IMAGINING THE EMPIRE: GERMANY THROUGH THE EYES OF EARLY MODERN ENGLISH TRAVELERS

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This thesis is a study of early modern English travel narratives and the ways they presented the German states and their people to the public through the medium of print. It is based on an analysis of forty seven published travel narratives written by men and women who toured Germany and wrote about their experiences. The study situates these writings in the context of the growing sense of national identity in early modern Europe and offers an assessment of how these travel narratives contributed to a uniquely English understanding of Germany. As English travel narratives about Germany in the early modern period evolved, writers highlighted distinctive characteristics they believed Germans possessed, and compared their subjects to themselves. Travelers presented diverse and even conflicting views on a variety of subjects related to Germany. Nevertheless, by the late eighteenth century, English travelers had fashioned a common set of images, stereotypes, and characteristics of Germany and its people.
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INTRODUCTION

This thesis is an analysis of common images, stereotypes, and perceived characteristics early modern English travelers created of Germany and Germans between 1648 and 1800. I studied approximately fifty published travel narratives composed by men and women who toured Germany during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, examined these writings in light of England’s developing nationalism, and assessed the ways the authors fostered an English understanding of Germany. I chose this time scope for several reasons. After the Treaty of Westphalia, English men and women could again travel to continental Europe, and increasing numbers took the opportunity to do so.\(^1\) Correspondingly, travel literature grew in size and popularity, and narratives slowly moved toward subjectivity as authors expressed their opinions rather than facts about the lands they visited. Finally, the study ends at the Napoleonic Wars due to the numerous political changes the conflicts created in Germany and the important technological developments that changed travel. Once constrained by human, animal, and natural power, travelers availed themselves of steam powered vehicles, fundamentally altering the nature of sightseeing and creating the modern tourist industry.

I use the terms Germany and Germans in this paper in a way that is roughly synonymous with what people in the early modern era respectively called “the German

lands” and “people who lived in the German lands.” Early modern Europeans generally applied these terms to the states that were part of the Holy Roman Empire and contained people who spoke German dialects. I chose Germany and Germans mainly for stylistic reasons as repetition of the early modern phrases would prove burdensome. I do not, however, include the Habsburg territories in this study, except those conquered by Prussia in the eighteenth century. Although the Habsburg lands encompassed German speaking peoples, they also consisted of numerous territories with non-German speakers who identified with non-German cultures. In the eighteenth century, the Habsburgs expanded their holdings to include an increasing number of non-German peoples, leading historian Charles W. Ingrao to contend that “Although the Habsburgs continued to identify closely with Germany and to seek continued leadership through the imperial crown, they increasingly used it as a tool for serving the interests of the dynastic state that they had formed along and across the empire’s southeastern border.” He also writes that “many of its German-speaking subjects – retained this dual, though unequal identity well beyond early modern times....” Thus I focus only on territories that were exclusively, or nearly exclusively, peopled by German speakers.

I used English rather than British in this paper. During the early modern period, England, Scotland, and Wales united politically and their peoples began to form a common


3. Ibid.


5. Ibid.
British identity. Some travel writers were from Scotland and Wales, and thus, use of the term British might seem appropriate. The term British, however, developed over the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and historians have debated the precision of the word’s definition and the timing of its inception. Because these travel writings date prior to or during the time when British identity was developing, it is appropriate to use the older term "English." Furthermore, Katherine Turner states: “In general within the discourses of eighteenth-century travel, ‘English’ and ‘British’ are deployed synonymously.”

English travelers' accounts are important in the context of the numerous connections between England and Germany. On the one hand, English travel writers wrote fewer works about Germany than they wrote about more frequently visited regions of Italy and France. Several narratives that recount voyages to multiple states on the Continent offer less coverage of Germany than of other regions visited. These diminutions may assert the relative unimportance of the German states in English eyes. Lacking numerous classical ruins, a warm climate, or the desired high culture of the Mediterranean, central Europe was not first on most English travelers’ itineraries. Nevertheless, Germany was significant to English travelers for several reasons.

England possessed religious similarities with Germany. During the Reformation, many English exiles fled to the German states for refuge, and several German reformers made theological contributions influential to the Anglican Church. Germany was also the birthplace of the Protestant Reformation, making it a symbolically important place for English Protestants. In early modern Europe, religion was closely linked with national

identity, and, unlike France and the Italian states, which many English visited, Germany was religiously divided, possessing three officially recognized Christian groups: Calvinists, Lutherans, and Catholics, as well a significant minority of Jews. These groups, at least the Christian ones, lived in relative tolerance of each other, forming a situation similar to England where Anglicanism had to contend with a variety of nonconformist groups as well as lingering Catholicism. In both England and Germany, religious divisions were a cause of internal wars, and the religious preferences of monarchs played an important role in political maneuvering. The English, then, could relate to Germans on religious grounds.

England also possessed military and political ties with Germany. English money and troops supported various German states in their wars, and England used German mercenaries in their fight to hold their rebellious colonies in North America. During the early eighteenth century, the Hanoverian prince-elector ascended the throne of England and ruled jointly over both Hannover and England. The political systems of England and Germany were in some ways similar. Germany was not one state but many, and possessed a political structure connected to the Holy Roman Emperor, although, various local bodies provided much of the governing activity. England was centralized to a much greater degree, but English monarchs ruled over the three separate kingdoms of Wales, Scotland, and England, and also governed through a parliament. These religious, military, and political connections between the two regions meant that English travelers encountered a Germany that was both familiar and strange. An examination of the relevant travel literature thus provides insight into the characteristics that English visitors thought were particularly German, by noting unique aspects of the people and places they visited.

Early modern English travel writers fashioned a series of images, stereotypes, and characteristics that shaped how the English public perceived Germany and Germans. These
views reflected the authors’ religious and political beliefs, social statuses, and personal feelings, but they also revealed English values and attitudes. English travelers presented Germany in all its regional diversity, yet nevertheless fashioned a series of common understandings that they believed characterized the land and the German people.

Seventeenth- and eighteenth-century English visitors were generally impressed with the neatness, freedom, thriving trade, and beneficial geographic situation of many of the Protestant imperial cities in Germany. Less often, travelers described negative aspects of cities, particularly Catholic Cologne, and complained of narrow streets, ignorant people, gloomy atmospheres, and a lack of liberty. Despite these exceptions, they presented largely positive images of German cities. English travelers depicted the German countryside, with its many navigable rivers and neighboring countries, as well suited to trade and economic development, yet some believed Germany was underdeveloped due to its numerous political boundaries and its leaders' and people's ignorance, especially in Catholic lands. English travelers, while impressed with the physical beauty and fruitfulness of Saxony and southern Germany, depicted the lands of Prussia and Westphalia as dull and drab. During the eighteenth century, travelers fashioned a romantic vision of Germany, particularly around the Rhine River, as they lauded its ruined castles, verdant vineyards, and sweeping vistas.

