Company, 1675-1775* (PhD diss., University of Chicago, 2009). We will revisit this issue in the next chapter.

56 BNA, CO 77/20, Egremont to the Secret Committee of the East India Company, Whitehall, 23 January 1762, as printed in Cushner, 24-6.

57 British Library, India Office Records, B/77, Court Minutes (1761-1762), pp. 266-8, Meeting of the Directors of the East India Company, 19 January 1762, as printed in Cushner, 17-8.
least reluctant support from the East India Company’s leadership in London, George III issued official orders to Draper on 21 January 1761.

The plan was for Draper to lead the land assault, with support from the elements of the British Navy that could be spared from the East Indies fleet. He would receive his chance to extract the booty that he hungered for in Manila, but would then turn the city over to the stewardship of the East India Company. Draper was then supposed to move on to the island of Mindanao, which he was asked to “use (his) best endeavours to take possession of” on behalf of the Company, with the ultimate intention of creating a permanent settlement there that could be used to extend and strengthen the British commercial network in Southeast Asia. In spite of the supposed weakness of Spanish defences, these were ambitious and probably overly optimistic plans. The reality of the situation was that, upon arriving in India, Draper found the East India Company unwilling to provide him with as much military support as he had expected. Major General Stringer Lawrence, who was in command of the army in India, thought the whole expedition was a poor idea given the precarious state of the British position in the region. Lawrence feared that losing a substantial body of troops to the Manila assault would cause the British in India to relapse “into the same distressed condition” that existed before their miraculous recent victories against the French. Along with other officials in India, Lawrence openly dissented against the expedition but followed orders and presented Draper with forces to take to Manila.

The British squadron arrived at Manila Bay in September 1762 under the command of Rear Admiral Samuel Cornish, laden with Draper and his ground forces. The governor of the Philippines, Archbishop Antonio Rojo, was surprised to see them, as they had arrived in advance of the news that war had broken out between Britain and Spain. On 22 September, before Cornish and Draper could even

58 BNA, CO 77/20, Instructions of George III to Draper, 21 January 1762, as printed in Cushner, 18-22.  
59 BNA, T 1/422, Letter from Major General Lawrence, 31 July 1762, in “Extracts of the East India Company’s Advices relating to the Inconveniences they suffered from the Manilha Expedition,” f. 27-8.
demand the surrender of Manila, the Archbishop wrote to them and inquired as to why they had come to Manila. He asked “if they needed anything” and offered assistance if it was required, but promised to resist “with the utmost effort” possible if the British fleet had come with aggressive intentions. A flurry of correspondence followed between Rojo and Draper, in which the Archbishop declined British demands to surrender the city, and advised his attackers that he had every intention of fighting them off. Although Archbishop Rojo expressed confidence in the ability of his garrison to repulse any assault, British forces quickly revealed that the Spanish were profoundly unprepared to prevent the city’s capture. For an eighteenth-century amphibious assault, the battle was fairly brief. There was to be no repeat of the long weeks of resistance that Spanish forces offered at Havana. By the morning of 6 October, British forces had breached the city’s fortifications and manoeuvred themselves into position for a decisive strike against Rojo’s main defensive citadel. Seeing that the battle was lost, the Archbishop surrendered quickly and began preparations to deliver the city into Draper’s hands. The military conflict was over, but a much longer legacy of strife and disagreement that stemmed from the conquest of Manila was only just getting started.

Holding Manila, Anxiously

In many respects, the British occupation of Manila did not go well. In order to secure the peaceful surrender of the city, Draper agreed that the city would “be preserved from plunder, and the

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60 Archivum Provinciae Tarraconensis Societatis Iesu (San Cugat, Barcelona) (APT), I, f. 1-2, Governor Rojo to the commander of the British squadron, Manila, 22 September 1762, as printed in Cushner, 58-9. Translated from the Spanish original by the author.

61 British Library, India Office Records, Orme O.V. 27, 77-96, Unknown British Officer, “To the Honorable the Secret Committee for Affairs of the Honorable the United East India Company” (Description of the taking of Manila).

62 British Library, India Office Records, HM 76, 55-65, Stevenson’s account of the capture of Manila, written 10 November 1762), as printed in Cushner, 82-8.
inhabitants preserved in their religion, goods, liberties, and property under the government and protection of His Britannick Majesty.” These promises were almost identical to the ones offered to the citizens of Havana, half a world away. The awkward and unusual caveat that the retiring Spanish officials in Manila had to observe in order to secure such protection was the delivery of a ransom of “four millions of dollars, the half to be paid immediately” and “the other half to be paid in a time to be agreed upon.”

In order to secure the first half of this prize, the public and religious coffers of Manila were to be drained, and any amount that could not be obtained directly from the city was to be drawn from “bills on the treasury of His Most Catholic Majesty,” the King of Spain. In allowing this plan, Draper and Cornish stumbled badly. It proved to be extremely poorly thought out for two important reasons. First, nowhere near the required amount could be extracted from Manila on demand. Second, and most importantly of all, the Archbishop did not have the authority to promise that the balance of the ransom would be paid from the royal treasury in Madrid, and the Spanish crown would quickly balk at any and all British demands to pay the so-called Manila ransom. The diplomatic fallout would help poison Anglo-Spanish relations throughout the 1760s.

The ransom issue added to an already dangerous situation. Barely-controlled British soldiers and sailors extracted what limited wealth they could from the city. They did not bother to be respectful while going about their task, nor did they restrict themselves to public and church funds. Doña Josepha Agustina de Larraguiver, a member of the city’s elite, later testified about the chaos that ensued. “It is the truth,” she said, “that on the day that the English entered the city, they looted and robbed my house,” taking clothing, jewellery, and objects of religious devotion. These men did so without

63 APT, I, f. 28, “Conditions offered to the City of Manila by the British Commanders,” Manila, 6 October 1762, as printed in Cushner, 123-4.

64 BNA, ADM 1/162 (2), f. 44, “Proposals of their Excellencies His Brittanick Majesty’s commanders in chief which are agreed to by the Most Illustrious Governor of these Islands as likewise the Royal Audience, the City and Commerce, with the clergy both secular and regular,” as printed in Cushner, 124-5.
permission from their commander. “The following day,” she recalled, “Draper killed a man in my house.”

The British general, having caught one of his men in the act, apparently executed him on the spot.  

Subsequent testimony from religious leaders indicated that British troops had acted in a similarly aggressive manner in churches and convents. The Jesuit college of San Ignacio was forced to yield its entire assortment of chalices and church ornaments. The pillage of the Convento de San Nicolás reportedly continued for three days, during which gold and silver ornaments and coins valued at 70 000 pesos were lost. Several Franciscan churches testified that the British had stolen their church bells and then sold them back to their owners for a further profit. It seems that the British, in their lust for the ransom, did more than to simply drain Manila’s finances. While Draper struggled to maintain control of the situation, they inflicted real and traumatic damage on Manila’s society and culture. In Havana, the British managed to co-opt much of the local elite. In Manila, they mostly assaulted them in a frenzy of greed.

How do we explain the extreme contrast between the behaviours of British forces in these two episodes? Draper’s failure to successfully extract the Manila ransom is central to this question, but it is a symptom of a more profound difference, one that is rooted in the gap between the basic motivations for the two attacks. In Havana, there was booty to be had, but the scene was dominated by state level strategies and power plays. Manila was certainly relevant to state planning, but far more motivation came in the form of ambition for Draper’s social advancement and simple avarice, partly triggered by the general’s own personal, financial problems. His priorities, while initially dressed in the niceties of diplomatic surrender protocols, were made plain enough when the non-payment of even the first half of the ransom was nowhere near complete at the end of October 1762. By that time, Draper was growing

65 APT, III, f. 63, “Testimony of Josepha Agustiana de Larraguiver,” Binondo, 31 January 1763, as printed in Cushner, 125. Translated from the original Spanish by the author.

66 This string of accusations comes from a series of short testimonies that were drawn from the Archivum Provinciae Tarraconensis Societatis Iesu, a Jesuit archive in Spain. They can be found in Cushner, 125-7.
increasingly anxious to complete his business in Manila and to depart for England. While he might have initially been willing to stem the tide of pillage, Draper shifted to actively threatening it unless Archbishop Rojo fully complied with the full terms of his surrender and ordered his provincial governors in the remainder of the Philippine island group to accept British rule. Despite strong objections from his audiencia, Rojo did so promptly, theoretically leaving control of the entire colony in the hands of Dawsonne Drake, the governor appointed by the East India Company to manage affairs in the wake of Draper’s initial occupation.

The East India Company continued to exhibit a glum attitude about the entire adventure after the successful conclusion of the initial attack. They were right to be concerned. There were not enough British troops to maintain order in Manila and Cavite, the community across the river from the capital city. Worse, nobody had been able to suppress resistance outside of the Manila area. The night before the final British assault on Manila, one of the city’s oidores, Don Simon Anda y Salazar, left to organize a resistance movement that could continue the conflict after the capital fell. Even after Rojo ordered the cession of the rest of the colony to the British, Anda continued the fight with the support of the Philippine islanders. British forces were never able to fully succeed against Anda and his resistance. What was supposed to be a quick and easy seizure turned into an almost constant military operation against an enemy that proved impossible to finish with the available resources. In the British camp, tensions were high, and the remaining military officials did not work well with the representatives of the East India Company. In his study of the British capture of Manila, Nicholas Tracy characterizes

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67 APT, I, f. 39, Draper to Rojo, Manila, 28 October 1762, as printed in Cushner, 139-40.
68 Tracy, 49.
69 Tracy, 58.
Governor Drake as “a little known character” who was a relatively minor official in India and “hardly had the experience necessary” to succeed in his new post.  

Captain Matthew Horne was one of the military officers left behind in Manila to witness the steady deterioration of the situation there over the year that followed. “Ever since General Draper left us we have had nothing but disagreements amongst our principal people,” he reported. Anda’s resistance was constantly growing in strength, and the British were suffering from “a continual scarcity of provisions.” Horne worried what might become of the occupation. “We are in a very disagreeable situation,” he said.

They carry on the most cruel war against us, frequently murdering a single man (even in our markets), and always cut off their (genitals), and hang any native that they catch who serve any of the English. But what is the most dangerouse they give the greatest encouragement to our men that desert, both Seapoy and Europeans, a good many of the best of which they have already got, and (I) am afraid they’ll have most of our Seapoys soon.

Horne also reported on the poor state of the relationships between Drake and the ranking officers in the military garrison. One of the governor’s worst relationships was with Captain William Brereton, who was left in charge of Cavite and in command of the remaining naval detachment. Horne reported that the feud between the two men had gone so far that Brereton had “quitted” Drake’s government. “In short,” he feared, “the King’s ships are of no service to us.” In short, the situation was dire – “the most disagreeable I ever was in,” as Horne put it.

For his part, Anda maintained effective control of the entire colony outside of Manila and Cavite and clearly felt little pressure to accommodate any British demands. Although both he and the British knew of the preliminary articles of the Peace of Paris by the beginning of 1764, Anda continued to deal

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70 Tracy, 62-3.
71 BL, India Office Records, Orme O.V. 27, Horne to (Smith?), Manila, 4 October 1763, 98-100.
with his opponents aggressively. Horne said that Anda gave them until the end of February to leave the Philippines, as supposedly demanded by the treaty, and threatened to “continue the war and treat us as disobedient subjects to both crowns” if they refused.\footnote{BL, India Office Records, Orme O.V. 27, Horne to Smith, Manila, 2 February 1764, 121-3.} He kept a constant pressure on the British for the duration of their time in Manila. His resistance was helped considerably by the almost complete lack of real political stability on the British side, as Drake and the British officers continued to spar with each other. The British fought their own internecine political wars for as long as they held Manila, culminating with an attempt by Captains Brereton and Backhouse to assume full military authority over the British expedition upon receipt of their evacuation orders. In response, Drake made the dramatic and unwise decision to have Backhouse dragged out of his bed in the middle of the night and arrested. By this point, the political situation had become so tense that Drake ultimately resigned his post before the evacuation was to occur, leaving the situation in the hands of the newly arrived Alexander Dalrymple and the military officers.\footnote{This is a very short encapsulation of a complex chain of events. For an excellent narrative of the political disputes that wracked Manila during the occupation, see Nicholas Tracy’s \textit{Manila Ransomed}, 57-109 (especially 99-109) for elaboration on how the endgame of that conflict played out.}

The conquest of Manila was, in short, a great deal more trouble than it was worth. It came at a significant cost, especially to the East India Company, and created unnecessary risk. Not only did it fail to collect the ransom that Draper had arranged with Rojo, but it created a lasting diplomatic headache that would serve as a continuing irritant as Spain and Britain attempted to move forward with their relationship in the years that followed the Seven Years’ War. It was not an effective demonstration or projection of state power. Orders from the British crown did compel the East India Company to provision the expedition, but only reluctantly, and not to the anticipated extent. William Draper, the man who provided the initial impetus for the attack, remained on site for only a few short weeks after the fall of the city. His behaviour provides a significant contrast to that of Lord Albemarle, who also
expressed his explicit wishes for a return to England after his invasion but stayed in Havana for several months to ensure that the occupation government was well-established. Draper certainly said all the right things, pushing ideological buttons that referred to the supremacy of the British commercial interest and painting a strategic portrait of a British imperial future in the Pacific. But his willingness – perhaps even eagerness – to quickly remove himself from the situation after the invasion may tell us more about his understanding of what empire was for than anything he ever said or wrote about the topic.

**Ephemeral Triumphs of the State Vanguard?**

The stories of the British invasions of Havana and Manila are important to the larger narrative of the post-war Anglo-Spanish Atlantic in several ways. For the Spanish, they were dramatic proof of the dangers posed by the British Empire and a strong impetus for reforms that played out throughout the 1760s. I will examine that story in greater detail in my fourth and fifth chapters. For the British, they played a more subtle but still important role in how the politics of empire unfolded in the post-war years. During the war, ideology had a way of giving way to exigency. As much as commerce-vanguard imperialism aimed to minimise the role of the state, it required support from the military when faced with massive opposition from the Bourbon powers. State-vanguard imperialism, in spite of its willingness to sacrifice short-term business interests, relied upon commerce as the underlying *raison d’être* for the entire endeavour. So there was an obvious overlap between these two modes of imperial expansion that minimized ideological conflict during the Seven Years’ War and allowed the state to act without significant opposition. As we will see, that state of ideological coexistence would not be as easily sustained in the post-war years.
For the moment, the state-vanguard imperialists seemed to be dominant. The reasoning behind the invasion of Havana was perhaps best voiced by William Paterson, the surveyor-general who argued so passionately for British military supremacy in the Caribbean, even if it worked directly against the immediate economic interests of British planters. He believed that the most dizzying heights of economic prosperity would follow in the wake of calculated application of state military power. The disruption or destruction of Spanish and French power in the Americas would spin off economic benefits that would pay for the initial military costs many times over. The invasion of Havana was, for Paterson and many others, the strategic key to this entire way of thinking about empire. If Britain could permanently relieve Spain of its Cuban jewel, it would enjoy a lasting position of dominance. This idea had several major problems, of course. Spain would have never accepted the loss of Havana, and responded to the shock of losing the city by reforming its defences there and becoming more effective at projecting military force in the region for the remainder of the eighteenth century. Even worse for Britain, the reduction of the immediate threat from other European empires in the Americas tended to make British colonies less willing than ever to ignore their more immediate economic and political interests in favour of centralized imperial planning on a large scale, as seen in the run-up to the American Revolution. But that result was not obvious to anyone in 1762, and the massive application of state power seemed as though it could be a real path forward for empire.

The invasion of Manila was more ideologically complex. It might have been primarily motivated by William Draper’s individual avarice, but it also required significant state intervention. In order to obtain the crown’s participation, Draper had to make the necessary references to state interests, and to offer a vision of a possible imperial future for Britain in the Pacific Ocean, one of the only places on earth that had not yet been substantially incorporated into the European sphere. But at the same time, Draper’s invasion of Manila is suggestive of a vision of empire that exists as a support network for individual ambitions, most especially for those who are in a sufficiently influential position to bend the
will and power of the state for their own purposes. In it, private interests seemed to be inherently superior to public or national interests. As we shall see in chapters three and four, this apparent characteristic of British imperialism was among the most difficult for the Spanish government to understand or accept when dealing with British officials. Spanish policy makers found it difficult to understand the basically participatory nature of British government, which allowed a more significant range of opportunity for private interests to find their voice in state policies and actions. It is difficult to imagine something analogous to the Draper expedition being approved by the Spanish crown in the eighteenth century.

Yet British imperialism did not yet enjoy a solid ideological consensus. As long as the war continued, and British military victories continued to mount, there was little serious discussion about how the post-war Empire might function. But even before the fighting officially came to an end, the lines of a new battle were being drawn in Great Britain between commerce-vanguard imperialists who were dissatisfied with the outcome of the war, and the state-vanguard imperialists who would struggle to maintain the kind of control that they had enjoyed during the war. Unfortunately for both the Spanish and British governments and their peoples, there was an additional negative legacy stemming from the war. As it turned out, the Anglo-Spanish portion of the Peace of Paris was an almost wholly unsatisfactory settlement. It angered commerce-vanguardists in Britain, who felt that not enough had been done to remove obstructions to trade. Even worse, it was written without sufficient knowledge of the actual outcome of the battles for Havana and Manila, and proved unable to predict how tensions would develop between Britain and Spain in the post-war years. To put it mildly, it opened far more doors for conflict than it closed. It also helped energize the political debate over the future of the British Empire, which is the topic of the next chapter.
The state is an entity of many faces, especially when it comes to eighteenth-century Britain. When I use the word state, I refer to the array of institutions that are linked to the operation of a national government. In Britain around the time of the Seven Years’ War, these included, but were not necessarily limited to: the king and his personal advisors, his principal ministers and their staffs, and any public servant who either directly or indirectly reported to them, including all members of the military. As Steve Pincus has argued, the Britain that emerged from the Glorious Revolution of 1688 was no less focused on centralization and modernization than the nascent Absolutist state that James II had been attempting to create before he was forced to flee. Rather than being mere reactionaries who wanted to protect some traditionally English mode of government and society, the revolutionaries who opposed Charles had their own, alternate vision of the British future. In the wake of their successful political revolution, eighteenth-century Britain continued to be preoccupied with growing commercial interests, military power, and the expansion of empire. Although the Revolution may have favoured classical Liberalism over Absolutism, it was in no way hostile to a strong role for the state.¹

¹ Steve Pincus, 1688: The First Modern Revolution (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2009). Pincus’s broad argument is opposed to long-established thought on the Glorious Revolution, which has held that it was a non-revolutionary, aristocratic assertion of sensible English tradition and that it did not reflect a desire to change English society in any significant way. Rather than suffer the extremes of republicanism and Absolutism, England was thought to have walked a restrained middle path. Pincus convincingly shows that this narrative is fundamentally misleading and draws attention away from the truly revolutionary changes that were then taking place in Britain.
The key transformation of the Glorious Revolution was that it made the British state far more broadly participatory. It was also more vulnerable to internal confusion and dissent than its Absolutist rivals to the south. With so many voices to consider, it is not always easy to understand the precise nature and extent of the state’s influence over the nation’s society. It is tempting to portray the state as an entity that operates completely apart from the private sector, thereby drawing a sharp and limiting dichotomy between the two. In other words, you could have public funding and direction or you could have private initiative, but not a genuine hybrid of the two. This distinction has little merit. It offers the illusion of a parsimonious description of a country’s political and economic structure, but does not reflect the more complex reality of how those forces have traditionally interacted in Western societies. The situation in Britain after the Seven Years’ War is an excellent example. As Holger Hoock has recently argued, Britain’s fiscal-military state in that era was “efficient and expansive,” but it was also “more porous and open towards supporting private initiatives that previously assumed.”

Even more significantly, there was already a significant tradition of interplay between the centralized governance of the empire and the commercial interests that lay at its fringe. As James Vaughn has convincingly illustrated, the East India Company (EIC) was not simply an erratic and uncontrollable factor for eighteenth-century British politicians. Vaughn argues that the evolution of the EIC was profoundly shaped by the “socio-political conflict” that was taking place back in metropolitan Britain – “the struggle for state power carried out over time by various social groups, economic interests, and politico-ideological factions.” In the 1760s, an open conflict was fought in metropolitan circles over the future of the British Empire. As Vaughn describes, a “neo-Tory imperial political economy that emphasized the extraction of revenues” from the colonies and “due subordination that

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subject peoples owed to metropolitan sovereign authority” rose up during the final phase of the Seven Years’ War and the immediate post-war years. Obstructing its path was “an older Whig imperial political economy” that focused on “constitutional liberties, commercial expansion and economic growth.”

In the parlance of my dissertation, these ideological factions roughly correspond to the categories of state-vanguard and commerce-vanguard imperialists, respectively. Although not all commercial endeavours in the British Empire prior to the Seven Years’ War were as obviously connected to metropolitan politics as the EIC, the roots of state-managed imperialism clearly extended back many decades prior to that conflict, as both Pincus and Vaughn have shown. This chapter will suggest that the post-war British Empire was seriously vulnerable to pan-imperial political turbulence that blended domestic and imperial issues into a more generalized conflict over what would be permitted in a future British state and empire and what would not. That fundamental divide was not created by the Peace of Paris. But the treaty, pushed through by war-weary French and British officials, was particularly inept when it came to the matter of how the Anglo-Spanish relationship was to play out in the post-war years. Alongside the metropolitan socio-political conflict that Vaughn has identified, dissatisfaction on the matter of the Anglo-Spanish future in the Atlantic played an important role in energizing dissent within the British Empire in the post-war years.

The Long Awaited Peace

The timing of the Peace of Paris was almost exclusively a product of the status of the struggle between Great Britain and France. In the simplest possible terms, the war came to an end because both the French and the British were finally ready for it to end – that much was already clear before the

4 Ibid., 4.
Spanish even entered the conflict. The treaty represented the end product of a long, multi-year process of both formal and informal negotiation between London and Paris. As such, it is not surprising that it was most effective – or perhaps the least flawed – when it dealt with Anglo-French issues. There would be many difficult issues for both parties to deal with in the years that followed, but the treaty did provide a stable environment for at least the foreseeable future. The Spanish component of the treaty was certainly not insignificant, but it was focused on resolving issues that had only been playing out on the battlefield for a handful of months. As we will see, negotiators on both sides of the table were operating in the dark, without complete information about what had actually happened in the war. Even understanding the situation at the time required a certain amount of guesswork about what was happening across the oceans in Cuba and in the Philippines. To go one step further, into the realm of understanding the longer-term consequences of the war, was extremely difficult in the autumn of 1762. As a result, the greatest hazards of the Peace of Paris were those that emerged from the rushed and deeply flawed Spanish component of the negotiations. In the seeming calm and relief of the Anglo-French armistice, there lurked an Anglo-Spanish Trojan horse that would help provide the basis for renewed imperial instability within a decade.

By the first half of 1761, many months before the Spanish entry into the war, French and British representatives were already seriously discussing the terms of peace. The French cession of Canada was already on the table, but the two governments continued to argue over several key issues. These included the future status and boundaries of Louisiana, and the rights of French fishermen off the coast of Atlantic Canada. The more aggressive British ministers, led by William Pitt, felt that the time was right to deny France any part in future fishing in the Atlantic, “even that which is allowed to all other nations in this world, and thereby to incapacitate them from being any longer a naval power.” The more realistic
among them understood that France would never submit to such terms unless their position deteriorated dramatically. The very existence of this debate was a problem. As long as either side was even slightly insincere in its desire for peace, and continued to attempt to gain advantage on the battlefield, the negotiations were doomed to drag on. In 1761, there were not yet enough influential Britons expressing strong opinions against the continuation of the war to put an end to it. In the absence of a vigorous opposition, Pitt was able to continue a campaign that was ultimately designed to take the French presence in the Americas apart, piece by piece. After disposing of the French, the Spanish were next in line.

Despite the fact that the British political environment remained bellicose in the summer of 1761, one faction in British political circles was already in favour of looking toward peace. The Duke of Bedford felt that the Pitt faction had taken leave of their senses, and had fallen into a habit of boastful pride and unreasonable faith in the capacity of the British state to project military power. He and his allies provided a more cautious counterpoint to Pitt’s warmongering, but found their advice falling on deaf ears. After a particularly discouraging cabinet meeting, Bedford wrote to his brother-in-law, Granville Leveson-Gower, and vented about his disappointment with the Pitt ministry. “I won’t make you so bad a compliment as to mention the arguments made use of to expose such a rhodomontade,” Bedford said, “and shall only tell you further that when I left them at half past five they were hammering at a dispatch” that aimed at “civilly desiring the French to lie down quietly to let us cut their throats.” Bedford felt disquieted and abused by the discussion in the room. “I am much disappointed in not
finding you here,” he told Lord Gower, who was among his closest political allies. The Duke was outgunned in a cabinet that wished to push on with the war. For the time being, they got their way.

The French and the Spanish also shouldered some of the blame for prolonging the war in 1761. It was the French who campaigned to bring Spain into the war, in the vain hope that Spanish arms might reverse some of the horrendous losses of the previous few years. The Spanish crown exercised bad judgment by ultimately deciding to acquiesce to French desires. But by the middle of 1762, even before news of the British seizures of Havana and Manila had reached European shores, each of the three Atlantic powers was rapidly losing any remaining taste for war. It was appropriate, and probably unsurprising, that the British representative at the Paris Peace talks was none other than the Duke of Bedford. In spite of the now-genuine desire for peace from all three crowns, the negotiations would sometimes prove to be difficult, and Bedford often expressed his frustration and annoyance with the process and with the other major personalities at the table. Representing France was the formidable Duc de Choiseul, the royal favourite and chief minister in Paris. The Marqués de Grimaldi, then serving as the Spanish ambassador to France, represented the interests of his crown.

At the beginning of September 1762, King George III issued a series of instructions that the Duke of Bedford was to take with him to Paris on his mission of peace. The first section of this instructional package concerned itself with negotiations with respect to the French Empire, much of which was already clearly drawn. The war between Britain and France had already effectively been over for some time. The failure of the Spanish intervention meant that France was still slowly losing ground to British forces in the Caribbean. Both sides already had a clear understanding that France’s territorial losses

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would be considerable in the Peace of Paris. Consequently, the French crown was fully aware that its best interests lay in a quick resolution to the war, and there were few surprises to delay or obstruct that goal. The Spanish case, which was the subject of George III’s second set of instructions, was different. Certainly, all of the negotiators at the Peace of Paris understood that Spain had failed to make any kind of critical military difference on the oceans and battlefields of the war. But in many cases, the battles were still raging, and important news about key events had not yet made its way back to Europe when Bedford departed to make peace in Paris.

Although Lord Albemarle had already successfully completed the capture of Havana, Bedford headed off to Paris several weeks before news of that victory could cross the Atlantic. The fate of the British attempt to seize Manila, which was still playing out so much farther away, would not be known for months. As a result, the longer-term consequences of the war for the Anglo-Spanish relationship were not yet fully apparent to either Bedford or Grimaldi. Under these circumstances, and with the eagerness on all sides to bring the bloodshed to a close, the treaty language of the Anglo-Spanish portion of the peace had to be markedly vague on many points. Entering into a post-war environment in which so many points of tension remained unanticipated and/or unresolved was dangerous. With that factor in mind, it is unsurprising that it was an Anglo-Spanish dispute in the Falklands, rather than an Anglo-French conflict, that nearly dragged the Atlantic powers back into war in 1770-1.

Some of the most important points of contention that would emerge between Britain and Spain in the years following the Peace of Paris could not have been anticipated. Nobody could have reasonably predicted that Draper would handle the conquest of Manila so poorly, and would demand a ransom that could not be paid. Similarly, the Falkland Islands would soon become a flash point for conflict, but were not yet on anyone’s mind in the winter of 1762-3. Yet two lasting points of contention between Britain and Spain were already perfectly clear when Bedford arrived in Paris. The first of these was the right of
Spanish fishermen to trawl the Grand Banks of Newfoundland. Ultimately, this issue was not particularly controversial, as the British were basically willing to restore the pre-war status quo and to continue that debate over time. A far more problematic issue was the status of British logwood cutters in the Bay of Honduras, which had already been a sticky issue between the two empires for many decades. The king ordered Bedford to agree to the dismantling of any settlements that British subjects might “have made in the Bay of Honduras,” but only on the “express condition” that British subjects would enjoy “the free and entire liberty of cutting, loading, and exporting logwood” from the region, “without any disturbance or molestation from the subjects of Spain.” As we shall see in the next chapter, although they did eventually reach an agreement on this matter, Bedford and Grimaldi had radically different understandings of what it actually meant, thereby leading to a series of dangerous missteps in Honduras by both sides after the war.

In general, with the notable exception of the new British rights in Honduras, the king’s instructions for Bedford were vague. He ordered his representative to restore the treaties of peace and commerce between Spain and Britain that had been in place prior to the war. As for the matter of territorial conquests, George III simply said that “all restitutions and compensations are left to be discussed by the Ministers Plenipotentiary,” and that Bedford should pursue “the most advantageous terms” that he might be “able to obtain.” But because no specific information was available yet about Havana and Manila, Bedford could hardly demand compensation for conquests that remained theoretical. There was also the issue of ensuring that Spain withdrew from Portugal, which it had invaded upon entering the war. The crown’s instructions made it clear that the Spanish-Portuguese

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8 In fact, as a general issue, it has continued to be somewhat problematic up to the present day, as the 1995 “Turbot War” between Canada and Spain illustrated.
9 BNA, SP 78/253, George III to Bedford, “Separate Instructions for Dealing with the Negotiations with Spain,” 4 September 1762, f. 21 verso.
10 Ibid, f. 22 verso.
border was to be restored to its original configuration, and that Britain’s cooperation in the peace negotiations was contingent on that point. In short, Spain had at least one thing that Britain wanted very badly; they did not suffer from a complete lack of leverage in the negotiations.

The Marqués de Grimaldi was a key figure at the peace of Paris, not simply because he represented one of the three signatory powers, but because the entire process could only proceed with his approval. The Earl of Egremont made it clear to Bedford that the “preliminary articles with the Court of Spain shall be so far adjusted as to be ready for signature at the same time” as the articles with France. He gave this instruction because the British crown feared that a non-synchronized peace process might open up a window for either the French or the Spanish to engage in some kind of deception or chicanery that could damage British interests. Egremont also observed that this initial round of negotiations, in which the preliminary treaties were being drawn up, was extremely important because the expectation was that there would be “very little to be added” to the later definitive treaty. It was intended to simply be a refined version, with clarifications but no substantial changes. But while Choiseul did not have to engage in guesswork when assessing France’s position, Grimaldi was operating half-blind. Although he was under orders from Madrid to conclude the war with Britain, his task was a challenging one – and so were Bedford’s efforts to negotiate with him.

Upon his arrival in Paris, Bedford quickly became aware that the French also perceived Grimaldi as one of the most significant potential obstacles to a quick resolution of the peace process. “The Duke de Choiseul is undoubtedly desirous of concluding (the peace) immediately,” Bedford reported. “The only difficulty he perceives in doing it arises from Monsieur Grimaldi himself,” as the King of Spain had already granted broad latitude to the King of France “to settle everything” according to his best

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11 Ibid, f. 23.
12 BNA, SP 78/253, Egremont to Bedford, Whitehall, 7 September 1762, f. 24-5.
13 Ibid, f. 27 verso.
judgement. As a result, Spanish issues often played an important role in the many exhausting hours of conversation between the ministers throughout September and October of 1762. Choiseul seems to have been greatly annoyed by Grimaldi’s attitude throughout the process, as well as concerned that it might derail the negotiations. According to Bedford, the French negotiator believed that “the Spanish Ambassador was so ill-intentioned to the peace that he feared it might be frustrated thro’ his means.”

Even with Choiseul’s warnings about Grimaldi, Lord Bedford was taken aback when they first came face to face.

Tho’ I had been already apprized of the character of the Spanish Ambassador, (and) of his ill Intentions towards the great work now in hand, yet I did not expect to find it so strongly marked at the very first meeting we ever had upon business. For tho’ that minister was very lavish in professions of the desire of his court to a thorough reconciliation with England, (and) of his zeal to contribute to the utmost of his abilities to carry these pacifick intentions of his court into execution, ... I found ... that all his professions of good intentions towards a reconciliation betwixt our two courts could not, in any degree, be relied on.

In short, from the perspective of the dismayed British and French negotiators, Grimaldi played a peculiarly obstructionist role at the Peace of Paris. Progress was slow on many points.

Grimaldi was “with difficulty brought to acquiesce to the article” that gave permission to British logwood cutters in Honduras, but only “after an altercation of above an hour, in which (Bedford) was supported against him by the French ministers.” But the Spanish minister remained obstinate on many other points. Bedford’s impression of much of what followed was that it was beneath the dignity of the occasion. “This is such stuff,” he lamented, “that I am almost ashamed to put it into a dispatch.” In his view, Grimaldi poisoned the situation with his “puerilities (and) false reasoning,” and by ultimately

14 BNA, SP 78/253, Bedford to Egremont, Paris, 12 September 1762, postscript of 13 September 1762, f. 51.
15 BNA, SP 78/253, Bedford to Egremont, Paris, 19 September 1762, f. 69 verso.
16 Ibid, f. 70.
declaring “that he would rather lose his right arm than sign” the treaty as it was then proposed. In desperate need of some additional leverage to move the Spanish minister, Bedford found relief when Lord Egremont finally sent news from Havana on 29 September. Egremont reported that everyone in London, including the French representative there, expressed their belief that this development might help move the peace process along. He said that it was “the general hope and belief of every one that as the difficulties the Spaniards had started arose chiefly from a persuasion that the expedition would fail,” the Spanish would soon be more “seriously inclined to listen to terms of accommodation.” Egremont made it clear that it was “not only the uniforme sentiments of the administration, but the unanimous voice of the whole nation, that so very important a conquest could not be restored without an adequate compensation.”

Egremont was right to suggest that the news from Havana would ultimately increase the pressure on the Spanish to sign the treaty. Grimaldi appears to have been surprised by the news. His second hand information, sent by officers in Cuba and filtered through Madrid, had been consistently reaffirming the invincibility of Havana’s defences. The message that he had been expressing to the other participants at the Peace of Paris was that Havana enjoyed “perfect security” and that any attempt to violate the city “would be attended with consequences much more fatal to his (Britannic) Majesty’s troops and fleet” than to the Spanish defenders. News of Havana’s fall was a flagrant contradiction of everything that Grimaldi thought he knew about Spanish security in the Caribbean. Bedford reported that the news had certainly made all of the negotiators more ready than ever before to sign, and that even Grimaldi was willing to drop his previous objections to the treaty. But in doing so, the Spanish

17 Ibid, f. 70 verso-71 verso.
18 BNA, SP 78/253, Egremont to Bedford, Whitehall, 29 September 1762, f. 132.
19 BNA, SP 78/253, Egremont to Bedford, Whitehall, 10 October 1762, f. 140.
20 BNA, SP 78/253, Egremont to Bedford, Whitehall, 14 October 1762, f. 145.
21 Ibid, f. 143 verso.
minister drew a firm line beyond which the British could not cross. He made it abundantly clear to Bedford that Spain would not cede any of its territory in order to regain Havana. Both the French and the Spanish ministers advised Bedford that it would be almost impossible to persuade the Spanish crown to accede to such a demand. Even more importantly, they warned him that any attempt to coerce Grimaldi to give up Spanish territories would result in a delay of uncertain duration to the entire peace process, and a continuation of the expense and bloodshed of war.  

Bedford did not push his luck. He accepted the situation as it sat and did not attempt to pry additional compensation out of the Spanish in exchange for Havana. On the morning of 3 November 1762, Bedford, Choiseul and Grimaldi signed the preliminary articles of the Peace of Paris. With the passage of their quills across the pages of the treaty, the largest part of the Seven Years’ War effectively came to an end. But on that day, Grimaldi demanded one final alteration to the accord. Without it, he absolutely refused to sign, even under direct pressure from the King of France. Article XVII was the passage that called for Britain to remove its fortifications in the Bay of Honduras in exchange for a Spanish promise not to interfere with British logging in the region after the war. Grimaldi demanded that the article should not deal only with the Bay of Honduras, but should ensure the removal of any British fortifications throughout the region. Accordingly, he added the phrase “and other places of the territory of Spain in that part of the world.” As we shall see from Grimaldi’s recollections about this final day of negotiations, he did so with the understanding that the British had no interest in expanding their logging activities into new areas.

What Grimaldi did not appear to understand is that Bedford was not particularly bothered by this new demand because he did not share Grimaldi’s conception of what constituted Spanish territory.

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22 BNA, SP 78/253, Bedford to Egremont, Fontainebleau, 11 October 1762, f. 149.
23 Ministerio de Cultura (España), Archivo Histórico Nacional, Estado, Legajo 4262, Marqués de Grimaldi to Prince Masserano, San Ildefonso, 13 August 1764.
In writing to London, Bedford made his perspective abundantly clear. “I have ... the satisfaction to be able to observe,” he recounted, “that no part of those coasts but those which are in the undoubted territory of Spain can be included” in the stipulation. Bedford did not consider Central America to be a solid, contiguous block of Spanish territory, while Grimaldi seems to have at least tried to represent it as such. While Bedford remarked that the new clause would save them from having to list all of the specific sites, Grimaldi took it to mean not simply a series of localized sites, but all the interstitial territory between them as well. As the Spanish claim swept over vast stretches of land on the basis of traditional claims, the British looked much more specifically at what a European crown was able to reasonably and legitimately claim via settlement and direct exertion of rule-of-law. If a land did not appear to be under the direct and active jurisdiction of the Spanish crown, then how could it be considered to be part of the Spanish Empire? In previous eras, when the intrusions of any other Europeans into Spanish America were generally infrequent and tenuous, these issues triggered conflict on a sporadic basis at best. But by the latter half of the eighteenth century, space was running out and geography was an increasingly pressing concern. The geographical definition of empire mattered more than ever before.

The Peace of Paris brought immediate relief to the Anglo-French relationship, bringing an end to a war that had already overstayed its welcome on both sides of the English Channel. But the treaty introduced more instabilities to the Anglo-Spanish relationship than it dissipated. The still unvoiced disagreement over the meaning of Article XVII meant that the logwood issue in Honduras remained far from resolved. The fact that the Treaty of Paris guaranteed the return of any additional conquered territories from any part of the world, without demands for compensation, meant that the yet-to-be-revealed debacle that was still unfolding in Manila would clash miserably with the treaty. Perhaps most importantly of all, the brief war of 1762 had demonstrated to Spain that it had a great deal to fear from

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24 BNA, SP 78/254, Bedford to Egremont, Fontainebleau, 3 November 1762, f. 1.
Great Britain, and the Peace of Paris did almost nothing to persuade them that the end of the war meant the arrival of any sort of lasting security. The Atlantic was as dangerous as ever, and for the first time, Spain faced its own imperial future with a vastly reduced French presence in the hemisphere. Together, these conditions were a Trojan horse in the preliminary accord that was signed in Paris in 1762. Matters may have appeared settled, but this Anglo-Spanish Trojan laid the ground for major instabilities in the Atlantic world that would increasingly threaten the peace between the major powers over the years that followed.

The Attempt for Consensus through Suppression

The Peace of Paris was not uniformly welcomed in the British Empire. To some extent, the British crown expected dissent. Officials in London knew that many politically interested Britons had hoped for a much more extensive dismemberment of Bourbon domains in the Americas, with major concessions not only from the French but also from the Spanish. As a result, even before the ink was dry on the Treaty of Paris, the crown began to take aggressive action against what it perceived to be the enemies of the state-sanctioned path for the British Empire in the post-war environment. This tendency was particularly strong in the immediate aftermath of the Seven Years’ War, and it reflected what James Vaughn describes as a neo-Tory determination to suppress and undermine the more traditional Whig position in both domestic and imperial policymaking. The first step was to suppress troublemakers before they could react against the conclusion of the peace process.

This process began on the night of 11 November 1762, when Nathan Carrington, chief messenger of King George III, walked the streets of London with three other royal messengers. They were bound for the home of the writer John Entick, a known opponent of the government’s wartime
conduct and an associate of the radical politician John Wilkes, who had already stirred up debate by accusing the crown of withholding critical information about how Britain and Spain had ended up at war in 1762. Upon their arrival, Carrington and his men broke into Entick’s residence “with force and arms.” For the next four hours, against the forcefully expressed wishes of the owner, the messengers rampaged through the house, breaking locks and rummaging through each room’s “boxes, chests, (and) drawers.” Carrington then arrested Entick and seized hundreds of his personal papers, acting on the personal authority of George Montagu-Dunk, Earl of Halifax and Secretary of State for the Northern Department. The hapless Entick was not alone; many of his editorial collaborators were similarly rounded up and accused of being seditious nuisances.

As far as the British government was concerned, John Entick was an established troublemaker. Or, at least, he had increasingly become one in his elder years. For much of his adult life, Entick had lived quietly in Stepney, in the eastern reaches of London, where he had concerned himself more with issues of language and religion than with politics. Born sometime around 1703, he was apparently a studious youth with a special talent for languages. As a young man, he published instructional books for students of Latin and Greek. He also described himself as a student of divinity, and published a strident tract titled *The Evidence of Christianity Asserted and Proved from Facts* (1729). But for much of the rest of his adult life, Entick was almost completely silent. In 1736, he proposed to publish a new volume of Chaucer’s work, but nothing came of the project. It would be 1754 before his name appeared in print again. But in this second wave of publishing activity, Entick vigorously expanded into an entirely new area: the politics and economics of empire.

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The erstwhile intellectual hermit became, almost overnight, a public figure who increasingly waded into polemical territory. Part of the motivation behind this new and energetic advocacy may have been his extensive involvement with Freemasonry, an organization that also tended to promote the commerce-friendly viewpoints that Entick held in his writings.\(^{26}\) In 1755, he became part of a group of writers with a clear political agenda that had emerged to fight against the conduct of the British government, which had then recently set the country on the path to war with France under the unsteady leadership of the Duke of Newcastle. The publisher Jonathan Scott and the political writer John Shebbeare, who were then embroiled in the controversy over Shebbeare’s highly critical first *Letter to the People of England*,\(^{27}\) engaged Entick to become a regular columnist for their paper *The Monitor, or, The British Freeholder*, a publication that often voiced opinions that were critical of government policies, especially during the Seven Years’ War.\(^{28}\) Through that position, Entick achieved a new visibility and a heightened ability to make his views known to British society.

Entick recognized the longstanding relationship between British sea power and the success of Britain’s oceangoing commerce. His view was not simply that commerce was an important component of empire. Rather, Entick understood commerce to be the entire point of having an empire, and suggested that the function of the British crown was to do whatever was in its power to facilitate that commerce. Although he was certainly not alone in this opinion, he gave voice to some of the most

\(^{26}\) We know of Entick’s involvement with Freemasonry principally by way of the handbook that he published on the Masons in 1754, and its subsequent updates, which list him as being a prominent Masonic official at numerous meetings throughout the late 1750s and early 1760s. See, for example, pages 281-2 of *The Constitutions of the ... Masons ... collected ... by J. Anderson and revised ... by J. Entick. A new edition, with alterations and additions by a Committee appointed by the Grand Lodge. (Appendix to the Constitutions, etc.*)* which was published in London in 1767, with an appendix added in 1776. This volume, and various others that are very similar, are held in the collections of the British Library.

\(^{27}\) See John Shebbeare, *A Letter to the People of England, on the Present Situation and Conduct of National Affairs, Letter I*, 2nd edition (London: J. Scott, 1755). In this tract, Shebbeare accused the Newcastle ministry of sacrificing Britain’s colonial interests in favour of George II’s Hanoverian interests on the European continent, a position that was also held by Pitt the Elder.

aggressive versions of this ideology. In his 1757 history of the British navy, Entick credited the rise of Britain’s economic strength to the slow but steady increase in its naval armaments over the past two centuries. His prescription for how naval power should be used was simple:

We must perceive of how great importance (trade) is, that it should be free and undisturbed: That whatever clogs or obstructs it, must be (a) universal detriment; and that whatever promotes navigation must be allowed to promote the general interest of the nation: For thereon depends our trade; and upon trade depends the value of our houses, lands, and produce.  

Entick and his associates had little use for the power of the state per se. For them, it was a tool that could be used for good ends, but could also be wasted on frivolous displays of strength and pointless international sparring. As a direct extension of that philosophy, they were sceptical about but not categorically opposed to the practice of warring between nations.

The writers of The Monitor agreed that wars were sometimes necessary and even useful to secure more favourable terms from other governments, especially when those terms opened the way for British commerce. But they were opposed to “the effusion of blood and treasure, which a war draws out of the vitals of a nation,” except when used to forcefully bring the war to a successful conclusion and a favourable outcome for Great Britain. They also argued that “those who steer the helm of state and are entrusted with the management of the public interest” must pursue a firm, resolute peace that gives the enemy the impression that Britain does not want further warring, but is willing and capable to strike against those who would challenge British interests and attempt to restrict British commerce.  

“There is but one certain unerring rule in politics,” they insisted: “What you do, do it with all your might. And they

29 John Entick, A New Naval History: Or, Compleat View of the British Marine (London: Printed for R. Manby, near Ludgate-Hill; W. Reeve, near Sejeant’s Inn, in Fleet Street; W. Bizet, in St. Clement’s Church-yard; P. Davey and B. Law, in Ave-Mary-Lane; and J. Scott, in Pater-noster-row, 1757), i.

30 The Monitor, or the British Freeholder, No. 355 (8 May 1762), 2139-40. The writers for this publication simply signed with a letter or two. This issue was signed by “Z.”
that do otherwise, do wrong.”\textsuperscript{31} In other words, \textit{The Monitor} argued that Britain must act against its enemies with all of its strength and take away their will and capacity to retaliate, or there was little point in acting at all. It was the eighteenth-century precursor of the contemporary doctrine of shock and awe.\textsuperscript{32} 

In the fall of 1762, \textit{The Monitor’s} forceful and antagonistic style led Entick and his colleagues into a labyrinth of troubles. The issue of 11 September 1762 condemned the idea that Britain would give up its wartime conquests at a time when France and Spain were beaten and humiliated. \textit{The Monitor} identified France and Spain as “the mortal enemies of our liberty and religion,” and feared that they would only revive and strengthen “under the sanction of peace.” As their editorial staff saw it, the French and Spanish would use the peace to rearm their militaries and then attempt to block British trade from much of the world. The consequences for British traders would be dire. John Entick and his colleagues felt that the British crown must take whatever actions were necessary to safeguard the nation’s commercial interests. So they argued that peace, with the situation as it was in the fall of 1762, would place the empire in grave danger. “Our murmurings and dissatisfaction can be allayed by no other means than a successful war, which shall ... carry peace at the point of a sword to the gates of Paris and Madrid,” they insisted. In their vision of the imperial future, the French and Spanish Empires would forever lie prostrate before the power of the British navy, with the Caribbean sugar islands, the Indian territories, the Atlantic fisheries, and the city of Havana all remaining in British hands.\textsuperscript{33} “The war ... has required an \textit{immense expense} to make it advantageous to the nation,” they conceded. But they argued that the overall stability of the British financial system was far more robust than those of the French and

\begin{footnotesize}
\textsuperscript{31} Ibid., 2142.
\textsuperscript{32} Here, I refer to the military doctrine of overwhelming domination advocated by Secretary of Defence Donald Rumsfeld and other members of the George W. Bush administration during the 2003 US invasion of Iraq.
\textsuperscript{33} \textit{The Monitor...}, No. 373 (11 September 1762), 2251. Signed by “Q.”
\end{footnotesize}
Spanish, and the monetary gains from long-term security would make the expense worthwhile.\textsuperscript{34}

Essentially, war might be expensive for Britain, but not nearly as ruinous as it was for its rival empires.

On 16 October 1762, The Monitor broadened its assault on the British government by declaring the House of Commons to be little more than an empty vessel – a shadow of its former self that continued to practice the form of governance but none of the substance.

That very dangerous innovations have been introduced, that the just ballance of power in the British constitution is destroyed, that the free popular system has been compelled to yield to the aristocratical, is evident to any one who reflects but a moment on the nature of our government, what a House of Commons was in its original institution, and what it is in its present state.\textsuperscript{35}

These accusations made it clear enough how Entick and his colleagues felt about the ministry that was then in power at Westminster: it was mired in aristocratic power games and either unwilling or incapable of acting in the best interests of Great Britain. It was not as though there were no prominent political figures with similar ideas. Before his unhappy departure from high office, William Pitt had expressed his determination to force France to seek peace only from a position of weakness and to accept no other kind of end to the war. But by the fall of 1762, the debate was effectively over, and the peace process was in play.

The Monitor’s complaints and mass character assassination directed against the Commons could only serve to exasperate the crown to the point that the proceedings against Entick were almost inevitable. Lord Halifax clearly assumed that Entick et al had every intention of continuing their assault against what they saw as the government’s excessively passive handling of the war at a time when the Duke of Bedford was already attempting to navigate his way through delicate peace negotiations in

\textsuperscript{34} The Monitor..., No. 376 (2 October 1762), 2264. This issue was unsigned and appears to have several authors.