Some visitors attributed to German nobles the elevated status of English aristocrats, describing them as polite and refined, but other travelers presented them as petty despots inclined to lavish entertainment, unnecessary formality, and frivolous spending. Travelers attributed both positive and negative qualities to common Germans. Their perceived virtues included honesty, plainness, industriousness, courage, and expertise in the mechanical arts. Women often possessed fair complexions, were well shaped, and were especially faithful
and diligent housewives. At the same time, English travelers saw Germans as obstinate, stubborn, heavy and phlegmatic, and prone to overindulgence with food and drink. Travelers sometimes described commoners as superstitious and ignorant, comments that reflected authors’ views of Catholicism in general. A few authors believed similarities existed between English and German peoples and lands, while others did not.

Travelers’ depictions of German religion were overwhelmingly negative regarding Catholic states and people, since the vast majority of British travelers who published were Protestants. The Enlightenment did little to stem the flow of anti-Catholic rhetoric. Whether Protestants or Enlightenment thinkers, travel writers castigated Catholics as superstitious, backward, and benighted. Authors heaped mocking comments on all manner of Catholic belief and practice, indicting commoners and rulers alike. Travelers presented Lutherans, however, as fellow Protestants of the middle way, who rejected both an irrational Catholicism and a rigid, if economically prosperous, Calvinism. Many German states provided at least a semblance of religious toleration, and travelers praised those that followed this practice, especially noting its economic benefits while censuring those rulers who did not. Travelers normally depicted Jews in stereotypically negative ways, presenting them as dirty and lecherous.

Travelers saw many states such as Prussia as prone to militarism. States could be well run, but they required a good ruler. Writers praised several rulers for their enlightened policies but regarded them as authoritarian. English travelers were impressed with the order and lack of crime that they believed German governments provided, but lamented the lack of political liberty. Travelers portrayed Germany as a place where rulers oppressed their subjects, and rejected the Holy Roman Empire’s political liberty as unimportant or facile. The free imperial cities were exceptions to this rule. Travelers praised Germany for its
musical culture, with authors writing about good singing both inside and outside of church. With some notable exceptions, writers were unimpressed by Germany’s visual arts or literature.

Portrayals of early modern Germany and Germans reflected the ways that the English viewed themselves and their place in the world. Travel writers often noted that Germans thought highly of England and English people and depicted some as being jealous of England. When comparing the two lands, most English writers assured their readers that England was superior to Germany in terms of personal liberty and freedom. Travelers used their journeys as opportunities to reflect on the fact that their experiences left them more grateful to be English, and happy that England was geographically separated from the Continent. Writers even used Germany’s supposed political oppression as a warning of what might happen to England if the English people did not remain vigilant and protect their liberties.
CHAPTER 1
EARLY MODERN TRAVEL

The physical environment shaped the ways travelers experienced their voyages. Tim Blanning begins a survey of the early modern era by describing how the roads and waterways impacted communication. He writes, “Almost everywhere the ‘roads’ were tracks, with no foundations or drainage and consequently deeply pitted by wheel-ruts.”¹ Travel was relatively slow and expensive partly because “Four or six draught animals were needed to pull a coach and they had to be changed every 6 to 12 miles (10 to 20 km), depending on the condition of the roads.”² Travel writers complained incessantly about the roughness of the roads and the discomfort they experienced on their journeys although this fact did not appear to lessen the number of people willing to travel. Depending on where a person was going, rivers and canals were options, but even on water, travelers could experience hardship.³ Some travelers to Germany recommended making use of the Rhine and other rivers, but based on travel writer Charles Burney’s bitter comments, waterways could also be uncomfortable. After a particularly rough voyage, in which a leaky boat roof failed to keep out rain, he complained, “I have been told, that the people of Bavaria were, at

² Ibid., 5.
³ Ibid., 19.
least, three hundred years behind the rest of Europe in philosophy, and useful knowledge.”

Travelers venturing from England to the Continent were also forced to travel by water over the English Channel. Even for such a short distance, travelers had to rely on tides and winds, and could spend as much as a whole day traversing the narrow channel or several days waiting for good weather. Thus, most travelers left England for months or years at a time before returning to their homelands, in part because of such physical constraints.

Terrain could be frustrating and expensive to traverse due to the numerous political boundaries travelers had to cross on trips across the Holy Roman Empire. The Rhine, Germany’s most important river, was clogged with at least “thirty-eight customs posts, administered by nineteen different authorities,” and the Elbe held “thirty-five customs posts... between Pirna and Hamburg.” It is little wonder that travelers complained of being checked over at the borders by what Burney called, “those inquisitorial robbers.” Once in a state, travelers sometimes found entrance into cities difficult. Germany contained independent city states surrounded by larger political entities, making travel even more complicated. Manned walls surrounded urban centers of any size, and soldiers inspected people coming in. One recent study of the city of Frankfurt claims that, during the early


6. Ibid., 30, 31.

modern period, some cities increased their vigilance over visitors and used their city walls to enforce stricter entrance requirements especially at night when the town locked its gates.\textsuperscript{8} Several English travelers noted German cities being locked at night.

Most travelers ventured forth on post-wagons which they deemed uncomfortable, crowded, and driven by sullen, stubborn, pipe-smoking men. The anonymous author of \textit{The German Spy} likened this mode of transportation to “a Country Dung-Cart, with Boards nail’d a-cross it for Seats,” and, during a twenty-six hour journey, was “cursing, at every Jolt, the Stupidity of the more ancient Germans, who could think of no better Conveniency, for the Accommodation of Strangers, and the Folly of the present Race, who will be A----s, for no other Reason, but because their Fathers were A----s before them.”\textsuperscript{9} Another anonymous author lamented that “a German postilion is very different from an English one; neither rewards nor menaces can make him move beyond one settled pace. To your offers and oaths he only replies by smoaking his pipe so much faster, without increasing the speed of his horses.”\textsuperscript{10} English travelers were afraid of being swindled by “the villainous and rascally


\textsuperscript{9} Anonymous, \textit{The Germany Spy: or, familiar letters from a gentleman on his travels thro’ Germany, to his friend in England}, 2nd ed. (London, 1740), 86, http://find.galegroup.com/ecco/infomark.do?&source=gale&prodId=ECCO&userGroupName=den0677&tabId=T001&docId=CW100614624&type=multipage&contentSet=ECCOArticles&version=1.0&docLevel=FASCIMILE.

\textsuperscript{10} Anonymous, \textit{A tour through Germany. Containing full directions for travelling in that interesting country...}, (London: 1794?), 3, http://find.galegroup.com/ecco/infomark.do?&source=gale&prodId=ECCO&userGroupName=den0677&tabId=T001&docId=CW3301239963&type=multipage&contentSet=ECCOArticles&version=1.0&docLevel=FASCIMILE.
behavior of postmasters and postilions, in this part of the world; the effects of which it is impossible to escape.”  

John Owen, a visitor to Germany in the late eighteenth century, wrote how traveling in Germany without knowing German made him feel vulnerable. On one stretch, he was put on a different carriage than his luggage, and he feared he was being robbed, although he later arrived with relief at the same hotel as his bags.  

Ann Ward Radcliffe, one of the rare women to publish an account of her travels, claimed that “The drivers in Germany are all bribed by the innkeepers, and, either by affecting to misunderstand you, or otherwise, will constantly stop at the door, where they are best paid.”  

As an alternative, some authors suggested traveling in a personal coach, but this was prohibitively expensive and only the elite could afford such luxury.

English travelers provided mixed views of the inns they slept in. Some complained of crowding and squalor and wrote humorous or exaggerated stories to depict their misery while others praised their accommodation’s cleanliness. Many noted features peculiar to German inns, such as a common room where all travelers slept on straw. Joseph Marshall traveled through several northern European countries over three years beginning in 1768.

11. Burney, The present state of music in Germany, 1:78.


He had already taken the Grand Tour to France, Italy, Spain, and parts of Germany, but wanted to know more about other regions of Europe.\textsuperscript{14} Near the city of Muenster he stopped at a barn that served as an inn. When he inquired about private accommodations, he was told that he would have to sleep in the same room as the other guests.\textsuperscript{15} The innkeeper forced him to sleep with the animals in the room as well. When awoken by a man lying on him, he beat the man with a cane believing him to an ox, with the result that “a voice, not less sonorous than that of an ox, roar’d out in High Dutch as if the devil had just caught him.”\textsuperscript{16} John Fransham composed a travel narrative around the same time as Marshall, and noted that while travel was cheap and safe in Germany, one had to sleep on a pile of straw, “where people of all ranks and degrees, from the nobleman to the beggar, lie promiscuously, with sometimes the rats tripping over their faces.”\textsuperscript{17} Several travelers noted staying in clean inns, and one even claimed, at the end of a long journey, that she looked forward to, “a hot super and soft bed, which the inns of Germany never fail to afford us in

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\textsuperscript{14} Joseph Marshall, \textit{Travels through Holland, Flanders, Germany, Denmark, Sweden, Lapland, Russia, the Ukraine, and Poland, in the years 1768, 1769, and 1770...}, (London: 1772), 1:Preface ii, http://libproxy.library.unt.edu:2142/ecco/informark.do?&source=gale&prodId=ECCO&GroupName=den0677&tabID=T001&docId=CW3301251026&type=multisize\&contentSet=ECCOA\&articles\&version=1.0&docLevel=FASCIMILE.
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\textsuperscript{15} Ibid., 2:79-80.
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\textsuperscript{16} Ibid., 2:86.
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\textsuperscript{17} John Fransham, \textit{The entertaining traveller; or, the whole world in miniature. Giving a description of every thing necessary and curious...}, rev. ed. (London, 1767), 1:48, http://find.galegroup.com/ecco/informark.do?&source=gale&prodId=ECCO&GroupName=den0677&tabId=T001&docId=CW3316884355&type=multipage\&contentSet=ECCOA\&articles\&version=1.0&docLevel=FASCIMILE.
\end{flushright}
even elegant perfection.”\(^{18}\) Though the number of negative comments about accommodation outnumbered the positive, there was not a unanimous opinion about the quality of German inns.

Another factor that impacted travel writing was the travelers’ motivation to write about his or her experiences. Attention from historians in the past twenty years gives fuller understanding to the genre. Anna Suranyi states that travel literature “described the journey of an individual who wrote down and published his adventures and impressions. It took a variety of forms, sometimes recorded as a day-to-day journal, sometimes presented as sections containing an author’s collected impressions from one geographic region.”\(^{19}\) While this definition is true of most travel literature, the genre also includes works by travel editors who only collected and published manuscripts written by others, as well as books by authors who composed fictionalized or satirical accounts without actually traveling.\(^{20}\) In fact, men such as Richard Hakluyt, who did not travel, composed some of England's earliest volumes about foreign lands by editing writings from men with travel experience.\(^{21}\)

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Although some men who composed travel works never actually traveled, the books were at least supposed to seem authentic.\textsuperscript{22} The new demand for empirical observation espoused by thinkers such as Francis Bacon and John Locke, who desired more evidence than simply, “the authority of the ancients,” helped create the quest for authentic narratives.\textsuperscript{23} Travel literature became widespread in England and increased in popularity during the early modern period. According to Suranyi, travelers produced a large number of both travel narratives and travel instruction, making these works immensely influential.\textsuperscript{24} Katherine Turner argues that travel literature was “the most consistently popular genre of the eighteenth century,” and Percy G. Adams claims that this was because, “In an age of enlightenment readers were dependent on it, not only for facts about a world that was growing both larger and very interesting, but for entertainment.”\textsuperscript{25} Travel writers thus composed works for an expectant public eager to read about the world.

Early modern travel works by English writers began to appear in the sixteenth century when “writing became an essential part of traveling; documentation an integral aspect of the activity.”\textsuperscript{26} Historians have identified two broad eras of European travel writing in the early modern era. The first, when the genre was in its latent stage, began around 1500 and extended through the early eighteenth century, while the second started

\textsuperscript{22} Oxford Dictionary.
\textsuperscript{23} The Cambridge Companion, 4.
\textsuperscript{24} Suranyi, The Genius of the English Nation, 26.
\textsuperscript{25} Turner, “British Travel Writers,” 10; Adams, Travelers and Travel Liars, 223.
\textsuperscript{26} Hulme and Youngs, The Cambridge Companion, 3.
after the restoration of Charles II and ended in the early nineteenth century. William H. Sherman claims that English travelers from the earlier period generally fit into at least eight categories although the difference between them is not always clear and some overlap exists.

The first group of writers were men like Richard Hakluyt and Samuel Purchas, who as editors used, “raw documents like itineraries and logs and included them alongside more polished narratives.” Hakluyt was motivated by factors such as personal curiosity, the desire to understand the variety of God’s creation, the promotion of English commercial ventures and, “simple patriotic pride and a desire to add to geographical knowledge.” These works, however, did not necessarily reflect English views, as they included continental sources translated from French, Latin, Greek, and several other languages.

Another type of travel writing revolved around the idea of pilgrimage. While a medieval idea, writers constructed narratives using values and ideas associated with pilgrimage through the early modern era. Explorers took up the pilgrimage mantel, thereby creating the idea of a, “secular knight,” who overcame obstacles as part of a


29. Ibid.

Important writers of this ilk included Sir Walter Raleigh and John Smith, who romanticized the account of his relationship with Pocahontas. Many travel writers interacted directly with the people and places they visited whether they wanted to or not. Several who were captured and forced into servitude by foreigners composed patriotic narratives, particularly depicting barbaric Turks or Spaniards. Other stories recount ambassadorial visits undertaken on behalf of the English government or a company. John Walter Stoye points out that this literature reflected the changing nature of English society at the beginning of this period. He cites the rise of the state as an important impetus for travel as well as the, “new commercial links between England and various European and Mediterranean countries.” He notes the growing importance of diplomacy as a motivating factor for travel, and the large number of people attached to such ventures. Diplomats sometimes published and sold their reports, which provided the public with important insights into the people and places England was coming in contact with.