\textsuperscript{35} The Monitor..., No. 378 (16 October 1762), 2280. Signed by “O.”
Paris. In Halifax’s determination, to even prepare for such publications was an act of sedition, so he ordered the November invasion of Entick’s home to secure evidence of wrongdoing. His agents found that evidence and temporarily muzzled John Entick and his colleagues. The crown took this strategy one step further in the spring of 1763, when they arrested John Wilkes for his condemnation of the Peace of Paris as overly generous to the Bourbon powers in the pages of his newspaper *The North Briton*. As a Member of Parliament and a highly visible figure in British society, Wilkes successfully fought back through the manipulation of public opinion and protest. But in the long run, Entick’s strategy may have been the most significant.

**Entick v. Carrington**

John Entick did not take the crown’s actions lying down. Not accepting Halifax’s warrant as valid, he sued Carrington and his men for trespassing and initiated a long legal process. In doing so, he put the British government on the path to a losing legal battle that provides us with an important window into the slow unravelling of the British government’s attempt to create both domestic and imperial consensus through suppression. In November 1765, plaintiff and defendants found themselves before Great Britain’s Court of Common Pleas at Westminster, headed by Chief Justice Charles Pratt, the Earl of Camden. After the court heard the arguments and deliberated on their merits, Lord Camden read a ruling that would have a strong and lasting impact on both British and American common law. Although he expressed sympathy for the government’s concern about libellous publications and the

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36 “John ENTICK, (Clerk) v. Nathan CARRINGTON and Three Others.” The legal citation for this case is: Entick v Carrington & Ors [1765] EWHC KB J98 (02 November 1765). It can be found, and is perhaps best known as case 1029 in volume 19 of *Howell’s State Trials*, more properly known as Thomas Bayly Howell, ed., *Cobbett’s complete collection of state trials and proceedings for high treason and other crimes and misdemeanors from the earliest period to the present time* (London : R. Bagshaw, 1809-1826).
potential damage that they might inflict on the public interest, Camden rejected Lord Halifax’s supposed authority to order the invasion of private property in an effort to seek and root out libel before it could see the light of day in printed form. “The law,” Camden decided, “never forces evidence from the party in whose power it is. When an adversary has got your deeds, there is no lawful way of getting them again but by (a legal) action.” Camden recognized the potential threat that libel posed to the security and prosperity of the empire, but he ruled that Halifax’s warrant was “wholly illegal and void” and had no basis in either statute or precedent.37

The ruling in favour of John Entick was a significant departure from long-established British tradition. Common law precedent over the centuries before Entick v. Carrington was inconsistent at best. The traditional sentiment in English society was that good men sometimes needed to violate individual privacy when such actions were in the best interests of the broader community. Some judgements ruled against the government breaking into private homes, but there was also a general understanding that such limitations were not meant to stand in the way when the direct interests of the crown were threatened. In seventeenth-century England, government officials were allowed broad discretionary powers when they suspected that a private home was a shelter for religious or political dissidents.38 In 1765, Carrington’s defence rested squarely on the claim that tradition gave Lord Halifax every right to issue such warrants, and that “such warrants (had) frequently been granted by Secretaries of State” in the past.39

37 Entick v. Carrington.
38 William Cuddihy and B. Carmon Hardy, “A Man’s House Was Not His Castle: Origins of the Fourth Amendment to the United States Constitution,” The William and Mary Quarterly 37 no. 3 (July 1980), 374-5. This article gives an extensive history of common law decisions that relate to both Entick v. Carrington and the US Constitution’s fourth amendment, which is closely linked to Lord Camden’s 1765 ruling.
39 Entick v. Carrington.
The justices of the Court of Common Pleas were not convinced. In order for the government to enjoy such a right, it would need the support of either a statute of parliament or a precedent from a previous common law ruling. In the estimation of the court, the government enjoyed neither, and so the justices established what they saw as a long-overdue legal precedent. “Our law holds the property of every man so sacred that no man can set his foot upon his neighbour’s close without his leave,” Lord Camden declared. “If he does, he is a trespasser, though he does no damage at all.” His condemnation of Carrington’s actions was stern. “There is no law in this country to justify the defendants in what they have done,” he said. “If there was, it would destroy all the comforts of society, for papers are often the dearest property a man can have.” In saying so, the chief justice made an oblique yet firm statement in favour of the individual’s right to disagree with government policies, and essentially granted an almost unlimited right to do so within the walls of private homes. Camden went on to denounce the argument that Carrington’s actions were defensible because the government had been issuing such warrants for many years. In the court’s judgement, the only reason why these actions had been allowed for so long was that nobody had previously brought legal action against the government. Perhaps they were too guilty, Camden mused, or perhaps simply too poor to bring actions against the power of the crown.

Entick v. Carrington changed the *de jure* rules of the game and began an elaborate legal dance between government and citizen in the Anglo-Saxon world that has now persisted for centuries. As Camden noted, feebly-justified government intrusions into the private lives of British subjects had never been endorsed by law, and that situation was reinforced by his court’s ruling. Yet we see from John Entick’s courtroom triumph that something important had changed in the dying days of the Seven Years’ War. The crown’s behaviour had become sufficiently intrusive and controlling to generate a wave of publically-stated opposition from the likes of Entick and Wilkes. In response, Entick had pushed back - he

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40 Ibid.
41 Ibid.
had cared about such violations with enough passion and energy to take strong and persistent legal action against trespassing agents of the crown to one of the highest courts in the British Empire. There, it was made clear that the royal government that oversaw the burgeoning empire could not expect absolute obedience from the British people, or uniform opinion about how it conducted its international relations. By taking action, John Entick made a brief but influential connection between his private understanding of how Britain should function, and the legal apparatus that was capable of helping to integrate those hopes and ambitions into the shared British future. But at the same time, the government of Great Britain and those of other nations that later emerged from the British Empire did not simply throw up their hands and agree to stop all surveillance of their citizens’ private opinions and activities.

The British future that then began to unfold was, in a small but important way, the future that John Entick made. Although it could not necessarily offer citizens broad protection against the crown, Entick v. Carrington gave an important legal standing to the will and power of the individual over the government. The basic essence of the ruling was subsequently enshrined in the fourth amendment to the constitution of the United States, as part of the Bill of Rights’ broader legal stranglehold on the powers of government. For Great Britain, a country in possession of a larger and more powerful empire than it had ever experienced prior to the Seven Years’ War, the potential impact of Entick v. Carrington on the administration of empire was vast. In Camden’s judgement, the common law could not be nullified by the authority of the British crown. The broader implication was that, on one hand, the people of the British Empire were empowered to do whatever they pleased unless it was specifically forbidden by law. On the other hand, the crown was empowered to do absolutely nothing unless the law specifically endorsed it. This legal opinion highlights what was then a growing problem for the British Empire. As the empire grew and the potential scale of the enterprise achieved heights that vastly exceeded any previous British project, the more traditional methodology of relying heavily on individual
initiative was increasingly problematic, as we saw from the example of the British experience with the city of Manila during and after the Seven Years’ War.

In many other theatres of the Seven Years’ War, direct command and control from the heart of the empire was more apparent. During the conflict, the British crown developed an intensity and broad geographical dispersion of state power that it had never before enjoyed. John Entick’s supposedly seditious opinions were deployed against that development. He was in favour of a more arm’s length, commerce-vanguard policy in which the British government would concern itself less with state power per se and more with protecting the rights and interests of individual British traders around the globe. As an extension of that philosophy, he had little taste for secret machinations in the halls of power – government was supposed to be transparent. His post-war writings are drenched with his disgust toward the British crown for what he perceived as their failure to fully exploit their victories over the French and Spanish in order to make the entire Atlantic world safe for British-led free trade. In other words, the heavy-handed but incomplete application of state power against Britain’s foes would only increase the necessity for state control in future years.

The timing of Entick v. Carrington says a great deal about what was happening to the British Empire in the 1760s. At first glance, the judgement might appear to recognize an emerging normative environment that privileged individual rights over state rights. But in fact, the normative scenario was increasingly privileging the rights of the state over the individual, as James Vaughn has indicated in his analysis of British politics in that era. Entick’s legal battle and eventual victory was essential precisely

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42 In writings after the Seven Years’ War, Entick made his displeasure with the government known in print. He felt that very little of value had emerged from the crown’s handling of the war and the Peace of Paris. Entick was very much in favour of free trade, and felt especially strongly that the government had not done enough to secure those rights for British subjects operating in the Spanish sphere of influence. See John Entick, *The General History of the Late War: Concerning its Rise, Progress and Events in Europe, Asia, Africa and America* (second edition) (London: Edward and Charles Dilly in the Poultry, and John Millan at Charing Cross, 1765).
because it made a stand for the protection of individual rights that were increasingly threatened by the growth of state power. To a great extent, the exigencies of war provided an engine of change for those norms. When Lord Camden wondered why nobody had previously challenged state intrusions into private homes, he did not appear to fully appreciate the intensity and permanence of change that the Seven Years’ War had introduced into the individual-state relationship.

In his pioneering study of the ideological bases of the British Empire, David Armitage observes that the early eighteenth century was a time in which there was ample room for different visions of empire to coexist. But he also argues that one general vision of empire started to become dominant by the 1730s and that it made certain clear distinctions between the British Empire and any other contemporary or past empires. Armitage sums up that vision in four words: “Protestant, commercial, maritime, and free.” The last of those four characteristics is, perhaps, the most significant of all. As Armitage points out, the ideas of “empire” and “liberty” were held to be incompatible in classical thought. After all, the arrival of the Roman Empire had meant the introduction of a commanding political entity, but it had meant the death of the Roman Republic and its associated liberties. This ancient dilemma hung miserably and problematically over eighteenth-century minds. Could the British Empire be the solution in the post-Seven Years’ War era? Was it possible that the British government could be a new kind of ruler – a kind of benevolent, global despotism – ready to simultaneously dominate the world and to protect it from those who would trample individual liberties?

As James Vaughn’s work on the East India Company illustrates, the British government attempted to create exactly such a future in the wake of the Seven Years’ War. The EIC had long been a nominally independent entity, but its vulnerability to state influence and control was already clear.

before the Seven Years’ War and would only become more obvious over time as the colony moved
toward its eventual destiny as a crown possession. That relationship was nicely illustrated by the role of
the EIC in Draper’s attack on Manila in 1762. The Company’s involvement was ill-advised and almost
certainly not in its own best interest, but the influence of the British crown was decisive and even
coercively persuasive. So not all was well in London, and the consensus on the imperial future was
clearly not as solid as Armitage suggests. Although British officials initially found success in silencing
their opponents, they could not prevent John Entick from obtaining his critical judgement in 1765 and
they could not suppress the likes of the redoubtable John Wilkes. Those men, associated with a
Whiggish, commerce-vanguard vision of the British Empire, saw the crown as little more than an
emerging tyranny that usurped the concept of freedom for its own uses. When they rebelled in 1776,
Britain’s North American colonists likewise announced their sceptical opinion on the matter.

The Lasting Anglo-Spanish Failure of the Peace of Paris

John Entick and his colleagues at the Monitor may not have been realistic in their calls for a war
to obliterate Bourbon imperial interests in the Americas, but their stridently commerce-vanguard
approach was not about to go away in the face of opposition from state-vanguard imperialists who
envisioned a more careful regime of building empire through centralized planning. In Britain’s
fundamentally participatory state, no socio-political faction could enjoy message discipline on an
imperial scale for long.\(^{44}\) Regardless of the specific approach favoured by the British, the post-war
canvas for expansion that lay before them was far more obstructed by the Spanish than by any other

\(^{44}\) Here I once again point to Pincus’ description of post-revolutionary Britain as a broadly participatory
state, and to Vaughn’s understanding of British politics of the 1760s as being in the grip of combat between neo-
Tory and Whig socio-political factions.
power. It would be the government in Madrid that would try to modernize its colonial system in an attempt to prevent further British economic and political infiltration of the Americas. It was Spanish ships and territorial claims that the British were to encounter when they rounded the tip of South America into the Pacific and looked to make claims on what limited space remained unknown and still totally unexploited by European imperialism. When the Atlantic powers next seemed ready to plunge into war in 1770-1, it would be a Spanish determination to resist the expansion of British influence and power in the southern cone of the Americas that nearly began the outbreak of hostilities. So the failure of the Peace of Paris was, perhaps, first and foremost of Anglo-Spanish origins.

The disagreements over what was to be done with the Spanish Empire that had begun during the Seven Years’ War continued in a more subtle but no less insistent form in the post-war years. The expression of British imperial ideology and expansion in that period, particularly over the longstanding British commercial interest in the Honduras region, is the topic of the next chapter. That discussion will provide some grounding for the two chapters that follow, which discuss the Spanish reaction to British imperialism after the Seven Years’ War. Collectively, they will illustrate the convergence of concepts of empire that was happening within and throughout the British and Spanish worlds in the 1760s. Faced with the emerging power of the British state and growing influence of British commerce, the Spanish would protest the aggression of independently-minded British traders but also borrow heavily from the policy-making of their rivals in an attempt to redress the imbalance created by the Seven Years’ War. In both countries, an increased willingness to use the power of government to achieve these policy objectives showed the growing traction of the idea that the British and Spanish crowns could act forcefully to help shape and discipline their imperial futures.
Chapter III

Imperial Ideology, Aesthetics and Geography from Manila to Central America, 1763-70

In my first two chapters, I often refer to commerce as the dominant ideological ingredient in mid-eighteenth-century Britain. For many, it was by far the most important reason to have an empire. The disagreements over how best to act in support of that ideal certainly caused turbulence, but they do not appear to have shaken the fundamental faith in pro-commercial ideology. So far, we have looked at how the British largely followed a state-vanguard approach to the expansion of commercial empire during a time of war – a state that was not at all unusual for Britain and Spain throughout the eighteenth century. We have also examined how the discourse on ideas about empire shifted in Great Britain during and shortly after the peace process, and have found that internal dissent on the subject reasserted itself in the British Empire when an active state of warfare no longer existed. But the fundamental international conflicts that ended up on the battlefield grew from inabilities to resolve imperial differences during the longer stretches of peacetime, especially those that pertained to trade and to the political pressures that acted on the geographical definitions and frontiers of empire.

The ultimate objective of this chapter is to take a look at one of the central sites of both conceptual and physical conflict between Britain and Spain throughout the second half of the early-modern period. That place is the Bay of Honduras, now generally known as the Gulf of Honduras. It is located to the east of the Yucatan Peninsula – a region that was once mostly unexploited Spanish territory and that would eventually become home to the colony of British Honduras. There, the two crowns skirmished over the rights of commerce and the geographical definitions of their empires. But in
order to arrive at a deeper understanding of what was playing out in Honduras, we will first look at some of the geographical, aesthetic and ethical underpinnings of British imperial ideology, at how they played out in the Spanish context, and at a more general portrait of how those ideas were then playing out throughout the world.

**Leaving Manila, Entering the Post-War World**

After the British misadventure in the Philippines finally came to an end in 1764, the unfortunate Dawsonne Drake was able to leave his Manila foibles behind him and to return his attention to the peacetime affairs of the East India Company. After making one final insult to the Spanish Empire by stealthily absconding with the furniture from the governor’s palace in Manila, Drake sailed away from the Philippine islands in the company of his assistant, James Bean.¹ According to Bean’s narrative, they soon found themselves and their booty caught in a storm. Damaged, and in search of a port to make repairs, their ship arrived in Cochinchina – now the southern part of Vietnam – sometime late in 1764. Upon hearing that the British had arrived on the coast, the King of Cochinchina extended an invitation for Drake and his entourage to visit him in his capital city. The British immediately regarded this summons as an opportunity to create a new business relationship. As Bean noted in his recollection of the visit, his mind was “naturally turned to commerce,” and would take “every opportunity” to make “observations for the improving (and) extending any of its branches.”

¹ This incident of furniture theft is discussed in the introduction to Nicholas P. Cushner’s *Documents Illustrating the British Conquest of Manila, 1762-1763*, Camden Fourth Series, Volume 8 (London: The Royal Historical Society, 1971). As his primary source, Cushner points to the letter of Captain Thomas Backhouse, 1765, in Reddington, *Calendar of Home Office Papers of the Reign of George III*, 589, no. 1865.
The two men were struck by the beauty of this country and greatly intrigued by much of what they observed around them. But their interest was piqued even more quickly by their discovery that “the produce and manufactures of this country, when laid open (to British traders), would be exceedingly well calculated for an extensive trade.” Accordingly, Drake “prepared a noble and proper present” that was calculated to “obtain the king’s favour.” With that task in mind, Drake and Bean set off for the capital of Cochinchina on New Years’ Day, 1765, and traveled into the interior for four days.

Upon their arrival in the capital, the British contingent was formally presented to the king, “who received (them) with great marks of respect.” For three weeks, they stayed at the Cochinchinese court, and enjoyed “entertainments” and ceremonial displays of the king’s “power and magnificence.”

While his contingent enjoyed their time at the royal court, Drake engaged the king in a dialogue on the possibilities of a commercial relationship with the East India Company. Bean tells us that the king “highly approved of the scheme” and was so highly engaged in these negotiations that he made it a “daily and constant subject of his conversation.” The British contingent left the capital of Cochinchina with a commercial agreement in place, and papers that commanded that all of the king’s subjects should treat Drake and Bean with friendship and permit them “to enter into every branch of trade.” Bean remarked that it would be possible to acquire a wide range of goods there, which could be sold for a decent profit in China, a somewhat greater return in India, or in England “to a very high profit, both for the buyer and seller.” The idea was not completely trouble-free, as Drake’s men were operating well within the Chinese commercial sphere. While at port, they encountered considerable trouble from the crew of a Chinese junk that was also in port and not at all pleased to see them – going so far as to engage in a street brawl that was endorsed by the junk’s commander. But Bean was not overly

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2 British Library, India Office, MSS EUR E 336. This folder, which is labelled as “Letters and Papers of James Bean ... 1762-64,” is focused on the period of the British occupation of Manila. It is made up of loose bundles of letters without folio numbers, and it includes this account of the Drake/Bean visit to Cochinchina.
discouraged by such resistance. He implored the East India Company to seize the opportunity, hoping that they would “not lose so favourable an occasion of extending commerce and thereby promoting their own interest.”

In saying so, Bean made a clear statement of one of the most powerful British ideological mantras of the eighteenth century: the extension of commerce and the opening of territories that were previously closed to British traders. Already in possession of a strong base of operations in India, the British did not aim to annex new lands in the years after the Seven Years’ War, but to either finesse or pry their way into the commercial spheres of independent kingdoms throughout the region. Bean makes this point clear, as he speaks of the desirability of furthering Britain’s “national advantages” by trading with the “opulent and independent kingdom” of Cochinchina. Unlike their frustrating experience in Manila, this visit presented Drake and Bean with precisely the kind of opportunity that they wanted. It was one that was in synch with the East India Company’s primary mode of imperial expansion – one that saw commercial growth as the vanguard of empire beyond the Indian subcontinent, rather than military or political expansion. They did not wish to impose British rule over such lands. But they did seek to generate profits from the king’s desire for European goods, and doing so required the remaking of any commercial and political norms that might interfere with that process.

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3 Ibid.
4 Ibid.
5 This observation is not intended to contradict the conclusions reached by James M. Vaughn in The Politics of Empire: Metropolitan Socio-Political Development and the Imperial Transformation of the British East India Company, 1675-1775 (PhD diss., University of Chicago, 2009). As Vaughn shows, there was a significant and growing element of state influence over the East India Company in the eighteenth century. But it is clear from the documentary records on the siege of Manila that the Company had little appetite for direct control over lands outside the Indian Subcontinent – they simply wanted to expand British influence through trade. For an elderly but still useful take on the East India’s Company’s ambitions in the Peace of Paris, see L. S. Sutherland, “The East India Company and the Peace of Paris,” The English Historical Review 62, No. 243 (April 1947), 179-90. Sutherland shows that the Company’s focus was very much on the issue of the extent of the post-war French presence on the subcontinent, and not in any particularly evident way on negotiating specific territorial rights anywhere else in Asia.
The trope of the voluptuously greedy foreign elite was also of critical importance for the British in Spanish America. There, they hoped to sever political and military ties to Spain and then continue to profit from trading with Creole elites that were independent, but that retained what the British understood as opulence. They did not simply scheme to annex these new territories to the British Empire. Even the grandest of British plans tended to recognize that the capacity for direct British control was finite. In the mid-eighteenth century, the concept of indirect empire was not yet named as such, but something similar was expressed by Britons who were writing about their national interest. In writing about Cochinchina, Bean did not make any reference to desires for expanding empire into that region, but he was clear enough about his basic meaning – agreements with local elites meant privileges that other Europeans might not have, which was an advantage when national interests were pitted head to head.

In Latin America, there were no opulent, independent kingdoms to bring into the British commercial realm – the Spanish had already incorporated its peoples into their sphere to various degrees. But the British had not lost all hope of disrupting that hold and opening the continent for competition. Of all the forward-looking British writing about Latin America in the 1760s, perhaps the most ambitious was that of Alexander Wright, whose proposals for a British offensive against many of Spain’s territories in the Americas in 1762 were discussed in my first chapter. Wright’s opinions are particularly interesting, not because of his military strategies, but because of his descriptions of what kind of British sphere of influence might exist in the wake of the war. For example, he envisioned a Peru that was “an independent kingdom,” but “de dependant on his (Britannic) Majesty for support.” Such a
development would “greatly weaken Spain” and “be a very considerable addition to the power of Great Britain, by enjoying the whole commerce of Peru.”  

Wright suggested that “when the city of Lima is reduced,” the British would be in a position to banish “every native of Old Spain, or any other person ... that shall be judg’d improper to remain.” Having disposed of the “insolent oppression” of the Spanish, they could then go about the business of constructing a new government, one that would be friendly to British interests:

Peru shou’d immediately be declared a free (and) independent kingdom. A man of spirit, (and) capacity ... of the most ancient (and) powerful families (should be) chosen king, with the general approbation of the inhabitants. Proper care being taken at the same time, that the poor, oppress’d Indians may for ever enjoy the same lawful liberty, equally in every respect with the Creolian white people. In this case the Indians wou’d soon recover their former spirit, (and) be one of the strongest barriers against the Spaniards ever regaining the sovereignty of that kingdom.

Wright’s statement is suggestive of several typical British ideas about the nature of the Spanish Empire, which conveniently condemn the Spaniards while turning a blind eye to any potential analogues in their own empire. More than anything else, they point to the idea that all residents of Spanish America, regardless of their social status, were suffering under the tyrannical thumb of the Iberian Spaniards, and would be grateful to be freed of that yoke. Wright understood the Creole elite, who tended to be ethnically Spanish, as distinct in spirit and interest from their Iberian counterparts. This conceptualization raises an interesting problem in that Wright appears to be able to identify this separation as endemic within the Spanish imperial project, but stops short of identifying it as a problem with European empire in general. He subtly implies that the British Empire is characterized by unity while the Spanish Empire shows only disparity and the suppression of local interests by the crown.

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6 Bodleian Library (Bodleian), North Manuscripts (MSS North) b6, Alexander Wright to unknown recipient (Lord Bute?), Bath, 30 April 1762, f. 95.
7 Ibid, f. 100 verso-101.
The difference was economic. Underlying Wright’s opinion was the belief that liberty and free commerce were inextricably bound together. It is interesting, and extremely revealing, that he felt that such radical change could be brought to Peru with a single strike against the Spanish colonial defences at Lima. His opinion is partly justified by his honest belief that the people of Lima would embrace the British as their saviours. The other implicit assumption that weaves its way through his text is that Spanish America was not monolithically, contiguously or pervasively under the control or even the influence of the Spanish crown. Simply eliminate the link to Madrid by removing the royal officials in Lima, he argued, and the way would be opened for the establishment of British influence in the region. What Wright had to say on the topic openly defies much of what we often think we know about empire and the nature of imperial geography, and it would be easy to dismiss him as a hyperbolic fantasist. But in fact, his view was consistent enough with the geographical status of European empire in the Americas in the mid-eighteenth century.

Rationalizing Imperial Geographies

At the most fundamental level, empire is inextricably tied to concepts of geography. Part of knowing what an empire is involves constructing some notion of its physical extent and dominion. One key characteristic that separates early-modern imperial geography from what came later is the easy manner with which geographical claims could be deployed in support of trans-oceanic projects. Our planet is an enormous place, and seemed even larger in the era when humanity was entirely dependent on the power of the winds and the ocean currents to convey ships from one part of the world to another. The inevitable result of that problem was that early-modern empires were extremely diffuse when it came to physical occupation and utilization of the land. The staggering physical extent of the world outside of Europe meant that any claims made at the beginning of the early-modern period were
little more than glib proclamations. Yet the enormous scope of such conceptual ambitions did not prevent Europeans from trying. In the immediate wake of Columbus’ first voyage to the Americas, the Pope sought to facilitate a process of Christianization by dividing the new lands between Spain and Portugal, an idea that was further enshrined in the Treaty of Tordesillas (1494). That agreement dropped a line of political demarcation down across the world. But it was only a theory, an idealized vision of imperial growth and expansion that did not resemble what actually went on to happen in anything but the coarsest sense.

Treaties and agreements were useful as broad templates for the development of empire, but they were not always useful predictors for patterns of European settlement in the Americas. Over the centuries that followed, the Portuguese settled far past the line that was supposed to separate Spanish territory from their own. Other Europeans, especially the French and the English, intruded regularly and insistently in the Americas by claiming territories for themselves. Perhaps even more to the point, the Europeans settled selectively and – especially at first – sparsely. Even if immense swathes of land were technically credited to one crown or another, the actual extent of governmental authority was highly variable. In some places, such as in the Caribbean islands, the Mexican highlands, or along the eastern seaboard of North America, there were relatively dense and increasingly organized communities. But throughout the early modern era, vast stretches of the Americas had not been substantially incorporated into the European sphere.

On paper, the Spanish Empire in the Americas was enormous. By the mid-eighteenth century, the French and British empires were also impressively vast, theoretically covering large stretches of North America. But much of these so-called empires remained free from significant metropolitan control. The Europeans controlled the urban centers and the limited domains of authority that surrounded them, and that reality shaped the way that they thought about their American possessions.
Even at the time of the Seven Years’ War, we see evidence of this mentality in how the British targeted the Spanish. They did not discuss the invasions of the colonies of Cuba and the Philippines, but those of the urban centres of Havana and Manila. As we saw in Lord Bedford’s writings about the Peace of Paris, British conceptions about what realistically constituted Spanish territory were not even close to vast. With respect to Central America and the Bay of Honduras, Bedford saw a huge interior that remained essentially uncontrolled by Spanish urban centres and that could be occupied and exploited by anyone with the necessary energy and resources.

So, overseas empire that was both vast and contiguous could not simply be willed into existence by signing treaties and drawing lines on maps. Legal justifications aside, it was something that had to be conceptually and practically manufactured through multiple iterations, each time farther and farther away from the metropolitan core. The historical geographer Daniel W. Clayton has done some pioneering work in this area, with a specific focus on the process through which the British brought Vancouver Island into their imperial structure in the eighteenth century. This “imperial fashioning,” as he calls it, took the relationship between the British and the indigenous peoples of the region from contact to trade and eventually to conflict and effective British domination. They achieved this transformation through a “recontextualization of the Northwest Coast as an imperial domain and the redefinition of Native territory as Crown land.”

It was a process that had to be performed, not in the halls of power in Europe, but directly upon the minds of the peoples who were physically present in territories that were to be incorporated into imperial spaces. As Clayton points out, Vancouver Island was only one of many possible examples. Europeans repeated the process when and wherever possible, setting up conceptual divisions between themselves and other peoples, and exploiting those divisions to establish agency over new lands.

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Not every early-modern power went about these kinds of imperial transformations in the same way. As Clayton has noted in his examinations of the Anglo-Spanish conflict over Nootka Sound (1790), there was a critical tension between Spanish and British “ways of claiming distant territory and producing imperial space.” He points out that there were many discourses that sought to justify sovereignty and empire, sometimes based on constructed legal rights (an elaborate story in its own right) but just as often reliant on judgments about what was physically happening on the ground. They could be simultaneously “vague and precise, and principled yet imperious,” as the specifics of the situation demanded.⁹ So British and Spanish politicians “conjured up a vast but hazy field of sovereignty and juxtaposed different visions of empire” in 1790 as they pursued their interests in the Pacific Northwest.¹⁰ But more importantly than any other consideration, as both Clayton and Patricia Seed have suggested, the British deployed a vision of empire that considered permanent settlement and development of new territory as absolutely essential to any solid territorial claim.¹¹ Ultimately, the two powers agreed upon a convention in which Spain ceased to claim “exclusive sovereignty” over the Nootka Sound region in exchange for a British agreement to stay away from any place where the Spanish had already settled.

The Spanish crown’s position here is distinct from its position at the Peace of Paris in that the agreement to cease interference with British loggers in the Bay of Honduras did not include any kind of official admission that sovereignty had been suspended or compromised in any way. In part, this change may reflect the extremely remote location and dubious economic value of Nootka Sound. But it may also signal Spain’s reluctant yet growing acceptance of the British point of view by the end of the

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¹⁰ Clayton, “The Creation of Imperial Space...,” 331.
century, as geographical pressures were mounting. By the time of the Nootka Crisis, the entire world had been more or less revealed by European cartographers – a process that greatly increased in intensity after the Seven Years’ War and was basically complete by 1780. There was essentially no more unknown space in the world. In any case, Britain once again satisfied its national honour and preserved its ability to expand its system of commerce into a territory previously claimed by Spain on the basis of first discovery. As we shall see, the outcome of the Nootka dispute, as conceptualized by Clayton, is entirely consistent with the pattern of Anglo-Spanish manoeuvring through issues of territorial space over the preceding century and a half, and is a useful echo of the earlier dispute over Honduras.

Perhaps the most important thing to notice about how the European powers approached these issues in the eighteenth century is that they were required to confront them with more urgency and anxiety than they had been accustomed to doing over much of the early modern period. It created a growing need for a rationalization of geography, a process that brought de facto and de jure understandings of imperial frontiers into alignment – often through treaty, but also through the endless process of political representation and posturing that flowed back and forth between the capitals of Europe. This crisis of space was the most problematic of all for the Spanish Empire, for it was the political entity that had laid claim to the vastest domain in the early sixteenth century. At that point, talk was cheap and rarely had to be backed up with action that was commensurate with the scope of the ambitions that were being represented. By the time of the Seven Years’ War, few accessible spaces had not already been targeted for imperial “fashioning,” and the great powers were beginning to develop momentum toward laying claim to what remained. This shift was not trivial in its implications for the development of European empire. The process would reach a feeding frenzy by the late-nineteenth

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12 Here, I refer principally to the work of Captain James Cook and his contemporaries. I discuss this topic in much greater detail in the third major section of this study.
century as Europeans charged into Africa and East Asia, and thereby served as one of the notable, albeit remote causes of the military conflagrations that followed in the twentieth century.

The crisis of geography may also have been a primary influence on the waxing and waning dominance of different approaches to imperial expansion. The commerce-first mentalities of John Entick and the East India Company may have represented the most efficient option when vast lands remained available and untransformed. But with Spaniards, Frenchmen, and even Russians bearing down on potentially British territories, gradual normative alteration was no match for change that was backed up by the barrel of a British gun. In this environment, we see more serious consideration of the sorts of plans for militant, state-vanguard imperialism espoused by William Paterson, Henry Ellis and – of course – no less a figure than William Pitt the Elder, whose imperial military aggression was considerable. Even William Draper’s avaricious targeting of Manila found a place in this era of heightened urgency. Those were all plans for war, but they had their equivalents in a time of peace. Underlying them all, regardless of the specific approach for expansion, was an aesthetic and ethical sense of the inherent rightness of the British imperial cause and the supposed waste represented by the imperial practices of the Bourbons.
It is often said that the West’s great undertaking is the commercialization of the whole world, the hitching of the fate of everything to the fate of the commodity. That great undertaking will turn out rather to have been the aestheticization of the whole world.

- Jean Baudrillard, *The Transparency of Evil*13

By writing about the transformative effects that the West has had on the larger world, Jean Baudrillard was mostly thinking about the latter half of the twentieth century – an era in which global economics has become dislodged from the logic of value that was supposedly instilled by the great seafaring empires of the eighteenth century. Its replacement, which Baudrillard dubbed “Transeconomics,” is a realm in which human beings continue to go through the motions of economic activity as they have for centuries, but without the underlying logics of value that established liberal economics in the first place. Now, the decoupling from monetary values based on physical scarcities or costs of production has accelerated considerably. Buying and selling, as well as valuation and devaluation, take place largely independent of substantive changes in the physical or human capital that underlie the economy.14 Recent crises in the global economy would appear to lend credence to what Baudrillard was arguing. Unlike the great market crash of 1929, which was partially triggered by a price crash created by massive oversupply in the agricultural economy, more recent troubles have exploded almost entirely out of the far more abstract and speculative realm of buying and selling credit – a concept that is nothing more than a human-constructed financial abstraction. The roots of this process go back much farther than the mid-twentieth century. While it is undeniably true that the world economy was oriented toward a more substantial sort of pricing logic in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the process of remaking the world’s sense of aesthetics was already underway. It was carried

by the torch of empire, and by the processes of transformation and incorporation into the European
sphere that came with it.

If asked to reflect upon the ontology of empire, Baudrillard might have classed it among the
most elaborate examples of simulation in human history – a whirling carousel, frantic with its own
momentum, jammed full of human captives and held together by ritual, violence and values without
clear reference to the logics that originated them. But what are those logics? In the early-modern era,
two present themselves with a boldness that separates them from other contenders: logic of religion
and logic of economic exploitation. In the Spanish and British imperial experiences, there were definite
elements of both, but in different mixtures and with unique characteristics. Without any doubt, both of
these logics might be linked to the most tortured and selfish human tendencies, but ultimately, empire
was held together more by a constructed sense of good than one of evil. But how does one identify the
most moral and/or ethical empire? What separated right from wrong when it came to imperialism?
Which, as a conceptual construction, boasted the most aesthetically pleasing face – the one that could
most effectively stake its claim to be the most beautiful and righteous empire?

We know little about the aesthetics of the eighteenth century, and even less about how the
general concept applies to the subject of empire. In fact, the mere use of the word aesthetic takes us
dangerously close to trading in anachronisms, as eighteenth-century intellectuals would not have used
the term. Walter Hipple, in one of the extremely few works to have tackled the general topic, notes that
British thinkers of the period would have preferred the term “philosophical criticism.” The word
aesthetic came into common usage in the early nineteenth century, but it was meant to act as

15 The classic text about simulation is Jean Baudrillard, *Simulacra and Simulation*, Sheila Faria Glaser,
16 Walter John Hipple, Jr., *The Beautiful, the Sublime, and the Picturesque in Eighteenth-Century British
shorthand for a concept that was already well understood – the manner in which principles of taste were linked to the human notions of ugly and beautiful. As Hipple demonstrates, eighteenth-century thinkers were already deeply concerned with such issues, and were developing aesthetic theories. So it is useful to discuss aesthetic aspects of eighteenth century thought in spite of the fact that the vocabulary of the time did not match our current usage. Writers from that time may not have used the word aesthetic, but they clearly expressed closely analogous ideas through different terminology. For the most part, Hipple eschews generalizations about British aesthetics and focuses on a series of case studies. But he does not entirely shy away from the broader view and offers some more general insights into what was happening at the time.

Perhaps the strongest and most obvious characteristic that Hipple identifies for eighteenth-century British aesthetics was its preoccupation with the ideas of nature and the natural state. With reason as their gateway, many eighteenth-century thinkers sought to unmask nature. If its true characteristics could be understood through reason, then an objective standard for taste could be developed – specifically, that which was closest to the natural state. In the words of Joseph Addison, a prominent seventeenth and early-eighteenth-century English politician and writer: “The Taste is not to conform to the Art, but the Art to the Taste.”¹⁷ As Addison’s statement suggests, there can be no objective standard for art, but artists may strive to align themselves as closely as possible with good taste, which he believed to be determined by way of a detailed examination of nature. In short, to have a close awareness of and respect for the natural state was a fundamental good. This idea was central to the way in which British writers understood aesthetics in the eighteenth century.

In much the same way as a sublime, scenic landscape or a piece of art, commercial empire was subject to aesthetic judgement. Because the British aesthetic sense was so closely linked to an affinity

¹⁷ Joseph Addison, as quoted in Hipple, 7.
for the so-called natural state, they judged their empire to be at its most beautiful when it was closest to their conception of the ideal, natural form of an empire. So having the power to define what was natural and what was not served as the key to even broader control over the direction of both society and empire, both in Britain and in much of the rest of Europe. As Fredrik Albritton Jonsson has recently argued, “across Western nations and empires in the second half of the eighteenth century, natural history became a privileged instrument of power to shape the natural order.” The market alone was not universally thought to be a sufficient force to facilitate human interaction with nature. Jonsson shows that eighteenth-century natural historians offered a challenge to the laissez-faire approach championed by Adam Smith and other liberal economists by claiming a necessary role as mediators between the different metropolitan and colonial natural worlds. “Was the market sufficient to order nature,” he asks, “or did the complexity of the natural order require the intervention of an environmental expertise?”

There was no easy answer to the struggle between what Jonsson calls “two rival ecologies of commerce.” The conflict between these two perspectives remains unresolved in the early-twenty-first century, as we continue to seek a balance between economic exploitation and environmental responsibility. The two poles of this debate mirror the conflict between commerce-vanguard and state-vanguard imperialists, as the former embraced the idea that markets were regulation enough for the imperial economy and the latter provided more space for the application of recognized expertise and a more managed approach. But either way, the critical importance of the concept of nature and its inextricable relationship to the project of empire is clear. Issues of management and regulation aside, it

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18 Fredrik Albritton Jonsson, “Rival Ecologies of Global Commerce: Adam Smith and the Natural Historians,” American Historical Review 115, No. 5 (December 2010), 1343.
19 Ibid., 1345.
was a consensus among the British elite that the imperial entity at its most natural was a fluid carrier of commerce – supposedly the most beautiful project of all – to the entire world.

But something more was happening in the mid-eighteenth century, something more expansive that the mere embrace of commerce as a natural ideal for England and its empire. As David Spadafora has illustrated, the period that surrounds the Seven Years’ War gave rise to a new aspect of British thinking about human affairs – the forward looking concept of societal progress. He argues that the idea “that there had been or could be improvement in human affairs generally – in culture or civilization or even happiness – was rarely expressed ... in more than an implicit, cursory way before about 1760.”

Holger Hoock, too, has noted that something important was changing for Britain in the second half of the eighteenth century – in this case, a flourishing in “the number and range of (state-cosponsored) cultural sites and projects (that) ... reflected, and in turn fostered, Britain’s military and imperial experiences.” As Steve Pincus and James Vaughn have illustrated, the expansion of empire had already long been something that was closely linked to the aims of the British state. But after the Seven Years’ War, both the state and leading members of society increasingly attempted to plan in a deliberate manner for the supposed betterment of the British nation. We can see that such plans were not limited to state machinations, but were early manifestations of an even broader public discussion about British progress and about the sort of country and empire that the British people aimed to create. A progressive attitude pointed the way to deliberate action, which in turn required some kind of ethical sense as a guide. So the particular aestheticization of the British Empire as a civilizing force by way of commercialization was buttressed by a specific set of ethics, especially among the traders who were the lifeblood of the entire enterprise. Having established an aesthetic sense of what an ideal empire should

look like, it fell to individuals in the British Empire to act in a way that consistently promoted that vision. Over the course of the eighteenth century, the British had been developing precisely that kind of ethical sense.

The Ethics of Eighteenth-Century Liberal Commerce

If our trade is the envy of the world, and they are conspiring to break in upon it, either to anticipate it, or block it out, we are the more engaged to look out for its support, and we have room enough. The world is wide. There are new countries, and new nations, who may be so planted, so improv’d, and the people so managed, as to create a new commerce.

- Daniel Defoe, *A Plan of the English Commerce* (1730)

For Daniel Defoe, best known as the author of *Robinson Crusoe* but also among the most influential political and economic commentators of his age, oceangoing commerce was an absolutely critical element of England’s national strength. In his capacity as a British economic commentator and policy advocate, he saw his country’s expansion into the world with new settlements and merchantmen stuffed to the brim with English wares as a tremendous advantage to all nations. Defoe stridently argued that England was making life better for all people by instructing “the barbarous nations” in the manners and routines of civilization. In his estimation, commerce had an intrinsic capacity to make life better everywhere. No longer would “savages” lie indolent, “shameless and naked.” But unlike the missionary-led Spanish efforts to bring vast stretches of territory in the Americas into the European sphere, Defoe’s transformation would have no direct relationship with proselytization. Rather, Defoe believed that it was the adoption of British “customs and usages” through trading that would ultimately “bring them to live like Christians,” regardless of what their actual beliefs might happen to be. For

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Defoe, rescuing the world from savagery was about encouraging adherence to economic norms. The implication here was that any other aspect of Europeanization was peripheral and subsidiary to the acceptance of British commerce. The spiritual substance of civilization had to be preceded by the adoption of the correct economic forms. If a European nation failed to open a newly discovered nation to international commerce, it was a disturbing and unforgivable error for Defoe – “the most unaccountable mistake of its kind that can be imagin’d.”

Other European nations were apparently not up to the task. Just as Alexander Wright would later argue, Defoe saw the Spanish as wealthy in spite of their tyranny, sloth and basic inferiority. He viewed the Portuguese as an “effeminate” and “haughty” people who were increasing the wealth of their empire in spite of their many shortcomings. The basic idea was that although Spain and Portugal had spread their control into the Americas and had encouraged vital trade by extracting precious metals from their new territories, their rule was compromised by a fundamental flaw. Defoe railed against what he perceived as the grotesque opulence of Spanish colonialism. He accused the Spaniards in the Americas of living “in the most voluptuous and extravagant manner imaginable.” Such conduct was not merely gluttonous. Rather, it worked directly against the developmental interests of the peoples of the Americas. Defoe’s advice for English traders, as expressed in his manual The Complete English Tradesman (1725), was directly opposed to such behaviour. In that volume, he opens an expansive vision of the English trader as a creature of superior moral capacity whose stamina and discipline would yield dividends beyond those of other nations.

25 Defoe, A Plan..., 338.
26 Defoe, A Plan..., xii.
27 Defoe, A Plan..., 6 (Appendix).
Defoe’s ideal British trader was an ethical paragon. He did not indulge in the extravagances of colonial Spaniards, for such vices were expensive distractions and opened the road to “immoderate expenses,” which were the most insidious causes of economic disaster. The successful British trader would live within an austere set of ethical norms that would facilitate the operation of international trade while relying on indolent types, such as the Spanish, to fill British coffers with their reckless overspending. Other economic commentators in early-eighteenth-century Britain agreed. For example, in *The Trade and Navigation of Great Britain* (1729), Joshua Gee advocated for a pre-modern version of import substitution. Gee suggested that Britain would remain strong as long as it pursued a type of autarkic model – one that would see Britain provide for all of its own needs, but produce a surplus that could be sold for profit to economically backward but extravagant and bullion-rich countries such as Spain. These are close antecedents to the threads of argument that were so passionately collected and woven by John Entick and his associates at *The Monitor* in the late 1750s and early 1760s. Commerce was the natural advantage and lifeblood of the nation, and there could be no higher priority than its uninterrupted flow.

The emerging preference for commerce was not limited to Britain. In his seminal book *Lords of All the World: Ideologies of Empire in Spain, Britain and France, c. 1500-c. 1800*, Anthony Pagden suggests that many eighteenth-century Europeans saw the traditional practice of empire as something that would ultimately corrupt and bring down the metropolis of any country that allowed its sphere of control to expand too far from European shores. He concludes that the general trend of Enlightenment thought promoted the belief that “European overseas empires were destined for rapid extinction” and

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would be wrecked at the hands of discontented settlers, or natives of faraway lands. Pagden points to Adam Smith’s argument that the European conquest of the Americas might never have happened at all if there had not happened to be an overwhelming technological advantage that allowed Europeans to project force across the ocean at a minimal cost. Smith prefigured contemporary realist theories of international relations by suggesting that this power disequilibrium might ultimately even out, leading to a situation in which nations were forced to respect each because they would fear what might happen if they did not.

In Pagden’s view, the embrace of commerce was the emerging consensus solution that would prevent European empires from flying apart from internal dissent or destroying each other in war. Empires that were bound together by strong bonds of direct political control would be transformed into communities that were principally tied together by looser ties of commercial affiliation, thereby privileging local political authority over the wills of the imperial crowns. Pagden identifies multiple figures in Britain, France and Spain who were willing to embrace the massive commercialization and political decentralization of the Atlantic World, and offers solid evidence that there was considerable intellectual convergence on this issue between the major Western European elites. Yet the manner in which these ideas had a practical impact was clearly not the same across this set of kingdoms and their empires. As Pagden points out, these sorts of visions for the future of Atlantic empires tended to lead

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32 Pagden, 178.
33 Pagden, 179. His roster of principal thinkers from eighteenth century Britain, France and Spain includes Adam Smith, David Hume, Anne-Robert-Jacques Turgot, the Marquis de Mirabeau, Pedro Rodríguez de Campomanes, and Bernardo Ward.
nowhere, mostly because the European monarchies were not anxious to give up political authority for speculative economic gains in the far future.  

In Great Britain, something was different. Only the British Empire spawned something that resembled the vision put forward by the Enlightenment elite, and even in that case it required internecine combat to separate the British homeland from thirteen of its most successful American colonies. Why was Britain different? Pagden suggests that the elites in the British colonies – the future United States – were broadly aware of the commercial federation model, while the Spanish colonial elite were largely ignorant of such developments. But even in accepting that explanation, a question remains with respect to the precise identities of the agents of change. Who were the conduits through which these new concepts of empire spread to the British but not to the Spanish? Who had both motive and opportunity to promote an agenda of commerce-friendly norms and values? Many indicators point to the community of British Empire traders, and to the ethical system that they were evolving to give them a sense of identity and a pragmatic set of norms that would guide them in their business endeavours. It is into that environment that David Hancock places his extensively researched “citizens of the world,” a group of outsider traders that penetrated the previously tradition-bound City of London and played a major role in revolutionizing British commerce in the eighteenth century. The “associates,” as Hancock calls them, adhered to an ideology of commonsense trade practices but showed no fear of experimentation as they expanded trade links throughout the Atlantic world. They were “marginal, opportunistic, global, improving, and integrative.”

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34 Pagden, 195.
35 Pagden, 196.
In a broader sense, eighteenth-century Britons were clearly developing a system of norms and values that directed them toward a position from which they would ultimately want for little because they would place the development of their commercial system before any immediate material gratifications. As Defoe suggested, it was also an ethic that abhorred the idea of wasted economic opportunity, and that demanded the expansion of British commercial activities into new areas of the globe that had not been claimed by other European powers. The British Empire would flow around the competition, taking advantage of unexploited opportunities and ensuring that British influence reached every region of the world. The vast areas of Spanish America in which there had not been any significant integration with the European economic system represented terrible waste when considered within the British normative ethic. The entire Spanish stewardship in the Americas clashed with the evolving British sense of aesthetics and system of ethics for two major reasons. First, the entire system seemed to revolve around servicing Spanish opulence rather than supporting the further evolution of the commercial network and all the benefits that it was thought to bestow upon the world. Second, and perhaps more importantly, the Spanish seemed to have wasted centuries of opportunity to bring the peoples of the Americas more fully into the European economic sphere. These two objections generated an immense dissonance between Spanish and British aesthetic and ethical norms.

The Spanish certainly did not perceive themselves to have been idle in the Americas. The massive extraction of bullion was not an inconsiderable economic achievement, and the Spanish had been working continuously at the same kinds of transformative projects that the British held in such high esteem in their own imperial sphere. For example, as Michel Foucault has suggested, missionary activity in Spanish America had a profound disciplinary aspect that explicitly aimed to subsume indigenous peoples in the European world. Missionaries acted as agents of discipline for the interests of church and crown in Latin America during the colonial period. Foucault placed particular emphasis on Jesuit missions in Paraguay as “disciplinary microcosms in which there was a hierarchical system to
which the Jesuits held the keys,” and which essentially acted to enforce the application of European norms of behaviour to indigenous populations. 37 But the Jesuit experience was part of a very different imperialism. Jesuit aims and activities were more complex and nuanced than Foucault indicates, as the next two chapters will explore in much greater detail. For the moment, it will suffice to note that the Spanish experience was often based at least as much on religious aims as on principles of economic exploitation, and sometimes generated direct conflict when the two could not coexist. For their part, the British were certainly not opposed to the spread of Christianity. But their experience with the Reformation and the subsequent splintering of Protestant denominations meant that they were not supporters of the Catholic spiritual world. Perhaps more to the point, the British ethical stance considered such direct spiritual aims to be secondary to and potentially even destructive toward the desired economic aims.