Still other types of travel literature depicted the adventures of pirates like Sir Francis Drake and William Dampier who left a mixed legacy of aid to their nation done through illicit


32. Ibid., 26-27.

33. Ibid., 27.

34. Ibid.


36. Ibid., 26-27.
means. Scientists also ventured forth, making careful observations about the world they found, and some, like Dampier, fulfilled the role of both scientist and adventurer. While often associated with later travelers, this type of literature had its genesis during the early modern period.

Finally, men such as Thomas Coryate, Fynes Moryson, and John Taylor undertook voyages for personal interest, adventure, or fame. Their books had a picaresque quality and included interesting tales and feats of personal achievement. Near the beginning of his work, Thomas Coryate stated that “Of all the pleasures in the world trauell is (in my opinion) the sweetest and most delightful,” and listed travel’s many advantages, including the ability to meet great minds, visit historical sites, and learn new languages. In another example, Taylor took a trip to Scotland during which he, “travelled on foot, pledging to take no money, and not to beg any food, drink, or lodging on the way, a handicap sufficient to persuade 1650 sponsors... to pledge to pay for an account of his adventures if he survived to publish them.”

A wide array of motives and literary forms characterize the second phase of early modern English travel, begun with the restoration of Charles II and ended with the advent of mass tourism in the early nineteenth century. However, the central motive for many travels


38. Ibid., 29.


was the idea of the Grand Tour.\textsuperscript{41} While characterizing the experiences of the upper class, the tour did not constitute all of the travel literature about Germany during this period. Additionally, much of the Grand Tour’s literature consisted of unpublished or private manuscripts.\textsuperscript{42} Historians have also noted a move in the late eighteenth century away from Grand Tour narratives and toward literature produced by and for the emerging middle class.\textsuperscript{43} These middle class works were sometimes, “a site of struggle for competing claims to moral virtue – claims which are frequently expressed in the gender-inflected language of class and nation.”\textsuperscript{44} Middle class travel narratives also mocked and satirized upper-class travelers as bumbling aristocrats, and increasingly portrayed the lands they encountered through bourgeoisie eyes.\textsuperscript{45} Thus, while I include Grand Tour narratives in my study, I do not focus on the tour, due to the diversity of eighteenth-century sources, the variety of motivations for publication, and the fact that my work is concerned with the portrayal of Germans as presented to the wider public rather than private audiences.

The authors in this study traveled for a variety of reasons, many of which fit in with the broad trends listed above. At least six travelers were in or passing through Germany as part of a diplomatic mission, although a few were not officially part of the mission. Lady Mary Wortley, for example, produced a lengthy work based on her travels with her husband

\textsuperscript{41} Buzard, “The Grand Tour,” 37-38.

\textsuperscript{42} Ibid., 38.

\textsuperscript{43} Turner, \textit{British Travel Writers} 25, 28.

\textsuperscript{44} Ibid., 55.

\textsuperscript{45} Ibid., 60.
through Europe to the Ottoman Empire. At least five men traveled for educational purposes, most of whom did so as tutors of wealthy aristocrats. Other authors traveled for personal health, as part of business ventures, as participants in the Grand Tour, for religious reasons, or to seek fame and fortune as travel writers. John Ray traveled in part because he was interested in cataloging vegetation that did not grow in England and wanted to see the various types of plants that other physical settings produced. Charles Burney determined to visit Germany and the United Provinces in order to explore their music and highlight the talented musicians there. Oculist John Taylor composed a tedious and lengthy tale about his travels to Europe which Roy Porter describes as one of, “endless name-dropping of eminent people treated and grand ladies flirted with at masked balls,” though he does concede that Taylor, “was clearly a tireless traveller in pursuit of glory in his craft.”

Fitting with the broader trend in travel literature, still other writers in this study chose to write as an aid to those who would later venture forth. After undergoing a journey to the Continent as a tutor to a wealthy young man, John Breval decided to publish several accounts of his experiences to help those who would follow after him. In the preface to his book he wrote, “The spending of our Time well or ill while we are abroad has so great


an Influence upon all our future Lives, that I cannot but admire the Unconcern with which
some of our Countrymen...set about and go through an Affair of that Weight and
Importance.”⁵⁰ Thomas Nugent began his travelogue by describing the ways that travel
literature benefited people in the past and how his current work would help his countrymen
who choose to venture forth understand the lands and people they would encounter.⁵¹
Other travelers did in fact use these works, especially wealthy young men on their tour
where they followed a generally accepted route based on published sources.⁵²

Patriotism also motivated men and women to publish narratives about their travels
in Germany. William Carr, an Englishman who lived in Holland for several years, published a
work on his travels around northern Europe in 1693. At the beginning of his account, he
stated that, because the people of Holland, Germany, Denmark and Sweden were most like
the English, his work would aid his home country.⁵³ What Carr had in mind when he

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⁵⁰ Breval, John, Remarks on several parts of Europe... (London: 1726), 2: preface,
http://find.galegroup.com/ecco/infomark.do?&source=gale&prodId=ECCO&userGroupName=den0677&tabID=T001&docId=CW3303094954&type=multipage&contentSet=ECCOArticles&version=1.0&docLevel=FASCIMILE.

⁵¹ Thomas Nugent, The grand tour; or, a journey through the Netherlands, Germany, Italy and France, 2nd ed. (London: 1756), 1:preface vi,
http://find.galegroup.com/ecco/infomark.do?&source=gale&prodId=ECCO&userGroupName=den0677&tabID=T001&docId=FW103916636&type=multipage&contentSet=ECCOArticles&version=1.0&docLevel=FASCIMILE.


⁵³ William Carr, Travels through Flanders, Holland, Germany, Sweden, and Denmark Containing an account of what is most remarkable in those countries... (London, 1693), preface,
predicted positive results was that, though the people in these places were similar to the English, his account would, “satisfie the Curiosity of my Countrymen, who have not been in said Places, and convince, if possible, all of them, that no Country that ever I was in, affords so great Conveniencies for the generality of People to live in, as the Kingdom of England doth.”

Though English pride was not the sole reason travelers wrote, some authors noted that their travels left them more appreciative of their native land. After several years on the Continent, Sacheverell Stevens ended his account by stating that, when he was finally back in England he “felt incredible satisfaction at the sight of my native country once more...a country where the enjoyment of real happiness is only to be found, whose present government, religion, liberties and laws, are the envy and admiration of other nations.”

Whether these patriotic sentiments were genuine or simply a justification for travel in the face of those who disapproved of foreign voyages can only be investigated on a case by case basis. Scholars have recognized social tensions about the value of travel and travel writing in early modern England. Historians have claimed that, oftentimes, those who chose to publish stories about their overseas experiences felt the need to justify their time spent in other lands as being beneficial to their own land. Sara Warneke analyzed the debate that travel created in England beginning in the mid-sixteenth century, and found that some English thinkers opposed foreign travel as they were afraid that those who spent time


55. Sacheverell Stevens, *MISCELLANEOUS REMARKS MADE On the SPOT, in a late SEVEN YEARS TOUR THROUGH France, Italy, Germany and Holland* (London, 1756), 390, http://find.galegroup.com/ecco/infomark.do?&source=gale&prodId=ECCO&userGroupName=den0677&tabId=T001&docId=CB3330084457&contentType=multipage&contentSet=ECCOArticles &version=1.0&docLevel=FASCIMILE.
abroad would begin acting in ways that reflected corrupt European values rather than good English ones. Andrew Hadfield argues that, during the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries travel literature was, “viewed with suspicion by the upper echelons of society,” and that “travel was carefully controlled and restricted so that a licence had to be granted to any would-be European traveller” because of fears about its negative impact on England. He states that early travel writers were thus afraid of being suppressed and that these political issues impacted how and what they wrote about. Though these works only refer to literature written during the early part of the period under review, they do show that the fear of foreign influence affected some authors. Based on the content analyzed below, later authors felt less constrained and even used travel as a means of criticizing government policy.

In short, there were diverse reasons that English men and women traveled to and wrote about Germany during the early modern era, and their experiences cannot be lumped in simple categories. Below is a table that summarizes the travelers covered in this work and the main reasons for their travel. The book titles have been shortened for convenience, with full titles in the bibliography. The motivation behind some journeys remains obscure and nothing is known about some authors.


58. Ibid., 5.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pub. Date</th>
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<td>John Burbury</td>
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<td>1673</td>
<td>Observations...made in a Journey</td>
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<td>Some Letters</td>
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<td>1693</td>
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<td>Observations concerning</td>
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<td>Several years travels</td>
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<td>1753</td>
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<td>1756</td>
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<td>1785</td>
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<td>Martin Sherlock</td>
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<td>The Wanderer</td>
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CHAPTER 2

CITY AND COUNTRY

Cities were important destinations for early modern travelers to Germany. Unlike England, which at this time consisted of the major city of London and few other urban centers of note, Germany contained numerous important towns, several of which were independent city states. Around the year 1700, approximately 13% of the German population lived in urban areas, a number that grew to over 25% by 1800.\(^1\) England possessed only three towns larger than 15,000 people, while the majority of state capitals in Germany were more populous than that, and Germany included numerous smaller towns.\(^2\)

German cities were also important centers of trade and culture as many of them were located on major rivers or on other strategic areas. English travelers spent considerable amounts of time in German cities as they conducted business, engaged in diplomacy, and saw the sights. Travel writers in this study included nearly thirty cities or towns in their narratives, although they visited certain cities more than others. They wrote most frequently about Frankfurt, Cologne, Mannheim, and Hamburg, with around fifteen authors providing extensive coverage of these cities, although several other towns were not far behind. Approximately ten authors referenced Hannover, Bonn, Berlin, Dresden, Coblenz, Munich, Mentz, Heidelberg, Nuremburg, and Augsburg, and some spent numerous pages reporting on their experiences. Approximately five authors included Aix-la-Chapelle, Dusseldorf, Bremen, Magdeburg, and Lubeck in their narratives, while only one or two

\(^1\) Peter H. Wilson, *From Reich to Revolution: Germany History 1558-1806*, (Hampshire: PALGRAVE MACMILLAN, 2004), 71.

\(^2\) Ibid.
authors described Kassel, Spire, Stuttgart, Danzig, Munster, Cleve, Paderborn and Worms. In their depictions of German cities, travel authors reflected their religious and cultural biases. One example is the way that most writers ascribed positive attributes to the free imperial Protestant cities. In particular, authors praised the cities of Frankfurt, Nuremberg, and Hamburg for their thriving trade, political freedom, and general prosperity.

Frankfurt received the largest number of positive descriptors as visitors praised its trade based wealth, thriving population, and political liberty. In the late seventeenth century, William Carr stated that Frankfurt had a large population with many merchants and two important yearly fairs.\(^3\) Near the end of the eighteenth century, John Moore’s work, published in 1779, described Frankfurt as a spacious and clean city that was religiously tolerant and contained well-dressed inhabitants.\(^4\) Several authors published positive reports about the city in the 1790s. An anonymous author wrote that it was, “a fine large city. Excepting Hamburgh, this is the only imperial city which keeps up all its pristine splendor,” while also noting its many lovely buildings and wealthy inhabitants.\(^5\) He believed Hamburg imported too many products but had nothing to fear because, “It lies in the midst of the best part of Germany, in a country the natural wealth of which is favourable to luxury, and

\(^3\) Carr, *Travels through Flanders, Holland, Germany*, 88.


which is broken into so many small states, that there is no cause to fear the prohibition of foreign wares."

Charles Este traveled through Germany in 1793 and raved about the freedom and prosperity he found in Frankfurt. After complaining of the dismal country surrounding the city, he stated: “At Frankfort, however, and all immediately around it, they live and move again-naturally showy, and rationally gay-in the blessings of a Republic, formed on independence, toleration, and peace.”

He described the city as possessing a large number of imported goods, low taxes, elected magistrates, and no debtors or criminals.

Ann Ward Radcliffe took a journey to parts of Europe in the summer of 1794 with her husband William Radcliffe. From 1790 to 1793, William worked as an editor for a radical journal in London during the early days of the French Revolution, which the paper praised wholeheartedly.

While Ann Ward composed much of the travel narrative and is listed as the author, her husband contributed to large parts of the work, especially on those devoted to economy and politics. While they portrayed most of Germany as oppressive and miserable, it is telling that the Radcliffes made one of their few positive comments


8. Ibid., 254-256.


10. Ibid.

about Frankfurt. They described the inhabitants as being distinct from other Germans and the city as being a place that traded liberally while they characterized nearby states as being ruled by “arbitrary power, ignorance and poverty.”

Hamburg was another large imperial Protestant city that English visitors frequently praised. Edward Browne, a physician, went on at least two tours of Europe and wrote of his travels in a well-received book that young men on the Grand Tour later used as a guide. He praised the city of Hamburg and especially noted the number of wealthy English merchants who plied their trade there. Around sixty years later, Thomas Frankz referred to the city’s renowned reputation by stating that it was, “so famous and well known, that it would be mere trifling to tell you it is large, rich, well built, strong, and populous, without attempting a particular Description.” In 1753, Jonas Hanway published a travel work that described his journey to the area around the Caspian Sea and his subsequent return through Europe, including stops in Germany. His depiction of Hamburg was mixed. While he termed it, “a great trading city” and, “a magazine of the different produce, and merchandize of the


trading world,” he also described its trade as being in decline and stated that the commerce of a British trading company in the city was not as considerable as it has been. He opined that “The better sort of people here are extremely affable…the easy circumstances of the greatest part of the inhabitants, have introduced a species of insolence and imposition on strangers, peculiar to a republican state: the common people tread close upon the heels of those of higher rank.” This demonstrates that, although most visitors described Hamburg positively, there were dissenting voices.