These kinds of British objections to Spanish behaviour are reflected in documents that relate to British intrusions into supposedly Spanish territories. A particularly salient example from the middle of the eighteenth century is the British move in Honduras to ally with and claim sovereignty over the lands and people known as the Mosquito (or Miskito) Indians during the War of Jenkins’ Ear (1739-42). In spite of the fact that the territory in question had long been claimed by Spain and not by any other European nation, the treaty made it clear that the Mosquito people were to become British subjects, and that they desired “the assistance of Great Britain to recover the countries of their father from their enemies the Spaniards.” In an even more far reaching clause, they promised to “help all Indian nations who are now in subjection to the Spanish yoke, and to recover their ancient liberty” by taking part in any British

military expedition with that aim. But on what grounds did the British justify their identification of the Spanish as not only British enemies, but also the enemy of the Mosquitos? What was the nature of the “Spanish yoke” and lost “ancient liberty” for a people who seemed to be sufficiently independent to be able to sign such a treaty with another foreign power? After all, the Spanish clearly had little capacity to control the region or its people. But, in fact, the lack of any real Spanish influence or record of achievements would have directly clashed with the ethical stance exhibited by British tracts from the period. To the British, it would have been offensive that the Spanish had done so little. The “liberty” that the Mosquito had supposedly been denied for so long was the opportunity to have engaged with the European economic sphere through British channels rather than be kept in a near stasis by a Spanish sovereignty over the region that existed more in theory than in practice.

**Honduras 1764 – Redefining Imperial Geography**

After the Seven Years’ War, the strategic situation in the Atlantic World was marked by several new realities. For the government of Spain, the harshest development was the now obvious and decisive disparity between British and Spanish abilities to project military force in the Americas. By seizing and holding the key port of Havana in 1763, Great Britain had demonstrated its ability to disrupt Spain’s political and economic control over its American possessions. Although Britain returned Havana to Spain at the end of the war, the coming of peace did not mean the end of British interference within Spain’s supposed colonial borders. In the first few years after the war, Central America was the primary battleground for a different kind of conflict between Spain and Britain – one that focused on the rights

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38 British National Archives (BNA), Colonial Office Files (CO) 123/1 (British Honduras Papers), f. 52, “Cession of the Mosquito Kingdom to Great Britain – the Declaration of Edward Kind of the Mosquito Indians – in the Presence of God under the British Standard set up at Senoch Dawkra on Sunday the 16th of March 1739/40.”
of commerce and territorial integrity, and on the ethics of empire and liberal commerce. It was a place in which the growing crisis of imperial geography boiled over and forced the British and Spanish to engage in a momentary crisis that brought competing ideas about politics, economics, law and territoriality into the arena of conflict in an more elaborate way than during the previous negotiations at Paris.

British traders had been involved in cutting logwood in the Honduras region for over a century before the Seven Years’ War. But as we have seen, the Peace of Paris changed the rules of the game in 1763, as it formally recognized the British right to do so for the first time. From the British point of view, Article XVII of the treaty was simply a *de jure* confirmation of what was already a *de facto* reality. It was meant to demilitarize the region, thereby paving the way for British commerce to operate without the participation of either the Spanish or British militaries. Britain assuaged Spanish fears about a British military presence in Central America by agreeing that they would demolish “all the fortifications which (British) subjects shall have erected in the bay of Honduras, and other places of the territory of Spain in that part of the world.” For his part, Carlos III of Spain guaranteed that British subjects would not be “disturbed or molested under any pretence whatsoever in the said places, in their occupation of cutting, loading, and carrying away logwood.” In short, the territory was to remain part of the Spanish Empire, but Britain had struck a significant blow against Spain’s economic and political sovereignty in Central America.

Article XVII quickly became a catalyst for conflict. The international law governing the Anglo-Spanish relationship in the region changed in a single moment with the signing of the Peace of Paris in 1763, but political and economic norms in the region needed time to adjust. The British loggers had

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previously been operating with a full understanding that the Spanish considered them trespassers in their territory, without any acknowledged permission whatsoever, and without any real commitment from the British government to protect them. Until the Peace of Paris required the demolition of their fortifications, they had looked after their own defences. James McLeish, one of the only scholars to have focused on the history of the British settlers in Honduras, characterized them as a plucky band of imperial adventurers who succeeded in eventually bringing their settlement into the British Empire in spite of their government’s lacklustre responses to their “innumerable appeals for help at times of crisis.”

He pointed to the words of Sir Charles Metcalfe, a nineteenth-century governor of Jamaica, who said that he regarded “the history of British Honduras as affording one of the most remarkable instances of British enterprise and energy” in the absence of governmental guidance. It was a textbook case of commerce-vanguard imperial expansion, yet the Peace of Paris left the settlers without defences and vulnerable to Spanish police actions and to the particular Spanish interpretation of what the Peace of Paris meant for them.

Still, the British government had not left the settlers as completely alone as they may have feared. Officials in London were clearly sceptical about the idea that Spanish officials in Central America could be relied upon to faithfully observe treaty stipulations. The Earl of Halifax, Secretary of State for the Southern Department, initiated a dialogue with the Board of Trade in November 1763 to determine whether or not British officials should remain inside supposedly Spanish territory in Central America, with specific reference to the British presence on the Mosquito Coast. The Lords of Trade unequivocally voiced their support for the continuation of an official British presence, especially to

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40 James McLeish, *British Activities in Yucatan and on the Mosquito Shore in the Eighteenth Century* (M.A. Thesis, University of London, 1926), 5. This thesis is held as part of the library of the Royal Commonwealth Society, now located at the Cambridge University Library, with the call number RCMS 272.

41 Sir Charles Metcalfe, as quoted in McLeish, 5.

42 BNA, CO 123/1, f. 40, Earl of Halifax to the Lords of Trade, St. James, 12 November 1763.
“secure the affections and interests of the Indians inhabiting that shore,” and to help prevent disorder resulting from bad relations between Indians and Spaniards. The maintenance of the “publick peace” was paramount, and the British government clearly placed little trust in Spain’s ability to serve in that function. So Halifax ordered Captain Joseph Otway to remain in the area, with the aims of preserving order, promoting the “prosperity of the settlement” and improving “the commercial advantages which may be derived from it.” Otway presided over the use of the considerable sum of fifteen hundred pounds sterling from the royal treasury on an annual basis to provide for “presents to the Indians” and other operational expenses in pursuit of those goals. The British took a distinctly paternalistic tone here, not only with respect to the indigenous peoples but also with respect to the supposedly extravagant and immature Spaniards. The underlying British fear was that Spanish hostility and/or incompetence would disrupt commercial operations, and thereby work against the interests of development and progress.

The Intervention of Don Felipe Ramírez de Estenoz

In the summer of 1764, British suspicions about the Spanish seemed to be confirmed when reports began to arrive in London about Spanish interference with British loggers. On 29 December 1763, British logwood cutters in the Honduras region were confronted by Felipe Ramírez de Estenoz, Spanish governor of the Yucatan. Taking a rigorous and legalistic stance, he accused them of having extended their work into new and “different places” than had been described in the Peace of Paris, and

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43 BNA, CO 123/1, f. 42, Lords of Trade (Hillsborough, Eliot, Bacon, Rice, and Gascoyne) to Halifax, December 1763.
44 BNA, CO 123/1, f. 31, Halifax to Captain Joseph Otway, St. James, 9 December 1763.
45 BNA, CO 123/1, f. 24, Extract of a Letter from Governor Lyttelton to the Earl of Egremont, Jamaica, 30 August 1763, enclosed in Halifax to the Lords of Trade, St. James, 12 November 1763.
forced them to abandon their work until they could produce documentation from either the Spanish crown or the British crown that specifically detailed the precise limits of their logging rights. The loggers withdrew as requested, and complained to W.H. Lyttetton, the Governor of Jamaica, who passed the bad news on to England in April. The British cabinet was furious. The Earls of Sandwich and Halifax, the two principal secretaries of state in London, demanded satisfaction from Prince Masserano, the Spanish ambassador. Operating in a near void of information, Masserano assured Halifax that Estenoz “would have had sufficient motives to justify his conduct,” and insisted on waiting for further instructions from his superiors before attempting to satisfy British concerns.

Meanwhile, the situation was heating up in Madrid. Lord Halifax was adamant that the Earl of Rochford, Britain’s new diplomatic representative in Madrid, should “immediately represent to the Spanish ministers these manifest contraventions of the definitive treaty.” Halifax instructed Rochford to be “firm but friendly” in his insistence that orders should immediately be sent to Central America to put a stop to all Spanish interference with British logging. But the Spanish did not see the situation in the same light. Prince Masserano had already informed the Spanish court that the British had a condescending tendency “to always interpret the recent peace treaty in the manner most favourable to them, even when the meaning is not entirely clear.” In Paris, the negotiators had almost rushed right past the issue of Honduras in their collective anxiety to get a preliminary treaty signed. Now, officials in both London and Madrid dug in to defend their interpretations of the treaty.

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46 See AHN, Estado, Legajo 4262 (Inglaterra – Correspondencia Diplomática, 1763-1764), Ramírez de Estenoz to Joseph Maud, Mérida de Yucatán, 29 December 1763, and Joseph Maud to Ramírez de Estenoz, Vigia de San Antonio, 4 February 1764. The translation of Ramírez de Estenoz’s letter, from the British record, can be found in BNA, SP 94/167, as an attachment to Egmont, Hay and Digby to Halifax, Admiralty Office, 28 June 1764, f. 188-9.

47 See BNA, SP 94/167, Halifax to Rochford, St. James, 15 June 1764.

48 Ministerio de Cultura de España, Archivo Histórico Nacional (AHN), Papeles de Estado (Estado), Legajo 4262 (Inglaterra 1763-1764), Masserano to Grimaldi, No. 212, London, 13 July 1764. This translation, and all subsequent translations from the original Spanish are by the author.

49 BNA, State Papers (SP) 94/167, f. 60, Halifax to the Earl of Rochford, St. James, 15 June 1764.

50 AHN, Estado, Legajo 4262, Prince Masserano to the Marques de Grimaldi, London, 8 May 1764.
At the heart of this dissonance was a single phrase from the Treaty of Paris. The treaty made explicit mention of British activity in the Bay of Honduras, which had already been a geographical center of the Anglo-Spanish conflict in Central America for over a century. But the treaty added that the British right also extended to “other places of the territory of Spain in that part of the world.” At first glance, it seems strange that the Spanish would have agreed to such a vague statement of geographical limitations in the first place if they were intending to quickly turn around and demand exact adherence to the letter of the law. But as we saw, negotiators on both sides at the talks that led to the Peace of Paris had felt that they had good reason to believe that the post-war situation would be to their liking. In the winter and spring of 1764, the Spanish began to realize that Grimaldi’s previous understanding of how Lord Bedford and the British had viewed Article XVII was simply not accurate.

After the signing of the Peace of Paris, the Marqués de Grimaldi became the Minister of State in Madrid, and was counted among the most influential politicians in Spain. But his personal experiences as the lead Spanish negotiator in Paris lent a personal dimension to the misunderstanding over Article XVII that it did not necessarily have for most of the other statesmen who were attempting to resolve the dispute over Honduras. His attitude was generally hostile toward Great Britain. He often reiterated his belief that the Peace of Paris could not be anything more than a temporary armistice so long as the British pursued such an aggressive and “disordered” pattern of behaviour and “mode of thinking” in the Americas. Grimaldi showed an overarching concern with British actions in the New World. He believed that the British were treacherous and parochially self-interested. They were, quite simply, not playing the game according to any ethics that Grimaldi understood. To make matters worse, he appears to have felt personally betrayed by British intransigence over the Yucatan logging dispute that came to a head in the summer of 1764.

51 Article XVII, Treaty of Paris 1763.
52 AHN, Estado, Legajo 4262, Marqués de Grimaldi to Prince Masserano, San Ildefonso, 16 July 1764.
Grimaldi had specifically discussed the territorial dimension of Article XVII with the Duke of Bedford at the treaty negotiations. His memory of that discussion was that Bedford had satisfied Spanish concerns about how far British loggers might spread.

When we were negotiating the definitive treaty, I did what I could to impress upon Bedford the necessity of explaining the preliminary article ... and I asked him if (the British) intended to cut wood as far afield as, for example, Mexico? ... He told me that it was not the will of his court to do so ... (and) that the only pretence of his court was to cut in the places where they had already been cutting, and where their forts and settlements could be found.53

Grimaldi clearly took Bedford’s comments to mean that British loggers would not venture any farther into Spanish territory than they already had. But as we have already seen, Bedford reported to London that “that no part of those coasts but those which are in the undoubted territory of Spain can be included” in the stipulation.54 So although the British crown had no specific plans, the door remained open for British traders to proceed as they saw fit in the Honduras region, except in those places that were obviously and explicitly under Spanish control. To put it simply, Grimaldi thought that he was getting a situation in which British activity would be strictly limited to a certain, established and well-defined zone. The actions of Ramírez de Estenoz were consistent with that interpretation, as the British loggers seemed to be taking advantage of the peace to expand into Spanish-held areas that were not previously being worked, and thus were not included in the treaty. But the British crown, not seriously recognizing most of the region as Spanish territory, wanted their subjects to be able to extract whatever logwood they wanted from the broader region, without supervision from any governmental authority.

Bedford probably meant to communicate that although the British crown was not specifically planning further commercial expansion, its policy position did not eliminate the possibility that some industrious, entrepreneurially inspired British subjects might seize the initiative and start logging in new

53 AHN, Estado, Legajo 4262, Marqués de Grimaldi to Prince Masserano, San Ildefonso, 13 August 1764.
54 BNA, SP 78/254, Bedford to Egremont, Fontainebleau, 3 November 1762, f. 1.
areas. Such thinking was at the core of the ethical system of the British trader, and the Spanish crown was receiving a crash course in these commercial ethics. Spanish officials were also deeply alarmed by some of what they felt they were then learning about the scope of British ambitions. Writing from London in the spring of 1764, Prince Masserano raised the alarm about British designs on Mexico. Through his conversations with the Duke of Cumberland and other English nobles, Masserano learned that some members of the British elite had greatly desired an expedition to Mexico during the Seven Years’ War, and he judged that they would almost certainly pursue that objective again if the two powers were to find themselves in yet another state of war.\(^{55}\) So for Grimaldi and his fellow ministers in Madrid, the situation seemed precarious. To admit in any way that Spanish sovereignty over the entire region was anything less than absolute could open the door to a continued, persistent British threat – not only in the Bay of Honduras, but as far afield as the Mexican highlands.

The Strong Arm of Lord Rochford

William Henry van Nassau van Zuylestein, the fourth Earl of Rochford (1717-1781), was one of the most notable British politicians of the 1760s and 70s, and perhaps the single most influential British figure when it came to the Anglo-Spanish relationship. He was part of a Dutch family that came to England as a consequence of the Glorious Revolution of 1688, and was the first son in his family to be born, raised and educated in England. So Rochford was steeped in the highly participatory but still centrally managed style of governance and empire that came with that revolution. It is clear from the written records that he left behind that he was an interesting and sometimes problematic character. Geoffrey W. Rice has written extensively about Rochford, and has found that he was “a cheerful optimist

\(^{55}\) AHN, Estado, Legajo 4262, Masserano to Grimaldi, No. 139, London, 4 May 1764.
with a lively sense of humour” and a strong affinity for the performing arts, although he was also known to have a “volatile temperament” and possessed the kind of “verbal vivacity” that could lead him “into indiscreet conversations with foreign diplomats.” He has sometimes been given little credit by historians because of his participation in the cabinets that oversaw the disintegration of the first British Empire. But the more recent consensus, founded on re-evaluations by Rice and H. M. Scott, is that he was a man of considerable diplomatic skill who did the best that could be expected of him through some very difficult years for British foreign policy. Rice has done some particularly substantial work toward rehabilitating Rochford’s historical reputation in his recent work on the Earl’s role in the Falklands Islands Crisis of 1770-1. That study shows that Rochford played a key advisory role to George III and should be given the principal credit for spearheading the British response, something that has previously been attributed more to figures such as Lord Weymouth and Lord North. Although his almost complete lack of interest in domestic political intrigue meant that he was not mentioned as often in British newspapers of the 1760s as some of the other principal ministers of the period, Rochford was clearly a highly capable diplomatist and was regularly counted upon by king and cabinet for his singular expertise on foreign affairs.

Rochford arrived in Madrid in December 1763 and immediately set about creating a combative and sometimes almost comical relationship with the Marqués de Grimaldi. At first glance, Rochford


57 Geoffrey W. Rice, “British Foreign Policy and the Falklands Crisis of 1770-1,” The International History Review 32, No. 2 (June 2010), 273-305.
found Grimaldi’s conduct with the arriving ambassadors from other courts to be “high and insolent beyond measure,” even as he made a strong effort to please the British contingent. To Rochford’s surprise, Grimaldi’s relationship with the French ambassador, the Marquis d’Ossun, was perhaps the worst of all. Maintaining good relations between France and Spain was essential for both Grimaldi and the Duc de Choiseul, whose Bourbon revanche strategy depended on using the combined forces of the two crowns against the British when the right opportunity arrived. But the Franco-Spanish relationship was complicated. Rochford said that Grimaldi was “entirely unacquainted with commercial affairs,” or with what Rochford perceived as “the real interests of Spain with regard to commerce.” Nevertheless, the Spanish minister “boasted of his having duped the French, in gaining considerable advantages for the Spanish trade by the Family Compact.” At the same time, he enjoyed a strong and direct relationship with Choiseul, which was part of the reason for d’Ossun’s discomfort in Madrid – being aware of the “Frenchified” Grimaldi’s direct line to Paris made him “rather shy in his behaviour,” according to Rochford. There is little doubt that Grimaldi was a committed and honest Francophile. His pleasant behaviour toward Rochford was almost certainly a consequence of his desire to avoid triggering a war before he and Choiseul were ready to fight the British.

The prompt emergence of the Honduras crisis provided an early test for Grimaldi’s patience, and gave him something to argue about with Rochford. As the British envoy recalled, Grimaldi initially “seemed to think it was owing to their having been in a place not permitted” by the treaty. But Rochford reminded him that the loggers “were disturbed merely on account of their not having produced a cédula from (Carlos III), nor a license from (George III)” and prodded the Spanish minister to take action. In

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59 BNA, SP 94/166, Rochford to Halifax, Madrid, 13 January 1764, f. 27-8.
60 BNA, SP 94/167, Rochford to Halifax, Madrid, 8 July 1764, f. 215-6.
Rochford’s confidential estimation, his own firm and determined handling of the situation had made an impression on the Spanish and would help to expedite the resolution of the crisis.

... Though I took particular care not to offend by any unguarded expression ..., I spoke with such a degree of firmness and represented in such a light the consequence of their chicane on so essential an article of the treaty that I found I was listened to with an uncommon attention, for I knew very well, and your lordships may be perfectly satisfied, that there is nothing they will not do to avoid quarrelling with us at this time.\textsuperscript{61}

Rochford’s reminiscences were astute, in spite of their self-congratulatory nature. The British were ill-equipped to go to war so soon after the end of the exhausting Seven Years’ War, but the Spanish were in an even worse state. Even so, Carlos III and his ministers were reluctant to blame Ramírez de Estenoz for the episode, and delayed a resolution for many weeks.

By the middle of September, the crisis was reaching its climax. Ultimately, through several days of intense debate and negotiation, Rochford was able to bring about a convergence between the British and Spanish positions, although the Spanish were distinctly disadvantaged in that shift. To put it another way, the Spanish reluctantly accepted a more British understanding of how the relationship between commercial interests and imperial authority was supposed to function in Honduras. Specifically, they agreed that the British would dictate how the treaty was to be interpreted, and that the Spanish would do their best to learn how to live with the norms and values that came with British commerce. The ethical core of British commerce demanded that the traders who existed at the fringes of the empire should be allowed to operate without interference from government, either their own or that of a foreign power. When Felipe Ramírez de Estenoz accosted the British loggers in Honduras, he demanded

\textsuperscript{61} BNA, SP 94/167, Rochford to Halifax, Segovia, 30 July 1764, f. 253-4.
that their economic activity be certified and legitimized with documentation from either the British or Spanish crowns. In doing so, he was unknowingly staging an assault on those ethics.

The fact that the British were able to force the Spanish to at least tacitly accept their commercial norms is inextricably linked to the force of British arms. Grimaldi did not like the British, and did not personally accept their perspective on Article XVII. In the end, he had little choice. The fact that the Spanish court dragged the affair out for weeks in spite of the potential military threat underscores their fundamental unhappiness with the situation. In one of his more extravagant moments, Grimaldi went so far as to claim that Carlos III had proposed burning “all the logwood trees in that part of the world” during the Seven Years’ War as a kind of massive scorched earth strategy against British economic penetration. Regardless of whether or not the story was true, it gives some indication of the strength of Spanish feelings about the infiltration of their territories by British loggers and traders. Although Honduras may not have been close enough to the most important Spanish colonies to be worth pursuing such a drastic course of action, Grimaldi was offering an oblique verbal warning to Rochford by telling him of such theoretical plans. If British expansion could not be stopped, the future of the Spanish Empire fell farther into shadow with each passing year, and that deterioration could not be permitted.

Grimaldi’s primary concern was that if Spain was compelled to admit that the British were already granted the right to be logging in new areas in Honduras, then they would have no legal grounds to stop British traders from rampaging over all of Mexico. For him, capitulation on this issue would be nearly tantamount to surrendering the economic sovereignty of New Spain to the British. He made it clear that he would be happy to expand the treaty to allow British logging in whatever specific locations the loggers would like to work, but in a specific manner that would make it clear where activity was

62 AHN, Estado, Legajo 4262, Felipe Ramírez de Estenoz to Joseph Maud, Mérida de Yucatán, 29 December 1763.
63 BNA, SP 94/168, Rochford to Halifax, Segovia, 6 August 1764, f. 5.
allowed and where it was prohibited. But George III had made it clear to his ministers that they were to take a zero-tolerance stance on this issue. In his estimation, the Spanish were in direct violation of a clear treaty article, and he would accept nothing less than full compliance with the British interpretation of Article XVII.

Rochford was ultimately able to cajole an unhappy Grimaldi into accepting the British position with some intimation about the potential use of the British Navy to enforce London’s will. In that respect, the British were not bluffing. The British Navy was, in fact, standing by to land troops in the region as a treaty-affirming police action if Rochford was unable to obtain a diplomatic resolution in Spain. For the moment, the Spanish were sufficiently cowed to allow the loggers to return to work, although they balked at British suggestions that Spain should pay reparations. Carlos III and his ministers were far from being in agreement with British thinking. Several weeks after the Honduras dispute was settled, Rochford reported that he had an audience with Carlos III in which the Spanish king loudly complained about the way in which the entire episode had played out. According to Rochford, he demanded to know how the British government could allow “people from private views” to often have “opportunity of embroiling the publick system.”

The Spanish crown found it incomprehensible that the British system allowed private citizens to act independently around the world and yet still enjoy the protection of the British government when they found themselves in trouble with a foreign power. This reaction was essentially based on a non-understanding of the highly participatory nature of British governance after the Glorious Revolution, which both permitted and encouraged a highly porous membrane between public and private interests

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64 BNA, SP 94/168, f. 78, Rochford to Halifax, Segovia, 14-17 September 1764.
65 BNA, SP 94/168, f. 27, Halifax to Rochford, St. James, 30 August 1764.
67 BNA, SP 94/168, f. 147, Rochford to Halifax, Segovia, 27 October 1764.
and activities.\textsuperscript{68} Rochford tried to placate Carlos III by assuring him that the great majority of British citizens saw good reasons for peace.\textsuperscript{69} But the Spanish crown was making a pointed, legitimate argument. If the British government was going to allow British traders to take the lead on their empire’s foreign policy by stirring up trouble in faraway colonies and then expecting protection from the British military when they encountered resistance, then no foreign power could take British security guarantees seriously. Rather, other empires should expect nothing but a constant stream of trouble from the British and their disrespectful free-agent traders.

But this commerce-vanguard form of imperial expansion was already firmly in play, and British power meant that the Spanish had little choice for the moment but to accept these conditions, and the slow but steady expansion of British commercial norms. This normative transformation had a profound influence on the territory in question – so much so that it began not only a shift in economic norms and ethics, but also an eventual transfer of territory and political authority as the imperial geographies became rationalized. In that sense, the Bay of Honduras case supports the claim made by Daniel Defoe several decades prior to the Seven Years’ War. Commerce, at least when backed up by British power, appeared to have the capacity to fundamentally transform societies around the world. But for the Spanish, the question was increasingly becoming one of resistance. British imperial strategies were dangerously effective, regardless of whether commercial activity or the military served as the vanguard of that expansion. How, then, could Spain adjust the way in which it was fashioning empire to be more competitive with the British as geographical frontiers became increasingly contested? That issue will be the primary concern of the next two chapters.

\textsuperscript{68} Here I refer again to Steve Pincus’ understanding of the impact of the 1688 revolution on the nature of eighteenth-century British government, as discussed in the last chapter.
\textsuperscript{69} Ibid.
Legal Post-Mortems and Rationalized Geographies

For the moment, it will be enough to see that in the wake of the Seven Years’ War, the Marqués de Grimaldi and the other Spanish ministers tended to view the British as thoughtlessly aggressive and unconcerned with the rights of other nations, and the Bay of Honduras dispute was no exception. But the British government was not automatically dismissive of Spanish rights, and did go to some effort to provide legal rationales for their right to expand Britain’s power in Central America. Expansion in that region was certainly a palatable concept to the British government, but it still required some justification. In the wake of the situation in the Bay of Honduras, the Lords of Trade requested an informed opinion as to whether or not the British crown would be within its rights to establish “any form of civil government or jurisdiction” over British citizens there while remaining within both the “letter and spirit” of the Treaty of Paris. The task of formulating that opinion fell to James Marriott, who was then serving as the King’s Advocate. For Marriott, an international treaty was much like a contract between individuals, but of a particular type that had no direct analogue in English common law. Because other European nations did not have a common law system and had no understanding of British legal process, Marriott concluded that the interpretation of the Treaty of Paris and any other international treaties must be done within the Roman legal tradition. Because every major European legal system had been influenced by Roman law to some degree, it remained the closest possible approximation of a set of truly international legal norms.

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70 BNA, CO 123/1, f. 116, “Case of the Settlers in the Bay of Honduras, referred to his Majesty’s Advocate General, 21 April 1766, from the Lords of Trades and Plantations.” Report submitted by James Marriott to John Pownal, Esq., Secretary of the Right Honourable the Lords Commissioners of Trade and Plantation. The underlining of the word “any” for emphasis also appears in the original document.


72 BNA, CO 123/1, f. 118, “Case of the Settlers...”
So to what extent did Marriott believe that the Treaty of Paris allowed for British political jurisdiction in Spanish territory? The short answer to that question is that he believed that British rights in the Honduras region were potentially unlimited. The Treaty of Paris includes specific discussion of the post-war status of several key territories, including Cuba and Florida. In addition, Article XXIII allowed for the return of any territories conquered during the war, “in whatsoever part of the world,” to their pre-war owners. But it is critical to recognize that these specific treaty stipulations depended on a non-specific, subjective understanding of the territorial domains of both the Spanish and British Empires prior to the war. Marriott proceeded from the assumption that the Bay of Honduras had already been British territory prior to the war because it had already long been occupied by British subjects, regardless of any claims made by Spain on the basis of the Treaty of Tordesillas or any other previous legal argument. From that position, Marriott asserted that there was “no cession made by Great Britain to Spain of the Territory of the Bay of Honduras on the ground of demolition of the fortifications there, or by implication of the terms of that proposition.”

Marriott dissected Article XVII and, unsurprisingly, found precise meanings that were favourable to the British cause. He attacked its loose ends and challenged every vaguely defined element. The treaty required Britain to demolish fortifications “in the Bay of Honduras, and other places of the territory of Spain in that part of the world.” At the Peace of Paris, Grimaldi clearly believed this statement to be a reaffirmation of Spain’s territorial right over the Bay of Honduras. But in 1766, Marriott shattered that understanding and reassembled the pieces in a manner that was more agreeable to British ambitions. He argued that “the Bay of Honduras is not here in this proposition clearly said singly (and) by itself to be of the Territory of Spain.” In order to convey that meaning, Marriott declared, it would have to read: “In the Bay of Honduras, which is of the territory of Spain, and

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73 Articles XIX, XX, and XXIII, Treaty of Paris 1763.
74 BNA, CO 123/1, f. 120, “Case of the Settlers...”
in all other places which are of the said territory.”\textsuperscript{75} To put it mildly, his reading of this clause was both tortured and unreasonable in terms of grammatical specificity, especially in view of the fact that each of the three signatory powers had a different state language. Still, regardless of whether or not Bedford intended to convey that meaning at the peace negotiations, Marriott accomplished an \textit{ex post facto} interpretation of Article XVII that left possession of Honduras ambiguous. It would also certainly be difficult for the Spanish crown to digest. In doing so, he also gave considerable credence to Prince Masserano’s claim that the British had an inveterate tendency to insist upon treaty interpretations that were unfairly biased in their favour.

To further buttress his claims, Marriott explored the case of the island of Jamaica. Like Honduras, Jamaica had been discovered by Spain in the late fifteenth century. But \textit{de facto} Spanish control over Jamaica was never more than tenuous, and it was decisively ended by the force of British arms in 1655. Spain recognized British territorial rights over places in the West Indies where British colonists had already settled in the Treaty of Madrid (1670), but the language of that treaty was conspicuously vague in terms of territorial specificity. As Marriott noted in 1766, Britain’s right over Jamaica stood only “upon possession by conquest and general confirmation, the treaties being silent in the particular case of that island.”\textsuperscript{76} As Marriott astutely pointed out, territoriality in the Americas during the early modern period was far from precise. It was easy to make vast territorial claims on paper, but it was an entirely different matter to generate the physical manifestations of empire that were required to stake a practical claim over those territories.

Looking beyond the chaotic deployment of different visions of empire and justifications for territorial claims, the simple and devastating outcome for the Spanish Empire throughout much of the

\textsuperscript{75} BNA, CO 123/1, f. 120-1, “Case of the Settlers...” The underlining is from the original document.
\textsuperscript{76} BNA, CO 123/1, f. 122, “Case of the Settlers...”
seventeenth and eighteenth centuries was the continual erosion of any claim to empire that was not based on the actual occupation and economic exploitation of the Americas. It began long before the Seven Years’ War, but reached a new phase and intensity of ethical purpose when Britain emerged victorious from that conflict. Maps that marked vast stretches of land with the colour of one empire or another had little meaning. Being on the land, working the soil, extracting precious resources, and participating in a vast, global trading network – that was what empire was starting to mean. This development was certainly pleasing to the British, for it was a strong element of their evolving, aggregate imperial vision. They were flush with power, not merely to patrol the oceans and displace rival settlements, but to reshape the very conception of what it meant to have an empire. That much has been well enough established by existing work. But what may ultimately be surprising is that the Spanish vision was not always directly contrary to that understanding of empire, in spite of what the British may have thought. The work of the next section is to discover the richness and nuances of imperial visions in Spain after the Seven Years’ War, and to understand the terrible conflicts that they ultimately engendered.
Part II

Spanish Assimilations
Prologue

The Demise of Early Modern Empire

Until now we have always had a reserve of the imaginary – now the coefficient of reality is proportional to the reserve of the imaginary that gives it its specific weight. This is also true of geographical and spatial exploration: when there is no longer any virgin territory, and thus one available to the imaginary, when the map covers the whole territory, something like the principle of reality disappears.

- Jean Baudrillard, *Simulacra & Simulation*  

We have already seen that imperial geography was often a hazy concept for Europeans throughout much of the early-modern era, and that it was coming into a much sharper definition in the latter half of the eighteenth century. But our journey into the relationship between empire and the physical spaces that it inhabits is not yet complete. What we have not fully explored is the extent to which the very reality of the early modern imperial experience was bound to the dynamic geographical relationship between Europe and the rest of the world, and to the consequences that arose from the crisis of that relationship in the eighteenth century, alongside the many other shifts in meta-cognition that were then underway. Throughout the early modern era, there was a shifting relationship between the real and the imaginary – and a slow but inexorable annihilation of both. Jean Baudrillard had some insight into this transformation. He described the general process of exploration as a “haemorrhaging of reality” which, by exposing the reality of the exploring society’s geographical point of origin to those of

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the newly discovered, eventually severed the project of exploration from its original reason or sense of purpose – a gradual destruction of reality itself.²

A major part of the argument of the second part of this dissertation is that the concept of empire in the early-modern period was fundamentally and inextricably linked to the fact that European thinking about empire at that time was focused on exploration and gradual territorial assimilation. Assumed European realities were set alongside newly revealed geographies and the forms of culture, economy and polity that came with them - ones that Europeans hoped to supplant. So as I suggested at the beginning of this study, the primary early-modern imperial discourse was between known space and unknown space. By the latter half of the eighteenth century, diminishing reserves of virgin territory and easily extractable resources were placing an increasing strain on that discourse, and they forced it to transform itself into one in which various different European realities of empire overlapped and were simultaneously projected into the same geographical spaces. What followed in the Americas was not a tale with clear British victors and Spanish victims, but one in which both parties struggled to find some form of clarity and future direction for the European experience of empire.

Dreaming about undiscovered lands and seas was giving way to thinking about and planning what must be constructed in known territories, how those places might be more fully exploited, and to a practical sense of how it all might be achieved in the face of direct competition from other Europeans. What had been a long unveiling and tenuous incorporation of new lands into the European sphere was being replaced by the beginnings of an even more ambitious and complex progressivism. From the dying trunks of early-modern empires of exploration, conversion and mercantilism sprung the first tendrils of modern empires of managed exploitation and direct international competition. We cannot know the causation behind this process in any straightforward or parsimonious way. As Lester D. Langley astutely

² Ibid., 124.
notes, the era that started in about 1750 presents us with unusual dynamics because “events did not unfold in a linear process of gradually or suddenly escalating power but in chaotic patterns that took differing forms in different places.”

In saying so, Langley showed a sensitive perception of the problem at hand – the seeming contradiction of a chaos with a pattern – but did not offer a practical solution. As I noted at the outset, one major limitation of traditional historical methodology revolves around the fact that the philosophy of history has tended toward a preoccupation with the idea of causality, which assigns a series of necessary antecedents to specific events. But as Ged Martin argues, we cannot truly understand any given historical phenomenon by merely looking for its causes, be they immediate or remote. A complete historical analysis must fully situate past events in their original temporal contexts, thereby endowing each event with both a past and a future. One of the few things that can reasonably be said about human decisions in a general sense is that they are largely based on assumptions or intuitions – either implicitly or explicitly – about how the future is going to unfold. As Martin admonishes us, “the inconvenient problem that the future is unknowable does not excuse historians from exploring the influences of perceived or imagined past futures upon the shaping of the decisions that constitute the building blocks of history.”

In the mid-eighteenth century, the struggle for future clarity of imperial purpose was increasingly concerned with concepts of space – how it could be seen, described, and eventually controlled or at least left free of monopolistic rival control. In many cases, there were mounting financial, political and military costs to be paid. In the preceding chapters, we saw that different visions for the expansion and management of empire were clashing within the British Empire and between

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British and Spanish subjects out in the world. Something similar was happening in the Spanish world, but with an important difference. British debates were centred on a commercial system that had really only become possible over the century prior to the Seven Years’ War. But the original Spanish imperial reality – that which the process of exploration and expansion was gradually annihilating – belonged to a post-medieval age in which perceived cultural, religious and economic imperatives were very different. An imperial logic of conversion and Catholic fealty had long been central, but that mission was running out of steam, partly because of increased exploratory and commercial intrusions by the French and British. By the mid-eighteenth century, Spanish leaders were looking for solutions. They observed the evolution of the British imperial experience – one that was partially derived from earlier Spanish experiences – and sought a new synthesis.

**Spanish Decline or Spanish Renaissance?**

The established trend in literature about the long decline of the Spanish Empire has been to discuss whether or not the Spanish might have been able to address the problems with their empire and so forestall their relative decline in relation to the French and the British. Among the most central questions has been to ask why the Spanish were unable to stem their decline in the seventeenth century. Perhaps the most critical moment in that literature to date comes from J. H. Elliott’s judgement that the Count-Duke of Olivares (1587-1645), the great seventeenth-century Spanish statesman, understood many of the problems and the solutions that were needed, but found that the political environment restrained him and left him unable to make the necessary changes. Consequently, Elliott suggested that the decline of Spain was not inevitable – reform was a definite possibility. But for
Olivares and other Spanish ministers of that era, particular political and economic obstructions made change difficult.\(^5\)

As convincing as Elliott’s perspective may be for the seventeenth-century Hapsburgs, and perhaps even for the Bourbons of the early-eighteenth century, this way of looking at Spanish decline is not particularly illuminating from the vantage point of the mid-eighteenth century. No matter how much the Spanish might or might not have been able to adjust their imperial practices in an earlier era, geographical pressures and the rise of British power made the eighteenth century into a new kind of scenario. Dealing with intrusive British thinking and practices of empire was no longer optional, and imperial revitalization could not be done on the basis of Spanish initiative alone. The relative old age of early-modern Spanish imperialism set the stage for the British to confront and for the Spanish to react and assimilate. But as we shall see, the process through which the Spanish world negotiated the discourse between British and Spanish imperial realities was not simply a matter of imitation. Rather, it was one of assimilation and adaptation.

Just as the British had built their earlier imperial development by following in the path created by Spanish Empire, officials in Madrid hoped to develop a new clarity from all that had come before in Atlantic imperialism. Their efforts were not entirely successful, but they were also not an abject failure.

\(^5\) See J.H. Elliott, *The Count-Duke of Olivares: The Statesman in an Age of Decline* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986). Elliott’s book was preceded by a lively debate on the subject of Spanish decline, and whether or not it even existed, in the pages of *Past & Present*. The triggering article for that debate was Henry Kamen’s “The Decline of Spain: A Historical Myth?” *Past & Present* 81 (November 1978): 24-50. In that article, Kamen suggests that Spain never became rich in the first place, and so cannot be seen as having declined. In the end, this discussion is tangential to the subject of this dissertation, as Spain’s (relative) decline with respect to France and especially to Britain is difficult to deny by the mid-eighteenth century. A more recent contribution to this discussion comes from economic historian Mauricio Drelichman, who argues that the influx of precious metals from Spanish America created structural problems in the Iberian economy by encouraging skilled labour to move into the unproductive nobility, thereby generating long-term economic stagnation. The political force of will needed to remedy this situation would not have been simple, and Drelichman argues that neither Olivares nor the eighteenth-century Bourbons managed to do enough against noble privileges to make much of a difference. See Drelichman, “All that glitters: Precious metals, rent seeking and the decline of Spain,” *European Review of Economic History* 9, No. 3 (December 2005): 313-336.
In many ways, there was a renaissance of the Spanish Empire that was taking place even in the final few decades before its near-destruction in the early nineteenth century, and especially in the period after the Seven Years’ War. Spanish officials considered a wide range of major policy reforms that were designed to strengthen their imperial economy, and even managed to implement some of them in the 1760s. To see those efforts only through the lens of the empire’s ultimate disintegration is to underplay or ignore the legitimate hopes and positive visions for the imperial future that were commonly seen in Madrid during the early years of the reign of Carlos III.

The second part of this dissertation, titled “Spanish Assimilations,” is designed to grapple with the issue of how the Spanish dealt with the problem of what to do with empire in the wake of the Seven Years’ War. Under serious and increasing pressure, the state sought clarity in several ways. Carlos III and his principal ministers adopted certain aspects of the British economic model, especially with respect to liberty of commerce within imperial borders. But they also increasingly moved to shape the future growth of their empire in a way that was designed to evade the pressures of being in such close physical proximity to British territory in so many places – a story that will later unfold as a major focus of the third part of this dissertation. As a more immediate security measure, Spanish officials reorganized their military forces and colonial administrations, starting with the city of Havana and its Caribbean neighbours. In doing so, they placed an increasing amount of responsibility and power into colonial hands, recognizing that step as an essential gamble if British power and influence was to be resisted. But there were serious prices to be paid as well. Not everyone in the Spanish Empire would benefit from or agree with these changes, and imperial networks and agendas that were not compatible with the chosen direction had to be either suppressed or removed by force. Perhaps the most dramatic aspect of this story involves the Jesuit Order, which the crown violently expelled from the Spanish Empire in 1767.

This historical moment is one of the most significant centres of gravity for the next two chapters, for it represents the suppression of an imagined future in a similar but much farther reaching
manner than the British crown’s actions against John Entick and his colleagues in 1762. By acting against the Jesuits, the Spanish crown declared that the Society’s projects in the Americas were not to be part of Spain’s imperial future. The second chapter of this section will concern itself with that decision and its implications. But first, to establish a broader context, we will explore how the British victory in the Seven Years’ War affected how various major figures in the Spanish Empire envisioned what should happen next within their borders, and allowed for a kind of mentality that would allow them to condemn the Jesuits as a hostile element that must not be allowed to participate. How the Spanish leadership in Madrid perceived the British Empire, its contributions to the practices of empire, and the intentions of their counterparts in London played no small role in these events.
Chapter IV

Evolving the Spanish Empire in the British Shadow, 1759-66

When Spain and Great Britain grappled in 1762, they fought in spaces that the Spanish had occupied for centuries. As Albemarle and Draper breached the walls at Havana and Manila, they shattered any illusion that even the most established settlements in the Spanish world were impenetrable. Manila, of course, was remote from the main body of the Spanish world and not well-defended. But many Spanish officials recognized that if Havana could fall, the British threat was growing to a magnitude that could overwhelm the Atlantic and either seduce or coerce the entire Hispanic world down a path that would not be of Spain’s choosing. To put it another way, British power was exerting increasing pressure on Spanish economic, political, geographical and military norms by making longstanding imperial practices untenable. Although the Spanish elite was already moving toward considering broader reforms in the 1740s and 50s, the Seven Years’ War and the rapidly growing disequilibrium of power in the Atlantic considerably hastened that process. The growing British presence in the Atlantic, in combination with the rising geographical pressures of the era, made it more important than ever to reconcile centuries-old Spanish modes of thinking and operating with newer ideas that were circulating in the Atlantic world. Attempting to resolve this tension was part of the work of the Bourbon Reforms. In the era after the Seven Years’ War, these reforms increasingly focused on the Spanish Americas, where officials sought administrative reform and to extract greatly increased wealth.

In this chapter, I will not survey the entire range of reforms that the Spanish attempted in the Americas, for that has already been the work of many scholars in an established and growing body of
Instead, we are primarily concerned here with the place of the Anglo-Spanish relationship in that reform process, the balance between pro and anti-British forces in Madrid, and with the normative threat that the British seemed to pose. Reformers in Madrid could not alter the great momentum of their empire as quickly as they might have preferred. The process was slow and halting, and called for the removal of obstructions and incompatibilities as much as it required the implementation of new processes and regulations. In the first seven years of Carlos III’s reign, the reformist cadre of ministers in Madrid were eager to greatly expand government control over the development of the Spanish economy and to attack entrenched interests if and when they perceived them as a threat to their reformist agenda. I argue that the iconic – and terminal – historical moment in the first and most vigorous phase of that process is the Jesuit Expulsion of 1767, when Carlos III stunned both Spanish and foreign observers alike with the scope and ferocity of his action. But the path to that significant event is long, and winds its way through many antecedents. One of its first destinations in the post-war era was a place we have already visited: the fallen city of Havana, in 1763.

The Havana Disgrace and the Cuban Reform Experiments

Governor Juan de Prado is best remembered in Spanish history as the man who presided over the loss of Havana to Great Britain in 1762. Upon the restoration of peace and his return to Madrid, the former governor was charged and subjected to an intense process of legal inquiry that gave full voice to

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Spain’s imperial anxieties and laid a heavy burden of culpability on the disgraced official. In his defence, de Prado pointed to a combination of bad luck and the unprecedented accumulation of British naval power as a formula for disaster. “The enemy (force) was the largest we have suffered up to this point in the Americas,” he said. “Look at naval history in its entirety –never before have such armaments been seen in that part of the world.” British advantages did not stop there, he declared. “The proximity of (Britain’s) old colonies and new conquests” meant that they were able to maintain a constant stream of supplies, reinforcements and a sense of “hope for (resolving) any predicament.” Perhaps most of all, de Prado described the British forces as tough and battle-hardened by the long years of the war. “Their soldiers were already familiar with the climate, with the dangers,” and were energized by the laurels of military triumph, running from conquest to conquest “carrying victory in their hands.” In what was partly an effort to downplay his own fault in any way possible, de Prado went so far as to imbue his British opponents with an almost supernatural character. “Even the elements became their allies,” he said. “The winds calmed to assist their disembarkation” from their ships, and there were none of the “storms and heavy rains” that were characteristic of the region.²

As he was on trial, de Prado had a strong motivation to produce an exaggerated description of the siege of Havana. The writings of his British opponent, Lord Albemarle, tell a story of real hardship on the British side of the invasion. They speak of a mission that nearly failed under the weight of the yellow fever epidemic and the fatigue that was brought on by the harsh climate.³ Yet the basic essence of his message was an ominous one for the Spanish crown, and was not mistaken for mere hyperbole in

² British Library (BL), Rare Books Collection, Satisfaccion del Mariscal de Campo D. Juan de Prado, Governador que ha sido de la Plaza de la Habana, y Capitan General de la Isla de Cuba, A los Cargos, que se le han formado en la causa pendiente en la Junta de Generales nombrados por S.M., sobre la conducta, que tuvieron en la defensa, capitulacion, rendicion, y perdida de la misma plaza, y esquadra furta en su puerto, los gefes, y oficiales de que se compuso la junta de Guerra, formada en ella en virtud de Real Orden (Madrid?, c. 1764). This source can be found in the British Library under the call number 1324.i.9.(38.). The translation from the original Spanish, as with all subsequent sources, is by the author.

³ Here, of course, I refer to the British narrative that is related in the first chapter of this study.
Madrid. Governor de Prado’s errors may have exacerbated an already precarious situation, but the fact remained that Spain was dangerously unprepared to fight Britain in 1762. The disgraced governor was right to say that the region had never before seen a naval force such as the one that fell upon the walls of Havana. Nonetheless, as much as crown officials in Madrid might have heard the legitimate portion of the governor’s explanations, they needed a scapegoat to blame for the temporary loss of the city. De Prado suffered the ignominy of being branded both lazy and incompetent. To add insult to injury, one hundred señoras of Havana submitted a manifesto to the Queen of Spain that condemned de Prado as weak and indecisive. To them, he was a coward. His failures at Havana were the proof.⁴

Even as the crown began its actions against de Prado, the first steps in a major reform process were underway. These reforms had various facets, some of which had already been initiated prior to the outbreak of war between Britain and Spain, but they were spurred on by the city’s experience under the British in 1762-3 and the imperial trauma that came with it. Not surprisingly, the most immediate concern was to reoccupy the city and regenerate its defences. To that end, the Spanish crown immediately made preparations to send the Conde de Ricla, a reform-minded administrator, to serve as the new governor and captain-general of Cuba. He was to reinforce Havana with over 2000 new troops, along with 139 officers and an ample supply of new weapons and munitions.⁵ Carlos III also sent the talented and highly-regarded Field Marshall Don Alejandro O’Reilly. Born into a noble family in Ireland, O’Reilly had moved to Spain as a child and spent his younger adulthood rapidly climbing the ranks of the Spanish military and impressing key political figures in both the French and Spanish governments. He was also a close personal friend of the Conde de Ricla. That friendship led Ricla to request O’Reilly’s

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⁴ Guillermo Calleja Leal and Hugo O’Donnell y Duque de Estrada, 1762 – La Habana Inglesa: La toma de La Habana por los ingleses (Madrid: Ediciones de Cultura Hispánica, 1999), 206.
⁵ Celia María Parcero Torre, La Pérdida de la Habana y las Reformas Borbónicas en Cuba (1760-1773) (Ávila, Spain: Junta de Castilla y León – Consejería de Educación y Cultura, 1998), 208-10. This book contains a good and well-documented narrative of the reform process. It is drawn primarily from archival sources in Spain – especially the Archivo General de Indias de Sevilla and the Archivo General de Simancas.
appointment as sub-inspector general for both the regular army and militia units in Havana. Ricla and O’Reilly were a formidable team. As Allan J. Kuethe points out, the two men were eager reformers who were “advancing a new idea in a momentarily fluid bureaucratic structure, and they clearly intended to make the most of their opportunities.”