Later visitor’s comments about Hamburg were almost all positive with a mix of critique as well. Most remarked negatively on the town’s confined spaces but found much else to value in it. Charles Burney, the man who toured Germany to investigate its music, provided a typical comment when he said of the city, the, “streets are ill built, ill paved and narrow, but crowded with people who seem occupied with their own concerns; and there is an air of cheerfulness, industry, plenty, and liberty, in the inhabitants of this place, seldom to be seen in other parts of Germany.” He praised the people there by stating: “The common people were to-day clean, and looked free from want; a sight not very frequent in other parts of Europe, through which I had lately passed.” John Owen, who visited Germany in the early 1790’s also lauded the pleasant business of the trading city, and


17. Ibid., 2:276.


19. Ibid., 256.
compared it to the military feel of Berlin.\textsuperscript{20} “The variety of its commerce,” he wrote, “and the opulence of its inhabitants, have introduced into its societies a mode of life in a high degree sumptuous and magnificent.”\textsuperscript{21}

Many English travelers commented favorably on Nuremburg during the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, but interest in the city seems to have faded by the time of the French Revolution. Edward Browne spent time there in the late 1660s and described the city as, “the fairest City that I saw in Germany; the Houses most of them of Free-stone, very high; and divers of them painted on the outside, and adorned with gilded balls on top; many are of six or seven Stories high.”\textsuperscript{22} John Breval, in 1738, wrote of the fine stone houses, numerous bridges, well-built Guild Hall, and many types of manufactured goods produced there.\textsuperscript{23} Only two visitors commented on the city in the twenty-five years before 1800, and both mentioned that, while it was still a nice town, it was no longer what it once was. When Francis Garden published a book about his travels for health in the 1780s, he claimed that Nuremburg’s economic decline was due to Holland’s and England’s rise in

\begin{itemize}
\item 20. Owen, \textit{Travels into Different Parts of Europe}, 2:555.
\item 21. Ibid., 556-557.
\item 22. Browne, \textit{An account of several travels through a great part of Germany}, 60.
\end{itemize}
productivity. Nevertheless, he concluded about the people: "their condition evinces the happy consequences of civil and religious liberty," and he discovered, "no marks of that poverty and misery which infest the territories and towns, both of great monarchs, and inferior princes." Similarly, an anonymous visitor in the early 1790s, claimed, perhaps sarcastically, that the city contained many patricians, and, "Some of them are very rich, but so haughty, that no body visits them, and they scarce visit one another. They are apt to ape the noble Venetians in everything, and to tyrannize over the people."

Hannover is a particularly interesting city because of its dynastic connections with England. In 1701 parliament enacted the Act of Settlement as a way of ensuring a Protestant royal succession, an act which placed James I’s grand-daughter, the electress of Hannover, in line for the throne. When George I became the king upon the death of Queen Anne in 1714, the same monarch ruled the two states. Prior to the Act of Settlement or the ascension of the Hanoverians, few travel writers covered Hannover but many more works on the city appeared during the later years of the eighteenth century. William Carr visited Hannover’s royal court and lavishly praised the royal family for their learned princesses and

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25. Ibid., 161, 162.


“graceful,” “kind,” and, “valiant” prince. In 1705, the year of George I’s ascension, John Toland produced an incredibly fawning account of the courts of Hannover and Prussia. Toland was a freethinker who took part in the diplomatic mission that presented the act to the Hanoverian royal family because he heavily promoted the Protestant succession. He made a favorable impression on Queen Sophia Charlotte of Prussia whom he spoke with many times during the trip as well as in a subsequent visit a year later. His work heaped praise on the monarchs of both states and described the city of Hannover as a thriving place that possessed a well-furnished palace.

Many eighteenth-century works praised the city’s physical beauty and the pleasantness of its immediate environs. Typical of such admiration was John Fransham’s account undertaken in the mid-eighteenth century. In surveying the various cities he visited, he stated that Hannover was a strongly fortified, populous, “handsome well built city.” These types of compliments were typical of the many that English visitors made about cities, but one unique aspect of their coverage of Hannover was that nearly every writer took the opportunity to compare it with England. For some this consisted of comparing physical

28. Carr, Travels through Flanders, Holland, Germany, 100-101.


30. Ibid.


32. Fransham, The entertaining traveller, 1:59.
appearances and for others the nature and character of the people, but all but one of the authors surveyed in this study compared the two favorably and found similarities between them. As early as 1735, when Thomas Frankz published his narrative, some English were making connections between their country and Hannover. One important point that these authors stressed was the similarity between the values of the inhabitants and their own. Upon arrival in the town, Frankz noted that it reminded him of Lincoln, England, and rejoiced in the fact that “Here I had the singular Pleaseure in beholding the Liberty and Prosperity of my Fellow Subjects, and in hearing their Prayers and tender Wishes for the Health and Prosperity of their Majesties, the Royal Family, and the whole English Nation; every Native, whereof, in travelling thro’ this Country, is shewn the utmost Civilities and Respect by all Ranks of People.” 33 Later in the eighteenth century, John Moore wrote of the city as being one that “has more the air of an English town” than anywhere else in Germany and that “the English manners and customs gain ground every day among the inhabitants. The genial influence of freedom has extended from England to this place. Tyranny is not felt, and ease and satisfaction appear in the countenances of the citizens.” 34 In 1792, Francis Garden was still favorably inclined toward the people of Hannover. While only in the city for a short time, he stated: “I regret very much, that I cannot make a large residence among our fellow subjects, who appear to me a sober, sensible people; and, in all ranks, unaffectedly


34. Moore, A View of Society and Manners, 1:197.
disposed to shew favour and kindness to British travellers." These authors emphasized freedom, prosperity, humanity, and loyalty to the king as being common bonds between the two peoples.

Other authors chose to describe the customs, manners, or physical similarities between the two. Sacheverell Stevens, in 1756, wrote of Hannover being, “a fine large antient town,” that has somewhat the same look as some English towns, and situated within a “pleasant” and “fruitful” country. After lamenting the poor quality of the land on the way from Minden and the lack of country manor houses on the road to Hannover, he described the city as located on a, “plain more fruitful than most that I have passed lately, and is a tolerably pleasant country.” Hester Lynch Piozzi complained of the road to Hannover as going through dreary country, but, when she arrived in the city, noted: “The cleanliness of the windows, the manner of paving and lighting the streets at Hannover, put us in mind a little of some country towns in the remoter provinces of England; and there seems to be likewise a little glimpse of British manners, dress, &c. breaking through the common and natural fashions of the country.”

35. Francis Garden, Travelling memorandums, made in a tour upon the continent of Europe in the years 1786, 1787, and 1788, (London: 1791), 3:272
36. Stevens, MISCELLANEOUS REMARKS, 382.
*A tour through Germany*, claimed upon entering Hannover that it was, “a neat, thriving and agreeable city, well paved and lighted, has more the air of an English town than any other in Germany, and the English manners and customs gain ground every day among the inhabitants.” 