While Ricla devoted his initial attention to the repair and improvement of the city’s fortifications, he instructed O’Reilly to begin the reorganization of the military. Chief among Spain’s military failures in Cuba prior to the Seven Years’ War was that they established a system of organized militias in Castile in 1734 but did not think to expand that system into the crown’s American possessions – partly because of a traditional reluctance to provide military training to Creole subjects. Officials in Madrid feared that a colony that was capable of independent self defence would no longer feel obligated to remain obedient to Spanish directives. As a result, the Cuban militia remained poorly organized and largely ineffective against the better trained and equipped British forces. Kuethe characterizes the militia as “poorly equipped, confused and frightened,” and so of little assistance to the overwhelmed Spanish regulars who had put up a valiant but futile resistance in the summer of 1762. The Cubans were hardly unique in the ineffectiveness of their militia. In the wake of the Seven Years’ War, Spanish officials were well aware that the problem existed throughout the empire. Yet the Spanish crown had remained reluctant to arm colonial forces, understanding that it would mean allowing a

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7 Kuethe, 13-4.
8 Kuethe, 19.
9 There is an extensive literature on this subject. In the late 1970s, there was general investigation into Bourbon military reforms in Spanish America. See, for example, Christon Archer’s *The Army in Bourbon Mexico, 1760-1810* (Albuquerque, New Mexico: University of New Mexico Press, 1977) and Allan Kuethe’s *Military Reform and Society in New Granada, 1773-1808* (Gainesville, Florida: The University Presses of Florida, 1978). More recently, scholars have focused on more specific issues within the general topic. Two prominent examples are Ben Vinson III’s *Bearing Arms for his Majesty: The Free-Colored Militia in Colonial Mexico* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2001) and, in a slightly later period, Peter Blanchard’s *Under the Flags of Freedom: Slave Soldiers & the Wars of Independence in Spanish South America* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2008).
certain amount of political power to lapse into colonial hands. In the aftermath of the fall of Havana, that kind of thinking was a luxury that the Spanish could no longer afford. If British power was to be resisted, it would require an acceptance of new costs and a willingness to take new risks.

Initiating and broadening a process of reform that went beyond simple reinforcements would require the participation and consent of the Cuban elite, as the British had also found while implementing their own temporary reforms during their occupation. Almost immediately after his arrival in Havana, Ricla began the task of recruiting experienced locals who might be able to help facilitate his reform program and convince their fellow Cubans to be cooperative. The new governor first approached the local comisario de marina (naval commissioner) and future titled nobleman, Lorenzo Montalvo, who disappointed Ricla by adopting a negative attitude and failing to support his plans.\textsuperscript{10} At this point, the story takes a most interesting twist. In search of a more subtle technique to foment cooperation, Ricla did something that speaks to some of the contradictions within the political complexities at play, given the emerging conflict between the Jesuits and the state. Specifically, he requested the assistance of Padre Ignacio Tomás Butler, a respected local Jesuit with deep roots in the community. Ricla asked Butler to convey the essence of the crown’s intentions for Havana to the community’s elite. There would be new burdens, but also new rewards. The padre moved with great care. He first met individually with the heads of thirty of Havana’s most important families to brief them on the crown’s plans, before expanding to a more assertive phase of negotiation.\textsuperscript{11}

\textsuperscript{10} Parcero Torre, 243.
\textsuperscript{11} Allan J. Kuethe and G. Douglas Inglis, “Absolutism and Enlightened Reform: Charles III, the Establishment of the Alcabala, and Commercial Reorganization in Cuba,” \textit{Past and Present} 109 (November 1985), 124. This article, based mostly on archival research at the Archivo General de Indias in Seville, is a foundational work on the application of the Bourbon Reforms in Havana after the Seven Years’ War, and is cited extensively by others who have written more recently on the topic, such as Celia María Parcero Torre.
In October 1763, Butler invited the heads of thirty of the city’s most influential families to meet with him in the home of Alejandro O’Reilly, who provided the venue but who seems to have had enough diplomatic sense to not attend the meeting himself. These leading citizens represented all of the major elements of the Cuban economy as it existed at the time, including planters, cattlemen, merchants and shipbuilders. Through their individual meetings with Butler, they already knew what the crown was offering them. The military reforms were to come at a cost, and it would come in the form of increased taxation – such was the cost of preventing future British conquests of Havana. But at the same time, the crown promised to accelerate reforms that would increase economic prosperity and make it possible for the Cuban elite to afford these new taxes. In this promise, the Spanish government was signalling its mounting willingness to liberalize trade and enable Havana to flourish as a port with a greatly increased number of direct commercial connections.\textsuperscript{12} At the meeting, Butler explained that Ricla had proposed that the elite should put together a proposal for how the new revenue could best be raised. But when put to a vote of the twenty-four elite patricians at the meeting, this initial proposal failed. The patricians agreed in principle with the broader reform agenda, but suggested that the situation be left in the crown’s hands for the time being, and that another meeting could be held once more details became available.\textsuperscript{13}

What the Havana elite did not know was that these reforms were evolving much more quickly than they had anticipated. Allan J. Kuethe and G. Douglas Inglis argue that Ricla had correctly judged that there was a willingness in Havana to accept a higher tax burden, but that the local elite was also accustomed to a much slower pace of political machinations and did not expect matters to move along quickly. So when a new royal decree – instituting a four percent \textit{alcabala} and new taxes on liquor – arrived in the summer of 1764, they were stunned. Moreover, the crown sent its orders with promises

\textsuperscript{12} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{13} Kuethe and Inglis, 125.
of commercial reforms to come in the near future without offering any details. In the wake of the elite discontent that quickly followed, Ricla shifted toward damage control. In October 1764, he sent José Antonio Gelabert, a Spaniard and the chief auditor of the royal treasury in Havana, to meet with a much larger group of now-angry patricians than had attended the earlier meeting with Butler. Having been embarrassed by their earlier failure to seize some initiative in the reform process, the patricians urgently requested a discussion on the issue of when exactly the promised reforms would arrive, and what form they would take. As Ricla and his staff were keenly aware, the situation was increasingly dangerous and required an immediate response.¹⁴

This time, the meeting led to the formation of a committee charged with the task of communicating the elite’s perspective on the reform process, both in terms of how they could best bear the burden of increased taxation, and of what economic reforms they wanted to see. The petition that came out of that process served to emphasize two main points. First, it obsequiously praised the crown for its efforts to improve the defence of Havana while expressing “anguish” that the community had so little to offer in a financial sense to support these initiatives. Second, and more importantly, the petition offered a vision of how the Havana economy should be allowed to operate. In essence, the elite anxiously desired to see their port opened to direct trade with all Spanish and Spanish-American ports. They also wished to be able to purchase slaves from any port, which would effectively open a path for commercial relations with territories controlled by other European powers. Finally, they suggested that no monopoly, aside from the one over tobacco, should be allowed – a preference that was designed to protect their ever-increasing cultivation of sugar from official interference.¹⁵

¹⁴ Kuethe and Inglis, 129-30.
¹⁵ Kuethe and Inglis, 131.
There was, of course, nothing in the petition that mentioned the obvious parallels between the recommended economic reforms and the city’s recent administrative experiences under British occupation. To explicitly make such a connection would have been extremely impolitic, given the Spanish crown’s high level of anxiety about the British threat. So it is not easy to develop a direct causal understanding of the extent to which Albemarle’s temporary reforms shaped or accelerated the transformation of the Havana elite’s commercial preferences. But at the same time, it is almost impossible to imagine that the committee of patricians that wrote the petition could have written about their desired liberalization of trade without thinking of their recent wartime experiences. As O’Reilly noted in 1763, the rise in trade volume during the British occupation was staggering. There was an increase from about 30 000 pesos to over 400 000 pesos in annual import and export duties – a temporary ballooning to over thirteen times the normal volume of legitimate trade.\(^{16}\) For eleven months, the city became a teeming American entrepôt. Nearly a hundred British ships visited, bringing luxury goods from Europe and considerable quantities of foodstuffs from North America.\(^{17}\) Even more importantly, the British brought in 3 262 new slaves, much to the approval of the Cuban elite. They roughly doubled the city’s slave population and reinforced the trade relationship between Cuba and Jamaica – one that continued to move large numbers of human beings in bondage after the end of the war.\(^{18}\) These radical shifts in the profitability of commercial life cannot possibly have gone unnoticed by either Cuban or Spaniard.

The more active involvement of the elite patricians in the reform process paid almost immediate dividends. On 16 October 1765, Carlos III issued a royal decree – the *Reglamento del Comercio Libre* – that gave the Havana elite much of what they wanted and that served as a significant disruption of


\(^{17}\) Stein and Stein, 51.

\(^{18}\) Stein and Stein, 55.
centuries-old Spanish commercial practice. The crown ordered that merchants would “be allowed the liberty of navigation” and would be able to choose “how, when, through whichever port is most suitable (out of a list of nine approved Spanish harbours), and without needing to seek permission from the crown.” The decree also broadened the commercial reform experiment beyond the island of Cuba by awarding these privileges to several other Spanish possessions in the Caribbean, including Santo Domingo, Puerto Rico, Margarita and Trinidad. In addition, it allowed for the direct, inter-island trade of goods produced in the colonies.\(^\text{19}\) It can seem a cautious decree at first glance. Although it was a definite expansion of commercial liberty, the decree had not yet called for truly free trade. Yet it was a massive shock to the existing Spanish system, and it earned the enmity of those who had benefited from the pre-existing system, such as the merchant guild of Cádiz, which was abruptly robbed of a significant part of its monopoly on trade with Spanish America. The merchant guild of Mexico also quickly moved to oppose it. The merchants there rightly suspected that even though the *flota* system was still in operation to New Spain, the arrival of free trade in Cuba would greatly undermine their part of the old system as well, because goods brought through Havana would also find their way to New Spain in significant numbers.\(^\text{20}\)

There was also a reform in trade law that shifted the basis of taxation from an assessment based on weight to one that was based on the value of the goods being transported. This change was critically important for economic development because it removed a fundamental economic distortion that made it difficult to trade in goods that were heavy but not very valuable per unit of weight. The Spanish crown also offered protection to the emerging Cuban sugar economy by denying the French privileged access

\(^{19}\) British Library, Western Manuscripts, Add MSS 21,449, f. 318-21. This document is a royal proclamation, copied by the Marqués de Esquilache and titled “Instrucción de lo que se ha de practicar para que tenga su entero cumplimiento mi Real intención, en la libertad de Comercio, que por Decreto de esta fecha, concedo á mis vassallos, para que pueden hacerle á la Isla de Cuba, Santo Domingo, Puerto Rico, Margarita, y Trinidad, sin necesidad de recurrir á solicitar mi Real Permiso.”

\(^{20}\) Fisher, 134-7. The *flota* system for New Spain lasted until 1778.
to sell their sugar in Cuba, in spite of heavy diplomatic pressure from their Bourbon allies. Yet the Havana elite did not receive everything its patricians had requested. The king’s orders did not open Havana to the importation of slaves from any other port, nor did they allow trade between colonies on a completely unrestricted basis. Those changes would eventually arrive, but were not foreseen in explicit terms and would have to wait for a future round of reforms. Still, the package of reforms that arrived in 1765 served as a stunning and fundamental alteration of centuries of Spanish economic policy.

Stanley and Barbara Stein underplay the importance of both the Havana elite and the impact of the city’s temporary loss to the British in their assessment of the crown’s decision to begin free trade reforms. They describe the Havana disaster as, at best, a catalyst that sped up changes already in play back at the court in Spain. As we shall see in the pages that follow, it is undeniable that there were already significant policy antecedents in place in Madrid. There was an understanding among the administrative elite that the Cadiz merchants and other beneficiaries of the existing system were a barrier to further economic development, and that a fresh, determined program of reform should be getting underway. But Stein and Stein’s analysis may credit too much of the reform impetus to the metropolitan elite back in Spain. They do not explain the crown’s initial willingness to institute new taxes in Havana without any immediate commercial reforms, or the reversal of that judgement in the face of resistance from the colonial elite. The participation and approval of Havana’s leading families appears to be a critical factor in the initial implementation of post-war reforms. It would not be unreasonable to go as far as to suggest that their eagerness for broader reforms may have helped to accelerate the process to the point at which more reactionary elements in the Spanish elite ultimately acted against reform and stymied the process altogether. But in spite of their overly metropolitan

21 Kuether and Inglis, 139.
orientation, Stein and Stein are right to place the 1765 Reglamento del Comercio Libre into a broad and long-term perspective. After all, this policy move was only one part of a much larger struggle to imagine the imperial future that was unfolding in Madrid.

Esquilache and the Struggle for Coherence of the Imperial Future

At court in Madrid, the Conde de Ricla had the support of key officials for his Cuban reforms because of the major political shifts that came with the ascension of Carlos III to the throne and the subsequent Spanish failure in the war. As the site of Spain’s greatest disgrace during the war and a place that was proven to be vulnerable to British interference, Havana was both the initial focal point and a proving ground that could open the way for broader reforms. Ricla and O’Reilly were certainly eager to begin their reforms, but they were setting sail for a place that Juan de Prado had already tried and failed to reform and fortify. The general feeling among the governing elite in Madrid was that an example would have to be made of de Prado. Still, many had doubts as to the disgraced governor’s culpability, including Captain Manuel Craywinkel, the prosecutor in the case. 23 If the fall of Havana could not be attributed to human error, then the situation suggested that more radical reforms would be needed.

Fortunately for Ricla and his ambitions, the political power structure in Madrid had been more quickly re-aligning itself since the accession of Carlos III in 1759 to be friendly to the implementation of new ideas about colonial governance and commercial reforms. This period was critical as it saw greater acceptance of an array of ideas about imperial reform and strategy that would ultimately lead to broad political and economic changes in the Spanish Empire over the last quarter of the eighteenth century – although arguably not enough to preserve the empire. Stanley and Barbara Stein have argued that

23 Kuethe, 20-22.
Spanish reforms between the Seven Years’ War and the French Revolution failed because the Spanish elite were reluctant to implement the radical changes that were needed to make a significant difference.\textsuperscript{24} For the period as a whole, that analysis may be true, as forces that had long benefitted from the pre-existing system rallied to protect their interests. But through the first handful of years of the reign of Carlos III, spurred on by the Seven Years’ War and its aftermath, the reform process was moving forward at what must be considered, within context, a rapid pace. That process was most strongly associated with one name: Leopoldo di Grigorio, the Marqués de Esquilache.

The year 1763 saw the Marqués de Esquilache’s accession to the key post of minister of war, adding to the responsibilities that he had already held as finance minister since 1759. As a friend and advisor to Carlos III during his time on the throne of Naples and Sicily, Esquilache was among the Italian reformers who played important roles in a successful series of reforms that had stabilized government finances and fomented economic growth in southern Italy. He moved to Madrid in 1759 with hopes of helping Spain realize its full potential as a European power through its own program of reforms. As early as his first year in office, he moved aggressively to make Spanish finances both more open and more dynamic. He began to hold sessions of the \textit{Junta de Comercio}, the state’s economic planning board, in public. He pushed for a series of changes that acted against inefficient monopolies, affirmed the state’s authority to tax the church, and moved to eliminate duties that suppressed Spanish manufacturing and encourage smuggling.\textsuperscript{25}

He also moved toward recruitment of government officials primarily on the basis of talent, largely with the informal support and advice of the Conde de Revillagigedo, a former captain-general of Cuba and viceroy of New Spain. Revillagigedo was a representative of a certain progressive element

\textsuperscript{24} That is one of the broad conclusions reached by Stein and Stein’s \textit{Apogee of Empire}.
\textsuperscript{25} Stein and Stein, 39-40.
within the Spanish military that had similar reformist aims. So even in the wake of Spain’s defeat in the final phase of the Seven Years’ War, Esquilache’s star was rising. When diplomatic relations were restored between Great Britain and Spain and the Earl of Rochford arrived in Madrid to assume his post, the British envoy keenly observed the political situation and quickly grasped Esquilache’s growing importance. Rochford believed that Carlos III was “not personally inclined to the French,” and that it had been the Marqués de Grimaldi – a known Francophile – who was been the “chief instrument” of the Bourbon Family Compact that had brought Spain into the war with Britain. But to Rochford, Esquilache did not seem to have any obvious leaning toward France, and appeared to be setting out on a path of reforms without worrying too much about pleasing anyone apart from the king himself.

Lord Rochford arrived in Madrid at an important moment in Spanish politics. Although Esquilache had already been an important minister before 1763, the increase in his responsibilities and the new appointment of Grimaldi as Minister of State brought about an important reorientation of power at the highest levels of administration. The way was open for Esquilache to broaden the scope of his ambitious reform program, although the risks of antagonizing Spanish traditionalists were not diminished. Rochford seems to have liked Esquilache and to have agreed with him on many issues. He described the minister as “a man of low birth,” but one who possessed a great love for business and an “indefatigable” capacity for it. Rochford also feared that Esquilache dismissed any threats to his position and his safety in a somewhat cavalier manner. “Although the clamours of the nation are strong against him,” Rochford wrote, “he thinks himself quite secure in his place.” Still, the British envoy clearly perceived Esquilache as a good person to know well and to support, as he thought him “more and more confirmed in his attachment to England,” even if his primary motive was “to act directly contrary to

26 Stein and Stein, 49-50.
27 British National Archives (BNA), State Papers (SP) 94/166, Rochford to Halifax, Madrid, 13 January 1764, f. 26.
Grimaldi,” a fellow Italian at the Spanish court. Rochford also felt that Esquilache had “a stronger hold upon the king than Grimaldi is likely to have, especially as (Esquilache’s) system of cultivating (the British crown’s) friendship is more agreeable” to Carlos III than the pro-French “doctrines that Grimaldi would instill into him.”28 Yet Grimaldi was wily, and it was Rochford’s understanding that it was he who had “artfully procured” a weekly meeting between himself, Esquilache, and Julían de Arriaga, the Minister of the Indies and the Navy – a group known as the Junta de Ministros.29

These three men made up the most powerful circle of political administration in Carlos III’s Spain in the years after the Seven Years’ War, and each of them had their own perspectives on empire, the reform process, and the dangers posed by Great Britain. By ensuring a regular flow of communication among the three, Grimaldi was assuring himself of some form of continuous connection to the nascent reform process and a way to potentially influence its course. In Rochford’s perception, Esquilache’s pro-British stance and Grimaldi’s pro-French stance were modified by the somewhat vague contribution of Arriaga, who Rochford dismissed as “a well meaning man, but led entirely by the Jesuits.” By including Arriaga, who was not generally “consulted but in what concerns his own department,” Rochford suspected that Grimaldi was “trying to make him more active” as a potential ally, but was thwarted because Arriaga’s “indolence and bigotry” would “prevent him from entering into Grimaldi’s views.”30 Rochford also schemed to protect himself from Grimaldi’s Francophilia by meeting as regularly as possible with Esquilache as well, in order to “acquaint (him) with the points of business” that he discussed with Grimaldi, in case the state minister failed to “report faithfully” what had been said to the crown and to the other two members of the junta.31

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28 Ibid., f. 29.
29 Ibid., f. 28 verso.
30 Ibid., f. 29 verso.
31 Ibid., f. 31 verso.
We learn a great deal from Rochford’s reminisces of his early days in Madrid, not because we can expect him to be an impartial observer, but because we can be assured that he was doing his best to detect and exploit any aspect of the political situation that could be used to Britain’s advantage. From Rochford’s point of view, his personal relationships with Grimaldi and Esquilache closely paralleled the relationships between the designs that each of the three men had on the broader imperial text of the time. We have already seen that Rochford believed Grimaldi to be bound up in his Francophilia and ignorant of Spain’s true political and economic interests. To some extent, his beliefs about Grimaldi echoed broader British fears about the French, which made it almost obligatory for him to identify and target the local Francophiles immediately upon arriving in Madrid. But Rochford clearly believed the opposite to be true of Esquilache, who was pursuing commercial reforms that might eventually generate a kind of economic convergence between the Spanish and British Empires. For Rochford, such a movement represented a highly desirable evolution of the practice of Atlantic imperialism – one that would handicap French commerce and greatly diminish the presence of French power in the Atlantic World.

Of interest, too, is Rochford’s dismissal of Arriaga as a tool of the Jesuits. While Grimaldi stood as a symbol of one possible imperial future that must not be allowed to occur, Rochford perceived Arriaga as an agent of the status quo ante – the practice of empire as it had stood in Spain for many years but that was unravelling under new pressures. Arriaga was certainly associated with reactionary forces in Spain, and subsequently served to some extent as an agent for the Cádiz mercantile community as it fought back against Esquilache and the other aggressive reformers.\(^{32}\) By connecting Arriaga to the Jesuits, Rochford was making an oblique statement about British ideas regarding the perceived obsolescence and retrogressive nature of that order, not to mention the broader British

\(^{32}\) Stein and Stein, 61.
Protestant view of the Catholic Church as an archaic obstacle to progress. But as we already glimpsed from Ricla’s dependence on a local Jesuit to smooth the way for his reforms in Havana, the Jesuit-state relationship was more complicated than Rochford assumed. So, too, was the evolution of the Spanish imperial experience. To be sure, there were French influences, affinities for British economic innovations and yearnings for traditional Spanish ways. But none of them was obviously dominant during the Esquilache years. The outcome for the Spanish Empire would very much depend on negotiation between these tendencies – or outright conflict.

The Myth of French Domination

For almost two centuries after the Seven Years’ War, there was a powerful and enduring historical myth that events in Madrid during the 1760s and 70s were driven by a strong and pervasive French influence over the Spanish crown. Without the benefit of research on the specifics of the question, historians have often placidly accepted a narrative that held that the two Bourbon crowns, bruised and beaten in the war, conspired under direct French leadership to avenge themselves upon Great Britain. Any changes in Spain’s colonial administration and commercial policies were the result of the Duc de Choiseul’s masterful influence over various French-speaking Spanish officials, such as José de Gálvez, Alejandro O’Reilly, and Teodoro de Croix. To some extent, this characterization of the Spanish government as being strongly influenced by French machinations has persisted right up to the present day. Even as recent a publication as Stanley and Barbara Stein’s generally excellent Apogee of Empire
(2003) is suggestive of a Spanish administration that was increasingly Anglophobic and all too willing to allow the French a strong influence over the development of Spanish government policies.\textsuperscript{33}

In 1959, John Lynch became the first historian to explicitly question any of the various elements of this general argument when he pointed out that the Spanish crown did not give in to many French demands for privileged economic access to Spanish America. Based largely on that observation, Lynch doubted that the reform programs of the 1760s had been strongly influenced by France, and felt they were more likely Spanish in origin and purpose.\textsuperscript{34} However, the claim that Gálvez and other French-speaking officials were among the primary movers of reform continued to be unchallenged until Allan J. Kuethe and Lowell Blaisdell unpacked the issue in the pages of the \textit{Hispanic American Historical Review} in 1991. They wanted to see if they could establish whether or not the primary impetus for commercial reform came from French influences or from within Spain. Furthermore, they wanted to discover whether or not there were reformist antecedents that already existed in Spain prior to the Seven Years’ War and the accession of Carlos III to the Spanish throne. If there were, they rightly asserted, it would greatly complicate the traditional picture of French influence over the Spanish Bourbons.

Kuethe and Blaisdell found that the available evidence failed to support the idea that the French wielded a significant amount of influence at court in Madrid. They argue convincingly that there were, rather, important pre-war antecedents that laid the groundwork for an eventual move toward liberalized commerce. Perhaps the most significant of these changes was the shift away from the

\textsuperscript{33} Stein and Stein, 23-4. Another good example is John R. Fisher’s otherwise fine survey \textit{The Economic Aspects of Spanish Imperialism in America, 1492-1810}, especially page 131, where he continues to point to the French government as the chief agent that encouraged Carlos III to begin his program of reforms after the Seven Years’ War.

\textsuperscript{34} Allan J. Kuethe and Lowell Blaisdell, “French Influence and the Origins of the Bourbon Colonial Reorganization,” \textit{Hispanic American Historical Review} 71, No. 3 (August 1991), 580-1. This important article includes an excellent historiographical analysis of how this question has evolved over time, in considerably more detail than the brief summary that appears here. The work in question by John Lynch is \textit{Spanish Colonial Administration, 1782-1810: The Intendant System in the Viceroyalty of the Río de la Plata} (London: University of London – Athlone Press, 1958).
traditional *flota* system and toward the usage of individually registered ships in the late 1730s and 1740s. They also affirm that Esquilache – not the Francophile Grimaldi – was “the dominant force in the *Junta de Ministros,*” and extended a strong personal influence over colonial affairs through that body. Although the Conde de Ricla’s plans for reforms in Cuba predated the establishment of the *Junta,* Esquilache soon took direct supervisory control over their efforts. Both Ricla and Field Marshall O’Reilly reported directly to Esquilache, especially on matters of reform, while also maintaining the more traditional linkages with Arriaga and the Indies Ministry. But Esquilache’s largest contribution came from his capacity to find ways to smash through resistance to change and to begin an attempted reconfiguration of the text of Spanish imperialism. He set a determined tone for his reform program that would give pause to any individuals or groups that might have thought to get in his way. First and foremost, he managed to gather and deploy enough political will to begin the disruption of the Cádiz merchant community’s centuries-old grip on Spain’s colonial trade. He did so by assembling reformist-minded Spaniards, such as the Marqués de los Llanos and Tomás Ortiz de Landázuri, to form a committee that would re-evaluate Spanish commercial policy and that would attack the political influence of the Cádiz merchants. Nowhere in that group of thinkers were there any Frenchmen or obvious Francophiles.

In a more general sense, Kuethe and Blaisdell are able to convincingly illustrate that the French did not enjoy a pervasive influence over the appointment of Spanish officials or over the views of those officials. Certainly, there were important Spanish officials who admired French power and culture, but that subset did not enjoy a systemic political dominance in Madrid. Esquilache was the one person whose influence could have been decisive in the mid 1760s if the French had been able to gain access to him and use him in consort with their friend Grimaldi. But the great majority of the available evidence

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35 Kuethe and Blaisdell, 587.
36 Kuethe and Blaisdell, 591-3.
suggests that Esquilache’s views were not oriented toward French interests when it came to commercial policy, and that the Duc de Choiseul was unsuccessful in his agitations for commercial deregulation improving French access to Spanish markets. In fact, the French ambassador in Madrid, the Marquis d’Ossun, almost constantly complained about Spanish interference with French traders. But he received almost no satisfaction whatsoever and could not secure a position that would privilege French traders over their British counterparts.

In the area of international politics and statecraft, Choiseul’s close relationship with Grimaldi gave the French greater influence. But that connection gave them little leverage in commercial negotiations and was generally of limited use in other areas. Kuethe and Blaisdell argue that although Choiseul thought of France as the dominant partner in the Bourbon Family Compact, “Spain was persistently difficult to control and often took the initiative.”37 Perhaps most revealing deficit of all was that the Choiseul-Grimaldi connection failed to produce a truly cooperative Bourbon strategy when it mattered most, in the Falklands Crisis of 1770-1. Aside from being a source of embarrassment for both France and Spain, that episode proved to be the end of Choiseul’s political career. Clearly, Spanish officials were fully capable of making their own determinations about what constituted their national interest and how best to revise their own imperial policies and practices, and usually did so without worrying about how their French allies would react.

It is critical to see that French influence on Spanish reform was not more important in the wake of the Seven Years’ War than influences from other significant sources. We must not conflate the obvious Franco-Spanish security concerns about British power with the entirely distinct matter of where the Spanish were inclined to look for models of imperial reform. For a brief but vitally important period between 1763 and 1766, the Marqués de Esquilache was the primary dynamo of reform in Spain. Much

37 Kuethe and Blaisdell, 602-3.
loved by the king and supported by a group of determined, reformist-minded Spaniards, he kept watch over a series of significant changes during his time in office. Some aspects of those reforms found their origins in the efforts of Ricla and O’Reilly in Havana, but it was Esquilache and his cadre who nurtured them in Madrid. Although Grimaldi’s vision of the Spanish future clearly differed from Esquilache’s in several ways, the two men were not always working against each other. They worked together to convince Carlos III that dramatic measures were needed to reinvigorate the Spanish military and to provide security for the empire. When they concurred with each other, they vastly outweighed the authority of Julián de Arriaga, who held onto his post after the war but had to suffer the stigma that came with having been in office while the British mauled Spanish defences in Havana. Their collective influence was an important factor behind Carlos III’s difficult choice to release a certain amount of metropolitan control in the hope that it would give him the military power that he needed to protect his domains from Great Britain.38

We may also notice that there is something of an inherent bias in the historical record that tends to focus more on Esquilache as a reformer than as a man of statecraft or imperial diplomacy. After all, it was Grimaldi who was the minister of state, and who loudly held forth on such matters on an almost constant basis. It was his name that echoed first in foreign capitals when matters of Spain were raised. But Esquilache also had a major influence on Spain’s foreign affairs. As minister of war, he certainly had a measure of responsibility for imperial strategy. But it does mean that we must often infer his diplomatic opinions from what Grimaldi had to say about them, and from the written recollections of the foreign diplomatic representatives in Madrid. Because Lord Rochford made a particular point of forging a relationship with Esquilache, one that ultimately created mutual respect and affection between the two men, his writings about the avid reformer are especially valuable. We will also later

38 Kuethe, 27.
see, to some extent, the influence that Esquilache had over Spain’s international relations by considering how Grimaldi’s behaviour as a statesman changed after the Esquilache Riots of 1766 – the event that led to Esquilache’s removal and to a major reconfiguration of the political situation in Madrid. But perhaps even more to the point is the question of how exactly Spanish conceptualizations of British imperial practices were evolving while these two Italian ministers were both in office.

Don Gerónimo de Uztáriz, Spanish Economic Interlocution and the Practice of Empire

Esquilache was not isolated. Bourbon Spain had already been involved as an active participant in European intellectual discussions about innovations in imperial commerce for some time. Perhaps the most influential Spanish contribution to the discourse had come from Don Gerónimo de Uztáriz (1670-1732), who produced his book *Theorica y Practica de Comercio y de Marinas* (1724) to serve as advice for Felipe V, the first Bourbon king of Spain. Uztáriz was something of a pioneer. He was not, strictly speaking, a figure of the Enlightenment, as his economic ideas stemmed mostly from his formative experiences in the late seventeenth century, and he did not advocate the more radical changes that later Spanish writers would go on to recommend. But he was an important precursor to those ideas. He strove to create a comprehensive “inquiry into the causes of (the Spanish commerce’s) decay and annihilation in this monarchy, and to suggest such means as are just, practicable, and conducive to the recovery, improvement and preservation of it.”

Perhaps because it placed much of the blame for Spain’s decrepitude on its monarchy, the book initially failed to generate any enthusiasm at the Spanish court. Most of the copies from that small, original print run were lost. Yet the crown’s interest in the work’s content would rise over the years that followed. Don Gerónimo’s son reprinted an updated

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version of the book in Spain in 1742, a French language translation appeared in 1753, and the Spanish crown’s printer produced it again in 1757.  

The British also recognized the importance of Uztáriz’s work. In 1751, John Kippax published an English translation of the original text, at the direct request of King George II. In his introduction, Kippax described Uztáriz as “a late minister in Spain, of great abilities, application, and publick virtue.” In the British translator’s view, the book provided “the most curious, useful and thorough scrutiny into the trade, and present state of the Spanish monarchy that has ever appeared in any part of the world.” He called upon the British to pay close attention, as their national commerce would prove to be “intimately connected with that of the Spaniards” once they had revived their economy and begun to “pursue their natural and real interest.” Uztáriz clearly had a significant impact on the course of British thinking about imperial economics, as numerous British economic writers cited or indirectly referenced his work over the decades that followed. This influence was particularly clear in the work of Malachy Postlethwayt, but Reyes Fernández Durán argues that it can also be seen in the writings of William Mildmay and Josiah Tucker. Perhaps the most significant testament of all to Uztáriz’s status as an international economic authority is the presence of his book in the library of Adam Smith, who cited him in his analysis of the relationship between taxation and manufacturing in the Spanish world.

If the Spanish were to adopt the “grand views” in Uztáriz’s book, which largely focused on understanding and combating the reasons for the decay of Spain’s manufacturing sector, Kippax believed that they would be successful in “reviving and extending” their commerce and would again rise

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40 The French version, *Theorie et pratique du commerce et de la marine*, was published by C. Herold in Hambourg in 1753. It is also worth noting that an Italian translation was produced in 1743.
41 Uztáriz, A2 (i).
42 Uztáriz, A2 (ii).
to pose a threat to Britain’s imperial dominance. The 1742 edition and subsequent editions also featured a broad endorsement by Father Joachin de Villareal, a leading Jesuit and acting procurator-general for his order in Chile. In his words we can again see the complexities of the relationship between the Jesuits and the European imperial states. We see a collaborative Jesuit voice that is steeped in economic theory, supportive of reform and the expansion of commerce, and that is certainly not mired in the past or disconnected from the larger imperial project. Like many Jesuits, Villareal was clearly well-educated and informed about economic and political theorizing from outside Spanish borders. He praised Uztáriz’s efforts, although he confessed that he had initially feared that the minister’s “glorious project would fall under a disgrace, (as) that had been the fate of many political writers in Spain.” But Villareal argued that Uztáriz was something new. “This treatise lays the foundation of our recovery, by chalking out infallible means to obtain it,” he declared. “It has such superior merit, as to deserve to be (engraved) in golden letters, and consecrated to eternal honour in the temple of fame.” It was a meaningful achievement for Uztáriz to simultaneously earn such laurels from a learned Jesuit father who enthused about what his plan might do to revitalize the Spanish Empire, and from a British scholar who feared that same potential success.

Uztáriz’s ideas played a significant early role in the development of liberal economic thought. He condemned the traditional Spanish practice of excessive and poorly-considered taxation, and identified it as one of the primary factors that acted to suppress the further development of the Spanish imperial economy. He also echoed Daniel Defoe’s thinking about the norms and ethics that underlie successful economic systems. As Villareal confirmed with great enthusiasm, Uztáriz’s book suggested that “all the comforts of the head of a family, all the wealth of a city, all the grandeur of a kingdom, depends solely

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44 Uztáriz, A3 (iv).
45 Uztáriz, ii-iii.
upon selling much and buying little, or upon selling more than is bought.\textsuperscript{46} In essence, Uztáriz made the same charge as Defoe made with reference to Spain: it would languish as a lesser power as long as it spent extravagantly instead of adopting financial customs that favoured austerity and the accumulation of surplus capital.\textsuperscript{47} To provide a practical framework from which such habits could be fomented, Uztáriz suggested policies that might encourage the revitalization of Spanish manufacturing. The principle here was to erect barriers against the importation of foreign goods while encouraging the Spanish manufacturing sector to produce a surplus for export to other European countries, just as the British had managed. In essence, Uztáriz was advocating a policy that twenty-first-century economists would recognize as an early form of economic stimulation by way of import substitution.

The path to the implementation of such reforms would be long and difficult. As Villareal pointed out, mid-eighteenth-century Spain was mired in policies that not only did nothing to foment production in Spain, but actually had the opposite effect. Until Esquilache reformed the crown’s collection of duties shortly after taking office in 1759, Spain charged more commercial duties on its own people than it did on foreigners. Perhaps even more incredible an “absurdity,” as Villareal put it, was that Spain charged more duties on exports than on imports.\textsuperscript{48} As eighteenth-century economic theorists were already very much aware, those two policies certainly had the effect of encouraging foreigners to sell their goods in Spain, but they also made it almost impossible for Spanish industry to compete because their goods were rendered unacceptably expensive for consumption in either the domestic or foreign markets. But as much as these concepts were already being accepted by economic thinkers throughout Western Europe (including Spain), their broader assimilation by the Spanish political elite was not happening quickly. For that reason, Uztáriz had to move slowly and carefully in his writing, taking care to explain

\textsuperscript{46} Uztáriz, x.
\textsuperscript{48} Uztáriz, xii-xiii.
the basic argument that although commerce could greatly enrich a nation, it was not an automatic good in all forms, and could cause terrible damage if done badly. As Anthony Pagden observes, Uztáriz noted a certain kinship between his task and the legacy of the seventeenth-century French finance minister Jean-Baptiste Colbert, who had similarly worked to convince the French nobility that commercial reforms would not pose a threat to their well-being.

Uztáriz provided three brief case studies of nations – France, Britain, and the Netherlands – in which he felt that government policies had vastly improved upon the volume and profitability of trade. Although he referred to the English as “haughty” and given to “carrying into execution whatever they please ... without regard to treaties of peace or any other consideration,” he acknowledged the fundamental effectiveness of their commerce and the laws that protected it. Uztáriz placed particular emphasis on the British practice of regulating economic activity by adjusting duties that merchants owed to the crown. He pointed out that the British crown and parliament had successfully encouraged an expansion in the volume of trade of several key commodities, such as herring fish and American timber, by reducing or even eliminating the duties on those goods. He also explained that the British crown had greatly expanded its agricultural output by setting policies that made it cheaper to sell those products abroad, and had similarly encouraged the exportation of lead and tin. Uztáriz used these examples to illustrate the need to pursue similar economic policies in Spain. The long arc of his story, from the first publication of his book in 1724 through its revitalization in 1742 and translation into English in 1751, offers some idea of how quickly some elements of the Spanish elite were beginning to accept the idea of commercial reform. In just over thirty-five years, although Uztáriz did not live to see

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49 See Uztáriz, 4-5.
51 Uztáriz, 142.
52 Uztáriz, 134-6.
the eventual outcome, much of his policy agenda moved from being totally rejected to being at least partially implemented by Esquilache and Carlos III.

By the 1750s, the Spanish government was clearly moving to take Uztáriz’s suggestions much more seriously, and became less hostile to the coalescence of a group of economic analysts who are often known as the *proyectistas*. Unlike the *arbitristas* of the seventeenth century, who focused on increasing the efficiency of existing methods of generating revenue, the *proyectistas* took the more radical step of advising active state intervention in the imperial economy in order to develop new sources of revenue. In 1750, Fernando VI sent the economist and civil servant Bernardo Ward on a four-year mission throughout Spain and its empire to collect information and make recommendations on how economic reforms could be implemented. In 1762, his labours culminated in the manuscript *Proyecto Económico*, which represented a further evolution of the ideas in Uztáriz’s earlier work. Among the most significant differences between the two is the extent to which Ward identifies Great Britain not only as a good example of a successful commercial nation, but as the economic behemoth of the Atlantic. Accordingly, he identifies what he calls the “general and fundamental commercial maxims” as being primarily associated with the British experience. Like Uztáriz, he emphasized the need to create policies that could encourage manufacturing within Spain, as well as those that could “facilitate the consumption of (their) superfluous products” in foreign markets. He also repeated Uztáriz’s lessons about harmful commercial practices, and warned about the excessive importation of luxury goods and of goods that could be just as easily produced in the domestic economy. But most of all, he declared

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53 Stein and Stein, 30. Here, the authors characterize the movement from *arbitrista* to *proyectista* as a step “closer to the modern political economist.”
54 Bernardo Ward, *Proyecto Económico* (Madrid: Joachin Ibarra, 1782), 119-20. This particular versión of the book is the third printing. The original was written in 1762.
55 Ward, 121.
that “liberty is the soul of commerce.”\textsuperscript{56} Accordingly, he advised the crown to do whatever it could to remove harmful commercial restrictions and special privileges, such as monopolies awarded to trading companies.

Ward was hardly an outsider in the Spanish system. He was a respected civil servant, presenting his recommendations at a time when Esquilache was already moving to pursue much of the agenda that Uztáriz had supported. Other influential voices were in accord. For example, similar views had been presented in the work of Miguel de Cervera, to whom the Esquilache cadre turned for economic analysis in late 1760 or early 1761. Cervera recommended a plan that he called \textit{libertad y protección} – in essence, liberty of trade and minimal government interference within the empire, combined with a lowering of duties to protect domestic manufacturing from foreign competition.\textsuperscript{57} Although the Spanish nobility was not completely in accord with this agenda, it is clear that the Spanish policy thinkers were actively engaging with broader European economic thought by the 1740s and 50s, and it seems that they were increasingly accepting the idea of Britain as one of the most important economic models. But their understanding of what truly underlay the effectiveness of the British military machine was still rudimentary. They lacked a well-developed concept of the relationship between financial credit systems and the ability to project military force, and had no apparent understanding of the importance of informal (non-state or church) imperial networking.\textsuperscript{58} But looking at the British situation helped the Spanish reformers to grasp many of the most obvious problems with their imperial economy, and they were increasingly determined to correct them.

\begin{footnotes}
\footnote{\textsuperscript{56} Ward, 142.}
\footnote{\textsuperscript{57} Stein and Stein, 60-1. The authors identify Melchor Macanaz, Antonio de Ulloa and Campomanes as other significant agitators for reform of the colonial commerce system over the period leading up to the Seven Years’ War.}
\footnote{\textsuperscript{58} Although, of course, it could legitimately be argued that the British did not fully understand the impact of their own financial system or their informal imperial networks at the time, either. The next chapter will explore these issues in greater depth.}
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Evaluating the British Threat: Spanish Postures and Perceptions

As we might expect from the Spanish crown’s eventual embrace of *proyectista* economic recommendations, the Spanish elite were generally astute enough to ultimately acknowledge that British experiences of economy and of empire might have something of value for the Spanish future. But there was also an ongoing debate about whether or not London might be the source of more damaging societal innovations. We can introduce ourselves to this dynamic as it existed during the final phase of the Seven Years’ War through the work of Francisco Sebastián Manuel Mariano Nipho y Cagigal, a key figure of the Spanish Enlightenment and among the most famous journalists in his country’s history. Nipho revolutionized the press in Spain by introducing the concept of a daily newspaper, the funding of such a paper through commercial advertising, and dual circulation via subscription and street sales. In doing so, he greatly increased the Spanish public’s access to the news, and gave himself an instrument to communicate his ideas to a broad audience. Although he sometimes encountered trouble with the crown’s censors, he was not given to challenging the authority of crown or church. He was, however, keenly interested in the concepts of commercial and economic progress within a Spanish Absolutist framework, and placed those concepts at the centre of many of his writings. In short, he was generally aligned with the mainstream of Spanish Enlightenment thought.\(^{59}\)

One of Nipho’s many projects was a weekly publication called *Estafeta de Londres* (1762). Issues generally consisted of letters that were supposedly written by Spaniards in England to an assortment of noblemen and scholars in Spain, although it is likely that Nipho heavily edited them or simply wrote

\(^{59}\) In spite of his great importance to the history of the Spanish media, not much has been written about Nipho. For an older but still useful English-language overview of his work, see Henry F. Schulte, *The Spanish Press, 1470-1966* (Urbana, Illinois: University of Illinois Press, 1968), 91-115. The chapter in question is titled “The Nipho Years.”
them himself. As a collection, they were meant to illuminate a broad array of English customs, industry, art, literature and so forth – with particular focus on their possible usefulness for Spain. They are especially focused on the lessons of English commerce and marine activity, which they clearly identify as the reason for the strength of the British war machine. In the first issue of the *E斯塔feta*, Nipho argues that the Spanish had the capacity to once again rise to a preeminent position in the Atlantic World, but that such a feat could only be achieved by skilful learning from the current leading power, much as the Romans had once learned from the Greeks.

(We must) imitate the good in (British) conduct, the ingenious among their ideas, the efficacious among their inspirations, and their canniness, and purpose of their politics – to always embolden, more and more, their merits, their industriousness, their scholarly investigations – with the ultimate aim of making ourselves more powerful in the art of war. One of their best modern writers said, speaking of his insular compatriots, (said) ‘Oh! Oh dear England, if Spain should wake from its heavy slumber! In no other power in this world can your ruin be found, than in this sleeping peninsula.’

Not all was lost for Spain, he announced. But overcoming the British lead in economic innovation came with an additional burden: the Spanish would have to show the way to help the British overcome the debilitating “vices” that had come at the same time as their great successes, as the British were collectively in the grip of a kind of epidemic mental illness.

These “vices,” as Nipho called them, related to the emerging aesthetic sense in Great Britain of what made their empire beautiful and righteous. As we saw in chapter three, British aesthetics of the eighteenth century were very much focused on the equating of beauty and nature, thereby leading to the notion that a broad liberty of commerce was inherently good because it was simply as nature had intended – ultimately moving toward the possibility of an even broader conception of social, political and economic liberty. But the Spanish had a different perception of these British ideas. Nipho agreed

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60 Francisco Sebastián Manuel Mariano Niño y Cagigal (writing as Marciano de la Giga), *E斯塔feta de Londres: Obra periódica, repartidas en diferentes cartas, en las que se declara el proceder de la Inglaterra, respecto a sus costumbres, industria, etc.* (Madrid: Gabriel Ramirez, Calle de Atocha, 1762), vi.
that there was a natural order to human affairs, but he emphasised different aesthetic values. He endorsed Spanish Absolutism by arguing that loyalty to the interests of the state was among the highest of natural virtues, although it must sometimes yield to concern for the greater good of collectives on a larger scale – for example, to that of the international community of Catholics. The British were radically departing from that order – to the detriment of their relationships with other nations.

“For the English,” Nipho insisted, “nothing is good, nothing is beautiful or even rational, except that ... which contributes to the (flourishing) of their country.” Somehow, the British had forgotten the concept of “virtue,” the Estafeta lamented. This basic sense existed “in whatever part of the world, even among barbarians, is born from certain principles and never deviates from its origins.” But in England, the idea of virtue had been turned on its head. Part of the problem was the apparent British preoccupation with an inappropriate love of nation over the larger common good. But even more pernicious, Nipho warned, was what he perceived as an inappropriate emphasis on individual interests and imperatives – a serious breakdown in the proper social order. In London, he complained, “the poorest mechanic is believed to be apt, capable, and competent to pass judgement on the conduct of the most respectable” members of society. “Ministers of the highest order; the most spirited and prudent generals; the most expert, faithful and vigilant admirals – all of them are subject to the whims of their most despicable vassals. Everything in England is a monstrosity, and in no way do they resemble the rest of mankind.”

While the Estafeta was wading deeply into hyperbole with such inflammatory rhetoric about English society, its anxieties about the differences between British and Spanish standards are revealing. It was not meant to be a work of satire; its stance was biased yet sincere. More than anything else, it

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61 Nifo y Cagigal, Estafeta de Londres, x.
62 Nifo y Cagigal, Estafeta de Londres, xii-xiv.
shows that the Spanish were fully capable of viewing British commercial achievements as divorced from what they saw as the odious social aspect of British liberty. The Spanish had a clear interest in adapting the methods of British commerce for their own empire, but Nipho had a painfully clear blind spot when it came to understanding the co-requisites of those innovations. As David Hancock has illustrated in his work on his “citizens of the world” – outsider traders who infiltrated and disrupted the traditional social order in the City of London as they revolutionized British trade – the flourishing of commerce and the disruption of traditional social order were intimately connected. 63 Did Nipho ignore any such connection because it was simply not obvious to him at the time? Or were the Spanish more generally motivated to ignore it because of the potential threat that it posed to Spain’s traditional social order? This latter issue was certainly an important element in Spain’s Absolutist take on Enlightenment thought.

The lack of a clear link between the economic and social developments in the Estafeta’s perception of mid-eighteenth century Britain made it possible for Nipho to simultaneously advocate the learning of British commercial techniques and the destruction of its hazardous social innovations. On the subject of the latter, he compared Britain to Pandora’s Box. “The (social) ills that universally afflict Europe have escaped” from London, he lamented. “It is necessary to forcefully investigate English maxims to liberate oneself from their malice … and to unveil even their most secret thoughts to impede their universal domination of the seas, through which they intend to enslave the common liberty.” 64 To put it another way, the “common liberty” that Nipho believed to be under threat was the right of rival kingdoms to run their own imperial affairs in the Atlantic without oppressive commercial or military interference from Britain’s malignant social ills. Subsequent letters in the Estafeta echo various aspects of this general principle, and reinforce the idea that the British are also victims of their own innovations.

64 Nifo y Cagigal, Estafeta de Londres, xv.
The first takes the position that British liberty is on the verge of causing “ruinous” damage “to their commerce and craftsmanship,” as it is allowing British industry to “excessively stir the imagination” and to exceed “the true limits of its utility.” What Nipho means here is that commerce and industry should be carefully aligned with the goals of the state, and to depart from that basic formula is to invite general societal ruin. British traders, who had become “biased” and unduly focused on their own particular interests, were “already looking at the national interest with greatly reduced love – the dense smoke of ambition suffocating the patriotic spirit, which had previously encouraged stability and firm support for the state.”

Still, Nipho holds out hope that the powers of London could eventually be persuaded to accept a reasonable co-existence with Spanish ways of conceptualizing international affairs. “The English are men like any other, who are familiar with reason, (but) at times they push that reason aside because of their belief that they are the only ones who love it.” Here, it is a perceived British intolerance for the views of other cultures that Nipho presents as the primary evil at play. Although the implicit suggestion is that the Spanish are more willing to allow a plurality of viewpoints when it comes to the natural state of affairs, the letter does nothing to offer direct evidence in support of that opinion. Subsequent letters in the Estafeta reinforce the idea that the British are arrogant about the superiority of their political philosophy and system of government. One, supposedly written to a senior scholar at a “leading Spanish university,” explains but expresses a deep scepticism about the “liberty” of British government.