A few authors took the opportunity of a visit to express criticism of government policy or note the differences between England and Hannover. In his politically opinionated work, Joseph Marshall argued that a recent conflict, probably the Seven Year’s War, was fought to aid the Prussians and not protect Hannover. He complained that the English crown was wasting money with its policy of fighting wars on behalf of the German states and would have preferred that the English attack the French directly. He claimed that protecting Hannover would have been a waste at any rate, and that the 40 million pounds spent on its supposed defense “[wa]s not worth more than half the sum; so that never was such a vast sum expended to so poor a purpose.” Another dissenting voice came from Jonas Hanway who claimed, “The connexion which ENGLISH subjects are supposed to have with HANOVER, had almost betrayed me into a persuasion that I should find myself at home there. It is a vulgar notion, that ENGLAND is the chief support of that electorate; how ill founded it may be, I shall not take the pains to enquire; but I could not avoid observing a certain coldness and indifference in ENGLISH travellers in regard to HANOVER, who, though


40. Ibid., 91-92.

41. Ibid., 94.
anxious in the dominions of foreign princes, to see things less worthy of note, are apt to pass over this city without any attention.”\(^{42}\) Despite the claim that English visitors felt Hannover insignificant, the number of those who wrote positively about their experiences there argues for its importance. These travel narratives thus provided a connection between England and a part of Germany. The authors linked Hannover and their home country and usually claimed for one the virtues and values of the other. They stressed the beauty and cleanliness of the city and favorably compared it to the attractiveness of English towns. Even those who did not like the comparison had to rebut the commonly held idea that they were similar.

English travelers presented the cities in the southwest, particularly along the Rhine River, as having picturesque and charming views, and usually portrayed them positively. Charles Este called Manheim, “one of the most handsome little towns in Europe. And it is so from the width of the streets, their regularity, and the sections and intersections being all at right-angles. Not that this excludes the pleasure of variety.”\(^{43}\) John Moore claimed that Heidelberg was surrounded by, “charming hills perfectly cultivated,” and nearly ten years later, Adam Walker added that it contained, “the finest ruin of a castle my eyes ever beheld,” from which he had, “a most romantic view; mountains rise from the town til their


\(^{43}\) Este, *A journey in the year 1793*, 332.
tops are almost lost in the clouds.”  

Travelers provided mixed reviews of Mainz though they all claimed the area around it was pretty. Thomas Cogan published a work in 1793 that covered a trip down the Rhine. He stated: “On the back ground, distant hills form a majestic amphitheatre, affording due space for tillage, while they undertake to furnish wines of the richest flavor.”  

He went on to say that “Mentz itself does not answer to the flattering ideas formed of it at a distance. The streets are narrow and irregular, nor are they well paved.”  

Authors also provided a mixed view of Bonn and Coblenz, with some authors noting the region’s poverty and others actually claiming it was the best spot on the Rhine. On his tour in which he traveled most of the length of the river, Thomas Cogan compared Bonn to Cleves and stated that, while he enjoyed the city, he preferred Bonn because “It is better adapted to the solitary evening walk; or to little excursions either on horse-back, or in a carriage; and much better supplied with agreeable society, if the general report be true.”  

English visitors usually praised Berlin and Potsdam. Most found these cities to be neat and orderly though some thought them rather drab and boring. Many stated that they 

44. Moore, A View of Society and Manners, 155; Adam Walker, Ideas, suggested on the spot in a late excursion through Flanders, Germany, France, and Italy (London: 1790), 78-79, http://find.galegroup.com/ecco/infomark.do?&source=gale&prodId=ECCO&userGroupName=den0677&tabID=T001&docId=CW3301502348&type=multipage&contentSet=ECCOArticles&version=1.0&docLevel=FASCIMILE.  


46. Ibid., 103.  

47. Ibid.,11.
seemed to be inundated with soldiers. John Toland found the streets to be “very large and noble, much better pav’d than is usual in Germany, and planted in most parts of the Town with Rows of Trees as in your Provinces, which serves for profit as much as for pleasure, tho little practis’d in England.”

He praised the nice canals, new houses, impressive palaces, and large amount of trade carried on there. Thomas Nugent believed Berlin to be “justly esteemed one of the most beautiful cities in Germany, being situated on one side in a fruitful country with vineyards, and on the other, in a sandy soil, amongst woods full of game and marches.” He mentioned the, “handsome canals” and “magnificent” royal palace, though the king’s apartment did not impress him. Hester Lynch Piozzi did not find the architecture of the city particularly interesting, but, she noted, “if uniformity of appearance can compensate for elegance or architecture, and space make amends for beauty, Berlin, certainly deserves to be seen, and he who planned it, to be highly commended.”

She described the town as being peopled almost entirely by soldiers, praised the clean, straight streets and buildings, but concluded that Berlin was "the first place of any consequence I have felt in a hurry to run away from." English visitors felt that Potsdam had the same characteristics as Berlin. John Moore thought the city nice and well

48. Toland, An account of the courts, 12.

49. Ibid., 12-14.


51. Ibid., 187-189.

52. Piozzi, Observations and reflections, 2:351-352.

53. Ibid., 354.
ordered, and noted that soldiers there were quartered in homes.\textsuperscript{54} Jonas Hanway likewise found it to be neat and orderly with nice gardens and handsome stables, but that “it seems to be intirely occupied by soldiers.”\textsuperscript{55} Nathaniel William Wraxall believed Potsdam to be “more in the light of a military station, or as the head-quarters of an army in cantonment, than as a city in the common acceptation of the term,” and described it as gloomy and cheerless.\textsuperscript{56}

The way that travelers portrayed Cologne presents an interesting contrast to their largely positive comments about Germany’s other major cities. Though most of the cities mentioned above were strongly Protestant, Cologne was predominantly Roman Catholic. Based on travelers’ comments, this difference in religion was a major reason that English travelers reacted so negatively toward the city and its inhabitants. They found it to be full of Catholic superstition, a dirty city that was a horrible place to visit.

On the one hand, some English travelers praised the city by describing it as being nice, clean, and wealthy. On the other hand, most travelers from the late seventeenth to the late eighteenth centuries were contemptuous of the city’s appearance and people and connected these negative aspects with the city’s Catholicism. William Carr wrote about the city in harsh terms in 1693, claiming: “It is much decayed within these Hundred Years,

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{54} Moore, \textit{A View of Society and Manners}, 205.
\item \textsuperscript{55} Hanway, \textit{An historical account}, 2:207.
\item \textsuperscript{56} Nathaniel William Wraxall, Memoirs of the courts of Berlin, Dresden, Warsaw, and Vienna, in the years 1777, 1778, and 1779 (London: 1799), 1:254, 256.
\end{itemize}

http://find.galegroup.com/ecco/infomark.do?&source=gale&prodId=ECCO&userGroupName=den0677&tabID=T001&docId=CW3305563435&type=multipage&contentSet=ECCOArticles&version=1.0&docLevel=FASCIMILE.
having been much Priest-ridden; a Misfortune that hath undone many other great Cities.”