The English claim that their government ... enjoys much more liberty than any other republic and, without exposing them to the risks of arbitrary power, enjoys all of the essential advantages of a monarchy. See here the way of thinking about popular politics and the legislature of Great Britain: a mixed government with elements of monarchy, aristocracy, and democracy, to which the various parts of the legislature

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65 Nifo y Cagigal, Estafeta de Londres, 14.
66 Nifo y Cagigal, Estafeta de Londres, 11.
correspond, and mutually balance against each other. It appears — according to the English — as though it is the most advantageous of all the forms of government.\(^67\)

This British claim is rejected by Nipho, who takes his cue from the Roman historian Tacitus. He argues that “a government that privileges equality cannot subsist, except in fantasy, being almost impossible to establish,” and even in the event that one does come into being, “it cannot survive for long.”\(^68\) On the basis of that belief, the author reasons that the British government is in mortal danger and will eventually suffer some kind of destructive political calamity.

Still, as Nipho argued in the first issue of the *Estafeta* and regularly affirmed in subsequently issues, Spain must “not lose sight of the methods” that have gone into “the expansion of the English commerce.”\(^69\) One letter, addressed to “one of the most respected individuals on one of his Catholic Majesty’s royal juntas,” gives one telling of the story of how the British came to be experts in commerce. In the writer’s opinion, “England has always shown a particular genius for commerce,” but had long been unable to fully exploit its talents because of an extensive history of political instability and warfare. Until the reign of Henry VIII, such problems were nearly insurmountable obstacles against the establishment of significant naval forces. Once those obstacles had been overcome, English naval forces began to increase and it was possible for them to begin their efforts “to extend the commerce of Great Britain.”\(^70\) On this topic, Nipho seems to be in accord with John Entick, who said much the same thing about the connection between British naval strength and the flourishing of the British Trade in his 1757 history of the British navy.\(^71\) The lesson was clear: the Spanish navy, too, would have to be greatly

\(^{67}\) Nifo y Cagigal, *Estafeta de Londres*, 43.

\(^{68}\) Nifo y Cagigal, *Estafeta de Londres*, 45-7.

\(^{69}\) Nifo y Cagigal, *Estafeta de Londres*, 368.

\(^{70}\) Nifo y Cagigal, *Estafeta de Londres*, 374.

\(^{71}\) John Entick, *A New Naval History: Or, Compleat View of the British Marine* (London: Printed for R. Manby, near Ludgate-Hill; W. Reeve, near Sejeant’s Inn, in Fleet Street; W. Bizet, in St. Clement’s Church-yard; P. Davey and B. Law, in Ave-Mary-Lane; and J. Scott, in Pater-noster-row, 1757), i.
strengthened if the Spanish Empire was to enjoy the same robust commerce that existed in the British Empire.

On balance, the *Estafeta* acknowledges the benefits of British practices of empire and advocates learning from them, but in an incremental sort of way that might strengthen Spain without requiring any truly radical shifts in polity, economy, or society. This cautiously reformist stance is consistent with what Stein and Stein argue in *Apogee of Empire* about what ultimately happened to the Spanish reform program under Carlos III: it achieved only superficial change and was not enough to make much difference in the long run. But in the early years of his reign, especially while Esquilache was in office, it was not at all obvious that efforts at reform would fail. It would be difficult to say that Esquilache was not moving quickly with reforms during his seven years as a principal minister in Madrid. Until he was removed in 1766, in the wake of the riots that bear his name, he was reforming about as quickly as could be reasonably expected of anyone in his situation. In addition, in spite of the anti-British vitriol that appeared in the letters of the *Estafeta*, it was not at all clear that the members of the administrative elite in Madrid were necessarily in the grip of Anglophobia.

The Marquis de Grimaldi, as a committed Francophile, was probably the most likely to make sweeping assumptions about the negative character of everything British. Carlos III and Esquilache tended not to automatically condemn the British, although they were certainly willing to question British policies when they appeared to pose a threat to Spanish security. In 1759, Carlos III took the Spanish throne in the same historical moment as news was arriving about how British forces had dismantled the French Empire in North America. As one of his first actions, the new monarch instructed Esquilache to express his concerns to London about how their run of victories was on the verge of upsetting the balance of power that had been established by the Treaty of Utrecht in 1713. The response from William Pitt – that Britain recognized no such balance of power – set an anxious tone for Anglo-Spanish relations
and helped begin the tumble along the path to the new Family Compact with France in 1761 and war with Britain in 1762.\textsuperscript{72}

In a more general sense, the Spanish knew that their domains in the Americas were increasingly vulnerable to commercial interference by other European powers, and the British were on the top of their list of known culprits. They knew that operations on the remote fringes of their empire, such as the Capuchin missions in the Orinoco basin and the Jesuit missions in the Rio de la Plata area, were in regular contact with the British commercial network.\textsuperscript{73} Of course, contraband was simply part of the normal course of economic life in such places. The Spanish colonial economic system focused trade through the primary hubs of its viceroyalties, which made it slow for goods to reach remote outposts and ensured that legal goods would be heavily taxed by the time they got there. To put it simply, Spanish commercial regulation was simply not concerned with efficiency throughout the vast majority of the early-modern period – the focus was on political imperatives and the preservation of commercial elites in the designated trading hubs. In the case of a city such as Buenos Aires, legal trade was still meant to come from Peru, instead of directly out of the immediately accessible Atlantic Ocean.\textsuperscript{74} In view of that situation, it is not surprising that the Rio de la Plata region had a vibrant tradition of contraband, nor is difficult to understand how the British could have become such an important part of the region’s trade.

Traditionally, the consensus about Anglo-Spanish relations in the years after the Seven Years’ War has been that they were marked by two major issues. First, there was the Manila Ransom, which stemmed from the Spanish crown’s refusal to pay the fee that William Draper had arranged with Archbishop Rojo in exchange for his promise not to ransack that city. Somewhat later, in the second half

\textsuperscript{72} Stein and Stein, 11-2.
\textsuperscript{73} Stein and Stein, 21.
\textsuperscript{74} For a general overview of how Spain’s colonial trade operated, see Fisher, 68-71.
of the 1760s, the issue of the Falkland Islands heated up and brought Spain and France to the brink of war with Great Britain at the end of 1770.\textsuperscript{75} According to Geoffrey Rice, these two issues were intertwined to the point that they were often different elements of the same negotiation, especially in the middle part of the decade.\textsuperscript{76} It is undoubtedly true that these two diplomatic controversies were important elements of the Anglo-Spanish relationship during the period in question. But they are also overrepresented in the ambassadorial chatter of the time. A great deal of rhetorical energy was wasted on both the Spanish and British sides of these disagreements, so much so that it is worth asking what else might be obscured by such diplomatic cacophony. The Manila Ransom is a good example of this principle, because it was of no particular importance with respect to the larger ideas and strategies of empire. Rather, it was little more than a contract dispute – the sort of thing that would have been resolved through a civil action if it had taken place entirely within the jurisdiction of one nation. At the international level, because nothing critical was actually at stake, it was almost completely about diplomatic form and almost not at all about substance. Still, along with a number of other, more minor disputes that stemmed from the final days of the Seven Years’ War, it had the potential to be a useful tool for both sides to use as they negotiated larger disputes.\textsuperscript{77}

Of course, a full understanding of the inter-imperial relationship between Spain and Britain must take the Manila Ransom and the Falklands dispute into account. The final chapter of this study will address that Manila-Falklands connection in greater detail. For the moment, our task is more to develop a broader context of how Spanish perceptions about and postures toward Britain were evolving in the years leading up to the clash over the Falklands in 1770. British influences on the Bourbon Reforms, the

\textsuperscript{75} See, for example, Kuethe and Blaisdell, 604.
\textsuperscript{76} See Geoffrey W. Rice, “Great Britain, the Manila Ransom, and the First Falkland Islands Dispute with Spain, 1766,” \textit{The International History Review} 11, no. 3 (July 1980): 386-409.
\textsuperscript{77} These included the British seizure of the Spanish ship Santisima Trinidad near Manila, and the Spanish seizure of a British ship in the Caribbean, near Trinidad.
ongoing discussion about the penetration of British commerce in Spanish America, and the simmering dispute over Honduras are all at least as important as the Manila Ransom is to our understanding of the Falklands emergency. We can find glimpses of what major figures on both sides were attempting to represent about those issues in their surviving correspondence. In the case of Esquilache, he appears to have been in the habit of sending friendly signals to the British even as Grimaldi sputtered with calculated shows of displeasure over the latest episodes of imperial conflict between Britain and Spain.

In August 1764, as the initial post-war disagreement over British logging rights in Honduras was building to its climax and Grimaldi was doing his best to keep Rochford on hold, the British ambassador was having a categorically different set of conversations with Esquilache:

> In a friendly conversation I had with M. Squillacci the other day, after talking over the affair of the logwood cutters, which he promised should be adjusted to our satisfaction, he told me in a very low voice (for fear he should be heard by his secretaries, who were in the next room) that he hoped I did not let myself be deceived by appearances, for that I might upon his word be assured nobody knew the King of Spain’s real sentiments but he (M. Squillacci), and that neither his Catholick Majesty nor he intended to be deceived any more by the French court.  

Although we cannot be certain of his motives or his sincerity, Esquilache (“Squillacci” in this account) seems to have been making a conscious, deliberate effort to lead the British ambassador to believe that the Franco-Spanish relationship was no longer close. In view of the strong and habitual British fear of the French throughout this period, this strategy was certainly prudent.

> Perhaps even more importantly, Esquilache made it clear to Rochford in the same conversation that the door was open for greatly improved relations between Spain and Great Britain. “You will always see,” he reportedly told Rochford, “that where we shew an inch of favour to the French nation, in relation to their commerce, that we will show twenty times as much to your court.” His reason, as the British envoy related it, was that the French could no longer either “hurt” the Spanish “or do them good

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78 BNA, SP 94/168, Rochford to Halifax, 13 August 1764, f. 23 verso. Marked “very secret” and written in code. The parentheses are as they appear in the original source.
in America” after their defeats in the Seven Years’ War.\textsuperscript{79} But how sincere was Esquilache in making these kinds of statements? Was he dealing openly and honestly with Rochford, or was he in the habit of manufacturing what he thought the British would like to hear in order to counterbalance Grimaldi’s more confrontational approach? Our understanding of the nature of the relationship between Rochford and Esquilache is, in fact, tremendously important to the conclusions that we must draw from the British ambassador’s recollections of their various encounters.

It is broadly accepted in the historiography of eighteenth-century Spain that the relationship between Esquilache and Carlos III was strong and genuine – he could legitimately be considered to be the royal favourite during his seven years in Madrid.\textsuperscript{80} So his claims to have a special relationship with the king were not vain exaggerations. There is also considerable evidence that Rochford sincerely believed that his rapport with Esquilache was real, and not a cynical political counterfeit. For example, when Esquilache passed confidential intelligence about the Austrian court to Rochford, the ambassador asked that the British government protect the Spanish minister from being exposed as the source. “I have been made acquainted with (the intelligence) in the utmost confidence,” he said. As Esquilache “would be ruined if it should be discovered,” Rochford begged that it should not be known that the information had come through him.\textsuperscript{81} Esquilache also seemed to show more concern for Rochford’s well-being than other members of the diplomatic community in Spain. When the British envoy was taken to bed with “a most severe fit of what they call the Madrid Cholick,” he made a point of mentioning that Esquilache came to visit and “sat with (him) two or three hours.”\textsuperscript{82} Particularly through

\textsuperscript{79} Ibid., f. 23 verso-24.
\textsuperscript{80} See, for example, the way that Esquilache and Carlos III are often discussed by Stein and Stein almost as though they were a single decision-making actor. On page 25 of \textit{Apogee of Empire}, they write: “Reorganizing the bureaucracy – the state servants, the bureaucratic instruments of change upon whom Charles and Esquilache might rely to review options, make decisions, and implement them – had the highest priority.”
\textsuperscript{81} BNA, SP 94/168, Rochford to Halifax, Segovia, 13 August 1764, f. 24.
\textsuperscript{82} BNA, SP 94/168, Rochford to Halifax, Segovia, 27 August 1764, f. 54.
the early part of Rochford’s time in Madrid, there was an element of mutual respect between the two men. There was also a perception on Rochford’s part that having Esquilache in a position of high authority in Madrid was compatible with British interests in the Atlantic World, although we will see that his view on that issue would subsequently be modified to some extent as he watched the Spanish political environment evolve and eventually turn against the Italian.

The dichotomy between the ways in which Grimaldi and Esquilache dealt with British concerns was especially well-drawn in their reactions to a minor diplomatic episode that took place in the summer of 1764. While en route from Madrid to London with a diplomatic pouch, Mr. Potter the English messenger was detained at Vitoria by Spanish customs officials, who searched his possessions and opened various packages that he was carrying from Rochford to various British noblemen. Potter presented the governor of Vitoria with a letter from Esquilache that specifically forbade the opening of letters, but the governor scoffed at the suggestion that such an order could apply to packages as well. According to Potter, the customs officials made it clear that only British messengers were treated so poorly and indicated that he had been able to prevent such a search on a previous occasion only by bribing the customs officials to pretend that he was French. When Rochford confronted Grimaldi about the episode, the Spanish minister of state effectively dismissed the matter by pointing out that it was a matter of reciprocity. Spain only searched British messengers because their own messengers were subjected to the same “remarkably strict” treatment by British officials, whereas French officials were far more lax. But Esquilache told Rochford that even though he had been told that Potter’s version of events was not true, “he had given positive orders to have the officers at Vitoria punished” and left Rochford with the impression that the policy would be changed and that Potter would no longer

83 BNA, SP 94/167, Halifax to Rochford, St. James, 24 July 1764, f. 230 and f. 234.
experience such searches.\textsuperscript{84} In effect, while Grimaldi insisted on rigorously pretending to hold the British to the same standards as other nations, Esquilache seemed to be willing to make sacrifices to show good faith in the hope that the British would reciprocate in future relations.

Rochford’s major concern about Esquilache was that he might either grow too close to Grimaldi and be personally taken in by the latter’s Francophilia, or let his fellow minister gain too much power and influence among the Spanish elite. The British ambassador constantly monitored the political situation in Madrid for signs of a major shift to the balance of the \textit{Junta de Ministros}. In the fall of 1764, he expressed his belief that there was “an entire harmony” between Esquilache and Grimaldi, and that the two Italians wanted to “get rid of” Arriaga so that Esquilache could swap his portfolio as Minister of War for the position of Minister of the Indies, which would be “a much more profitable employment” for his reformist aims.\textsuperscript{85} By the end of the year, Rochford suggested that the two ministers were getting along so well recently that he was beginning to feel that he had to be somewhat more cautious with Esquilache, although he continued to maintain that Esquilache was more dependable than Grimaldi as far as British interests were concerned.\textsuperscript{86} Still, he worried that Grimaldi’s influence was rising too quickly. “I am sorry to say,” he lamented, that Grimaldi “gains more credit here (in Madrid) than I could wish him.” He added, darkly: “M. Squillace will, I hope, open his eyes, (for) he shall not want my hands to assist him.”\textsuperscript{87} The subtext here was that although Rochford had generally thought that Esquilache was capable of agreeing with British perceptions about the correct progression of empire in the Atlantic toward free commerce, he feared that his friend might yet prove vulnerable to French manipulation.

\textsuperscript{84} BNA, SP 94/168, Rochford to Halifax, Segovia, 10 September 1764, f. 74-5.
\textsuperscript{85} BNA, SP 94/168, Rochford to Halifax, El Escorial, 12 November 1764, f. 188 verso-189.
\textsuperscript{86} BNA, SP 94/168, Rochford to Halifax, Madrid, 10 December 1764.
By the summer of 1765, Rochford no longer felt that Grimaldi and Esquilache were working well together. But he reported on rumours that Grimaldi and Manuel de Roda – another reforming minister of rising importance – were slowly moving against Esquilache. As Rochford put it, “many people of opinion” believed that there would soon be a major change at the Spanish court. “The reasons assigned for it,” he reported, “were that M. Roda, the new minister and a favourite of the people, as being a Spaniard, had united very closely with M. Grimaldi and had profited of this opportunity to ruin (Esquilache) with his Catholick Majesty.” In retrospect, this analysis seems prescient, for Esquilache had only months left in office before his precipitous fall from power. But Rochford, apparently still very much committed to his friend Esquilache, refused to believe such rumours.

As I am persuaded a change of this kind would soon occasion one in the political system, I enquired thoroughly into it, and after the maturest examination I cannot find there is the least probability of its taking place. What gave rise to it was the frequent conferences and intimacy between M. Grimaldi and Roda, and from some words his Catholick Majesty let drop in joke about M. de Squillacci, which were taken seriously by those who heard them; but your Lordship may be assured (that) his credit with the King of Spain is greater than ever.  

It is revealing that by the middle of 1765, when Esquilache’s fortunes were most certainly declining, Rochford made the mistake of dismissing the early symptoms of his friend’s demise as idle speculation and gossip. While it is true that Carlos III dismissed his favourite minister the following spring only under extraordinary duress, it may also be that Rochford was too biased in favour of the reform program for which Esquilache served as an iconic figure to accept the idea that forces within the Spanish elite were beginning to mass against him. Rochford may have also grown excessively accustomed to Esquilache’s policy of placating the British. He was not well-prepared for the relative obstinacy that awaited him as Grimaldi’s star rose and Esquilache’s faltered.

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88 BNA, SP 94/170, Rochford to Halifax, Aranjuez, 17 June1765, f. 191.
A Diplomat Prince in London

On the Spanish side of the diplomatic equation, there was a good deal of concern about the rise of British power, but there was also a sense that recent developments did not necessarily reflect a long-term trend in Atlantic imperialism. We can learn something about Spanish opinions of Great Britain and its empire from the voluminous correspondence that moved between the Marqués de Grimaldi and Prince Masserano, who was the Spanish representative in London for the entire period between the end of the Seven Years’ War and the Spanish entrance into the American Revolutionary War in 1779. Masserano was a particularly prolific correspondent, one who took the trouble to write to Grimaldi almost every day. While Masserano was generally a sociable character and maintained an extensive network of contacts in Great Britain throughout his time there, he was well aware of his part in the theatrical routines of diplomacy and was never afraid to protest when he felt that either he or the Spanish crown were being treated with anything less than the respect that they were due. He was also an indefatigable speculator on the topic of British ambitions, and reported his perceptions and predictions back to Madrid regularly.

Almost immediately after arriving in London at the end of 1763, Masserano provided a series of impressions about how the British were faring in territories that had once belonged to other European powers. He noted approvingly that the British occupation of New France was not going well – not so much a direct condemnation of British imperial policies as a more simple expression of pleasure at the weakening of a dangerously successful imperial rival. He had heard that the indigenous peoples refused to recognize British authority, that they had “murdered many (British) subjects” and that they “wanted no friend except the King of France.”\(^8^9\) At the same time, he made a more specific effort to condemn

\(^8^9\) Ministerio de Cultura de España, Archivo Histórico Nacional (AHN), Papeles de Estado (Estado), Legajo 4262 (Inglaterra 1763-1764), Masserano to Grimaldi, London, 20 December 1763.
poor British rule in formerly Spanish territories, such as disruptions of the ecclesiastical linkages between the Bishopric of Mallorca and the British-occupied island of Menorca.\textsuperscript{90} On that particular matter, his stance was not a controversial one. Masserano’s voice was added to those of British critics who were already condemning Lieutenant-Governor Johnston on the grounds that he was an inept governor who disobeyed royal orders, illegally privileged French merchants over British ones, and frustrated both the British garrison and the island’s residents with corruption, intimidation, and possibly even murder.\textsuperscript{91}

Prince Masserano seems to have been a fairly popular man in London. He was certainly well established, as a career diplomat who spent the better part of two decades posted to Britain. He was also something of a gossip. As such, he was a regular purveyor of an odd assortment of personal details about the various personalities at the English court. For example, he felt that the Earl of Sandwich, Secretary of State for the Northern Department in 1764, was “an enlightened man, of cheerful genius, jovial; he does not love working; he enjoys, and dedicates himself to all manner of pleasures ... but he is disingenuous and not at all sincere.” Yet for the most part, Masserano had positive opinions of the major British political figures. He found Lord Halifax, Secretary of State for the Southern Department and his first primary point of contact with the British government, to be excessively concerned with being in charge, but generally a “talented and well-manned” gentleman.\textsuperscript{92} Curiously, he also seems to have held a particularly high opinion of General Draper and his conduct in Manila during the war. Masserano did not blame Draper for the destruction and theft that came with the invasion, but praised him for “having

\textsuperscript{90} AHN, Estado, Legajo 4262, Masserano to Grimaldi, London, 27 December 1763.
\textsuperscript{91} An account of the deplorable state of the island of Minorca, And of the Many Injuries done to the Inhabitants Under the Command of Lieutenant-Governor Johnston, (London, 1766), Eighteenth Century Collections Online, accessed 29 June 2010.
\textsuperscript{92} AHN, Estado, Legajo 4262, Masserano to Grimaldi, London, 23 January 1764.
treated the inhabitants of that island with great humanity." In a broader sense, the Spanish ambassador seems to have genuinely believed that the British cabinet’s professions of “peace and good harmony” were sincere, at least for the short term. In other words, Britain and Spain could readily agree that they both wanted and needed the immediate relief brought by the Peace of Paris.

The longer term was a different matter. As we already saw in chapter three, Masserano carried out his own investigations into future British territorial ambitions in Spanish America. He reported that some members of the British elite had been hungry for an invasion of Mexico during the Seven Years’ War, and he expressed his belief that this ambition would once again present itself in the next war between Spain and Great Britain. He also complained about the British “disposition to always interpret the articles of the last peace treaty in the most favourable manner” for British interests, even though the articles “did not have a totally clear meaning.” This tendency made the British a problematic interlocutor on the international scene and a difficult bedfellow as Spain’s only remaining large-scale imperial neighbour in the Americas. Masserano found that he could endlessly reiterate the Spanish point of view in conversations with British ministers and receive no indications of any sort of willingness to negotiate or compromise. Although he may have exaggerated his problems in London from time to time, the basic thrust of his dilemma is entirely consistent with what can been seen in a multitude of writings by British ministers and by George III himself. For example, as we saw from the British handling of the Honduras logging dispute, George III was not even remotely interested in opening a dialogue over what the Peace of Paris really meant – the British understanding of the treaty was paramount.

93 AHN, Estado, Legajo 4262, Masserano to Grimaldi, London, 3 February 1764.
95 AHN, Estado, Legajo 4262, Masserano to Grimaldi, No. 139, London, 4 May 1764.
96 AHN, Estado, Legajo 4262, Masserano to Grimaldi, London, 8 May 1764.
Yet Masserano did not always disagree with the British or cheer for their defeat; his views on the Anglo-Spanish relationship were nuanced. It seems clear that in some ways, he understood Britain and Spain as two distinct agents of a connective, collaborative, pan-European imperial project that was slowly remaking the world in the European image. While the various western European crowns might struggle for supremacy within the larger meta-project of trans-oceanic empire, some Spaniards were able to perceive the more general expansion of that imperialist sphere as a cause for celebration even if it was not their own handiwork. The expansion of a particular European nation into a new region might provide its government with a temporary advantage against its rivals, but it also expanded the playing field for all of the European imperialists. So while Masserano was happy to see the British experience disorder and suffer loss of life in clashes with the indigenous peoples of the Americas, where British power sat dangerously close to some of Spain’s oldest and most valuable colonial possessions, he was equally pleased to see the British triumph over what he saw as uncivilized peoples in other parts of the world. Doing so added to the shared imperial text, and thereby served to further validate it for all European participants.

One good example of this general principle is Masserano’s strikingly positive attitude toward British actions in India, even when they were violent and clearly against the wishes of local rulers. In 1764, word arrived in London that Mir Kasim, the independently-minded Nawab of Bengal, was attempting to break free of British influence. The response of the British crown and the East India Company was to send Major-General Robert Clive to protect British interests in India, an action that would lead to Kasim’s military defeat that autumn at the Battle of Buxar and to the cementing of British power in India. Masserano characterized Kasim as “barbarous” and accused him of “cruelty” toward the British. His reaction suggests that he regarded British retaliation as both righteous and conducive to

better order in India. He appeared to share British anxieties when “unfavourable news” arrived in October about disciplinary problems with the “European soldiers” among the British forces. In the summer of 1765, when word of the British victory at Buxar reached London, Masserano was delighted.

“I have recently received very pleasant news from the East Indies,” he proclaimed. He noted approvingly that British casualties had been light and that the enemy forces, having suffered about six thousand fatalities, had been “completely vanquished” and had been forced to yield considerable riches to their conquerors. Clearly, as a fellow European imperialist, Masserano felt that he and the Spanish government could believe that they shared – in a tangential but substantial way – the benefits of this British conquest.

Back in Madrid, Grimaldi was not so generous. His language typically suggests that he, too, thought of Spain as part of a larger European imperialism. But he did not praise the British. Instead, his oft-voiced belief that the British had allowed private interests to hijack the state suggests that he feared that these new British customs could destabilize the entire imperial system. So he fed Masserano an almost constant diet of anti-British sentiments. While immersed in the dispute over logging rights in Honduras, he argued that the peace would not last long if the British could not contain their “chaotic manner of thinking and acting in the Americas.” Masserano agreed that yet another war might be inevitable before long. His take on British behaviour over Honduras was that it was rigid and abusive of the good understanding that was supposed to have been established by the Peace of Paris. He felt that the Spanish way of approaching the dispute – to offer to sit down and negotiate clarifications of the disputed points – was “just,” and he was enormously frustrated by his inability to change the rigid way

98 AHN, Estado, Legajo 4262, Masserano to Grimaldi, London, 15 June 1764.
99 AHN, Estado, Legajo 4262, Masserano to Grimaldi, No. 302, London, 12 October 1764.
100 AHN, Estado, Legajo 4276, Masserano to Grimaldi, No. 482, London, 18 June 1765.
101 AHN, Estado, Legajo 4262, Grimaldi to Masserano, San Ildefonso, 16 July 1764.
in which the British ministers understood the situation. In late August of 1764, he had long conversations with both Sandwich and Halifax in an effort to resolve the conflict. Masserano told Halifax that the peace had already been “glorious” enough for Britain, as Spain had conceded British fishing rights in the Atlantic, logging rights in certain parts of Honduras, and had allowed the acquisition of Florida. In return, Halifax reportedly charged that it was the Spanish who were acting in bad faith, and insinuated that the French and Spanish were merely buying time until they were ready to attack Great Britain again. In essence, each man was accusing the other’s nation of being unsatisfied with the Peace of Paris, and of threatening the peace with continued aggression that was designed to either circumvent or openly defy the limits set by that treaty.

After his unsuccessful attempt to negotiate the Honduras issue in London, Masserano expressed his anxieties about how the future would unfold if the Spanish crown allowed the British to have their way in Central America. “It would be the same as conceding to England all of the possessions of the Spanish crown,” he argued. The people of the Spanish Empire would be reduced to labourers of the British Empire, serving British goals and ambitions. But Masserano did not believe that outcome to be inevitable. He presciently warned Lord Sandwich that British military successes in the Seven Years’ War might well not be replicated in a future conflict, and argued that Spain could have done greater damage to British interests if the war had gone on for longer. “The fortune of arms is not constant,” he told Sandwich. “One cannot argue that we would have been equally unhappy if we had continued the hostilities” instead of accepting the peace. “We had good reason to hope for the conquest of Portugal,” he boasted, “and (then) all of Brazil would certainly have been ours – conquests that would have been

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102 AHN, Estado, Legajo 4262, Masserano to Grimaldi, No. 251, London, 21 August 1764.
103 AHN, Estado, Legajo 4262, Masserano to Grimaldi, No. 265, London, 1 September 1764.
104 Ibid.
worth infinitely more than ten Cubas.” In saying so, Masserano was baiting Sandwich by explicitly referencing one of Britain’s greatest fears with respect to Spain. Although the British navy could disrupt Spanish communication with Latin America, it could do little to prevent the Spanish army from marching across the frontier and attempting to put an end to the independence of Britain’s Portuguese allies. During his time in Madrid, Lord Rochford was always watching closely for any hints that France and Spain might be plotting against Portugal, and often made it clear to Grimaldi that Britain would not tolerate such aggression. The issue of Portuguese security was, in fact, one of the most important strategic pieces in the Anglo-Spanish relationship between the Seven Years’ War and the Falklands Crisis of 1770-1, as the third part of this dissertation will illustrate in greater detail.

The more general problem of re-armament – and the unprecedented level of militarization in the Americas that came with it – was controversial for both Spanish and British officials. Ambassadors from both countries routinely reported back home about military preparations, and challenged their host ministers about their intentions. As Juan de Prado had rightly pointed out, the scale of the British attack on Havana was greater than anything seen before, and it had a permanent impact on thinking about imperial security. The military reforms that began in Cuba immediately after the war were to be only a first step in a lasting revitalization of the Spanish military. In January 1765, Masserano reported that Lord Halifax queried him about what appeared to be a widespread French and Spanish naval building program “in various parts of Europe and America.” Masserano downplayed these efforts and simply responded by pointing out that many ships had been lost in the late war, and that it was merely a rebuilding effort. But Halifax was not content with that explanation. He told Masserano that the British were aware of Spanish plans to augment their military forces with significantly improved colonial militias, and asked him to explain the reasoning behind these developments. The Spanish ambassador

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retorted that it was hardly a secret that Spain was attempting to reinforce its American possessions. Furthermore, it was well known that the British also had militias in their American colonies, which were used to “guard the coasts and to protect against contraband.” On balance, he announced, militia defence was “a good and advantageous (British) method ... (that) we should imitate.”\textsuperscript{106} It was also an important element in British military superiority during the Seven Years’ War, as both men were clearly aware but declined to mention. So although both countries preferred not to have to bear the burden of escalating defence costs, the imperial environment remained so charged in the aftermath of British victory in the Seven Years’ War that neither crown was willing to take any chances with the security of its empire.

Masserano’s correspondence illustrates other ways in which both the Spanish and the British attempted to shape the further evolution of their shared imperial experience. Some of them were economic. Alongside French diplomats, Masserano successfully lobbied the British at the beginning of 1765 to leave their African colony of the Gambia open to completely free and open international commerce, because they saw it as a critically important source of slave labour for all of the Europeans in the Americas.\textsuperscript{107} So even as the Spanish were attempting to begin reforms that would move their imperial commerce toward an internally free but nearly autarkic model, they were forced to accept a certain amount of participation in a broader Atlantic economy – a practice that was known to open the door to increased black market activity involving goods beyond the importation of slaves, and hence to greater inter-imperial commercial contact. Yet Masserano also showed a willingness to support the idea of inter-imperial trade in certain other cases. For example, in the spring and summer of 1765, he tried to lobby the British government to allow the “the free transport of wines from the Canary Islands to the

\textsuperscript{106} AHN, Estado, Legajo 4276, Masserano to Grimaldi, No. 379, London, 1 February 1765.
\textsuperscript{107} AHN, Estado, Legajo 4276, Masserano to Grimaldi, No. 398, London, 26 February 1765.
English colonies in America,” a project for which he claimed to have gained the support of some members of the British merchant community.\textsuperscript{108}

Another way of attempting to direct the future course of the European-dominated Atlantic world was related to the geographical pressures that were increasingly heated in this period. Although he did not report any specific demands on the topic from the British cabinet, Masserano claimed to notice a growing sentiment in the British media that the geographical frontiers between the Spanish and Portuguese were unacceptably vague. He said that the English press was suggesting that these borders should be determined to a high degree of precision, and that “obelisks should be periodically erected to demarcate the boundaries that pertain to each nation,” a practice that was certainly already common in Europe, but not so much yet in the rest of the European-controlled world.\textsuperscript{109} So in the Spanish ambassador’s perception of British attitudes, we see some evidence of the previously-discussed pressure to move the European-controlled world toward a more precise, rationalized geography. There was also, of course, British pressure to define and adjust the boundaries between British and Spanish territory ever closer to the principal hubs of Spanish America. Masserano reported that the Marquess of Rockingham, who was the Prime Minister over the winter of 1765-6, suggested that Spain should cede New Orleans to Great Britain in exchange for British acceptance of Spain’s non-payment of the Manila Ransom. Apparently, Rockingham smugly explained that the territory would be of little use to Spain, and that it was clearly located in territory that “pertained” to Great Britain. More ominously still, he told Masserano that if Spain was unwilling to give it up, it would only be a matter of twenty years before the two crowns would suffer “great differences” over that territory.\textsuperscript{110}

\textsuperscript{108} AHN, Estado, Legajo 4276, Masserano to Grimaldi, No. 507, London, 23 July 1765.
\textsuperscript{109} AHN, Estado, Legajo 4276, Masserano to Grimaldi, No. 398, London, 26 February 1765.
\textsuperscript{110} AHN, Estado, Legajo 4276, Masserano to Grimaldi, No. 619, London, 31 December 1765.
As far as Grimaldi was concerned, these kinds of conversations only served to confirm his fears about the innate belligerence of the British government. Late in the summer of 1765, he expressed his displeasure with the recently-installed Rockingham government by saying that its disposition toward the Spanish Empire showed “the violent spirit of Minister Pitt,” in spite of the fact that Pitt had famously declined to be part of Rockingham’s cabinet. His statement is revealing because it provides a glimpse of Grimaldi’s perceptual limitations when it came to understanding British politics. The 1760s are broadly acknowledged as one of the more turbulent and erratic periods of British political history, one in which none of the major figures was able to comfortably hold onto office for long. Rockingham was already the fourth politician to hold the office of Prime Minister since George III had acceded to the throne in 1760, and would be followed by two more before Lord North finally established a more stable government in 1770. But in spite of the legitimate instability and differences of opinion about how the business of empire should be conducted in Britain, Grimaldi maintained a simpler vision that emphasized continuity and ignored much of the complexity and change.

In contrast, Spain had enjoyed much more political continuity since Carlos III became king in 1759. Esquilache and his reforming cadre enjoyed great favour with the monarch. Most of the crown’s other principal ministers, including Grimaldi, the Count of Campomanes and Manuel de Roda, considered themselves reformers and were unafraid to take aggressive action in pursuit of that goal. But like Great Britain, Spain would not escape the decade without seeing significant political turbulence. In March 1766, Esquilache would be forced out of office by forces that he had been unable to predict, thereby disrupting the Junta de Ministros. The remaining reformist ministers in Madrid would use that event as justification to begin secret machinations against the Jesuits, leading to the complete

111 AHN, Estado, Legajo 4276, Grimaldi to Masserano, San Ildefonso, 5 September 1765.
112 The other Prime Ministers of the 1760s were the Duke of Newcastle (1757-62), The Earl of Bute (1762-63), George Grenville (1763-65), Pitt the Elder a.k.a. the Earl of Chatham (1766-68) and the Duke of Grafton (1768-70).
extermination of that order within Spanish borders the following spring, and subsequently to their suppression by the Roman Catholic Church only a few years later. Together, that series of events comprises a critical moment in eighteenth-century Spanish politics. The loss of Esquilache was also an event of great significance for the British. As Rochford had quickly identified him as a thinker whose ideas about governance and empire were closer to those of the British than anybody else in Madrid, his departure signalled a potentially negative shift in the shared experience of Atlantic imperialism. The increased authority and influence that initially fell into the hands of the Marquis de Grimaldi, whose antagonist feelings toward the British were clear, seemed to make that shift even more likely. For all of these reasons, the eventful year between the spring of 1766 and the spring of 1767 will be the focus of the entr’acte that follows, and of the next chapter.
Lord Rochford and The Esquilache Riots, 1766

On the evening of 23 March 1766, Madrid was in a state of paralysis. For a moment, royal authority fell into abeyance, and one of the most violent popular uprisings in Europe prior to the French Revolution was in full tilt. The people of Madrid, ostensibly incensed by the government’s recent decree against the wearing of the traditional Spanish cape and three-cornered hat, ran rampant through the streets and demand the removal of the Marqués de Esquilache. This flare of discontent would later be named the Motín de Esquilache – the Esquilache Riots. The Earl of Rochford watched with fascination as the uprising played out. This “dreadful insurrection of the people,” as he described it, quickly instituted mob rule in the streets. The mob enforced its will, obliging “everybody in the streets to slouch their hats,” a direct violation of the crown’s recent edicts. The crowd harassed and damaged passing coaches. They smashed all the windows in the house of the Marqués de Grimaldi – another Italian in a position of high authority. They broke every streetlamp in sight. Then they set their sights on the home of the hated Esquilache himself. There, their attempts to set fire to the house were only stopped by gunfire from the soldiers within.

The following morning, Rochford called at the Spanish court, in the newly constructed Palacio Real. On his way, he passed through the raucous mass of Spaniards outside. They cried: “Long live the king, and death to Esquilache!” To Rochford’s evident satisfaction, upon seeing him, they reportedly shifted to chanting “Long live England and death to France!” Messages passed between the king and the crowd, in an attempt to bring calm. But it seemed as though their thirst for violence could only be quenched by the head of Esquilache. Rochford found that the Spanish government was unsure of its
ability to contain the revolt. Military units were being called to Madrid as quickly as possible, but they needed time to travel.\textsuperscript{1} Cornered, the king granted the mob all that they asked for on 24 March, but the royal family quietly slipped out of the city that evening, accompanied by Esquilache and other members of his government. On 25 March, realizing that they had been had, the mob formed once again and roamed the streets of Madrid, chanting for Esquilache’s head and abusing the bodies of slain soldiers. Much to Rochford’s relief, they passed “numberless times by (his) house but offered no incivility or disrespect.” Some of them, to his delight, shouted out a message of support: “Long live the English Ambassador!”\textsuperscript{2} This time, a crowd gathered outside the home of Diego de Rojas y Contreras, Bishop of Cartagena and governor of a key governmental organ, the \textit{Consejo de Castilla}. Rather than hold out in support of Esquilache, the bishop almost immediately sided with the crowd. He asked the \textit{consejo} to condemn the ill-fated Italian and to blame him for almost all of Spain’s current ills. The list of his supposed crimes was long: involving Spain in the Seven Years’ War, causing the loss of Havana, high food prices, unwanted bureaucratic interference, and forced urban improvement projects, to name a few.\textsuperscript{3}

In order to make their thorough disrespect clear, the mob elected a criminal – Diego de Avendaño – to carry a new indictment of Esquilache to Carlos III. To emphasize the seriousness of their intent, they then occupied the army barracks in Madrid and seized a recent arms shipment. At the same time, Bishop Rojas y Contreras signed and sent a petition to the king, in support of the crowd’s indictment. The crown’s position was extremely tenuous. The following day, with Avendaño, Rojas y Contreras and members of the \textit{Consejo de Castilla} standing by, the king’s capitulation was read out in Madrid’s \textit{Plaza Mayor}. As a further testament to the weakness of his posture, Carlos III was also forced

\textsuperscript{1} British National Archives (BNA), SP 94/173, Rochford to Conway, Madrid, 24 March 1766, f. 191-4.
\textsuperscript{2} BNA, SP 94/173, Rochford to Conway, Madrid, 31 March 1766, f. 206-7.
\textsuperscript{3} Stanley Stein and Barbara Stein, \textit{Apogee of Empire: Spain and New Spain in the Age of Charles III, 1759-1789} (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003), 85.
to rather timidly request an end to the riots. The mob, finally placated by the crown’s firm promise to remove Esquilache from power and exile him from Spain, quickly dispersed and returned peace to Madrid.  

Lord Rochford, appalled at the events of the past few days, immediately began his own investigation to make some sense of the events that led to the exile of his friend Esquilache. Perhaps not surprisingly, he soon came to the conclusion that among the real villains behind the scenes were the Marqués de Grimaldi and the other Francophiles at the Spanish court.

“You will easily believe,” Rochford later wrote, “that I have used my best endeavours to discover the true source of this insurrection,” in spite of the “various ... conjectures here about it.” He quickly decided that complaints about the laws against traditional Spanish hats and about the rising price of bread were only pretexts, and that the entire affair had been orchestrated by certain elements of the elite. “There is not the least room to doubt ... that some of the principal grandees, and the heads of the law, were at the bottom of ... this affair,” he said. While confusion reigned at court, Rochford had watched the principal actors and judged their reactions to the unfolding debacle. He “talked some time” with the Marqués de Ensenada, the former chief minister who had been removed from office after a scandal in 1754. In Rochford’s view, it was revealing that Ensenada “was in great spirits the whole time,” along with many principal ministers of the Spanish crown. Only Esquilache’s friends were “disconcerted.” In conversation with some of the other ambassadors, Rochford discovered that there was a consensus among some of them “that Grimaldi and the French Party were the first movers” of the insurrection, “and that the court of France was determined to ruin (Esquilache) as it was plain that he very much neglected” the opportunity to organize and deploy Spanish defences in the manner preferred by the French crown. Rochford could not absolutely confirm that interpretation of events, but he did

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4 Stein and Stein, 86.
“not think it unlikely” and added that “the old Spaniards” were being “made the fools” and might well strike back against Grimaldi and his friends upon realizing what had happened.⁵

In the wake of the riots, a quiet unease settled over Madrid. Rochford reported that Carlos III was despondent over the loss of Esquilache, and openly declared to the assembled nobility “that if he had but one bit of bread, he would divide it with M.de Squillacci.” Even worse, his confidence was shattered. “He seemed greatly embarrassed at first seeing” the British delegation after the riots “and did not recover himself the whole time” that Rochford spent with him.⁶ As the king brooded, the web of suspicion spread. By early April, Rochford reported that “the plot was very deeply laid, and that even the clergy had a great share in it” – a shadow of the machinations to come against the Jesuits.⁷ By the end of the month, Rochford noted that Spanish investigations into the causes of the riots might be starting to yield their first victims. The Conde d’Aranda, who had replaced Rojas y Contreras at the head of the Consejo de Castilla, moved against Ensenada, telling him that he was no longer welcome at any of the king’s residences, “and that he must immediately quit Madrid.” Although Rochford was uncertain as to whether or not Aranda’s justification for the exile could be found in the Esquilache Riots, he reminded his colleagues in London about Ensenada’s suspicious attitude during the insurrection and repeated his conjecture about the former minister being a “promoter of the troubles.”⁸

In the end, conjecture was all that Rochford was able to provide with respect to the causes of the Esquilache Riots. Carlos III and his ministers “have affected the greatest secrecy,” he reported. Yet a lack of solid information was not enough to prevent him from deciding that his initial reaction was correct and that the riot was the work of a political faction with a pro-French agenda. “I can venture to

⁶ Ibid., f. 216 verso.
⁷ BNA, SP 94/173, Rochford to Conway, Aranjuez, 7 April 1766, f. 218-9.
⁸ BNA, SP 94/173, Rochford to Conway, Aranjuez, 21 April 1766, f. 228-9.
conclude with a great deal of certainty,” he proclaimed, “that the French were the first movers of it, in order to ruin M. de Squillacci.” Seeing that the disgraced minister was raising funds more for non-military uses and not giving the Spanish military the level of funding that the French wished to see, Rochford believed that they pushed for Esquilache’s removal. But he also reserved some blame for the “old Spaniards,” who “took advantage” of what the French had started in order to further their own anti-reform agenda and to exact revenge on Esquilache for having allegedly been the primary advocate for the Spanish entry into the Seven Years’ War.

I have learnt from undoubted authority that the language, which is held at the meetings of the principal old Spaniards, is this: that if M. de Squillacci had not used his influence with the King of Spain, Portugal would not have been attacked nor the Family Compact have subsisted, and their present sentiments are that this court should, if possible, avoid any démêlée with us, and not think of molesting Portugal, but first attend to the re-establishing good order in the state, and that then in ten years time, with prudent management, they will be again in a formidable situation.9

In view of this apparent split between French interests and the Spanish traditionalists, Rochford held out some hope that the entire affair might still “turn out advantageous” to Britain.10

Unfortunately for the British, there was good reason to believe otherwise. Miguel de Múzquiz, Esquilache’s replacement as minister of finance, assured Rochford that he would treat the British with “the greatest impartiality possible in all commercial affairs.” Although Rochford believed the sincerity of his statement, he noted that Múzquiz did not have “so much authority” as Esquilache had enjoyed at court, and so he feared that there would be “a great deal more dilatoriness.” The British ambassador also expressed his belief that Grimaldi would continue to act as an agent for the French as long as he remained in place in Madrid, but seems to have been satisfied that the Spanish traditionalists would

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9 BNA, SP 94/174, Rochford to Conway, Aranjuez, 5 May 1766, f. 20-1. The word “démêlée” is a French word meaning “quarrel,” which was more common in England in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries than in the present era.

10 Ibid., f. 21.
constrain him to the point that his “venom will be dispersed before it can take effect.” Rochford would not find out in person, for these were among the last words that he wrote from Madrid. In May 1766, he placed the British embassy in Madrid in the hands of Louis de Visme, and set out for Paris, where he was to represent his government for the next two years. In his absence, one of the most important years in eighteenth-century Spanish political life unfolded. At its end, all of Europe would find out where the Spanish crown had decided to lay the blame for the riots that sent the king’s favourite minister scurrying into exile.

Ibid. The word “dilatoriness,” which is no longer in common usage, refers to a tendency to procrastinate.
Chapter V

Death of a Future: The Path to the Jesuit Expulsion, 1766-7

Stanley and Barbara Stein may have put it best when they wrote that “the Esquilache era would be aborted not so much for what it accomplished as for what it might have accomplished.”¹ Over the seven years that the Italian minister enjoyed his place as the central political figure at the Spanish court, his growing body of enemies gathered their forces and waited until the time was right. Some of their discontent stemmed from their unhappiness with reforms that had already been enacted, but much more of it revolved around their understanding of what the Marqués de Esquilache and his reformist cadre intended for the future of the Spanish Empire. The riots that culminated in Esquilache’s removal and exile served notice that rapid reform would not be unopposed. But the process through which the Spanish political scene struggled to establish a new balance did not come to an end with the violence of March 1766. That was merely the opening act.

Over the year that followed, standing assumptions about heroes and villains would be challenged and the line between reformers and reactionaries would become blurred. The events, motivations and agendas that drove that process have been one of the great mysteries within the historiography of eighteenth-century Spain and its empire. In the spring of 1767, as these machinations came to a sudden close, the crown elected to condense a frighteningly complex sequence of events into one simple and carefully manufactured message: the Society of Jesus had acted with malice against the Spanish crown, and it should be made to pay for that transgression with its very existence. That

judgement had little to do with anything that the Jesuits had actually done during the Esquilache Riots. Rather, the uprising presented the Society’s enemies with a fluid political environment in which they could finally realize their long-held ambition to attack the Jesuits.

The actions taken against the Jesuits by Carlos III and his principal ministers are a good example of what states can do when faced with the task of making policies for extremely complex imperial systems. Almost every actor on the scene claimed to have the best interests of the empire at heart, but the real underlying motivations and the possible consequences for the imperial future were difficult for anyone to fully comprehend – including the king and his ministers. Among many other things, Esquilache and his proyectista friends had already greatly complicated the operation of the Spanish Empire, and threatened to make it even more complicated if they had been allowed to continue with the full scope of their agenda. We have already seen that some of their closest allies in the fight to reform the empire were associated with the Society of Jesus. In Havana, the Jesuit padre Ignacio Tomás Butler was an important part of the Conde de Ricla’s efforts to negotiate fundamental reforms with the local elite after the end of the British occupation. Joachin de Villareal, another prominent Jesuit, was an open enthusiast of the proyectista writings of Bernardo Ward and an obvious proponent of the concept that major economic reforms were needed to restore the Spanish Empire to its former glory.

In a broad sense, the Jesuits were well-connected on almost every conceivable front. As champions of learning and education, they were well-acquainted with new ideas from throughout the European sphere. They also enjoyed a vast network of contacts throughout the Spanish empire, linking them to wealthy elites, miners, merchants, and government officials in both Spain and its colonies. Their vast reach and expertise also made them into a formidable “para-state entity” – an organization that was able to take on some of the mantle of political authority in the more remote corners of the empire. Their traditional comfort with involvement in commercial affairs also made them fully capable – almost
ideally so – of supporting the development and maintenance of an international trade and financial network. Stein and Stein argue that “by origin, theology, and discipline, the Jesuits cultivated what can only be termed a spirit of Catholic capitalism that facilitated their expansion in the colonies in the eighteenth century.” But in the process of that expansion, they were also starting to run afoul of the needs and desires of the Spanish crown – an entity with which they had not always fully agreed but had traditionally managed to negotiate a workable coexistence.

**Imperial Exigencies and the Degradation of the Jesuit-State Complex**

The Society of Jesus was born out of struggle, conflict, and individualist revelation. Ignatius de Loyola, the Basque nobleman and knight who founded the order, did so after undergoing an intense, personal spiritual conversion while recovering from serious battle wounds that left him permanently crippled in 1521. In the wake of that experience, he prepared the first manuscript of what eventually became *The Spiritual Exercises*, the seminal text of the Jesuit order and a manual that others could use to find their own way down the path to the spiritual awakening that he had experienced. Over time, it became much more. As Jeffrey Chipps Smith explains it, *The Spiritual Exercises* were “a flexible framework for achieving the (Jesuits’) ultimate goals: salvation through self-knowledge and union with God.” They were fundamental to the early Jesuit view of the world and of their role in it. Possibly because he had struggled with the suspicious attitudes of both the Roman Catholic Church and Spanish Inquisitorial officials while in the process of creating the order, Ignatius included a set of maxims in the last section of the *Exercises* that provided broad outlines for how the order should comport itself.

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2 Stein and Stein, 35.
“Laying aside all (their) own judgements,” it proclaimed that the Jesuits “ought to keep (their) minds open and ready to obey in everything the true bride of Christ Our Lord, our holy mother, the hierarchical Church.” Even more submissive is the ninth rule, which states that the Jesuits “should praise all the precepts of the Church, being ready to seek arguments in their defence and never in any way to attack them.”

It was not only papal authority that Ignatius sought to bolster in these rules of conduct. The tenth rule is possibly the most revealing of all when it comes to early Jesuit attitudes toward imperialism, and to the basic pattern of their relationship with the Spanish state:

We should be more inclined to approve and praise the decrees and regulations of those in authority, and their conduct as well; for although some of these things do not or did not in the past deserve approval, more grumbling and scandal than profit would be aroused by speaking against them, either in public sermons or in conversations in front of simple people. In that way, people would become hostile toward authority, either temporal or spiritual.

On one level, this rule appears to be an appalling carte blanche that could easily be abused by imperial authorities. But on another level, it speaks deeply to the interdependence between Jesuit spiritual and Spanish imperial aims, as well as those of other major players in the European world. The tenth rule suggests that Ignatius was at least somewhat cognizant of the excesses and abuses of imperial power, but justified them as a distasteful yet necessary by-product of the larger Christian and European projects. He may have feared that if he were to advocate a more active role as a political watchdog for the Jesuits, he would undermine the far more important process of reaching out spiritually to people around the world.

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4 Ignatius de Loyola, *Personal Writings* (London: Penguin Books, 1996), 356. These quotations are from section 353 of the Spiritual Exercises, also known as “RULE 1” of “Rules to follow in view of the true attitude of mind that we ought to maintain [as members] within the Church militant.”

5 Loyola, 357. From Section 361, “RULE 9” of the aforementioned regulations.

6 Loyola, 357. From Section 362, “RULE 10” of the aforementioned regulations.
For the most part, this basic stance served the order well, and set a tone that helped to facilitate the order’s coexistence with the Spanish crown. Although this relationship was not without its turbulent patches, the Jesuit missions in Latin America were key religious and political appendages of the Spanish crown for almost two centuries prior to the order’s expulsion from the Spanish Empire in 1767. The missions had always been strikingly different from the encomiendas (another structure once used to extend the crown’s control) in that they did not exist to merely extract labour and to assimilate the indigenous population into the economic system being developed by the agents of Imperial Spain. Instead, the priests believed that they could fulfill their perceived duty of bringing Christianity and civilization to the natives by reorganizing them into new communities where they could discipline and educate them. In theory, the missions would be secularized after ten years of operation and the missionaries would move on to other regions. In practice, the execution of this strategy was uneven, and the Jesuits often remained in any given mission for much longer periods.

The southernmost cluster of the Jesuit missions, spread throughout a region that includes parts of what are now Paraguay, Argentina, and Brazil, was unhappily caught in the middle of a territorial dispute between Spain and Portugal in the middle of the eighteenth century. There, the Society of Jesus was engaging the Guaraní people in a unique strategy of conversion that was exceptionally faithful to Jesuit spiritual roots but ultimately incompatible with the changing realities of Spanish imperial rule. Rather than place an equal emphasis on the twin goals of Christianization and Europeanization, missionaries focused on conversion to Catholicism and took control of pre-existing political and

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7 Encomiendas were grants of Indian labor given to conquistadores as a reward for their services to the crown. This institution strengthened the ties between landholders and the crown because the monarchy still held legal title to the land. Although the holders of these grants were supposed to provide religious instruction for the labor force, their primary focus was economic and political.

8 This is a common and longstanding understanding of how the missions were intended to function. See, for example, Herbert E. Bolton, “The Mission as a Frontier Institution in the Spanish-American Colonies,” in David J. Weber, ed., New Spain’s Far Northern Frontier: Essays on Spain in the American West, 1540-1821 (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1979), 49-65.
economic systems rather than supplanting them with wholly European systems. These missions were known as the Jesuit Reductions, and they would prove ruinous to the order when they were thrust into the middle of a larger imperial drama.

In 1750, Spain and Portugal signed the Treaty of Madrid. It assigned new, specific borders for the frontier shared between the two crowns in South America. This agreement was a central moment in the conceptual development of empire in the Americas, for it represented one of the largest steps in the process of geographical rationalization and brought the region much closer to the frontiers that it has had throughout the modern era. When Spain and Portugal agreed to rationalize their frontier in the Rio de la Plata region, they did so to the benefit of Portugal and to the great expense of Spain. These developments were also to the benefit of another player in the Atlantic World. Because of its mutual enmity toward Spain, Portugal enjoyed a strong relationship and alliance with Great Britain. In the negotiations that led up to the Treaty of Madrid, the British hovered silently over the Portuguese side of the equation. The British had some sense that the eventual dismemberment of the Spanish Empire could be promoted by continued rationalization of imperial borders, as they had done in 1670 and would continue to do in the second half of the eighteenth century. The Spanish crown’s claim to territory in the Americas had a long tradition, but it was not always capable of backing up those geographical claims when challenged by rationalized conceptions that were based on settlement and development.

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10 To help clarify any potential confusion, there were numerous Treaties of Madrid throughout the early-modern and modern periods. In this dissertation, I mention two of them: the 1670 agreement between Spain and England, and the 1750 agreement between Spain and Portugal.
11 Here, again, see Daniel Clayton’s work on the later Nootka Sound conflict. The other highly relevant case here is the then-ongoing struggle to define imperial boundaries in the Honduras region, which ultimately resulted in the creation of British Honduras. See the British Honduras Papers, British National Archives (BNA), Colonial Office Files (CO) 123/1.
In the mid-eighteenth century, Spain could handle territorial challenges by the Portuguese military, but Portugal’s alliance with Great Britain meant that Lisbon could potentially back up its settlement ownership claims in South America by calling upon the considerable might of the British armed forces. The silent British part of the strategic equation in 1750 was what made the border settlement possible. Without the ever-present threat of the application of British force against Spain’s overseas colonies, there may well have been no rationalization of imperial geography in the Río de la Plata region at that particular time. Perhaps more to the point, without the British factor, the coming conflict between the Jesuits and the Iberian crowns would have been delayed for years, or even for decades. Ultimately, it may not have even taken the form of a general expulsion from the Spanish Empire. The fundamental differences in how the Jesuits and the Spanish state envisioned the future of the Americas were not of a specific British origin, but it is difficult to fully understand the urgency with which they presented themselves in 1750 without reference to British power.

As it was, the Jesuits found themselves trapped. Instead of bowing to the requirements of the new treaty, the Guaraní chose to take up arms against the Spanish and Portuguese crowns. There is a considerable body of literature on the Jesuit role in this conflict, and an ongoing debate over precisely what role the Jesuit missionaries played in the years between the border treaty and the Guaraní War (1754-6). Did they incite the Guaraní to rebel, or at least encourage them by creating conditions in which resistance seemed plausible? The emerging historical consensus is that they most likely did not. But in the end, it makes very little difference. Putting aside its significant local impact, what mattered about the episode on the wider, international stage is how the Guaraní debacle affected Iberian (and broader

12 This view of the strategic scenario in the Río de la Plata region in 1750 is shared by William F. Jaenike, who offers a more elaborate breakdown of the situation is his book Black Robes in Paraguay: The Success of the Guaraní Missions Hastened the Abolition of the Jesuits (Minneapolis, Minnesota: Kirk House Publishers, 2007), 174-8.

13 For further detail and a discussion, see Ganson, 88.
European) views of the Jesuits. The missionaries in the Reductions were vehemently opposed to the treaty, and openly condemned it as a destructive instrument of international law that was unfairly biased in favour of Portugal and that would destroy decades of Jesuit work in the region. They delayed communicating the bad news to the Guaraní for months in the hope that the decision would be reversed. But the Spanish and the Portuguese governments doubted that the missionaries had benevolent intentions. Many of them believed that the Jesuits were stalling for time in order to arm their Guaraní state within a state for warfare.\(^{14}\) When the fighting finally broke out, it marked the beginning of a shift from slowly declining Jesuit-state relations in Spain to a more rapid decay. While the transnational Jesuits had been able to coexist with imperialism in an era of ample, fuzzy geographical space, they were increasingly at odds with the Spanish crown’s acceptance of an emerging, pan-Atlantic imperial vision that featured clear geographical frontiers. Perhaps just as importantly, that vision of empire limited para-state or supranational organizations to informal roles that would support but not interfere with state objectives. It also tended to underestimate the importance of those networks even as it relied upon them to facilitate the various functions of empire.

The Imperial Network Problem

Among the least obvious sinews that enabled the strength and function of empire in the latter part of the early-modern period were those of imperial networks. As we saw in the previous chapter, the Spanish were aware that there was a connection between the formidable strength of the British military and the accelerating proliferation of British commerce around the world. Yet they had little awareness of some of the most important underlying causal linkages between these two aspects of

\(^{14}\) Ganson, 91-3.
British imperialism. Eighteenth-century economic theory had not yet developed a fully-considered understanding of the relatively new financial innovations in credit and public debt that allowed the British to actualize a much greater amount of military force than their French and Spanish rivals. But perhaps even more important to the peacetime functioning of their mid-to-late-eighteenth-century empire was the presence of informal connectivity between disparate ports of call through what historians now refer to as imperial networks. At the time of the Seven Years’ War, neither British nor Spanish theories about the methods and techniques of empire attached any specific importance to the idea that such informal networks were vital to their development and maintenance. But as Jessica Harland-Jacobs demonstrates in her recent work on the role of the Freemasons in the British Empire, the Masons constituted such a network, and were instrumental to the further evolution of the empire.

Harland-Jacobs shows that the Freemasons evolved into a “global institution” in the mid-eighteenth century. Already well-established in the British Isles and in some of its older colonies, Masonic lodges spread throughout the globe as Britain acquired new territories. Harland-Jacobs argues that although the Masons were strongly associated with the British imperial project, they were politically complex and often managed to simultaneously support and challenge the metropolitan government. They were crucial to the establishment of a colonial middle class as they helped provide some structure for an environment in which members negotiated the sharing of power with Britain’s traditional elites.\(^\text{15}\) The spread of Freemasonry was also very much driven by the members who lived on the fringes of empire, rather than as a project that originated with the grand lodges in metropolitan

Britain. The men who were directly, physically engaged in the business of empire had strong feelings about wanting to preserve that aspect of their lives even the farthest-flung parts of the world.  

Perhaps even more importantly, the Masons also began to spread outside the boundaries of Britain’s formal empire, especially after 1750. They established themselves in locations as diverse as China, Sumatra and Argentina, often setting up inside the empires of Britain’s rivals. In doing so, they not only spread British ideas, but provided a space in which men from different national origins and loyalties could meet and engage each other in dialogue. They generally upheld the values of individualist-driven commercial enterprise, and discussed the relationship between those interests and the imperial politics that intersected them. Harland-Jacobs rightly points out that the existence and functioning of “such an institutional network ... in the second half of the eighteenth century suggests that the period between 1750 and 1815 was a crucial phase in globalization.” As she explains, the Freemasons had a set of characteristics that enabled them to function globally and to help further the project of globalization. They had a “well-established administrative structure with a central hub,” along with the capacity to “effect the proliferation of the institution’s network” and to “adapt to changing circumstances while maintaining discrete, identifiable institutional features.” They also provided the means for their members “to identify and communicate with one another” and a shared ideological orientation that encouraged them to think globally. To say the least, they were a key factor in the normative shaping and unofficial regulation of the British Empire. Beyond that horizon, they helped reshape the rest of the world into an environment that was increasingly accepting of the British way of operating.

16 Harland-Jacobs, 32.
17 Harland-Jacobs, 2.
18 Harland-Jacobs, 11.
In many respects, the Freemasons and the Jesuits played similar roles in the Atlantic world, but in their own ways and with some ideological distinctions that reflected their diverse national and religious origins. The Society of Jesus was also a network with global reach, and its members had a similarly supranational aspect to their identities that were loosely tied to the Spanish imperial project, but generally not in a formal or direct manner, as their primary mission was fundamentally spiritual in nature. As we saw in the last chapter, they had an extensive network of contacts with elites throughout the empire and, by the middle of the eighteenth century, generally operated within the ideological environment that Stein and Stein characterized as a kind of Catholic capitalism. Like the Masons, they had the capacity to act as a medium through which colonial elites could negotiate the further development of the empire with traditional metropolitan elites. An obvious example of this kind of negotiation would be the reform consultation process facilitated in Havana by padre Ignacio Tomás Butler on behalf of the Conde de Ricla after the Seven Years’ War.

In a broader sense, when the Jesuits looked up from their spiritual mission and offered their views on matters of imperial management, they were open to change and were clearly not afraid to stand apart from prevailing wisdom. In the Spanish Empire, they supported the development of a freer commercial system through their intellectualism and public involvement in promoting new economic ideas and a general sense of increased industriousness. For example, the Jesuit Juan de Cabrera wrote in 1719 that the number of obligatory holidays on the Catholic calendar, already cut down by Pope Urban VIII in 1642, should be further reduced in order to ensure that the poor had enough opportunity to work and provide for themselves economically.\footnote{Ruth MacKay, \textit{Lazy, Improvident People: Myth and Reality in the Writing of Spanish History} (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2006), 97. Here, MacKay refers to Juan de Cabrera’s \textit{Crisis política determina el mas florido imperio} (Madrid, 1719).} Although obviously Catholic, the Jesuits were in the habit of openly questioning traditions and policies of both church and state if they perceived a better way of
doing things. That tendency makes them, perhaps, into unrecognized movers of an alternative manifestation of the Enlightenment – movers who were unable to bring new ideas to their full fruition because of their tenuous political environment and rapidly degrading relationships with various other powerful institutions in Catholic Europe.

The Jesuits certainly seem to have had a vision for the future of the Atlantic World. They sought to harness the power of freer trade and individual commercial initiative – not as an end in its own right, but to serve the needs of their ongoing spiritual mission in the challenging new environment of the mid-eighteenth century. Possibly the greatest testament to the power and potential of that vision is the vitriol that was heaped upon them by former friends and long-time enemies alike. Even as the pro-commerce aesthetic was working upon the British social and governmental mentality and permeating their imperial networks, something equally new may have been forming in the Jesuit network. In saying so, I suggest here that there were multiple potential meta-outcomes of the Enlightenment era with respect to imperialism, and that there was a conscious decision among Spain’s policy-making elite to suppress one of those potential futures. The path they chose to emphasize instead was one that more closely corresponded to partial implementations of what they thought they saw happening in the British Empire – essentially, buying into the common text of empire in the Atlantic World instead of attempting to resist or redirect it. In the long run, choosing that path might not have been preferable to taking a risk and allowing the flourishing of a network that was indigenous to the Catholic world. But in the face of what the Spanish crown saw as a continuously growing danger from the expanding successes of the British Empire, it was difficult for ministers in Madrid to see beyond specious, imaginary connections between the Jesuits and the British.
Anglo-Jesuit Imperialism and Other Apocryphal Futures

“Anti-Catholicism has always been the pornography of the Puritan.”


The eminent American historian Richard Hofstadter offered this succinct explanation for the longevity of anti-Jesuit and anti-Catholic feelings in the United States. Although it is something of a deliberate oversimplification of a complex issue, it does highlight the important point that Protestantism and Catholicism tended to conflict not only when it came to matters of theology, but also when it came to the fundamental ways of interpreting the wisdom and morality of political and economic actions. But how can we understand why eighteenth-century Spain – a staunchly Catholic country if there ever was one – would turn so decisively against the Jesuits? Like the collective sentiments that ultimately ejected Esquilache from office, anti-Jesuit feelings were not well-grounded in objections to actions already taken by the order. Instead, they dwelt almost exclusively in paranoia about what the Jesuits might go on to accomplish if they were allowed to pursue their activities in the Americas to what their enemies perceived to be their logical conclusions. In many cases, concerns about British power and interests played an important role in these conceptions. Even before the Seven Years’ War, the Spanish were increasingly anxious about the threat that Great Britain appeared to pose to their possessions in the Americas – ironically, something that the Jesuits themselves warned about.

In 1757, the Jesuit padre Marcos Andrés Burriel published a warning, entitled Noticia de la California, about possible British influence along the Pacific coast of North America. He pointed out the threat of British raiding in the Pacific and the potential danger represented by the British ambition of

\[\text{20}\] Richard Hofstadter, “The Paranoid Style in American Politics,” Harper’s Magazine (November 1964), 80. This influential essay, in spite of its age and its appearance in a non-academic publication, remains a significant part of the serious literature on the role of conspiratorial thinking about the past and its impact on the political process.
finding a Northwest Passage through the Arctic. Had Britain succeeded in this goal, its extensive naval power would have encircled North America, strengthening its already formidable military presence. The Spanish crown was sufficiently alarmed by these possibilities that it made plans in 1760 to create separate governments for the frontier provinces of New Spain, although it then failed to carry them out. After the Peace of Paris in 1763, the disappearance of New France and the emergence of Britain as the supreme power in North America made this issue more concerning than ever before, especially in the face of the embarrassing and damaging losses of Havana and Manila. The apparent ease with which Britain had accomplished these military victories was extremely disquieting for the Spanish government.

While concerns about the security of Spanish America mounted, the development of an increasingly vicious anti-Jesuit mythology among the European elite set the stage for Spanish minds to make erroneous connections between Jesuit aims and British power. As one example among many, in October 1766, the viceroy in Mexico City sent the California Jesuits a list of complaints about them that had been sent to the king in Madrid. It included accusations of conspiring with the British to keep Spanish families out of the region, thereby directly obstructing the growth of the Spanish Empire. They described the Spanish soldiers in California as “slaves of the Jesuits” who were routinely gouged by the order in the sale of food and other essential goods. They accused the Jesuits of keeping the indigenous population in a state of slavery and of never teaching about the King of Spain, instead preferring to have the natives view the missionaries as their only earthly kings – thereby opening the door to British political and economic penetration. To these inflammatory allegations they added the near-ridiculous, including assertions that the Jesuits had “secret silver mines in their houses” and that they were actively

working to promote bad conditions at nearby mines. All of these ideas played on existing fears and encouraged the Spanish elite to regard the Jesuits with suspicion.

Among the best available sources for illustrating how the Spanish elite voiced their objections to the Jesuits are the polemical tracts that emerged in Madrid in the wake of the 1767 expulsion. In broad terms, this genre of attack literature undermined the Jesuits by questioning their allegiance to the Spanish crown. For example, in his *Delación de la Doctrina de los Intitulados Jesuitas* (*The Betrayal of Jesuit Doctrine*...), Doctor Don Fernando Huidobro y Velasco attacks the order on the basis that church authority and state authority must not be allowed to mix, a natural arrangement that the Jesuits had dared to challenge. “These two powers, equally instituted by God,” he declares, “are absolutely independent and may not interfere with the rights of the other without disturbing the order established by the sovereign lord of the universe.” The “secular princes” and their ministers “do not have the power to govern the church,” yet “they are its protectors and must sustain and foster it.” Conversely, the author insists that the Jesuits have no business interfering with matters of state: “The kingdom of Jesus Christ, of which they are ministers, is not of this world.” Consequently, the Jesuits “have no right to make laws, nor issue political ordinances, nor overrule those that are already in effect.” Yet in the opinion of Huidobro y Velasco, the Jesuits had been actively and inveterately engaged in precisely those activities.

Other writers attempted to unveil the longstanding malignancies in the Society of Jesus that had brought the Spanish Empire to such a point of crisis. One volume, titled *Retrato de los Jesuitas formado*

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23 L.F. Huidobro y Velasco, *Delación de la doctrina de los intitulados Jesuitas, sobre el dogma y la moral, hecha a los ... Arzobispos, y Obispos de la Francia*, (Madrid: Antonio Marin, 1768), 1-2. Translation from the original Spanish is by the author.
24 Ibid., 3.
al natural por los más sabios, y más ilustres católicos... (Portrait of the Jesuits as Articulated by the Wisest and Most Enlightened Catholics...), attempted to deploy the testimonies of a long series of religious scholars, judges, ambassadors and other learned Catholics “to speak of the errors, the impieties, the deceptions and other defects of the Jesuits, with infinitely more force than was already said by the Jansenists,” who were among the longest-standing enemies of the order. They collectively spoke of “crimes, excesses (and) ranting, as evident as the sun,” all of which they declared to be fundamentally characteristic of the Jesuit order.  

It is important to see that these judgements were not simply against the recent behaviour of the Society of Jesus. They reflected a belief that there was something intrinsically wrong with the order, and came packaged with particularly malicious representations of the Jesuit past and future. Aside from their theologically-based objections, these testimonies characterized the Jesuits as being deeply implicated in the basest political intrigues imaginable. Like Huidobro y Velasco, they believed that the order’s thirst for power had vastly exceeded any reasonable boundaries. They accused them of “diabolical politics ... (and) detestable conspiracies against the peace between states (and) against the lives of sovereigns.” Perhaps most of all, they believed the Jesuits to be guilty of pursuing and securing “shocking and incredible privileges” that were meant to elevate their order above “parish priests, bishops ... and all of the other religious orders,” as well as “ecclesiastical and civil courts, kings and sovereigns,” and even above the pope and “the universal church.” The Society of Jesus stood accused of attempting to become independent “of all

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25 Unknown author, Retrato de los Jesuitas formado al natural por los mas sabios, y mas ilustres católicos. Juicio hecho de los Jesuitas, autorizado con auténticos, é innegables testimonios, por los mayores, y mas esclarecidos Hombres de la Iglesia, y del Estado: desde el año de 1540 en que fue su Fundacion, hasta el de 1650. Traducido de Portugues en Castellano, Para desterrar las obstinadas preocupaciones, y voluntaria ceguedad de muchos incautos, é ilusos, que, contra el hermoso resplandor de la verdad cierran los ojos. (Madrid: Gabriel Ramirez, 1768), 3.
superior authority,” and of seeking to “procure the means to dominate everything and rule over all of creation.”

There was, quite simply, a rising hysteria about Jesuit activities, coupled with a broad willingness to view global-level events through a conspiratorial lens. In that respect, there was nothing unusual about what was happening in Spain – the popularization of what political scientist Michael Barkun calls “systemic conspiracy theories” was entirely consistent with the common evolution of the Anglo-Spanish imperial text. This tendency, which assigns exclusive responsibility for broad, complex sequences of events to a single institutional actor, offers a certain kind of comfort in a chaotic world. Randomness and coincidence give way to careful intentionality and connectivity, allowing seemingly innocuous players to mastermind the evolution of civilization to serve their own evil desires. Part of my argument of this chapter is that this particular wave of conspiratorial thinking should be understood in the context of the mounting intricacy that was characteristic of early-modern Atlantic empire in its waning days. To put it simply, the systemic conspiratorial mindset was a convenient way of trying to make sense of the imperial project when its innate complexity was accelerating. In the Spanish case, the general idea was that the Jesuits were veritable puppeteers, quietly taking control of all major organs of government, religion and commerce. This power was supposedly established through multiple techniques. For example, anti-Jesuit tracts often pointed to their leading role in education, as well as to the direct participation of Jesuits in various governance bodies. The Society’s ultimate aims remained obscure but were thought to be most certainly sinister.

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26 Ibid., 5.
27 For Barkun’s definition of “systemic conspiracy theories” as well as his broader explanation of the different forms of conspiracy theories, see Michael Barkun, A Culture of Conspiracy: Apocalyptic Visions in Contemporary America (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003), 3-6.
The same phenomenon was very much in play throughout the British sphere. As Richard Hofstadter pointed out, the conspiratorial mindset that has marked American far-right politics in the twentieth century has deep roots. It had clearly thrived on anti-financier, anti-Masonic and anti-Jesuit hysteria throughout the nineteenth century. But perhaps more importantly, it shows itself in the ideological discourse of the British Empire in the period prior to the American Revolution – the same period under discussion here. In his seminal study *The Ideological Origins of the American Revolution*, Bernard Bailyn argues that conspiratorial theorizing extends at least half a century prior to the American Revolution, and gained enormous traction after the Seven Years’ War. “At the very first sign of conflict between the colonies and the administration in the 1760s,” he tells us, “the question of motivation was openly broached and the imputation of secret purposes discussed.” Bailyn further argues that the same was true of Britain itself, and that politics in London in the 1760s were often weighed down by the belief that the major ministerial actors had nefarious secret purposes that had yet to be uncovered. Such paranoia was very likely further encouraged by the intense political conflict between Whig and neo-Tory views of imperial policy-making that James Vaughn has identified in his study of the East India Company in the eighteenth century.

While this conspiratorial fever contributed to the fracturing between metropolitan and colonial governments in the British Empire, the Jesuits took the brunt of parallel developments in the Spanish Empire. The Esquilache Riots gave those fears precisely the right historical moment to gain enough traction to drive the wheels of policy and begin the movement toward their expulsion. The emerging

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28 Hofstadter, 77.
31 James M. Vaughn, *The Politics of Empire: Metropolitan Socio-Political Development and the Imperial Transformation of the British East India Company, 1675-1775* (PhD diss., University of Chicago, 2009). Also see the discussion of this matter in chapter two of my study.
Atlantic tendency toward conspiracy theorizing, when combined with the random collection of half-truths and hearsay about Jesuit activities in the Americas, fomented and nurtured anti-Jesuit paranoia. But the riots focused aimless hysteria into concrete action. The moment of British supremacy after the Seven Years’ War did not help. The Spanish crown was doubly inundated by doubts about the reliability of the Jesuits and fears about confronting the British from across the Mississippi River and all along the empire’s vast, exposed coastlines. As Nancy Farriss suggests, the increased English threat fed the Spanish crown’s emerging tendency to propagate an “atmosphere of suspicion and fear” with regard to Jesuit activities in the frontier provinces of New Spain.\(^{32}\)

After the expulsion of 1767, the Council of the Indies went so far as to seriously investigate dubious allegations that Jesuits were spying for the English and that there had been “a Jesuit plot to turn the American colonies over” to Great Britain.\(^{33}\) Writing from London in August 1767, Prince Masserano raised his suspicions of collusion between the British and the Jesuits in South America. While generally fearful of British economic expansion into South America, the Spanish envoy particularly focused on alleged British attempts to gain exclusive access to the trade of the Paraguayan yerba maté plant through Jesuit connections – something that he could not back with specific evidence, except that he had heard from French officials that the British government was apparently in communication with the superior general of the Jesuit order.\(^{34}\) At first glance, these kinds of statements indicate simple Spanish fears that territory might change hands. But there is more to see.

In a larger sense, they represented Spanish anxieties – bordering on outright paranoia – that a process of geographical rationalization, possibly assisted by Jesuit intransigence, might deliver large


\(^{33}\) Farriss, 143.

\(^{34}\) Ministerio de Cultura (España), Archivo Histórico Nacional (AHN), Papeles de Estado, Inglaterra, Correspondencia Diplomática, 1767 (legajo 4269), Masserano to Grimaldi, London, 12 August 1767, No. 1080.
tracts of previously unsettled Spanish territory into eager British hands. While that conception did prefigure British economic dominance in South America throughout much of the nineteenth century, it was fundamentally misinformed about the role that the Jesuits might play in that process. The distress that resulted for both the Jesuits and the Spanish Empire was considerable. Elite paranoia placed serious limits on the manner in which Enlightenment discourse could evolve in the Spanish context, and simultaneously privileged the dominant Anglo-Spanish mode of thinking about empire. As Hofstadter so eloquently put it, “we are all sufferers from history, but the paranoid is a double sufferer, since he is afflicted not only by the real world, with the rest of us, but by his fantasies as well.”

**Unrealized Jesuit Futures**

Perhaps the most important thing to understand about Jesuit planning for the future is that, contrary to what their eighteenth-century foes believed, there is little evidence to suggest that they had a disciplined and cohesive political and economic plan. Instead, they might be best characterized as enjoying a loose intellectual cohesion that promoted their general spiritual and societal aspirations – just as the Freemasons had in the British Empire and elsewhere. Dauril Alden has examined the issues surrounding Jesuit involvement in commerce and empire, with special emphasis on the order’s experiences with the Portuguese Empire. The fundamental aims of his wide-ranging investigation are to establish the extent to which the Jesuits involved themselves in imperial economies, how lucrative they found those experiences, and whether or not they ultimately sacrificed their spiritual project for more earthly, material ambitions.

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35 Hofstadter, 86.
Alden traces the roots of Jesuit participation in commercial affairs all the way back to Saint Francis Xavier, who advocated “the Society’s participation in a limited form of commerce.” Specifically, he asked his fellow Jesuits for permission to ask the King of Portugal for money that could be invested in textiles in India, thereby providing the order with operating funds. At first glance, such activities would seem to be in direct conflict with both church law and the Jesuit order’s own rules. But Xavier was the first of many Jesuits to argue that there was an important and already established distinction between animo lucrandi (profit for its own sake) and charitatus or pius, which was to further charitable or spiritual aims. Perhaps more to the point, even though not all Jesuits agreed with this principle, members of the order “engaged in some form of trading activity” almost everywhere they evangelized.\footnote{Alden, 528-9.}

To some degree, the Jesuits had to deal with socio-political necessities. Many examples of the Society’s involvement in commercial affairs illustrate that Jesuits realized that their circumstances tended to demand extensive engagement with political and economic affairs as they went about their spiritual mission. They often “could not avoid doing favours for powerful friends, whether merchants or administrators or court dignitaries.” To strictly avoid such entanglements would have damaged their ability to pursue their spiritual mission. So the Jesuits made the sensible calculation that a certain amount of economic activity was acceptable as long as the proceeds were used to support their pious aims.\footnote{Alden, 550.}

The problem was that involvement in commercial affairs tended to raise suspicions about Jesuit intentions, and encouraged gossip about the Society’s reputedly nefarious activities. Politicians and merchants viewed the order through the prism of their own assumptions about human ambitions, which certainly included the accumulation of capital and its transformation into a currency of power. It was through that medium that the anti-Jesuit mythology began to grow. As early as the late sixteenth
century, Philip II ordered his chief Portuguese minister to praise the Jesuits for their spiritual aims, but to simultaneously reprimand them for having involved themselves in commerce. Yet the scale of Jesuit commercial activities was small in comparison to the major merchant houses of the day, and certainly represented no threat of economic domination. Nonetheless, the Portuguese historian Magalhães Godinho went so far as to suggest that the Society of Jesus intended to “erect not only a theocratic territorial empire ... but also a gigantic association which should control the world’s principal trades.” Alden characterizes Godinho’s argument as a “hysterical allegation” that lacks a substantial evidentiary basis. Perhaps without being consciously aware of what he was doing, Godinho was showing us something other than the history of what was; he was unveiling the history of what many feared would come to pass.

Alden strongly and convincingly asserts that no scholar has ever been able to show that the Jesuits “dominated a single branch of imperial trade, or ever had any aspiration to do so.” The idea that the Jesuits were a financial and commercial powerhouse is fundamentally erroneous. Records of Jesuit accounts simply do not support such allegations. In fact, throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the Society was gradually shifting toward a quieter, more passive investment portfolio that focused more on interest-bearing loans than on land purchases and direct commercial transactions. Alden suggests that if the Jesuits had been able to accelerate that shift, they may have escaped at least some of the hostility and suspicion that they suffered in the years leading up to their temporary suppression in 1773. In any case, the Jesuits were clearly not interested in supplanting the great

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39 Alden, 530.
41 Alden, 551 and 567.
merchant houses or in establishing a commercial hegemony that would dominate trade in the Atlantic World.

A more solid indication of what a Jesuit vision for the future might have looked like can, in fact, be found in what we know about the kinds of plans that the Jesuits openly proposed for the still unsettled and uncontrolled parts of the Americas. In the summer of 1766, word began to filter through diplomatic channels that the Jesuits were involved in a new, large scale “design of settling and civilizing a vast tract of country” in South America then known as La Llanura de Manso (Manso’s Plains).⁴² The central figure in this drama was a shadowy man referred to simply as Matorra. After immigrating to Buenos Aires as a servant, Matorra married into a wealthy family and inherited considerable wealth. At some point, he reportedly impressed the Jesuits with his “enterprising genius” and they began to rely on him as the central organizing force in a plan to civilize a territory that was understood to be over a thousand miles long – an area near the previous centres of Jesuit activity that was potentially even larger than Spain itself. Matorra travelled to Spain with these plans, and convinced the Minister of the Indies to present them to Carlos III. In order to obtain the crown’s support, Matorra pointed out that there was both a vast potential for conversion to Christianity and a considerable base of natural resources to be exploited, including silver-rich ore.⁴³

In the summer of 1766, Louis DeVisme was Britain’s ranking representative in Madrid. He reported that enemies of the Jesuits within the Spanish government reacted with vehement opposition to allowing the Jesuits to be heavily involved in the Matorra project. Manuel de Roda, one of the king’s most anti-Jesuit ministers, apparently warned that such plans could easily return the Jesuits to the

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⁴² This region corresponds in part to the area called Chaco Central, which is located in the extreme northern reaches of present-day Argentina, immediately adjacent to Paraguay. It is very much in the general region of the previous Jesuit Reductions.

⁴³ BNA, SP 94/175, DeVisme to Shelburne, San Ildefonso, 28 August 1766.
position of power that they had enjoyed prior to the Guaraní War. The anti-Jesuit faction was particularly concerned about the idea of allowing indigenous people to once again be armed under missionary supervision.\footnote{Ibid.} As we will see, Roda opened up a campaign of persuasion that was designed to warn any involved parties about the dangers posed by the Jesuits. DeVisme reported that the Spanish minister was working on Portuguese minds by warning their ambassador that allowing the Matorra project to proceed would require a heightened state of military preparedness along the new border between Spanish and Portuguese territory in the Rio de la Plata region.\footnote{BNA, SP 94/175, DeVisme to Shelburne, San Ildefonso, 30 August 1766.} The Jesuits had a tradition of operating in a physical, spiritual and political space that was divergent from the increasingly rationalized and militarized imperial geography. Coexistence with temporal authority had never been a perfect fit, but it was starting to become apparent that Jesuit conceptions of political space were simply not compatible with the emerging norms of European governance and territorial integrity. Having finally come down on the side of placing spiritual work before any other considerations in 1750, the Jesuits had earned powerful enemies in Madrid.

What form the Matorra project would have ultimately taken can only be examined through counterfactual speculation. But when we consider the realities of life in the Jesuit Reductions, we can hypothesize that the Jesuits would have been primarily concerned with their spiritual mission, and that imperial economic and political objectives would not have been major priorities. In and of itself, that sense of precedence does not add up to sedition. As we have already seen, the Jesuits were not opposed to economic reforms, and in some cases scholastic members of the order actively encouraged them. But anti-Jesuit ministers in Madrid believed that Jesuit plans and their own imperial ambitions – ones based on the common Anglo-Spanish imperial text – were becoming mutually exclusive. That
conception was decisive when it came to determining the fate of the Society of Jesus in the Spanish Empire.

Parsing the Political Aftermath of the Esquilache Riots

“Is it understood yet that everybody was conspiring against the Secretary of Finance and War?”

- José Andrés-Gallego, El motín de Esquilache, América y Europa

In the spring of 1766, the anxiety-laden desire to eliminate the Jesuits from the Spanish Empire was clearly already in play. Here, we come to the importance of the Esquilache Riots in providing the enemies of the Jesuits with the necessarily political leverage to carry out their desired actions. We have already seen from Lord Rochford’s account of the episode that the Spanish nobility was not of one mind about the events that sent the king scurrying from Madrid that March. Between the riots and the expulsion of the order the following year, there is no obvious evidentiary path to follow. To put it another way, the case against the Jesuits makes little sense unless we include a robust consideration of how the hazy but determined anti-Jesuitism that was growing among the Spanish elite at the time became the primary motivator for a sharp and specific attack on the Society. Because we find an almost complete lack of causal precision or cohesion when we look at the supposed antecedents to the expulsion of the Jesuits, it becomes especially important to place these events into their complete temporal contexts. To do so, we must endow them with both pasts and futures, as seen from the perspective of the major actors in 1760s Madrid. So the specific question of what the Jesuits might or

46 José Andrés-Gallego, El motín de Esquilache, América y Europa (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 2003), 429. Translation from the original Spanish by the author.
might not have done over the years leading up to their demise is not particularly important here. It is what they might have done next that is so important.

There is a long and convoluted story to be told about the political machinations that swirled around both the Jesuits and the ministers of Carlos III, both before and after the Esquilache Riots. The question of how the king’s chief minister came to his end is a complicated issue in its own right, and has been the subject of extensive research, especially in Spanish-language literature. Of particular note is the work of José Andrés-Gallego, whose exhaustive archival research shows the implausibility of any parsimonious attempt to explain Esquilache’s departure – there was simply too much going on. No matter what else we might believe about the riots, Andrés-Gallego shows us that the popular uprising was not simply a matter of anger against one of the king’s ministers. Rather, it was an expression of rage by many different actors against a multitude of problems, both within Spain and with Spain’s place in the world. For many Spaniards, Esquilache had tried to change too much, too quickly. For the moment, it will be sufficient to note that broad diversity of anger. The more pressing issue at hand is that of finding out where the axes fell in the aftermath of the riots but before the enemies of the Jesuits successfully re-imagined the riots as a cataclysm of that society’s making.

The loss of Esquilache shattered the structure of high politics in Madrid. In the aftermath of his departure, it was the Marqués de Grimaldi who initially seized the moment and tried to make important changes to the *junta de ministros* that had previously been made up of Esquilache, Grimaldi and Arriaga. The two portfolios that had previously been Esquilache’s domain would no longer be vested in a single minister – Don Miguel de Múzquiz took over the Ministry of Finance, and don Gregorio Muniáin became the minister of War. At first, this dilution of powers seemed to make Grimaldi a more important figure, and he was able to further reconstruct the situation by suggesting that don Manuel de Roda might become both the minister of Justice and a new member of the *junta*. But Grimaldi’s efforts backfired.
Roda, who had previously laboured mostly under the protection of Esquilache, soon proved to be adept at forming new alliances. He grew closer to padre Osma, the king’s confessor, and to the Duke of Alba, one of the most powerful grandees of the Spanish nobility and a known Anglophile. It is to this new power block that Andrés-Gallego attributes the expulsion of the Francophile Ensenada, much to Grimaldi’s dismay. At the same time, the Council of Castile also underwent major changes, with the Count of Aranda taking over as president and Pedro Rodríguez de Campomanes as fiscal (a post similar to that of an attorney-general).\(^{47}\) Whereas the banished Ensenada was known to be a friend of the Jesuits, the new power brokers were decidedly not. The trio of Roda, Osma and Campomanes were particularly vehement about their anti-Jesuitism, and would be important elements in the machinations to come. These three men quickly proved to be the new prime movers of policy in Madrid, thereby fully taking up the position of influence previously held by the junta de ministros.\(^ {48}\)

The Esquilache Riots opened a window for these men to pursue the political objectives that they had long sought but had previously lacked the opportunities to enact, while Grimaldi’s larger ambitions remained stifled. Yet aside from the departure of Ensenada, the new power block did not go out of its way to target Grimaldi and the other Francophiles in Madrid. The ecclesiastical community was not so fortunate. In early April of 1766, only days after the end of the riots, Roda and Aranda began to investigate potential connections to the Catholic Church and its various orders.\(^ {49}\) Their inquiries suggested that some element of the ecclesiastical community had actively supported the groundswell of anti-Esquilache feelings by anonymously circulating inflammatory material throughout the country. But it was difficult for Roda and Aranda to unearth any specific evidence that clergymen had been able to

\(^{47}\) See Andrés-Gallego, 433-5.  
\(^{48}\) Andrés-Gallego, 438-9.  
\(^{49}\) Andrés-Gallego, 462.
plant the idea of disobedience against the crown in the minds of the Spanish people.\textsuperscript{50} Undeterred, the investigators pushed on. Members of the clergy “had been seen” among the crowds during the riots, and the special inquest spearheaded by Roda rejected the notion that they had simply been curious to witness the events as they were in progress.\textsuperscript{51} At the same time, accusatory fingers were starting to trend more specifically toward the Jesuits, especially when it came to the anonymously distributed poems that brazenly insulted Carlos III and his ministers, including the “conscienceless Osma,” the “tyrannical Roda” and the “unjust and miserly Esquilache.” These texts were an ongoing problem, as the volume of anti-crown satire circulating in Madrid continued to accelerate through the spring and summer of 1766, and were subsequently found during inspections of convents and monasteries.\textsuperscript{52}

The claim that ecclesiastics had motivated the Esquilache Riots remained weak, and rested entirely on circumstantial evidence. But the investigators were spurred on by a fundamental bias against the Jesuits. Campomanes, who was convinced from the beginning that the uprising had been conspiratorial in nature, set out to find the evidence that separated the guilty Jesuits from the rest of the clergy, whom he believed to be innocent. He did so by deploying myriad small details that could only be made to add up to anything substantial through some determined creative thinking and leaps of faith, in spite of the fact that the Jesuits had not shown any obvious opposition to Esquilache.\textsuperscript{53} The results of these investigations closely paralleled the basic assumptions about the Jesuits that were discussed in the previous section. Put simply, they believed that the Jesuits thirsted for power, deliberately undermined the efforts of other religious orders, and viewed themselves as being above the authority of the Spanish state. As we have already seen, the ministers of Carlos III were particularly

\textsuperscript{50} Andrés-Gallego, 471.
\textsuperscript{51} Andrés-Gallego, 475.
\textsuperscript{52} Andrés-Gallego, 477-9.
\textsuperscript{53} See Andrés-Gallego, 483-6.
concerned about Jesuit activities in places where Spanish authority was already tenuous, such as the southern cone of South America.

This point is reinforced by recent research in the private archives of Pedro Rodríguez de Campomanes, who speculated ominously about the order’s activities throughout the Spanish world. He fanatically pursued his agenda against the Jesuits, and warned Carlos III that they were “missionaries only in appearance.” He passionately argued that their true identities in Spanish colonies around the world were of a far more hazardous and insidious nature: those of uncontrolled “sovereign” rulers. Without requiring much in the way of specific evidence, Campomanes accused the Jesuits of harbouring a “continued spirit of sedition against the government,” as well as a “spirit of vengeance” and perhaps most startling of all, a potentially treasonous set of “external alliances.” The Jesuits had already been expelled from France and Portugal. They had few friends left in Europe by 1766-7. Although Spanish delusions about furtive connections between the Jesuits and the British had little grounding in fact, they were the stuff of nightmares for the likes of Roda and Campomanes. With such poisonous thoughts already being whispered in the ear of Carlos III, it is not at all surprising that the government in Madrid declined to offer any support for the Matorra project or any other imagined Jesuit futures in the Americas.

Over the year between the Esquilache Riots and the expulsion of the Jesuits, Campomanes produced the document that has long stood as the best available public representation of the case.

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54 I refer here in particular to the work of Teófanes Egido and Isidore Pinedo. Their book Las Causas «Gravísimas» y Secretas de la Expulsión de los Jesuitas por Carlos III (Madrid: Fundacion Universitaria Española, 1994) was the first to benefit from extensive work with the (formerly) private Campomanes archives, among others. In it, they include a broad selection of long quotations from Campomanes’ personal papers.

55 Pedro Rodríguez de Campomanes to Carlos III, 31 December 1766, as quoted in Egido and Pinedo, Las Causas «Gravísimas»..., 50. This translation, as well as the subsequent translations from the same volume, is by the author.

56 Campomanes, as quoted in Egido and Pinedo, 51-2.
against the Jesuits: his *Dictamen fiscal de expulsion de los Jesuitas de España* (1766-7). It was effectively the report of the special investigation into the riots that he and Roda had spearheaded, and it smeared the Jesuits with a potent mixture of hearsay and the same brand of anti-Jesuit rhetoric that was then circulating in other publications. Campomanes insisted that the Jesuits were observed “showing a tone of satisfaction and laughing” at the misfortune of the crown throughout the riots. But much of his argument rested on the assertion that the Jesuits had been clandestinely responsible, as promoters and even as perpetrators, for atrocities against the crowns in France and Portugal over a period of at least several decades.

This doctrine of tyrannicide, of which everyone accuses the Jesuits and which they try to misrepresent by falsely attributing it to Saint Thomas, is and will be the fertile spring of rebellions. There is no police force that can guard against a formidable society that teaches it in its books and schools for children and the preaching of its sermons and in the confessional.

Campomanes feared that the Jesuits had the power to implant anti-regal ideas into the minds of Spanish subjects everywhere, starting with how they educated the young and continuing through their interactions with ex-pupils throughout the life cycle. No matter how we might regard the veracity or speciousness of his ideas, he showed an astute awareness of the concept that organizations and institutions could have a powerful influence on how a population imagined its own destiny, and the actions that it might take in pursuit of those possible futures.

These dangers made “the system” of the Society of Jesus “incompatible with the Spanish monarchy,” as Campomanes put it. The Jesuits, he argued, showed a “blind obedience” to the general

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57 Pedro Rodríguez de Campomanes, *Dictamen fiscal de la expulsion de los Jesuitas de España (1766-1767)* (Madrid: Fundacion Universitaria Española, 1977), 59. Translations from this Spanish-language text are by the author.

58 Campomanes, 61.

59 This is, in fact, the title of the second chapter of the *Dictamen*: “El sistema de la compañía, incompatible con la monarquía Española.”
of their company – an allegiance that could not be allowed to stand. “In the Company, obedience must be ... absolute, without limits with respect to its execution.” The result, in his opinion, was a malignant “state within a state” that stood in direct opposition to the operation of enlightened government. Campomanes further smoothed the way for action against the Jesuit order by completely rejecting the idea that there was anything indigenously Spanish about them and by labelling them as “a powerful foreign party” with sinister objectives.

Rebellion, sedition, resistance against legitimate authority, regicide, tyrannicide and perjury, (all) probable in their system, are familiar doctrines in their practice. Their system, in sum, is to dominate by way of love or by influence or through whatever means ... Up to the present the effects have been seen, (but we have not seen) their Constitutions, which have been an impenetrable mystery.

In other words, Campomanes felt that while the terrible methods used by the Jesuits were clear enough, their true identity and their ultimate goals remained terrifyingly obscure. But more than anything else, Jesuit objectives were not Spanish objectives, and there was little hope of collusion or even peaceful coexistence between the two at this point. When the time came, late in 1766, to make a decision about the future of the Jesuits in the Spanish Empire, these grave opinions had a decisive influence on Carlos III’s decision to approve the action against the Society.

**British Delight and the Cementing of the Anglo-Spanish Imperial Bond**

The expulsion of the Jesuits in 1767 was, ironically enough, consciously intended to help Spain resist the growth of British power even as it removed barriers to bringing the Spanish practice of empire

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60 Campomanes, 69-70.  
61 Campomanes, 74.  
62 Campomanes, 84.
into a closer alignment with that of Great Britain. With that result in mind, it should come as no surprise that British reactions to the expulsion tended to be enthusiastic and celebratory. Yet they were also extremely surprised, almost to the point of not being able to believe their good fortune at this turn of events. With the departure of the Jesuits, the Spanish imperial future was even more firmly bonded to their own. The British expected crafty opposition from the Spanish, not the destruction of the very tools they feared had such ample potential to disrupt or prevent the implantation of British commercial norms and influence.

The king’s extraordinary determination to keep his command secret until it was a fait accompli is dramatically highlighted by the government’s success in keeping Europe’s diplomatic networks almost totally ignorant right up to the moment of expulsion. Louis de Vismes, Britain’s temporary chief of mission in Madrid, only began to suspect that something astonishing was afoot the day before the expulsion. On 30 March, he reported that “some papers (had) been printed” by the government, “but in so private a manner that guards were set over the printers.” De Vismes’ efforts to learn more were “ineffectual,” but he did hear that the government document in question was “to be published in all parts of (Spain) at the same time.” Spurious rumors about their content circulated throughout the anxious diplomatic community in Madrid. De Vismes correctly speculated that they related to “a plan laid down for humbling the religious orders,” but he does not seem to have understood that the Jesuits would be specifically targeted for annihilation.

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63 Louis de Vismes (1720-1776) was a son of Huguenot refugee Philippe de Vismes. In spite of his French surname, he was raised in England, studied at Oxford and spent much of his career serving as a British diplomat. For more biographical information, see “Vismes, Louis de,” in H.C.G. Matthew and Brian Harrison, eds., Oxford Dictionary of National Biography, vol. 56, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 564.

64 British National Archives (BNA), SP 94/176, “DeVisme to Earl of Shelburne, Dispatch No. 20,” Madrid, 30 March 1767.
The next evening at eleven o’clock, the Spanish crown pounced on the hapless Jesuits. Like almost everyone in Madrid’s diplomatic community, de Vismes was astonished. He described a scene in which royal officials and soldiers roughly ejected the Jesuits from their residences at night, just as they would later do in New Spain. Almost all of the city’s “coaches and chaises” were commandeered to quickly and efficiently uproot Madrid’s roughly three hundred and fifty Jesuits and to shepherd them into exile. Similar reports began to pour in from other sources in Spain. An unnamed correspondent sent an account of the Jesuit expulsion from Madrid to the British diplomatic staff in Paris. In Barcelona, British consul Joseph Miller reported that the Jesuits of that city had suffered the same fate. He also passed on intelligence that “a large body of French troops” stood ready at the frontier, ready to enter Catalonia if the royal edict caused any “commotion,” thereby lending credence to the idea that the French government was directly complicit in the expulsion.

De Vismes recovered quickly from his initial shock. On 5 April, he heartily praised the “wisdom of the (expulsion) plan, the uncommon secrecy with which it was conducted, and the prudence used” in its execution. He also strongly opined that the King would not have listened to even the most virulently anti-Jesuit advisors in his court if it had not been abundantly clear that the Jesuits were “the chief promoters” of the previous year’s riots. In London, de Vismes’ superiors nodded their approval. The Earl of Shelburne, British Secretary of State (Southern Department), rated the ambassador’s reports as “very satisfactory” and happily noted that “the appearance of things (were) more promising for the future.” He told de Vismes that action against the Jesuits was spreading to Naples and predicted that

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65 BNA, SP 94/176, “DeVisme to Shelburne, Dispatch No. 21,” Madrid, 2 April 1767.
66 BNA, SP 78/272, “Extrait d’une lettre de Madrid, Unnamed correspondent to Rochford,” Madrid, 2 April 1767.
67 BNA, SP 94/176, “Joseph Miller to Shelburne, Dispatch No. 3,” Barcelona, 4 April 1767.
68 BNA, SP 94/176, “DeVisme to Shelburne, Dispatch No. 22,” Madrid, 5 April 1767.
things would “open themselves more and more favorably every day.” It is difficult to know if Shelburne was shocked to learn about the expulsion, but his enthusiastic approval is obvious. He seems to have accepted de Visme’s analysis of the situation without much suspicion and did not appear to believe that the affair was much more than a confirmation of what he saw as an obvious incompatibility between the Society and the Atlantic imperial project. For the British, it was abundantly clear that the expulsion fit snugly with their pre-existing policies and ambitions toward the Spanish world and could open the way to even greater British influence. To say the least, no official in London waxed melancholy about the fate of the Jesuits.

In Madrid, de Visme eagerly delved into an investigation that soon produced a continuing analysis of the situation. He laid out a sweeping description of the political problems then facing the Spanish crown and the court intrigues that had come into play. As he saw it, the monarch had to battle hard to maintain control over the Council of Castile, a body that he neatly sidestepped in his attack on the Jesuits. The Council was the chief administrative body of the Bourbon state, but de Visme suggests that Carlos III had trouble bending it to his will. Even more importantly, de Visme pointed to the staggering task of keeping control over the “vast territory of America,” an empire ruled by officials who were responsible to the Council of Castile. To carry out the expulsion without the participation of the Council was a clever and carefully considered move by the crown, as it ensured that the besieged order’s friends could not try to support them until it was too late. Although the Spanish crown had once encouraged the rise of the religious orders to balance the influence of the secular clergy, de Visme argued that the monks had grown “so formidable” in terms of political influence that the king was

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69 BNA, SP 94/177, “Shelburne to DeVisme, Dispatch No. 4,” Whitehall, 15 May 1767.
70 The Council of Castile had a long and complex history of its own, going back to the era of Ferdinand and Isabella. For more on its evolution from the late fifteenth century to the early eighteenth century, see J.H. Elliott, Imperial Spain 1469-1716 (London: Edward Arnold, 1963; Penguin, 1990), especially 89-91, 170-4 and 377-8.
forced to attack them “for his own security.” The idea was that Charles III simply could not afford a serious struggle for power with an organization that was so influential, both at home and throughout the empire.

As for the people of the Americas, de Vismes suggested that a great liberation had taken place, and took obvious pleasure in a dramatic presentation of the standard mythology about Jesuit activities in the Americas. In his view, the “miserable” indigenous peoples had been kept “in total ignorance of the Spanish tongue” by the Jesuits who had forced them into a state of “abject slavery.” Doubtlessly, the jubilant British ambassador opined, the freed slaves would have rejoiced “at the opportunity of shaking off the (Jesuit) yoke” if they had only enjoyed “the liberty of thinking.” For de Vismes, there could be no shades of gray when it came to the correct thoughts on polity and economy. Opening the indigenous peoples to European languages meant opening them to Atlantic commerce, something that the British elite saw entirely as a benefit for everyone involved and not at all as an imposition. Perhaps even more importantly, that commerce was to fall under enlightened British leadership. It was certainly not to be allowed to flourish in the spirit of Catholic capitalism that some of the Jesuits, in accordance with the ideas of Gerónimo de Uztáriz, were actively encouraging. As Jonathan Carlyon points out, “Uztáriz (maneuvered) between Catholic normativity and economic rationality by emphasizing how money provided for quality of life.” In other words, the largely secular Uztáriz stepped carefully as he promoted his economic ideas in a Catholic environment that could easily undermine or assault them. The Jesuits also followed that path, in pursuit of the same goal but with an opposite set of priorities. They supported change and remained mindful of shifting economic realities while continuing to follow and prioritize their long-term spiritual objectives in the Spanish Empire.

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71 BNA, SP 94/176, “ DeVisme to Shelburne, Dispatch No. 24,” Madrid, 19 April 1767.
As any potential Jesuit-sponsored realignment of Spanish imperial economics faded into obscurity, the flood of British delight over the expulsion persisted. On 2 May, Ambassador Edward Hay reported from Lisbon that the expulsion of the Jesuits gave “great satisfaction to (the Portuguese) court and (relieved) them of frequent anxiety.” Hay was equally enthusiastic in his personal evaluation of the situation. He said that there was no doubt that the Jesuits had been attempting to “defame the government of Portugal” and that the expulsion from Spain would finally suppress any remaining affection for the order among the Portuguese people. Hay also noted that the expulsion would block Jesuit attempts to tamper with “the minds of the people of England.”

In these anxieties we again see anti-Jesuit conspiracy theorizing, and we see that it was a pan-Atlantic phenomenon, with Britain, France, Portugal and Spain all equally committed to the battle against the order by the late 1760s. This anti-Jesuitism provides a great contrast to the much less antagonistic attitudes that the Jesuits found in Eastern Europe, which was not engaged in Atlantic-style imperialism and where they subsequently found shelter during the years that they were officially suppressed by the Catholic Church (1773-1814).

To put it another way, the kind of virulent anti-Jesuitism that emerged in the mid-eighteenth century was profoundly Atlantic, and was inextricably connected to the imperial project that the Atlantic powers were then pursuing. But perhaps more than anything, it was connected to the Spanish crown’s compliance with that project. Once Carlos III was resolved to move against them, any Jesuit-inspired alternative realities of the Enlightenment and the further evolution of early-modern imperialism came to an end.

Yet in the end, Spanish rejection of the Catholic/Jesuit imperial vision in favour of the Neo-Liberal/British vision reflects a profound deficit of imagination among the key ministers in Madrid during the 1760s. Esquilache was perhaps somewhat more moderate than the men who rose to greater power

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74 BNA, SP 89/63, “Edward Hay to Shelburne, Dispatch No. 9,” Lisbon, 2 May 1767.
in his absence, such as Campomanes and Roda, particularly when it came to the lengths to which they were prepared to go to bolster the crown’s power at the expense of other players. But none of them seemed to appreciate that the power of Great Britain did not emanate from its crown. Certainly, the British military was an important tool, and the crown used it to great effect in the Seven Years’ War and afterwards to protect British commercial activities throughout the Spanish sphere. But the underlying wealth, the ideological raison d’être, and the impetus to expand into Spanish-claimed territory came from the British commercial class. The British crown, although certainly an important player, was not capable of generating sustained expansionist momentum by itself.

Unfortunately for the reforming cadre of ministers in Madrid, the same basic limitation also applied to the Spanish crown. They could take the same kinds of actions in support of their own merchant class, but their own regulations had long placed a stranglehold on those merchants’ ambitions to expand outside the traditional Spanish economic system. With the expulsion of the Jesuits and the considerable influence that they held over the structure and momentum of society, polity and economy in a critical part of the South Atlantic, the way was opened even more widely for precisely the kind of British expansion that the Spanish crown feared most. Only three years after the expulsion, British and Spanish ambitions in the South Atlantic – this time, over the newly discovered Falkland Islands – would reach a fever pitch and would threaten to once again consume the Atlantic in a state of war. The origins, motivations, and imperial imaginings that lay behind that crisis are the subject of the third and final section of this dissertation.
Part III

Atlantic Ententes
Prologue

Into the Sublime Pacific

Maps reflect a desire for completeness, a dream of universality, a yearning for power in which seeing from a point of view forbidden to all others ... is equivalent to possession.

- Christian Jacob, *The Sovereign Map* ¹

Looking back on the questions that first propelled him to study the history of cartography, Christian Jacob confesses to a fascination with “the strange power of maps.” He had wondered how pre-modern maps could be so authoritative even as “they were so obviously wrong” by modern standards. Yet they had extraordinary powers of rhetoric and persuasion. Why, he wondered, “did their users feel so comfortable and secure while looking at them, convinced that these maps depicted their world as it was?” Jacob argues that we come to a greater understanding of this power when we place maps into the social and institutional context that surrounded them and when we identify the actors who created and wielded them.² Maps are representational images with purpose, and were routinely used as such in the pre-modern era. If a portion of the map is not yet broadly agreed upon, it becomes an even more potent instrument for imagined, speculative political and economic claims – the very stuff that made up so much of early modern Atlantic empire. If some portion remains completely unknown, it provides a pressure release for inter-state competition, as the perception of further untouched space for imperial expansion survives. As such, that space is free to host wild imaginings, both individual and shared *en masse*. The imperial stage is only partly set; surprising developments could still lurk behind curtains that

² Jacob, xiii-xiv.
have yet to be noticed. This state of geographical uncertainty was an intrinsic part of the character of early-modern imperialism.

Until the latter part of the eighteenth century, there was still ample unknown space for speculation – much of it in the vast but mostly unknown Pacific Ocean. Roughly as large as all of the world’s continents put together, the Pacific covers almost a third of the surface of the planet. Put simply, it is the Earth’s dominant feature. When it remained shrouded in the darkness of the unknown but was thought to contain new lands and unknown wonders, it had a profound effect on how Europeans saw the world. In other words, for much of the early-modern period, European thinkers did not know that the voyages of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries had already revealed almost all of the world’s landmass. They had never truly known an ocean as large as the Pacific, and their collective imagination struggled to acknowledge the possibility that so much of the far side of the world might be mostly water. That central conceit was buttressed by a genuine lack of knowledge about the region. Ferdinand Magellan’s first crossing (1520-1) showed that an unexpectedly long distance separated the Americas from Southeast Asia, and a small but regular Spanish system of trans-Pacific voyaging to the Philippines began later in the sixteenth century. But relatively little was known about the earth’s largest ocean until the voyages of Captain James Cook (1768-79) put a decisive end to the more fanciful speculations about what might be waiting in that vast space, including the popular delusion that the southern hemisphere would prove to be home to Terra Australis Incognita, a massive and bountiful continent to rival the Eurasian landmass.

Magellan and Cook are perhaps the most iconic of all the towering personalities of the Age of Discovery. Following the initial strides of Columbus and Vasco da Gama, Magellan unfurled the entire canvas of the unknown, stretching all the way around the globe. Two and a half centuries later, Cook added the rough but essentially accurate cartographical strokes that effectively vanquished it and
ushered in a new era of civilization-level geographical confinement. The era of exploration and European expansion might best be understood not as a steady process but as a period that was opened by an initial period of bold probing ventures in the late-fifteenth and early-sixteenth centuries and later closed by a burst of activity in the mid-to-late eighteenth century, in which borders were rationalized and missing gaps were filled in. Throughout the long period between the two, the competition to reveal new terrain and to make even the most tenuous of imperial claims was on. In the historical moment that closed the Age of Discovery, the agreed-upon, complete map of the modern world was born.

The Imperial Filling

So much was revealed in the initial burst of exploration in the late-fifteenth and early-sixteenth centuries that the task of processing even that much new geographical knowledge into the European worldview was staggering. As Ricardo Padrón puts it, “once-provincial Europeans” had to begin thinking of themselves “as inhabitants, not of an insular orbis terrarum, but of a boundless terraqueous globe.” After Columbus revealed the existence of the Americas to the Iberians in 1492, the spatial conceptualization of the Spanish imperial project got off to a haphazard start. Following a preliminary series of papal bulls on the subject of who would own the new territories, the Treaty of Tordesillas (1494) hastily established a dividing line that split the Americas between Spain and Portugal, somewhere around the 46° western line of longitude. But on the ground in South America, the only place where the Tordesillas meridian cut through land, nobody was completely certain as to where exactly the frontier was supposed to be. The treaty directed that the dividing line between Spanish and Portuguese territory

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was to be established three hundred and seventy leagues west of the Cape Verde Islands. In order to lend some precision to this arrangement, a joint Spanish-Portuguese expedition was to voyage to the Tordesillas meridian and then to travel along it, building a tower to mark where the line intersected with land. The Spanish monarchs, Ferdinand and Isabella, made a show of how seriously they took this commitment by placing it in the hands of no less a figure than Christopher Columbus.

The intended expedition never set sail. The following year, the two crowns agreed instead to have a committee of experts establish the line. For the time being, the Spanish government ordered that the line was to be included on sailing charts, to at least provide some guidance. But neither of these measures happened. Instead, almost nothing was done until the second decade of the sixteenth century. At that point, the two crowns had become more involved with arguments about establishing a second treaty line in the east. In any case, they disagreed on almost everything about the Tordesillas treaty. The Cape Verde Islands are almost three degrees of longitude in width, so the Spanish and Portuguese disputed the location in the archipelago at which the measurement should be initiated. To make matters worse, they could not even reach consensus on the length of a league. In the end, nothing precise was ever decided. A rudimentary conception of what the treaty meant would have to do. Both countries seemed to agree that the landed section of the Tordesillas meridian started from a northern extreme that was somewhere to the southeast of the mouth of the Amazon River – placing the entire Amazon basin in Spanish territory – and again intersected with the coast somewhere near the city of São Paolo. In a strictly practical sense, setting aside the performative bluster of empire, geographical precision simply did not matter in those heady early days of Atlantic imperialism. There was space

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4 There has been little English-language work that specifically focuses on the Treaty of Tordesillas over the last century. One elderly but concise account of these events can be found in Mary Wilhelmine Williams, "The Treaty of Tordesillas and the Argentine-Brazilian Boundary Settlement," *Hispanic American Historical Review* 5, No. 1 (Feb. 1922), 5-7.
enough for all in the newly discovered lands, not to mention the considerable terrestrial portion of the globe that most believed had yet to be revealed.

Over the two and a half centuries that followed, the precision of the Tordesillas meridian became almost completely irrelevant, because settlement patterns did not even remotely correspond to that border. By some interpretations, even the city of São Paolo – among the earliest and most important Portuguese settlements – lies slightly inside what was meant to be Spanish territory. With that in mind, it is not hard to see how Portuguese settlement then proceeded to expand far beyond either the Spanish or Portuguese definitions of the Tordesillas meridian. Meanwhile, other European powers – especially the English, French and Dutch – increasingly helped themselves to opportunities for trade and settlement in what seemed to be vacant or unused portions of the western hemisphere. By the early seventeenth century, Spain could no longer consider itself alone on its side of the meridian. By the eighteenth century, the hemisphere was increasingly crowded – and militarized. Arguments about precisely where frontiers were to be marked were no longer peripheral matters that were only of interest to the two Iberian crowns, as the rest of the European imperialists lined up to demand Spanish recognition of their claims.

As we have already seen, the Caribbean was the first arena for territorial haggling over Anglo-Spanish frontiers. The Treaty of Madrid of 1670 took a tentative early step toward reconciling the difference between empire in theory and empire in geographical reality. In that accord, Spain agreed in vague terms to release English settlements within theoretically Spanish territory to English sovereignty. It was on that treaty that England based its right to annex Jamaica and other territories in the Caribbean region. More importantly, it was a watershed moment in the rationalization of imperial geography to correspond to a concept that the British preferred and promoted at every possible turn: the right of \textit{de jure} possession by way of \textit{de facto} occupation and economic development. If a European nation was not
tilling the land, extracting its metals and lumber, and establishing the roots of active and expanding development, it had no natural right to put its name over any given territory on the world map. These British ideas about the aesthetics of empire were potent. Even if Spanish officials were not believers in their beauty or righteousness, they were absolutely aware of the powers that were accruing to the British Empire through their application.

Before the eighteenth century, the world remained extraordinarily vast and there was no immediate shortage of space to explore and develop. If a nascent European empire met even perfunctory resistance from a rival in one region, it was a simple enough matter to find another area to develop and exploit. So, a concept of empire as a broad and vaguely defined claim on a territory’s future potential was plausible and even desirable. For more than two centuries, Spain happily maintained a theoretical claim over an almost unthinkably vast domain for an age in which it could take months to send even a simple message from Madrid to the farthest reaches of the empire. But as Spain’s rivals began to venture out in greater numbers, distant frontiers grew closer and the world no longer seemed so unfathomably large. In an era in which Enlightenment ideas were permeating the European elite and moving those societies in the direction of reason, precision, and standardization of thought, so too was imperial geography subject to being defined with an ever-sharper precision. In the wake of the Seven Years’ War, there was an increased determination to finish revealing and to establish more rigid claims in the last great geographical unknown – the Pacific Ocean.

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5 See chapter three of my study for a more elaborate discussion about the aesthetics and ethics of empire. 6 A broad analysis of imperial geography in the early-modern Atlantic world has not yet been fully developed. As we saw in chapter three, some important, pioneering work in this area has been done by the historical geographer Daniel Clayton. Another significant contributor in this area is Ricardo Padrón, most recently in his article “A Sea of Denial: The Early Modern Spanish Invention of the Pacific Rim” Hispanic Review 77, No. 1 (Winter 2009), 1-27.
Anglicizing the Spanish Pacific

For much of the early-modern period, the Pacific Ocean remained almost completely outside of the British sphere of interest, as the British Admiralty only gradually came to develop an interest in exploring that far-flung region. Although English ships had entered the Pacific prior to the eighteenth century, those efforts paled in comparison to the flurry of activity that took place after the end of the Seven Years’ War. As Glyndwr Williams puts it, the British voyages that began in the 1760s were “not so much the climax of a steady process of officially-sponsored exploration as an exceptional outburst of activity for which the precedents were few and muffled.”

The Admiralty began to show definite interest in Pacific voyages in the late 1740s, in spite of George Anson’s mostly disastrous incursion into the region during the War of Jenkin’s Ear (1739-42), which was primarily meant to plunder Spanish colonies in South America. Although Anson did attack one port in Peru and eventually captured a treasure-laden Spanish galleon near the Philippines, his mission was mostly a failure as he did not manage to attack anything else. In addition, by the time he returned to England in 1744, he was in command of a greatly reduced crew and only one of the six warships (the HMS Centurion) that had been part of his fleet when he departed in 1740. Nevertheless, as Williams points out, the British did not temporarily back away from plans for further voyages of this type in 1749 because of Anson’s failures. Rather, they did so in the face of determined diplomatic opposition from the Spanish, who were still trying to view the Pacific as their exclusive domain.

This Spanish conceptualization of the Pacific already had a long history of its own. Ricardo Padrón argues that Spanish mapmakers invented something akin to the present-day concept of the

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8 Williams, 18.
“Pacific Rim” over the course of the early-modern period, and that refocusing our investigation of early-modern expansionism on the concept of the Spanish Pacific “helps free us from the ways that latter-day metageographies” have been distorted by the endemic tradition of nation-oriented historical literatures. Padrón points out that the historical literature on the Hispanic world unduly privileges locations in which the end result was a Spanish-speaking society and almost completely ignores Spanish interests in other places, thereby truncating our perception of the full extent of Spanish ambitions with respect to their imperial future. In particular, he claims that “we forget just how large Asia loomed in the early-modern imagination,” and the extent to which interest in that region “continued to fire Spanish expansionism well after the discovery of America.” After all, it was Spain – not England or France or any other European country – that first connected China to the global economy through its trans-Pacific trade route and the bullion that it brought to Eastern commerce. The distances involved were immense, and the quest for further Spanish expansion so far away from Spain itself was fraught with difficulties. Perhaps above all, it would have involved a collision with a powerful Chinese sphere of influence that would not easily give way to theoretical Spanish ambitions. But the potential dividends in wealth and power were certainly known to the Spanish – as were the risks of allowing them to fall into the hands of European rivals.

After the Seven Years’ War, with the Spanish military temporarily humbled, the historical moment for the final opening of the Pacific arrived in force. British imaginings of the imperial future were still basking in the glow of recent wartime triumphs. The French, too, looked to the Pacific with an eye to remedying the evolving power imbalance with Great Britain by revealing new territories in the Pacific – perhaps even the still rumoured Terra Australis Incognita. The Spanish government remained

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totally opposed to the presence of either foreign power in the Pacific, but could do little to prevent exploratory voyages. Lord Egmont, First Lord of the Admiralty from 1763 to 1766, embraced a supremely state-vanguard vision of the British future. According to J.C. Beaglehole, Egmont was “interested in a grand conception of oceanic control, not merely through control of the (southern) Magellanic entrance ... but also through that of (an ice-free) northern passage,” which remained merely theoretical in what would become the Canadian Arctic. In other words, if Great Britain could establish control over both American gateways into the Pacific, it would give the island nation an enormous military, commercial and intellectual advantage over its various rivals, especially in times of war. To hold sway over access to the Pacific was to enjoy a privileged position for the collection of new geographical, scientific, and cultural knowledge about the still-mysterious far side of the world. In an Enlightenment era in which knowledge was increasingly associated with power, it would be no small prize. To know about the Pacific could be the key ingredient in the protection of the new British hegemony.

Egmont did not wait long to begin his pursuit of oceanic domination. In June 1764, he ignored Spanish concerns and sent out the two ships *Dolphin* and *Tamar*. Under the command of John Byron, they were to investigate the South Atlantic and to evaluate the Falkland Islands and any other potential landmasses that might prove useful as a future base for trade. Byron was then to take his small fleet through to the Pacific to gather further intelligence on the western coast of South America. Arriving back in England in May 1766, the *Dolphin* was given little time off before being sent out once again in August 1766 under the command of Captain Samuel Wallis to search for “land or islands of great extent, 

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11 Knowledge certainly had a strategic dimension in terms of identifying resources and potential trading partners for the imperial economy, but it also clearly had power to help define what was “natural” and to decide the proper course of European civilization, as I discussed in chapter three. See, for example, Fredrik Albritton Jonsson, “Rival Ecologies of Global Commerce: Adam Smith and the Natural Historians,” *American Historical Review* 115, No. 5 (December 2010), 1342-63.
hitherto unvisited by any European power ... between Cape Horn and New Zealand.”¹² In other words, the *Dolphin’s second mission* was, for the first time, explicit about a British ambition to finally determine the truth about the unknown Pacific and the potential new lands that might be found there. None of the three major European powers in the Atlantic World were blind to these designs, and the obvious expansionist impulse that was spilling over into the Pacific set the stage for one final, early-modern, pan-Atlantic, imperial crisis. The immediate object in dispute was the rocky, barren Falkland Islands. The larger conflict in play was over the vital, strategic status of those islands as a gateway to the Pacific Ocean – the site of the final days of an early-modern imperialism of unknown space.

¹² Beaglehole, 123. The quotation in question, which is taken directly from the ship’s orders, can also be found in the British National Archives, ADM 2/1332.
The exploits of the *Dolphin* in the years after the Seven Years’ War were a mere prelude to what was to come. Even as Captain Wallis headed for the Pacific, plans were already underway in both Britain and France for further voyages of exploration that would finally expose the remainder of the Earth’s unknown space to European consciousness. The resulting expeditions, under the command of two veterans of the Seven Years’ War who had both played significant roles at the decisive Battle of Quebec, would form the backdrop against which the Spanish struggle to resist British and French penetration of the South Atlantic and the Pacific would play out. The first of these was commanded by the well-known French officer and diplomat Louis-Antoine de Bougainville, who funded and led an expedition to colonize the Falkland Islands only to be forced to turn it over to the Spanish in 1766. Partly as compensation for that disappointment, King Louis XV granted Bougainville permission to circumnavigate the globe, making him the first Frenchman to accomplish that feat and to cross the vast Pacific in the course of doing so. Like the voyage of the *Dolphin*, Bougainville’s mission was steeped in the concept of revealing new lands that might be incorporated into the orbit of the European world. Having suffered major territorial losses in both India and the Americas, this potential was especially serious for the French. They could hope to redress the growing imbalance between French and British power with the acquisition of new lands – having lost in the Atlantic, perhaps matters would turn out differently in the Pacific.

In pursuing a new arena for the final expansion of the early-modern iteration of the French Empire, Bougainville drew upon long-held speculations about *Terra Australis Incognita*, going back at
least as far as the mid-seventeenth century, when the cleric Jean Paulmier de Courtonne had claimed that a portion of his ancestry must have originated in that fabled land. These ideas were especially promoted in the mid-eighteenth century by the *philosophe* Charles de Brosses. His 1756 history of voyaging in the South Seas also served as a plea for a more serious investigation of the region, and is broadly thought to have influenced Bougainville’s early thinking on the matter.¹ De Brosses’ ideas also readily spread to other countries, especially to France’s bitter rivals to the north. An English translation arrived in Britain in 1766, adding fuel to pre-existing British ambitions to explore the Pacific.² So what had long seemed to be chiefly a matter of geographical curiosity became far more urgent after the Seven Years’ War. As Victor Suthren puts it, Bougainville’s main contribution “was to convince the king and his ministers that now was the moment ... before it would be forever too late.”³ He was successful in conveying this urgency to Louis XV and the Duc de Choiseul, but also unwisely communicated his plans to the Conde de Fuentes, the Spanish ambassador in Paris. De Fuentes stiffly informed the French government that he was sending word of Bougainville’s plan to Madrid, and that the response was extremely unlikely to be favourable. Knowing that the best diplomatic move was to get Bougainville out of Paris before the official Spanish protest could arrive, Choiseul pushed the explorer to accelerate his preparations, leading to the early departure of his flagship *La Boudeuse* on 15 November 1766.⁴

Bougainville’s orders included a considerable focus on French economic recovery, for the Seven Years’ War had deprived his country of much of its colonial territory and several of the commercial

² Charles de Brosse, *Terra Australis Cognita: or, voyages to the Terra Australis, or Southern Hemisphere, during the Sixteenth, Seventeenth, and Eighteenth Centuries* ..., (London and Edinburgh: A. Donaldson, 1766).
³ Victor Suthren, *The Sea Has No End: The Life of Louis-Antoine de Bougainville* (Toronto: The Dundurn Group, 2004), 128. For more on the life and expeditionary accomplishments of Bougainville, also see Mary Kimbrough’s *Louis-Antoine de Bougainville, 1729-1811: A Study in French Naval History and Politics* (Lewiston, New York; Queenston, Ontario; and Lampeter, Wales, United Kingdom: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1990).
⁴ See Suthren, 139-40.
linkages that fuelled the early-modern French imperial economy – above all, those that were lost to the British in India. Aside from his search for new land, Bougainville was to make progress toward the opening of a new trade route to China that would counterbalance the loss of that Indian trade, and to find new and exotic spice plants that could be raised on the island of Mauritius. He succeeded in none of these endeavours. He did manage to visit Tahiti in April 1768 – only the second expedition to do so after the *Dolphin* made first contact in June 1767 – and made a splash in European intellectual circles upon his return with his extensive observations of what he perceived as an extraordinary physical and social paradise. His expedition also made some minor cartographic contributions and at least confirmed the absence of *Terra Australis* along his route. But Bougainville did not find new lands for colonization, and made no commercial inroads. Further dampening his achievement, during the latter part of the trip Bougainville discovered that he had unknowingly been following a route similar to that of a British ship that had been separated from the *Dolphin* – the *Swallow*, commanded by Philip Carteret. That realization highlighted the discouraging reality that while the French might have achieved a significant venture around the world, the British were already doing so in greater numbers. To make matters much worse, the British were preparing the first of three voyages that would completely eclipse Bougainville’s achievement and that would ultimately reveal almost all of the space that remained unknown to the European world. That voyage would sail under the command of Captain James Cook.


6 Tahiti was, perhaps, the last great revelation of a so-called unknown paradise to the Europeans. Bougainville’s account electrified a European society that was still wounded from the brutal excesses of the Seven Years’ War by giving the narrative of early-modern exploration one final, great success story. An interesting recent study of Bougainville’s representation of Tahiti can be found in Andrew Martin’s “The Enlightenment in Paradise: Bougainville, Tahiti, and the Duty of Desire,” *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 41, No. 2 (Winter 2008), 203-16.

7 Suthren, 160-2.
In April 1768, the British Admiralty and the Royal Society selected the HMS *Endeavour* for a voyage that would first return the British to Tahiti, where they would observe the transit of the planet Venus across the sun. It would then proceed to the second and more important objective of its mission, which was to further advance the state of British knowledge about the geography of the Pacific Ocean, and to confirm or disprove the still-believed theory of *Terra Australis Incognita*. It should come as no surprise that the commander selected for this mission was James Cook, a man of exceptional ability who had already impressed both the Admiralty and the Royal Society with his cartographical skills while he was with British forces in Quebec during the war and during his subsequent posting to Newfoundland.

As John Robson points out, there were important distinctions between both the orders and the skill sets available to Cook and Bougainville. Whereas Bougainville was under orders to find new places, he was not ordered to focus on mapmaking, and in any case did not have the required skills. He was carrying a cartographer named Charles Routier de Romainville on his second ship, the *Étoile*, but that form of exploration and knowledge construction was clearly not a priority for Bougainville’s expedition. As Robson argues, Bougainville did not behave in an inquisitive manner, and often sailed past islands without indulging in significant geographical learning.

James Cook was the polar opposite. Having been selected for the task largely because of his mapmaking prowess, he trained his junior officers and midshipmen in cartographic techniques, and displayed an aggressive curiosity that served him well in the Pacific.\(^8\) He showed an understanding that the creation of new knowledge on his voyage had a direct relationship to the prestige and maintenance of British power, and he played his role in that process with great dedication. After a successful visit to Tahiti, Cook met the high expectations of his superiors by mapping the coasts of New Zealand as well as much of the eastern coast of Australia. His triumphant return to Britain in the summer of 1771 brought

\(^8\) Robson, 139-42.
him fame among the learned and led to his assignment on two more soon-to-be legendary voyages of
discovery aboard the HMS Resolution (1772-5 and 1776-9), leading to his premature death at
Kealakekua Bay on the island of Hawai‘i in 1779. Cook revolutionized European knowledge of the Pacific
Ocean. In just over a decade, he amassed an extraordinary volume of new charts. He identified almost
all of the missing dimensions of the world’s major continents and islands, including the northwest coast
of North America, a region that was quickly becoming a battleground for conflicting British and Spanish
claims, starting in the mid-1770s. Perhaps most importantly of all, he put an end to the enduring myth of
Terra Australis Incognita and made clear what was already starting to be broadly suspected: that all of
the useful, temperate land in the world had already been revealed. In doing so, he profoundly disrupted
the notion of unknown space that had been so characteristic of European imperialism in the early
modern era. Along with the actions of his fellow British explorers and of Louis-Antoine de Bougainville,
the mere departure of James Cook in 1768 seriously violated the centuries-old Spanish conception that
the Pacific Ocean lay entirely within their domain. The passage of these inquisitive adventurers through
the Strait of Magellan did not go unnoticed in Madrid, and it fuelled a growing concern about the future
integrity of the Spanish Empire among the most influential members of the Spanish court.

Protecting the Imperial Future

With the epochal voyages of Cook and his fellow explorers as a backdrop, those Spanish
concerns increasingly focused on one hotspot in the South Atlantic, particularly toward the end of the
1760s. The Falkland Islands (or Islas Malvinas) were the subject of a significant political dispute between
Spain and Great Britain in 1766 and a much more dangerous confrontation in 1770, when the major
powers nearly went to war over the issue. Even as British exploratory momentum was accelerating in
the mid-1760s, Britain’s diplomatic savvy was stalling. As H. M. Scott presents it, domestic political
instability meant that the period between the fall of the Grenville Ministry in 1765 and the appointment of Lord Rochford as Secretary of State for the Northern Department in 1768 featured a notable dearth of diplomatic achievements. Among the most notable failures of the numerous secretaries of state from that early part of that period was an unswerving preoccupation with the Manila Ransom, still unpaid from General Draper’s conquest of the city in the autumn of 1762. That disputed payment, which the Spanish crown disavowed on the grounds that Archbishop Rojo had no authority to make such a promise, hung miserably over Anglo-Spanish relations until it became abundantly clear to both parties that no such ransom would ever be paid. In the meantime, it consistently highlighted the limitations of British diplomatic power as demands for remuneration were steadily resisted in Madrid.

Perhaps more damagingly, the Manila Ransom combined with other unresolved matters from the Seven Years’ War – especially the case of the seized treasure galleon Santíssima Trinidad – to distract Spanish and British diplomats from the substance of more current strategic issues. In other words, a preoccupation with the recent past trumped what might have otherwise been a greater focus on the future evolution of the Anglo-Spanish imperial sphere. Yet amid the diplomatic cacophony, some officials remained mindful of the broader future. Throughout his stay in Madrid, Lord Rochford kept a vigilant watch over Spanish manoeuvring with respect to the Philippines and the Pacific Ocean. In March 1765, when a Spanish vessel called El Buen Consejo departed from Cadiz on the first leg of a voyage that

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9 In fact, Scott devotes an entire chapter of his British Foreign Policy in the Age of the American Revolution (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990) to the topic. The chapter in question is the fifth, titled “The Decline of British Diplomacy, 1765-1768,” running from page 90 to page 124. Aside from the specific, domestic political problems of those years, there was a more general shortage of qualified diplomats in Britain, as few members of the elite had much interest in taking on diplomatic posts. Lord Rochford was one of the notable exceptions to that rule.

10 The Santíssima Trinidad was a treasure galleon that worked the Acapulco-Manila route in the mid-eighteenth century. It departed Manila shortly before General Draper’s attack on the city in 1762, and subsequently turned back when it encountered bad weather. Its officers and crew were not aware of the British invasion, and the ship was intercepted and captured by elements of the British fleet that had supported the attack on Manila. The British claimed that the value of the treasure seized from the Santíssima Trinidad was not included in the amount of the Manila Ransom, while the Spanish took the opposite position and claimed that the agreement of the capitulation of Manila had allowed for freedom of commerce, thus making the galleon’s seizure illegal. For more on the context surrounding this issue, see Scott, 91-2.
would take it through the South Pacific to the Philippines, Rochford wrote to the Earl of Halifax with an astute set of observations on the Spanish vision of the imperial future. “The scheme (the Spanish had) in view,” he reported, was to establish a new trading outpost, either in the Marquesas Islands “or any other convenient place they can find thereabout to get water.” From such a base in the middle of the South Pacific, Spain’s commercial linkages to Manila could “then be carried on much more advantageously and infinitely nearer than by the usual way of Acapulco.” The potential advantage was clear – such a way station would allow the Spanish to establish an entirely oceanic trade route with Manila that would not necessarily require a land crossing in Mexico or Central America. “I cannot possibly give so good an explanation of this,” Rochford wrote, “as your Lordship can easily have by casting your eye on the map.”

Lord Rochford felt that the mission of the Buen Consejo was entirely consistent with the broader outlines of Spanish imperial strategy. “The only reflection I have to make upon this (voyage),” he remarked, “is that they are endeavouring by all sorts of means to get out of our reach as far as they can.” Rochford also forecasted a heightened Spanish determination to protect the southern cone of South America from foreign interference.

This scheme, if it succeeds, will naturally make them more tenacious of their present possessions on the River Plata (roughly the future Argentina), and more unwilling to restore any of the Portuguese places they are now in possession of, as they will be glad to secure the freedom of those seas as much to themselves as they possibly can.

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11 British National Archive (BNA), State Papers (SP) 94/170, Rochford to Halifax, Madrid, 25 March 1765, f. 53. In this dispatch, Rochford refers to the Marquesas as “the Mendosa Islands.” The Marquesas had already long been known to the Spanish. Their discoverer, Álvaro de Mendaña de Neira, was a pioneering Spanish explorer of the Pacific, whose voyages of the late-sixteenth century revealed several major equatorial island groups and prefigured the Terra Australis Incognita-seeking exploits of Bougainville and Cook. The Marquesas were named for the wife of the Marqués de Cañete, García Hurtado de Mendoza, who was the Viceroy of Peru at the time of the discovery in 1595.
Yet Rochford also showed a contemptuous attitude toward Spanish capacities to see such plans through. “I have so very bad an opinion of Spanish projects,” he smugly declared, “that I can scarcely believe they will ever succeed in anything they undertake.” Regardless of whether or not Rochford’s view of Spanish imperial planning was accurate, his remarks are an excellent illustration of the deep scepticism about Spanish abilities that he often projected back to London in his correspondence. In this attitude he reflected the more general opinion of the British elite. Although they were clearly frightened by the potential combined threat of the two Bourbon crowns, Rochford and his peers tended to dismiss the idea of Spain as an independent menace.

Not surprisingly, Spanish officials expressed a parallel set of speculations about their imperial future. In 1764, the Marqués de Grimaldi began to take a heightened interest in the Falkland Islands and in their potential strategic importance. Recognizing the significance of the proximity between the Falklands and the Strait of Magellan, he suggested that there were “various compelling reasons” for the Spanish crown to take possession of the Falklands and to occupy them. At that point, Grimaldi was not certain whether or not “direct commerce with Spain” could be successfully established by way of the Magellanic route across the South Pacific, but he treated the idea seriously. Although the land immediately surrounding the Strait of Magellan was sparsely populated at best, Grimaldi believed that Spain had an undisputed territorial claim over the region. Adding the Falklands to those lands would secure Spanish dominion over the southern passage between the Pacific and Atlantic Oceans. If it also proved useful to the establishment of direct commerce with Manila, Grimaldi argued that “it would double the advantage of its possession.”

12 Ibid.
13 Real Academia de la Historia (RAH), Malvinas (Islas), catalogue number 9-1981, Marqués de Grimaldi to an unnamed recipient, Madrid, 2 August 1764. This volume, found in the Real Academia de la Historia in Madrid, contains a large volume of letters in folio that relate to the Falkland Islands, starting with the initial French attempt
Keeping imperial rivals away from the southern cone of the Americas also had the advantage of providing continued protection to Spain’s colonies on the Pacific side of South America. Grimaldi’s initial concerns were directed at the French, who were the first to attempt the colonization of the Falklands, but he also remained mindful of the ever-present threat of British naval and commercial domination.

If the French situate themselves there, what is to prevent them from eventually conducting illicit trade with the kingdoms of Chile and Peru? Who will prevent them from navigating the Strait of Magellan ... and introducing themselves into the South Seas, whose vast beaches would permit unrestrained contraband? The abundant fishing that could be done in the seas (around the Falklands) out of the Bahia de San Julian, would fall into foreign hands, when it could be our recourse to escape English slavery while simultaneously dealing them great harm.  

Grimaldi feared the “English slavery” – subjugation under overwhelming British power and influence – that seemed to be a potential outcome of British success in the Seven Years’ War. But he also remained optimistic that a new balance could be created by sheltering Spain’s farther-flung territories from foreign interference and by promoting their development. Direct trade with the Philippines, the protection of Spanish sovereignty in the vicinity of the Strait of Magellan, and the potential for a large-scale fishery in that region were all elements of that broader strategy. As Lord Rochford had so astutely observed, Grimaldi was eager to keep the Spanish out of the “reach” of the British for long enough to strengthen and reinvigorate the empire. “If such inconveniences would be brought by the occupation of (by Bougainville) to colonize them in 1764 and moving forward to the resolution of the Falklands Crisis of 1770-1. There are no folio numbers for this volume, but the letters are generally arranged in chronological order. Translation from the original Spanish by the author. The Bahia de San Julian is the Spanish language name (a claim that continues to be maintained by Argentina today) for Queen Charlotte Bay, which is one of the two main bays on the west coast of West Falkland Island (Isla Gran Malvina in Spanish). However, it is not entirely clear as to whether Grimaldi meant to refer to that bay, or to the Bahia de San Julian that is located in Patagonia, in the present-day southern Argentinean province of Santa Cruz. In either case, the reference to the commercial potential of the nearby seas is the same.
these islands by our best friends (the French),” Grimaldi wondered, “what would be the results of an occupation by our worst enemies, the English?”

The potential consequences seemed dire. A British naval base in the Falklands could be a fatal threat to Spain’s plans for imperial revitalization, and even to Spanish control of South America. Grimaldi imagined a two-pronged, future invasion of the Río de la Plata and of the city of Buenos Aires. “How would we resist a maritime invasion from there,” he asked, “and a simultaneous land invasion from Brazil?” Grimaldi suggested that Spanish officials should be grateful to the French for having brought this strategic vulnerability to their attention so that action could be taken before it was too late. “It is important for Spain to establish a solid, comfortable settlement in the Malvinas Islands,” he decided, “in order to possess them and to prevent an enemy from doing so.” It would also help ensure that the King of Spain “would be the absolute owner of the South Seas, and of his own (exclusive) fishery” in those waters. In view of these concerns – preserving the underlying Spanish imperial ambitions – Grimaldi trod as lightly as possible with British representatives and employed a long-term strategy of delay with respect to the unpaid Manila Ransom. His task was difficult in the face of Rochford’s determination “to bring (the Spanish) court to a right way of thinking about that business” and to extract the money before his term of office in Madrid came to an end.

Under pressure from Rochford, Grimaldi agreed in January 1766 that Spain might be responsible for the debt, but only on the condition that the British claim could be properly authenticated. This admission was something of a gambit, as it officially admitted some potential responsibility but it also opened up the way for an entirely new set of delay tactics. Grimaldi’s solution in the short run was, at the suggestion of the Duc de Choiseul, to refer the issue of the Manila Ransom to an independent

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15 RAH, 9-1981, Grimaldi to unnamed recipient, Madrid, 2 August 1764.
16 Ibid.
17 BNA, SP 94/173, Rochford to Conway, Madrid, 22 January 1766, f. 38.
arbiter. The man who the French minister recommended to play that role was Frederick II of Prussia, more famously known as Frederick the Great. As H.M. Scott argues, Choiseul’s choice of arbiter was inspired, and was something of a power play in the broader arena of European politics. The French and Spanish expected that the British would reject the idea of arbitration, as they simply wanted immediate payment and did not feel that their claim was dubious in any way. But at the same time, Anglo-Prussian relations had not been warm in the years since their wartime alliance had ended, and to reject Frederick’s involvement was to risk further offending the Prussians, something that Britain could scarcely afford to do when it was already struggling to find reliable allies in the post-war environment. The chaos of the domestic political scene in London was an additional detriment, and it helped bring about a weakening of the British resolve to extract the full amount of the ransom.\footnote{Scott, 93-4.}

In Madrid, Rochford was out of time, and was forced to leave for his diplomatic post in Paris in May 1766 without having extracted the Manila Ransom. In his absence, the situation only deteriorated. Henry Seymour Conway, the British Secretary of State for the Southern Department at the time, led a hasty retreat from Rochford’s brinksmanship when he asked the cabinet for authorization to reduce the amount of money being demanded from £500 000 to £300 000. Having been shown that the British were not necessarily determined to be firm on the amount, Grimaldi seized the opportunity to recast the issue as a matter of honour and declared it to be either payable in full or not at all. As Geoffrey Rice argues, “Rochford’s hard-won initiative at Madrid had been thrown away by the revelation that British ministers preferred composition to confrontation.”\footnote{Geoffrey W. Rice, “Great Britain, the Manila Ransom, and the First Falkland Islands Dispute with Spain, 1766,” The International History Review 11, No. 3 (July 1980), 394. Although it is not a particularly recent piece, this article remains the best and most comprehensive scholarly account of this 1766 dispute over the Falklands.} So the status of the Manila Ransom was left in limbo, paralyzed by a diplomatic impasse. It would remain so until it was disturbed by a preliminary round of what would ultimately become known in English circles as the Falklands Crisis of 1770-1.
Why the Falklands Mattered

By the time of the Seven Years’ War, the Falklands Islands had been known to the British for many decades. It remains unclear when the first sighting by a European occurred, but the islands were definitely encountered and given their current name by Captain John Strong in 1690 after he was blown off course by a storm while en route to the Strait of Magellan.\(^{20}\) After his voyage of the 1740s, Lord Anson recommended that a permanent British settlement be established somewhere in the region so that expeditions would not have to resupply at Brazilian ports of dubious reliability.

It appears that all future expeditions to the South Seas must run a considerable risque of proving abortive whilst we are under the necessity of touching at Brazil in our passage thither. An expedient that might relieve us from this difficulty would surely be a subject worthy of the attention of the publick, and this seems capable of being effected by the discovery of some place more to the southward where ships might refresh themselves and supply themselves with the necessary sea stock for their voyage round Cape Horn.\(^{21}\)

Anson imagined that a new establishment in the region would greatly improve Britain’s capacity to safely and securely navigate through to the Pacific Ocean. He also pointed to the more general benefits to British power and influence in the region should pan-Atlantic conflict once again break out between Britain and the Bourbon powers. “Even in time of peace, (it) might be of great consequence to this nation,” he wrote. “In time of war, (it) would make us master of those seas.”\(^{22}\) Yet in the prevailing strategic environment before the Seven Years’ War, Spanish antagonism was taken seriously enough to prevent such a move, and the Falklands remained uninhabited.

\(^{20}\) Julius Goebel, *The Struggle for the Falkland Islands: A Study in Legal and Diplomatic History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1927), 136. In spite of its age, this book remains the most exhaustive and comprehensive overview of the long-term diplomatic struggle over the Falklands Islands.

\(^{21}\) *A voyage round the world, in the years MDCCXL, I, II, III, IV. By George Anson, Commander in Chief of a Squadron of His Majesty’s Ships, sent ...,* second edition (London, 1748), 128. Available through the Eighteenth Century Collection Online database.

\(^{22}\) Ibid., 130.
The post-war era was different. In pursuit of his grand vision of oceanic domination, Lord Egmont ordered Commodore Byron to take possession of the Falklands in June 1764 while he was on his circumnavigation voyage. Like Anson, Egmont perceived a great future importance for the Falklands as a base for the extension of British power around South America and into the Pacific Ocean.

This station ... is undoubtedly the key to the whole Pacific Ocean. This island must command the Ports & Trade of Chili, Peru, Panama, Acapulco, & in one word all the Spanish Territory upon that sea. It will render all our expeditions to those parts most lucrative to ourselves, most fatal to Spain, & no longer formidable, tedious, or uncertain in a future war.

Egmont believed the Falklands to be a critical rallying point for the final days of the Age of Discovery. “What farther advantages may be derived from discoveries in all that southern tract of ocean both to the east (and) west of the Magellanick Streights it is not possible at present to foresee,” he wrote. “But those parts, now almost entirely unknown, will from such a settlement be soon (and) easily explor’d.” The Falklands would chase away the shadow of the unknown and show the entire world to British eyes. Egmont completely dismissed the idea that the Spanish might have any kind of a legitimate claim on the islands. “It is impossible that even their pretended title from the Pope’s grant, or any treaty so far as I can recollect can give them the least claim to an island lying 80 or 100 leagues ... eastward of ... (the) continent of South America,” he declared. The fact that Bougainville had also tried to settle in the region further convinced Egmont that Spain had no right to object to potential establishments there by other powers.

Byron duly carried out his orders and made an appropriate claim on the western island, but left no permanent settlement. When British officials heard of Bougainville’s subsequent efforts to recruit colonists for his already-established outpost in the Iles Malouines, they were not yet certain as to

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whether or not these were the same islands, but they nevertheless responded by sending Captain John McBride and the HMS Jason to establish a permanent British settlement in the Falklands. In January 1766, McBride succeeded in that mission when he established Port Egmont, but failed to spot the outpost that Bougainville had established in 1764. The British government subsequently ordered McBride to conduct another search when they heard about Bougainville’s negotiations with the Spanish in the spring of 1766 to turn his colony over to their rule.\(^{24}\) In August of the same year, worried that McBride’s search might bring him into contact with a larger French military force, the British government also decided to send a squadron of naval reinforcements. It was that decision that brought greater Spanish attention to the matter, and led Prince Masserano to express his concerns about the apparent existence of a British settlement in what he took to be Spanish territory. Displeased by what he considered to be a dismissal of Spanish rights by Lord Shelburne, who was the new Southern Secretary, Masserano took an unusually bellicose stance and advised Grimaldi that he should destroy any British settlement upon discovery.\(^{25}\)

Although Grimaldi did not act rashly on Masserano’s advice, the ambassador’s message provoked a round of serious thinking about the matter in Madrid. In September, Grimaldi wrote to the Count of Aranda with an account of the situation. In his analysis, Grimaldi invoked the eighth article of the Treaty of Utrecht (1713), which stated that “that the Spanish dominions in the West Indies (would) be preserved whole and entire” as they existed prior to the outbreak of the War of the Spanish Succession in 1701.\(^{26}\) Although Spain had no presence in the islands when that treaty was signed in 1713, Grimaldi took the broadest possible definition of the term “West Indies” and considered it to be
inclusive of any territory in the Americas over which Spain maintained even a theoretical claim. Given the major compromises that Spain had already been forced to make in the Bay of Honduras, British claims over the Falklands seemed to be the next step toward a slippery slope to widespread foreign interference with Spanish sovereignty in the Americas. So Grimaldi told Aranda that it would be best if the Spanish and French crowns could persuade the British to give up their new settlement in the islands.

“But if the English persist in this project in spite of our efforts,” he said, “the King wishes to know your opinion on whether or not it is worth the risk of war to remove their settlement or to prevent the establishment of new ones, working from the assumption that they are not yet well-fortified.”27 In other words, time was of the essence. Left alone, the settlers at Port Egmont would have the opportunity to develop more elaborate defences and to receive reinforcements from Britain. Grimaldi worried that there might be a limited window of opportunity to remove them without engaging in a major, sustained military action.

By mid-September, Grimaldi had further developed his opinion on the matter. Although obviously still concerned about the possibility of a British foothold in the region, he suggested that Spain’s position depended greatly on how the crown negotiated the issue in the halls of European diplomacy. Above all, an effective response would require French cooperation, and at least a tacit understanding from the Austrian court. In effect, a diplomatically isolated Britain could be resisted, but a breakdown in that isolation could prove to be disastrous. Still, Grimaldi had no doubt that Spanish claims over the islands were entirely legitimate, and that the British intrusion was both illegal and “contrary to reason” even if the region was not yet actively populated by Spanish subjects. Grimaldi also found it disturbing because of how it reflected Britain’s longer-term plans for the region. “The English absolutely want to establish themselves on the coast of Patagonia,” he said, “even though they have

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always recognized it as belonging to another owner.” Grimaldi believed that the British were hoping for Spanish toleration of their presence in the Falklands for long enough to fortify themselves and to achieve at least a tenuous recognition that would give them an effective foothold in the general region — much as they had previously done in Honduras. This plan, he ominously warned Aranda, “depends on our inaction.”  

In case his meaning was not yet clear, Grimaldi offered his prescient vision of one possible future in which the Spanish crown had failed to prevent the establishment of a British presence in the southern cone of the Americas.

If wise and thoughtful, the English will be content to merely create a few new establishments, but in places that lend themselves well to maritime commerce, with the only end being to make themselves owners of South America ... Who can doubt that Spain would lose control of those domains? ... (The English would) build large commercial warehouses on the continent ... for the mischief of regular unlawful trade, (and they would) use their influence to distract the country from its obedience to its (Spanish) conquerors with the pleasant concept of freedom.

Grimaldi feared the coming influx of British contraband, but he was even more frightened by the infiltration of the ideas that would come with them. Aside from being a commercial and military menace, a base in the Falklands could be an ideological beacon, emitting social, religious and political thoughts that could not be compatible with Spain’s enlightened absolutism. Its reach and influence would erode the empire from within. For Grimaldi, such a multi-faceted threat could not be tolerated, and he ultimately supported Masserano’s suggestion that force must be used to remove the British before they became sufficiently entrenched to resist.

Tensions between the major Atlantic powers escalated quickly. For the first time since the Peace of Paris, it seemed like a realistic possibility that another war could break out. The Duc de Choiseul,

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29 Ibid.
eager for revenge against the British but acutely aware that the Bourbon powers were not yet ready for war, strongly urged the Spanish to act cautiously and to avoid war if at all possible. In early October 1766, he outlined his view of the situation in a letter to Grimaldi. In Choiseul’s view, the two main issues that continued to poison the Anglo-Spanish relationship were the Manila Ransom and the question of the Falklands settlement. As Geoffrey Rice suggests, Choiseul’s high level of anxiety about the situation led him to take “a characteristically imaginative leap” to propose that the two distinct issues might be linked in some kind of diplomatic settlement that could simultaneously resolve both of them and dissipate the tension that threatened the peace in Europe. At an impasse but knowing full well that Spain could not stand against British naval forces without French support, Grimaldi stepped back from the brink of war and allowed Choiseul to try this new diplomatic manoeuvre.30

With Rochford’s arrival in France delayed because of illness, Choiseul made an initial but largely unsuccessful attempt to convey his plan through the Earl of Hertford, a former British ambassador to France who happened to be in Paris on vacation. In late October, when Rochford finally arrived for his diplomatic posting, Choiseul almost immediately produced his Manila-Falklands proposal and urged a quick resolution. Meanwhile, back in London, Prince Masserano continued to press Lord Shelburne on the Falklands issue. In a meeting on 15 November, the two men made a discovery that further increased the urgency of the situation. When Shelburne produced a map of the South Atlantic and pointed to the Falkland Islands, a startled Masserano received his first cartographical confirmation that they were the same islands as the Islas Malvinas. He told Shelburne in no uncertain terms that the Malvinas were within a hundred leagues of the Patagonian coast and could only be considered Spanish territory.31

30 Rice, “Great Britain, the Manila Ransom, and the First Falkland Islands Dispute...,” 397. Also see Scott, 105-6.
31 Rice, “Great Britain, the Manila Ransom, and the First Falkland Islands Dispute...,” 401.
An increasingly concerned Shelburne wrote a long, secret letter to Rochford with an analysis of the situation and instructions for dealing with Choiseul. In it, he reaffirmed the “undoubted right of the King’s subjects to the Manila Ransom.” Moreover, he strongly asserted that “his Majesty’s first and original right to (the Falkland) Islands ... stands unaffected by any proof that has been brought against it,” and maintained a “clear and undoubted right to navigate both the Atlantick and South Seas, the Spaniards’ romantiick and absurd notions to the contrary notwithstanding.” He also expressed his displeasure with Choiseul’s interference. Although Shelburne instructed Rochford to encourage anything that the French might be able to do to influence the Spanish to pay their debt, he also wrote that the British could “never approve of suffering the French to take possession of the negotiations under the pretence of mediation or any other name.” The issue was between Britain and Spain, and Shelburne was determined to keep it that way – there would be no negotiation with the Bourbon Family Compact as a single entity, for doing so would imply acceptance and recognition of that entity. But at the same time, Shelburne confusingly instructed Rochford to also pursue Choiseul’s idea of simultaneously resolving the Manila Ransom and the Falklands issue.\(^{32}\)

From that point, the issue began to fade away. Although the British cabinet was fully aware that the Bourbon powers were not prepared to attack, they appeared to be willing to evacuate the Falklands in exchange for the money owed. But because they were also unwilling to involve the French as mediators, nothing was done about the matter. Rochford went on to orchestrate a series of letters between Shelburne and Grimaldi, but in the end nothing substantial was decided about the settlements and nothing was said about permanent ownership of the islands. Because the British ultimately declined

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\(^{32}\) British Library, Additional MSS 9242, ff. 1-5, Shelburne to Rochford, Secret and Confidential, Hill Street, 17 November 1766. According to Geoffrey Rice, this copy of the letter was made from the Rochford Papers in the early nineteenth century.
to press the issue, the Manila Ransom was left unpaid and would remain that way forever.\textsuperscript{33} The dispute simply went away for the time being. Geoffrey Rice argues that Britain’s weakness in this affair signalled a broader diplomatic feebleness to the French, thereby leading to the French annexation of the island of Corsica in 1768. In his view, more aggressive British behaviour could have both secured the Manila money and prevented the French from acquiring Corsica.\textsuperscript{34} At any rate, both Rice and Scott argue that the first Falklands dispute was a pitiful chapter in British foreign policy, and that it most likely further emboldened French and Spanish behaviour in the last few years of the decade. There may well be something to this argument, although there is little to support it in Spanish sources. While Grimaldi and other key foreign policy figures showed consistent concern with British expansion, there is no explicit understanding in their letters that British behaviour in 1766 would necessarily be duplicated in future rounds of the struggle for Atlantic empire, especially when it came to strategically vital areas.

Although the immediate diplomatic crisis of 1766 was over, the fundamental issues that underlay the conflict over the Falklands were not resolved in any way. Neither crown was willing to accept the territorial claims of the other. The Spanish remained convinced that keeping the British out of the South Atlantic and Pacific Oceans was critically important to the security of their empire and to the prevention of a future in which the British dominated the globe. The British remained determined to explore these regions and to assert their territorial rights to the Falklands, which they perceived as important to their commercial and exploratory efforts. Most significantly of all, neither crown made any real effort to adhere to any understanding that the islands would be left unsettled. Under these conditions, it was only a matter of time before the dispute re-emerged. In 1770, when a governor of Buenos Aires acted on his standing orders to remove British settlements from recognized Spanish

\textsuperscript{33} For a summary of these diplomatic transactions, see Scott, 104-7, and Rice, “Great Britain, the Manila Ransom, and the First Falkland Islands Dispute...,” 403-7.

\textsuperscript{34} Rice, “Great Britain, the Manila Ransom, and the First Falkland Islands Dispute...,” 408-9.
The Emergence of the Final South Atlantic Standoff

The basic chain of events that led to the Falklands Crisis of 1770-1 is well-known. The discussion in this chapter is not primarily concerned with the detailed political mechanics of the dispute, which have already been extensively covered in existing literature, especially in recent work by Geoffrey Rice. Rather, I focus on the ways in which the negotiations inform and develop our understanding of the broader conceptual issues of the future of empire that were then in play – the ways in which Spanish and British images of the imperial future provided the underlying motivations to fight for possession of the Falklands. In the aftermath of the first dispute over the islands, the Spanish government could do little to combat the British because they did not know where to find the enemy settlement. That changed in the winter of 1767-8, when the Spanish located Port Egmont. Upon receiving this news, Grimaldi set into motion a plan that was fully intended to risk a general, pan-Atlantic war. He corresponded closely with Choiseul, and reminded the French minister that his own plans for a war of revenge against the British called for the Bourbon powers to be ready to fight by 1770. The combination of improved French preparations for war and the British diplomatic weakness of the previous few years had the effect of emboldening Grimaldi, who now felt confident that a new war against Britain could realistically be won. With that in mind, the Spanish minister issued orders for the removal of Port Egmont and had them sent to Francisco de Bucareli, the Captain-General (Governor) of Buenos Aires. These orders had received the personal approval not only of Carlos III, but also of Louis XV. In 1768,
having just watched the British do nothing while the French annexed Corsica, Grimaldi admittedly had some good reason to believe that the British would not resist this aggressive move.\textsuperscript{35}

The problem was that Buenos Aires was far away, and it would take time for Grimaldi’s plan to come to fruition. It would be late in 1769 before Bucareli had prepared a squadron of sufficient size to evict the British from Port Egmont. By that time, British and Spanish ships from their respective bases in the islands had already accidentally had an encounter, at which each had demanded that the other nation dismantle its base and leave. Unsurprisingly, neither one was successful in convincing the other to withdraw. But Bucareli responded to the British threat by sending two ships to Port Egmont in February 1770 to make a more pointed request for a quick and bloodless British departure. Again the settlers refused. When news of this visit reached Europe, the British response was somewhat anaemic. Southern Secretary Lord Weymouth made noises to Choiseul that suggested openness to compromise. According to H.M. Scott, Weymouth attempted to convince the French that although Port Egmont was not at all important (a blatant lie), the British crown could not abandon it without offending British commercial interests, not to mention Parliament and the general public. His apparent goal in doing so was to urge the French to encourage the Spanish to apologize, thereby averting a larger crisis. But in the meantime, Bucareli had sent a second and much larger squadron from Buenos Aires to remove the British settlement by force. When that happened, it was too late to avert a crisis. The Atlantic World was already well on its way to the brink of war.\textsuperscript{36}

The situation deteriorated quickly in the autumn of 1770. Scott suggests that Grimaldi’s behaviour, upon learning of the attack on 17 August 1770, was far less bellicose than it had been in 1768 when he had issued the orders to Bucareli. In an effort to mitigate the damage, the two Bourbon

\textsuperscript{35} An excellent and more extensive summary of these events can be found in Scott, 141.
\textsuperscript{36} Scott, 142-3.
governments forewarned the British crown of these events and blamed them on Bucareli, who they characterized as overeager and perhaps a bit too independently-minded. This strategy was not effective. When the British received independent confirmation of Bucareli’s expedition in early September, their reaction was far more forceful than it had been in 1766. More traditional historical interpretations tend to argue that British policy in this crisis was primarily directed by some combination of Lord Weymouth and Lord North, who had then only recently assumed the office of Prime Minister. But recent research by Geoffrey Rice makes a strong and convincing argument that it was actually Lord Rochford who was the most significant figure behind the British response, even before he took over the Southern Department in mid-December 1770. Rochford had direct experience with both the Spanish and French courts from his ambassadorial posts and was by far the most knowledgeable member of the British cabinet when it came to diplomatic affairs. As Rice argues, his advice was a vital factor and “would be sought and respected by his colleagues and by George III.”

The British response was most likely decided in a private meeting between George III and Lord Rochford on 9 September 1770, and subsequently endorsed by the cabinet the following day. It was firm and decisive. Weymouth ordered James Harris, the novice British envoy in Madrid, to seek confirmation of the attack. If confirmed, he was to demand that the Spanish disavow Bucareli and restore Port Egmont to Great Britain. To underline their determination, the cabinet also followed Rochford’s recommendation to ask the British Admiralty to begin preparations for naval warfare. As it became obvious that the crown’s response to the situation was serious enough to lead to war with the Bourbons, the British public began to speculate about what was happening behind the closed doors of

37 Ibid.
38 Geoffrey W. Rice, “British Foreign Policy and the Falklands Crisis of 1770-1,” The International History Review 32, No. 2 (June 2010), 273-305. For example, this argument contradicts H.M. Scott’s stance that Weymouth was the primary mover of British policy.
39 Rice, “British Foreign Policy...,” 279.
government. Initial reports in the London media showed little concern, and even speculated that the news of the Spanish seizure of the Falklands might be little more than an attempt to manipulate the stock market. As the *Middlesex Journal or Chronicle of Liberty* reported on 13 September, “it was reported yesterday that the Spaniards had taken from us an island in the South Seas, a story raised merely to sink the stocks.” But by the end of the month, speculation was growing about what else might be going on. On 28 September, *Lloyd’s Evening Post* speculated that the Spanish might have intercepted and seized the *Endeavour*, under the command of James Cook.

It is surmised that one ground of the present preparations for war is some secret intelligence received by the ministry that the *Endeavour* ... has been seized, with all her people, by the order of a jealous Court, (which) has committed other hostilities against us in the southern hemisphere.

Although totally groundless, this rumour is indicative of the more general British anxiety about Spanish interference with their exploratory efforts in the Pacific Ocean – the most common reason for British navigation around the southern cone of the Americas at the time.

Meanwhile, the Spanish debated what was to be done. On 13 September, the Count of Aranda wrote to Carlos III with a pessimistic assessment of the matter. He prefaced his remarks with some broader considerations about the British character and of what it might mean for dealing with the British crown. Aranda’s thinking was centered on the concept of enlightened absolutism, and on the stance that some British ideas and methods represented a threat to those ideals. In that respect, his thoughts were in tune with a dominant vein of Spanish Enlightenment thought, perhaps best represented in the writings of Francisco Manuel Mariano Nipho y Cagigal in the pages of the *Estafeta de Londres*. Aranda noted the “disorder” of Great Britain and the “debauched” state of its society. He perceived George III as being unable to stop this “insolent” independence from royal leadership and

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40 *Middlesex Journal or Chronicle of Liberty*, Issue 228, 13-15 September 1770.
41 *Lloyd’s Evening Post* (London), Issue 2065, 28 September 1770.
feared that the British crown lacked the necessary power to contain the “excesses” that were taking place within its borders. With that in mind, Aranda believed that the outbreak of yet another war could probably not be avoided. “Even if our easily-accomplished seizure of the Malvinas does not cause an immediate break,” he warned, “it will create a desire for revenge” among the British.42

For Aranda, hope came in the form of the alliance with France. “Never has our monarchy had such secure allies against this (British) enemy,” he said. The broader diplomatic environment seemed favourable, too, with “the House of Austria so closely aligned with Paris, Naples and Florence.” Like Grimaldi, Aranda noted the importance of Britain’s diplomatic isolation, and took it as a favourable sign in the struggle to protect Spain’s imperial security. In war, Spain and its allies would be able to disrupt British trade throughout the Mediterranean and in Portugal, a British friend that remained consistently vulnerable to Spanish invasion. With expectations of an imminent conflict that could realistically be won, Aranda urged Carlos III to begin military reinforcements in Spain and throughout the Spanish Empire, from Havana to Panama to Buenos Aires. “Today war is safer (for us) and more damaging to the British,” Aranda declared, “for it would interrupt their commerce, which is the source of their assets.” His ideas on the potential damage to be done to Britain and the rewards for the Bourbon crowns amounted to an almost complete reversal of the outcome of not only the Seven Years’ War, but of Spanish losses to Britain in the War of the Spanish Succession – above all, the port of Gibraltar. These were fanciful designs. But Aranda was also perceptive enough to notice that it was “the people that dominate” in British America, and that crown control over those territories was not as strong as the British might have liked to believe. “The masses there are incapable of any desires aside from those that are to their own

(direct) benefit,” he wrote. In effect, Aranda presciently doubted the sincerity or commitment of the British colonists to their own imperial cause.\textsuperscript{43}

In spite of Aranda’s more aggressive stance, which was shared by Minister Arriaga, neither Grimaldi nor Carlos III appeared ready yet to plunge Spain into war.\textsuperscript{44} In the orders that Grimaldi sent to Masserano on 27 September and 3 October, he sought a middle ground that would effectively satisfy Britain’s immediate demands but which would also protect Spain’s honour and protect Spanish imperial interests. To that end, he instructed Masserano to agree to restore the British colonists to Port Egmont, but with certain conditions. The British were to disavow the offensive declaration made by Captain Hunt, the officer in charge at the scene, which had proclaimed the British refusal to leave the Falklands and the demand for the dismantling of the Spanish settlement there. Masserano was also to request that Britain and Spain agree to mutually and simultaneously vacate the Falklands at a time of Britain’s choosing, thereby restoring the situation that had existed prior to the initial Bougainville settlement that had triggered the entire series of events.\textsuperscript{45} This Spanish response, still early in the crisis, was perhaps the truest expression of how the most influential Spanish officials were conceptualizing their imperial future. The most important aim was to find a way to keep the British away from the Falklands, from the southern cone of the America in general, and thus out of the Pacific Ocean. Only then would Spain be secure and able to foment the kind of development that was needed to resist the British over the long term. Grimaldi was willing to pay lip service to British honour, and to allow them to triumphantly return to Port Egmont, if he could also extract a promise that Spain’s most important objective of mutual evacuation would also eventually be met.

\textsuperscript{43} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{44} See Scott, 143.
\textsuperscript{45} Ministerio de Cultura (España), Archivo Histórico Nacional (AHN), Estado, Legajo 4274, (Inglaterra – Correspondencia Diplomática, 1770), Grimaldi to Masserano, San Ildefonso, 27 September 1770 and 3 October 1770. Also see the discussion in Rice, “British Foreign Policy...,” 282-3.
In spite of Aranda’s great confidence in the security of the Bourbon alliance, the French did not respond well to this evolving Spanish position on the Falklands. Choiseul was alarmed by the situation and was therefore anxious to bring about a peaceful resolution. Although he accepted the potential need for France to back up its Spanish allies if Britain attacked, the French minister worried that another Anglo-Bourbon war might open the door to a broader power shift in Europe. Scott argues that Choiseul’s overriding preoccupation in 1770 was the growth of Russian power, especially at the expense of the Ottoman Empire. If the western European kingdoms were distracted with war in the Atlantic, Choiseul reasoned, the Russians could freely expand into new territories and establish an unchallenged dominance over the eastern part of the European continent. France also suffered a serious financial crisis in 1770, which meant that Choiseul would have been hard pressed to find the necessary resources to mount a serious military effort. But with Spanish foreign policy outside of his control and the British totally opposed to any French interference in the affair, Choiseul could do little but watch as Britain and Spain came ever closer to blows through the autumn of 1770. As he feared, the British did not respond well to Spain’s counter-demands and simply offered a more forceful reiteration of their demands for the disavowal of Bucareli and the restoration of Port Egmont.

In London, negotiations between Masserano and Weymouth were not going well. Rice rightly argues that Weymouth’s understanding of diplomacy was severely lacking. Certainly, Weymouth’s approach was obstinate and unrefined. While Masserano clearly maintained that Spain’s rights to South America and the Pacific Ocean were worth fighting a war to protect, Weymouth rejected the possibility of a compromise and allowed the talks to grind to a halt by early November. For his part, Grimaldi was clearly hoping for a peaceful diplomatic resolution but was also prepared to fight a losing battle if necessary. On 5 November, he sent Masserano clear instructions that reflected what Grimaldi

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46 Scott, 144-5.
47 Rice, “British Foreign Policy...,” 284-5.
represented as “the King’s manner of thinking” about the crisis. Above and beyond the specific demands of the dispute, Grimaldi told Masserano that there should be “reciprocal and authentic security” in any potential agreement. In other words, compromise was certainly a possibility, but the Spanish could not accept giving in to British demands if there was nothing to protect their own imperial future in the southern hemisphere.

So the negotiations remained at an impasse. It was at that point, especially after the opening of the British Parliament on 13 November, that the crisis became more broadly known to members of the government and to the public. George III’s speech from the throne made the British position abundantly clear and he received the support of Parliament after only a brief debate. It once again fell to the Spanish to respond to Britain’s demands – this time from a position that had been eroded by the absolute British refusal to compromise. Spain’s posture was also deteriorating rapidly because as war preparations progressed in the three involved kingdoms, the British were clearly in the lead in terms of their ability to project military force. As British preparations had already begun in mid-September and French naval mobilization did not begin until early November, the Bourbons would have to deal with an ongoing gap in readiness that they would be unable to close. Without a plausible military solution, the Spanish would have to find another way to defend their imperial future.

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48 AHN, Estado, Legajo 4274, Grimaldi to Masserano, San Lorenzo, 5 November 1770, No. 9 in a package of letters sent that day.
49 See Rice, “British Foreign Policy...,” 285.
50 Ibid., 285-6. This is also the basic argument of Nicholas Tracy’s 1975 account of the Falklands Crisis – specifically, that Britain’s earlier naval mobilization gave their forces a permanent and decisive advantage over the course of the crisis. See Nicholas Tracy, “The Falkland Islands Crisis of 1770: Use of Naval Force,” English Historical Review 90, No. 354 (January 1975), 40-75.
Wobbling to a Resolution

Few officials in Spain, France and Britain wanted war as they headed into the winter of 1770, and yet war seemed to be at hand. “It’s true that everyone generally wants peace,” Masserano wrote to Grimaldi on 23 November, “because this is not a war of commerce.” On this point the Spanish ambassador was only partially correct. As both Grimaldi and Rochford had suggested in their earlier writings, the importance of the southern cone of the Americas had little to do with current commercial interests and far more to do with potential future ones. The dispute over the Falklands was not merely about national honour or about seeking compensation for insults and skirmishes. Neither the British nor the French would have attempted to settle in the Falklands if there was no purpose in the move, and the reasons for doing so are abundantly clear in the writings of officials from all three of the major Atlantic powers. That understanding clearly underlay the diplomatic proceedings, which were so clearly going nowhere by the end of November that a rupture seemed imminent. Having already been through numerous fruitless meetings with Masserano, Weymouth refused to discuss the matter any further with the Spanish envoy and sent word to James Harris in Madrid that war now seemed inevitable unless Grimaldi and Carlos III backed down from their position and agreed to unconditionally meet British demands. But at the same time, George III and his Prime Minister, Lord North, were having serious second thoughts about the entire scenario. Even though Britain had a significant lead in war preparations, Rice argues that North saw the crisis primarily through the lens of his position as Chancellor of the Exchequer, and was fearful that the great expense of another war would once again plunge the crown into financial chaos.

52 See discussion in Rice, “British Foreign Policy...,” 287.
With those anxieties in mind, North reputedly tried to take matters into his own hands. On 28 November, he met with Bertrand de Francès, the French chargé d’affaires in London, and allegedly made a secret promise that Britain had no long-term interest in the Falklands and that their outpost would be dismantled at some later date if the Spanish would simply satisfy British honour by giving in to their demands. There is no record of this promise in the British documentary record, although there is no obvious reason to doubt the veracity of the French and Spanish sources that reported it. In opposition to the more traditional stance that North’s intervention was decisive in ending the crisis, Rice argues that North came perilously close to wrecking the entire affair for the British, as he partially undermined the “firm and effective diplomatic and military response” that Rochford had initially established in consultation with George III in September 1770. Meanwhile, as Scott argues, the momentum toward war had taken on a life of its own, as neither Britain nor France could keep fully-mobilized warships in port for long without making a decision to either go to war or to accept peace and demobilize. By late-November, Britain’s fleet became the first force to be fully mobilized and a decision needed to be made – one way or the other.

In Spain, a clear dichotomy was emerging between Aranda’s persistent warmongering and Grimaldi’s ongoing caution. But only one of those men could enjoy the support of the King, and Carlos III appears to have consistently supported Grimaldi’s more careful approach. After reading Masserano’s late-November correspondence from London, a worried Aranda wrote to Carlos III in a final attempt to press his perspective on the Falklands. In his plea, the Spanish grandee invoked the recent memory of the debacle in the Bay of Honduras and suggested that weakness in Spanish foreign policy was allowing the Empire to slowly slip away. “This is what happened on the logwood coasts,” he warned. “They took

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53 Rice, “British Foreign Policy...,” 287. The concept that North was primarily responsible for the resolution of the crisis through his secret promise dates back to Goebel’s 1927 study, if not before. It is also supported by Scott in his narrative of the crisis.
54 Scott, 149-50.
it from us without fearing a declaration of war.” Aranda believed that British aggression showed no signs of slowing down, and that the long-term consequences to Spain would be nothing short of disastrous. “Our commerce is lost,” he lamented, “while that of (the enemy) only gains.” The British achieved this state “partly through their capriciousness, and also by interpreting peace treaties in a manner that is profitable to them and damaging to us.” If not actively combated, these activities would be Spain’s “perpetual doom.” In short, the British were whimsically unpredictable in their imperial practices and relentlessly self-interested in diplomatic affairs. Even worse, the entire Spanish Empire was vulnerable to them.

“There are no coastlines in America belonging to your Majesty with which (the British) have not interfered,” Aranda declared. Just as Grimaldi had warned in previous years, Aranda saw each new British outpost in what was previously thought to be Spanish territory as a grave threat. With the French humbled in the Seven Years’ War, it was the Spanish Empire that lay directly in the British line of fire. “France (no longer) has possessions in the Americas that interest the English,” Aranda wrote. “They are few in number and cautiously guarded, while there are many inadequately protected Spanish possessions.” The Falklands were, perhaps, the worst yet. “They are the key to South America,” he wrote. In British hands, they would make Spanish colonies as remote as Peru “open to attack at any time.” In Aranda’s view, Spain simply could not afford to trust rivals in the Falklands and the southern cone of the Americas – an entirely new region for the British to consume. A failure to act could mark an epochal transformation that would see the rise of an irresistible British hegemony over the Atlantic World. Just as Bougainville had urged Louis XV to allow him to reveal the Pacific before the opportunity and initiative was lost to the British, Aranda worried that there might be a limited window of opportunity to prevent the consolidation of British power. His feelings on the matter were strong.

56 Ibid.
enough to risk making such a forceful statement to Carlos III at a time when the King seemed to be leaning toward a less confrontational approach to the crisis.

Aranda was not blind to the potential risks of engaging the British in warfare. “Is it possible,” he mused, “that between the two (Bourbon) nations there are insufficient arms to destroy the English commerce? That there might not be enough warships to counter those of the British, or to at least be deployed in such a way to contain the enemy and disrupt their military operations?” Although the possibility had clearly occurred to him, Aranda believed that the Bourbon crowns still had an effective strategy available to them. “The English Navy spans the entire breadth of the seas as they protect their commerce,” he reasoned. To win, the Bourbons did not necessarily have to directly engage the British Navy. Rather, they had to “cut off England’s oceangoing traffic to prevent them from fishing, close down their factories, disrupt their sources of revenue, and force them to sue for peace in order to get relief.” The goal was not to utterly destroy the British – it was simply to make their economic lives untenable. Much as English privateers of a previous era had disrupted the Spanish flota system, the Bourbons would offer the British a taste of their own medicine. Only then did Aranda believe that the British would “renounce their arrogance and their present commercial advantages” and give up “the vanity of dominion over the seas.” It was also, in his opinion, nearly inevitable that conflict would soon break out and leave the Bourbons with no choice but to put his plan into action.\(^{57}\)

Aranda was wrong – armed conflict was not inevitable. Military forces stood by, ready to clash, but diplomatic efforts continued. Bellicose voices were being heard in London, Madrid and Paris, but they were moderated by calmer heads. Perhaps even more importantly, none of the three monarchs was eager for war. Although the British cabinet was determined to be firm on the issue, their intentions were not fundamentally aggressive. Neither Choiseul nor Grimaldi preferred fighting over talking. The

\(^{57}\text{Ibid.}\)
essential details of the diplomatic story that unfolded between mid-December 1770 and the end of January 1771 are well-known. An outraged Weymouth was isolated from the rest of the cabinet by his much more aggressive stance toward the Bourbon powers. He found himself forced out of office after attempting to prematurely withdraw James Harris from Madrid – a move that George III blocked – and proposing a surprise attack on the French and Spanish Empires in a cabinet meeting on 7 December. Rochford was quickly moved to replace him as Southern Secretary.

In Rochford’s hands, the British stance on the Falklands was no less resolute, but it no longer featured the naked aggression that had been characteristic of Weymouth’s opinion on the matter.\(^58\) So although British officials were no less determined to see the Spanish give into their demands, Weymouth’s departure almost certainly lessened the imminent danger of war and provided some extra time for a more peaceful resolution to unfold. The British were also fully aware that war with Spain was not without risks for their own colonies and allies. As Josiah Hardy reported from Cadiz in late December, the Spanish were making significant military preparations in Andalucía that were to be directed against the British fortress at Gibraltar. He noted that elaborate plans for a combined arms siege were being made in consultation with French advisors, and that although “the loss of men (would) be very considerable, the general opinion (there was) that the King of Spain (was) so anxious to carry this favorite point that he would sacrifice half his Kingdom to succeed in it.”\(^59\)

On Christmas Eve, an event took place in France that significantly altered the strategic scenario. In spite of the fact that the documentary record clearly shows that Choiseul was actively trying to avoid conflict, Louis XV was convinced that Choiseul was dragging his kingdom toward a war with Britain that it could not afford. So the King of France dismissed his chief minister and exiled him to his estates at

\(^{58}\) See Scott, 151-2 and Rice, “British Foreign Policy...,” 289-92.

\(^{59}\) BNA, SP 94/186, Josiah Hardy to Weymouth, No. 21, Cadiz, 26 December 1770.
Chanteloup. At the same time, he informed the Spanish government that his country needed peace. Scott argues that this moment was the turning point in the crisis, as it sent a strong message to Carlos III that Spain could not rely on French support in the event of a war. No matter how much Carlos III might have seen the logic behind the more aggressive posture championed by Aranda and Arriaga, he was forced to embrace the more cautious approach that was being recommended by Grimaldi. Within days of the arrival of the news about Choiseul in Madrid, Grimaldi sent word to Masserano in London that Spain would be forced to negotiate a settlement, and that they would have to concede at least some of what the British were demanding.\textsuperscript{60} It is difficult to deny the logic of Scott’s position on this point. The timing of the Spanish willingness to accept that concessions were necessary was aligned too closely with the news of Choiseul’s fall to be coincidental. So the removal of the French minister was, at the very least, an important trigger that led decisively away from war and toward a negotiated settlement. It removed the most obviously bellicose policy option and limited the choices that the Spanish crown could make as the crisis wore on into January 1771.

What is not as immediately obvious is how Louis XV and Carlos III ultimately came to the conclusion that the return of the British to the Falklands did not represent a sufficient existential threat to their empires at that particular time to be resisted at any cost, as Aranda had so forcefully suggested. It is problematic to say that the Bourbons simply caved in under pressure, as the broader project of taking on the British Empire was still very much in play. Rather, they showed a clear understanding that it was the timing that was not yet correct. In a letter of 24 January, Louis XV told Carlos III that the French Navy was not yet strong enough for the coming showdown with the British. “We need more time before we can be assured of success,” he warned. But the French King remained optimistic that the Bourbon powers would soon be able to challenge the British. “Our maritime forces will surely be in good

\textsuperscript{60} For a more extensive discussion of these events, see Scott, 152-3.
condition soon” as a consequence of “the orders we have given and will continue to give,” he explained.\textsuperscript{61} Two months later, on 16 March, Carlos III reaffirmed his commitment in a response to Louis XV. “I will continue my economic and financial reforms,” he pledged, “and I will continue to strengthen my navy wherever possible, as that is the only force that can earn us the respect of the English.”\textsuperscript{62} These royal communications had a tone of determination to resist Great Britain, but showed none of the urgency and near-desperation that underlay Aranda’s view of the situation and that had been more characteristic of both Grimaldi and Choiseul in previous years. It was important to combat the British, but it was not critical that it be done immediately.

**The Weakening of the British State Vanguard**

It seems clear that Carlos III accepted the situation in January 1771 at least in part because officials in Madrid perceived the outcome of the diplomatic negotiations as sufficiently compatible with their fundamental objective of repulsing British intrusion into the southern cone of the Americas and into the Pacific Ocean. Aranda had invoked the memories of British transgressions in Honduras after the end of the Seven Years’ War to make the case that all British imperial behaviour could more or less be summed up as closely analogous to that particular episode. But in that judgement he was wrong. In Honduras, the British had been using state power to back up a long-established commercial and strategic interest in the region. In the Falklands, there was no obvious economic interest for the British in the immediate future. Although both British and Spanish statesmen clearly agreed that the islands had strategic value and that unfettered access to the Pacific was highly desirable, it was becoming clear that the Pacific Rim was not to be extremely important to either empire in the immediate future,

\textsuperscript{61} RAH 9-1981, Louis XV to Carlos III, Versailles, 24 January 1771.

\textsuperscript{62} RAH 9-1981, Carlos III to Louis XV, El Pardo, 16 March 1771.
especially in an economic sense. The growing body of evidence that there was no *Terra Australis Incognita* in temperate latitudes was also in the process of negatively reshaping European conceptions about the potential usefulness of that part of the world. As unknown space was revealed, it was increasingly apparent that the location of any future struggle for imperial development would have to be in already known space – primarily in the Atlantic World.

So although the Falklands presented a tantalizing base for one final surge of expansion into the last truly unknown part of the world, the British did not yet have the naval capacity to project significant political or economic power into the Pacific. To be sure, the voyages of James Cook represented a significant achievement in accumulating new cartographical/biological/cultural knowledge, which was an important kind of power in its own right. But it seems extremely unlikely that the two Bourbon monarchs could have failed to recognize the limitations of a British Empire that was already straining against its own internal problems. They perceived the British Empire as powerful yet vulnerable and seem to have doubted that the British would be able to quickly transform their lead in knowledge about the Pacific Ocean into any major advantages in the short term. They also did not feel that Spain had made any vital concessions to the British in the negotiations of 1771, even after the fall of the Duc de Choiseul. The deal that was signed on 22 January – very shortly before the opening of the British Parliament – called for Spain to disavow Bucareli’s actions and to restore the British garrison to the Falklands, but the Spanish crown made no official recognition of British territorial claims there.

Even more importantly, Masserano accepted Rochford’s informal promise that Britain would leave the Falklands at some point in the future.⁶³ Although this assurance was totally non-specific, it allowed the Spanish to believe that they would ultimately be able to protect the security of the broader southern cone region – the South American territory that was clearly the primary intended site of their

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⁶³ For more on Masserano’s acceptance of this point, see Scott, 154.
future imperial development. The seriousness with which they treated that promise was subsequently reflected in their regular diplomatic harassment of British officials on that topic until the settlement was finally dismantled in 1774. The degree to which the settlement can be understood as a triumph for the Spanish is also evident in the record of the debate that took place in the British Parliament during the winter of 1771 on the subject of the recent Falklands negotiations. There was considerable discontent with the manner in which the British government had handled the situation, along with a sense that an important opportunity for imperial expansion had been missed. On 13 February, Thomas Pownall, a veteran politician with ample experience in colonial governance, delivered a long address on the subject in the House of Commons.64

Pownall criticized the British approach to the crisis and broadly suggested that the cabinet had exceeded its authority by entering into parallel informal negotiations alongside and often counter to the more proper formal ones. “This business has been conducted in two different lines of negotiation,” he complained. “One (was) diplomatic, responsible (and) upon paper.” The other, he maintained, was “ministerial” and “irresponsible.”65 But even worse, in Pownall’s eyes, was the inconclusive result of the agreement.

Before the act of hostility, his (Britannic) Majesty had exerted a right of possession to the whole island and affixed the sovereignty of the Crown of Great Britain to it. Neither the possession nor sovereignty of the island is restored. The port and fort only, by exclusive, defined words, are restored – the sovereignty lies buried in disgrace – the exertion of our right is extinguished, and we now come to the question of right – the points of vacancy and occupation, possession and sovereignty, being abandoned.

64 Pownall served in various capacities in North America, including Lieutenant-Governor of New Jersey, before serving as Governor of Massachusetts from 1757 to 1759. After returning to Britain, he supported the idea of centralized control through an imperial parliament that would have included representatives from both Britain and its colonies. It is also suspected that Pownall may have been among the authors of the famous letters of Junius, which were critical of British government policies between 1769 and 1772. For a biographical sketch, see Eliga H. Gould, ‘Pownall, Thomas (1722–1805)’, Oxford Dictionary of National Biography (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004; online edition, Jan 2008), accessed 26 Aug 2011.

65 Thomas Pownall, Two speeches of an honourable gentleman on the late negotiation and convention with Spain (London: J. Almon, 1771), 20.
Pownall concluded that the entire affair was a disaster, and that the “restitution was a snare, which lays a train for another war.” What had once seemed to be a clear right of British possession was muddled by the crown’s inability to extract an explicit recognition of British rights from the Spanish, who had every reason to continue to resist the establishment of a British presence in the South Atlantic. Pownall’s analysis of the situation was both insightful and prescient, as he forecast the incredibly protracted quarrel over the rightful ownership of the islands, a dispute that remains unresolved in the early-twenty-first century.

Rice heralds the Falklands Crisis as an example of Rochford’s skilful, unswerving diplomatic fortitude and Scott argues that the crisis “strengthened Britain’s diplomatic recovery” because it convinced “foreign observers (that) ... the Bourbons had backed down when faced with Britain’s show of strength.” These are valid points. But there is also a compelling case to be made that Thomas Pownall was right all along – the agreement that ended the crisis was as much a Spanish victory as a British one. The source of that Spanish victory may be found in the tension between state-vanguard and commerce-vanguard schools of thought on the British imperial future. The creation of a base in the Falklands was very much a state-vanguard scheme. By ordering the establishment of Port Egmont, the British Admiralty deliberately tampered with the Spanish territorial sphere and aimed to project British power into the South Atlantic, with an eye to further expansion into the Pacific. But success in the Falklands depended on the subsequent attachment of commercial interests to the beachhead that had been established by state action.

It is important to recognize that what we see happening in the Falklands at the beginning of 1771 can be understood as a sign of the impending short-term failure of the wave of state-vanguard

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66 Ibid., 27.
67 Scott, 155.
imperialism that seemed so strong in the immediate aftermath of the Seven Years’ War. In the 1770s, the British Empire was still struggling to digest its recent conquests and to maintain order within its own colonies. At the same time, private commercial interests in the Empire had no particular reason to invest in the Falklands. For Rochford to promise Masserano that the British would withdraw was a clear enough expression of the tenuous nature of their presence in the islands. As Pownall so ably recognized, it was also an admission of the British crown’s inability to serve as an effective vanguard for empire, at least until it had resolved the political and fiscal problems that plagued it after the war. The political will to bear the expense of an advance base of British imperialism in the South Atlantic simply did not last past 1774. From a strictly commerce-vanguard perspective, there was no reason for the British to be there yet at all, and it was that position that won out by default as state resources were drained away in the years leading up to the crisis of the American Revolution.

This outcome did not signal the failure of state-vanguard imperialism over the long run. It would, in fact, go on to much greater heights over the course of the nineteenth century. Great Britain would eventually return to the Falklands, in a modern era in which the Age of Discovery was already a rapidly-fading memory and the development of existing, known spaces over time was more firmly entrenched as the predominant methodology of imperialism. But for the moment, truly developing the islands as an imperial possession was beyond their reach. The British might have temporarily reclaimed their settlement in the Falklands in 1771, but no permanent base appeared off the coast of Patagonia over the remainder of the eighteenth century. Furthermore, the British would mount no serious territorial challenge in the region before the Spanish Empire tore itself apart half a century later, in the wake of the Napoleonic era.

For the moment, the Spanish imperial future was reasonably secure, at least from external threats. Their South American territories, which Spanish officials projected as the site of their own
emprise’s resurgence, remained available to be reshaped by the Spanish crown without interference from internal Jesuit foes or external British ones. Although the British and Spanish would go on to skirmish over the western coast of North America in the decades that followed, the Pacific would not prove to be a vital strategic arena and would not achieve significant economic importance for another two centuries. In spite of the great rush to explore it in the wake of the Seven Years’ War, the Pacific Ocean was mostly made up of empty space and could not offer quick advantages to the problems that had begun with the British victory in that war. For the Spanish and French, there was little that could be quickly and easily assimilated to protect against British power. For the British, there was nothing that could be immediately assimilated into their empire or commercial sphere.

With the voyages of James Cook ongoing, it would also prove to be the beginning of an era without a spatial unknown – one in which the future could no longer be plotted through territories that had yet to be revealed. The future Bourbon strategy against the British would, therefore, be plotted through time, as the correspondence between the two Bourbon monarchs in the wake of the Falklands crisis illustrates. What mattered most was the defence and further development of the territory that was already in the hands of European imperialists. In that judgement we see a nascent version of a more modern form of imperialism. The power of the state as a guiding and so-called progressive force would ultimately strengthen, just as forward-thinking officials in both Britain and Spain had anticipated in the 1760s. But it would be focused on strengthening and reconfiguring each empire’s position within the now almost fully known world – a newly closed system – and that was a profound shift in the mentality of imperial competition. Stronger economies and naval forces would, in time, deliver the Bourbons from their British enemies. Or so they imagined it could be at the time, in one possible vision of their respective imperial futures.
Conclusion

The Spatial Status Quo and the Coming of Modern Imperialism

If there is a point at which historians have traditionally agreed that the early modern period gave way to the beginning of the modern period, it is the revolution that broke out in France in 1789. But perhaps an even more significant historical moment for the beginnings of many characteristics that we associate with modern states is the *annus mirabilis* of 1759. It was the striking imbalance of power between the principal crowns of Western Europe, along with the embarrassment and disruption of French and Spanish commerce that encouraged much more specific and structured thinking about the future of empire in Europe, the Atlantic, and beyond. If the power of the state to control the individual and to reshape society is something fundamentally modern, then some of the most significant tendrils that would ultimately become hardened roots of modernity can be found in the 1760s. The Seven Years’ War encouraged progressive reforms that highlighted state power in both the British and Spanish Empires. Although both agendas were once again disrupted by domestic and intra-imperial opposition in the late 1760s and 1770s, they did not disappear. The modern period would see far more developed schemes of state-directed societal evolution. At the same time, we have seen that the impetus to finish the process of global discovery was largely a by-product of the war. So the *annus mirabilis* hastened the end of the Age of Discovery and initiated the movement from the primarily meta-spatial reality of the early modern period to the meta-temporal reality of the modern period. The arrival of the structured notion of societal progress over time was part of that transformation. Its roots are not found in the French Revolution, although it certainly found expression there. They are found much more in the era of the Seven Years’ War.
The idea that there were significant political, economic and intellectual antecedents to the French Revolution throughout the eighteenth century is not new. As Darrin McMahon has observed, the Enlightenment first emerged in France much earlier in the eighteenth century, and it helped produce incipient versions of the modern left and right wings of the political spectrum – both of which were new and fundamentally modern phenomena.\(^1\) By the time the Revolution erupted, the expiration of the early modern was already essentially complete. What happened in 1789 was more a confirmation of that change than a generator of it. But what was expiring, exactly? One of the questions that I have attempted to address over the course of my study concerns itself with how the course of European imperialism was affected by major changes in how Europeans constructed their geographical conception of the world. As Ricardo Padrón has argued, the Age of Discovery opened with a profound shift in mentality as Europeans broke free of their relatively closed terrestrial domain and embraced an aquatic one that had uncertain boundaries and uncharted terrestrial components.\(^2\) The re-confinement of that once-boundless world of oceanic discovery also had a profound impact on how Europeans saw both the world and their role in it, although to date there has been little scholarship that has touched upon that issue in any substantial way.

In my study, I have endeavoured to connect the already recognized and accepted arrival of societal progressivism in Europe in the latter half of the eighteenth century with the closing of the Age of Discovery and the re-orientation of the unknown from space to time. We can easily imagine that something important changes in the minds of the key actors when the entire field of play at last comes into full view. How exactly we can and should describe that change, in all of its many facets, is a complex task that goes well beyond any single research project. But we can say that, lacking any unknown


physical locations in which one can potentially venture and outmanoeuvre ones rivals, it becomes clear that planning over time in known, established locales becomes much more important. In short, the future gained a great deal of currency as a matter of concern for European statesmen in the second half of the eighteenth century. We see elements of the urge to plan a more managed society over time in the British neo-Tories and state-vanguard imperialists of the 1760s and in Esquilache and his fellow reformers in Madrid during the same period. For better or for worse, these men were trailblazers for the kind of managed imperialism of the nineteenth century – a modern institution that was increasingly capable of disciplining and incorporating almost all of the world’s space, even the African and Asian lands that had long proven to be almost impossible for Europeans to successfully occupy.

The first part of my study showed how British imaginings of the future of their empire – and of the rival Spanish Empire – were energized by the Seven Years’ War. But the state-vanguard imperialism that seemed to be dominant during and shortly after the war was not yet able to truly thrive in the post-war environment, and it was the Whiggish, commerce-vanguard approach that ultimately remained dominant. Similarly, as my second part showed, the Spanish attempted an unprecedented expansion of state control of their empire – even going so far as to expel the Jesuits from their empire – only to meet fierce resistance from established interests. My third part examined the demise of this first great experimental surge of modern imperialism against the backdrop of the final surge of exploration into the Pacific Ocean. In the mid-to-late eighteenth century, neither empire truly possessed sufficient governmental power to follow intelligent strategic rationales to simply create empire where it did not yet exist – in this case, the Falkland Islands. Forced to abandon many of their apocryphal imperial futures in the face of organized opposition and the burden of continual expenses, the long-term establishment of modern imperialism would have to wait another few decades.
In a larger sense, it remains extremely relevant to examine questions of how geographical boundaries affect the relationship between human beings and the spaces that we occupy. In this modern era, we are forced to live in a world in which space is valued at an extraordinary premium. It is deeply ironic that, in a universe so large that it defies the human capacity to even understand its true scale, we are confined to an almost infinitesimally small marble of a world. There are not many places left to go, and certainly no unknown, inhabitable terrestrial frontiers to probe on our planet. In that respect, the way we live now is an extraordinarily aberrant period in human history. But with some additional time and ingenuity, we may be once again on the threshold of opening a new canvas of unknown space – this time, to the planets and stars above. Perhaps now is the right time – before we venture out there – to consider more deeply the history of how human societies function in environments that are filled with such vast expanses of the unknown. What will happen when the meta-temporal and meta-spatial realities are once again on an even footing? It remains a troubling unknown, but perhaps some hint of guidance can be found in the story of the demise of the early modern form of imperialism that intersects with the fortunes of the Spanish and British Empires in the 1760s and 70s.

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3 In saying so, I do not mean to diminish the tremendous efforts to explore the underwater domains of our planet. There remains much to learn about our natural aquatic world, but those places are not (yet) habitable for human beings, and so did not figure prominently in thinking about human territorial claims and habitation.
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