He argued that its productivity had declined because the Jesuits had forcibly removed the town’s Protestants and that it contained the same number of inhabitants as a mere parish in London. Forty years later Thomas Frankz provided a deleterious account of the city when he wrote of being afraid to walk its poorly constructed streets on which he was pursued by thronging beggars who, “I have often wondered should so long escape the Censure of the Magistrates.” Though he mentioned a few beautiful features, he seemed to share the sentiments of an acquaintance of his who he quoted: “Cologn, thou Sink-hole of the German Rhine, Unpleasant, and unhealthful is thy Soil; Rude and unnatural are they Natives here, giving respect to none, but as such as bear Hellish-like Minds, and a seditious Air. Farewel.”

The anonymous author of A tour through Germany also wrote of the city as being infested with beggars who he claimed, “roam through the city and besiege the travellers with an insolence and rudeness not to be conceived.” He summarized his views by stating, “Upon the whole, Cologne is at least a century behind the rest of Germany. Bigotry, ill-manners, clownishness, slothfulness, are visible every where.” There is a clear difference between the way travelers imagined and presented a Catholic city like Cologne and the Germany's foremost Protestants towns.

57. Carr, Travels through Flanders, Holland, Germany, 83.

58. Ibid.

59. Frankz, A tour through France, Flanders, and Germany, 14.

60. Ibid., 15.

61. Anonymous, A tour through Germany, 10.

62. Ibid., 12.
Visits to cities provided travelers ample opportunity to comment on urban life and recount what they believed to be the city’s virtues and vices. The overwhelming majority of English travel writers covered in this study provided positive comments about the cities of Germany but varied somewhat based on region or religion. They praised the large, urban, Protestant trading centers for their freedom and commerce, and depicted the cities in the southwest as being charming and beautiful. They viewed the cities in Brandenburg as regular, spacious, and uniform, and Cologne as the worst major city in Germany.

Because of the importance of cities to travelers, and the fact that they spent much time in them, they wrote more about urban areas than rural ones. They did, however, describe their experiences on roads through the countryside or in small villages and favored certain areas over others. As with cities, English travelers were most impressed by the southern parts of Germany, especially around the Rhine River. During the eighteenth century this area became a focal point of romantic sentiment and was depicted as a place covered with hilly vineyards, ruined castles, and sweeping vistas. They also praised Saxony for its fruitful productivity. Travelers presented Brandenburg, however, and to a much greater extent Westphalia as barren and tedious, with the latter being considered the least attractive area of Germany.

Even before the beginning of the Romantic Movement, English travelers lauded the Rhine region of Germany. In the late seventeenth century, Gilbert Burnet celebrated the area by stating, “The lower Palatinate is certainly one of the sweetest Countries of all
In traveling from Heidelberg to Frankfurt, he described the pleasantness of the vineyards, cornfields, meadows, trees, hills and wine of the area. Later in the eighteenth century, authors expanded upon these early positive views, and spent numerous pages describing the delights of the region and why it was a premier location for English visitors. Christopher Hervey toured Portugal, Spain, Italy, and Germany during the late 1750s and early 1760s. He devoted most of the three volumes he wrote about his voyages to non-German lands, but one of the few places he visited in Germany was the northern Rhine. “We passed through a most beautiful country,” he wrote, “as hills rose gently on each side the river cloathed with the Rheinish grape.” Another travel writer, Francis Russell, published an account of his tour in Germany and France in 1786 and rhapsodized about the Rhine between Bonn and Coblenz. He stated: “The Rhenish wine, whose ripening branches form an azure mantle for all these hills, delight the traveller’s eye, and produce a refreshment so necessary against the sultry heats collected in this truly romantic vale.” He went on to


64. Ibid., 293.

65. Christopher Hervey, Letters from Portugal, Spain, Italy and Germany, in the years 1759, 1760, and 1761 (London: 1785), 3:523-524, http://find.galegroup.com/ecco/infomark.do?&source=gale&prodId=ECCO&userGroupName=den0677&tabID=T001&docId=CW3301388350&type=multipage&contentSet=ECCOArticles&version=1.0&docLevel=FASCIMILE.

66. Francis Russell, A descriptive journey through the interior parts of Germany and France... (London: 1786), 9, http://find.galegroup.com/ecco/infomark.do?&source=gale&prodId=ECCO&userGroupName=den0677&tabID=T001&docId=CW3302243509&type=multipage&contentSet=ECCOArticles&version=1.0&docLevel=FASCIMILE.
write about his journey away from Coblenz and into the hills where he saw, “many neat houses, gardens, and ornaments as if affixed to their front, and tipped with spires, now glittering to the dawning rays of the morning, and throwing off the sable shades of the night, as if preparing for a higher approach towards Heaven, to waft up their solemn tolls of hosannas to the great Author of so sublime a scene!”

It was in the last two decades of the eighteenth century, however, that the number of authors writing about romantic visions of the Rhine increased. During this time, travelers published no less than seven works describing trips around the river, an interesting increase at a time when Europe was entering a period of prolonged warfare. In his depiction of the Rhine, Charles Este claimed: “there are none in Europe with more grandeur than the Rhine,” and, “In this grandeur of the Rhine scenery, art too is grand, as well as nature. The power of cultivation is seen on every surface of the soil.” That same year, Ann Ward Radcliffe and her husband, in the midst of a slew of complaints about the people and places of Germany, described some beautiful views on the Rhine. She wrote: “an old castle itself, now and then, appeared on the summit of a mountain somewhat remote from the shore; an object rendered sweetly picturesque, as the sun’s rays lighted up its towers and fortified terraces, while the scrubby steeps below were in the shade.” Joshua Wilkinson traveled through France, Germany, and Italy in the early 1790s and published a book about his experiences in 1795. On the road from Mainz to Cologne he wrote, “the eye is variously struck by objects

68. Este, A journey in the year 1793, 220.
69. Radcliffe, A journey made in the summer of 1794, 155.
sublime and terrific, or beautiful and rich, immense rocks, populous towns, and close-set villages, woods of various hues, and vines, a country wide and extended, environed by hills laden with vineyards and woods, and sometimes so narrow, dark, and savage, as scarcely to afford a bed for this immense river.” These depictions of the Rhine's beauty are a sampling of the types of remarks travelers made, and it is clear that, by the close of the eighteenth century, the region along that river was considered the most beautiful in Germany.

Travelers portrayed both Brandenburg and Westphalia, two north German states, as barren and miserable. They generally saw Brandenburg as inferior because of its harsh climate and poor soil. Nathaniel William Wraxall visited some of Germany's major courts in the late 1770s. In traveling from Potsdam to Berlin he wrote about the countryside, stating: “It is difficult to imagine a more sterile tract of country than that which separates the two cities. The whole is an expanse of sand, exhibiting scarcely any marks of cultivation, thinly peopled, dreary, and resembling a wilderness, rather than the vicinity of a great metropolis.” While he believed that the poor soil contributed to this sad situation, he also blamed the government of Frederick II for its desire to expand its own glory rather than provide for its people. Other authors also described the sterility of the countryside. John

70. Joshua L. Wilkinson, The wanderer; or anecdotes and incidents, the result and occurrences of a ramble on foot, through France, Germany, and Italy, in 1791 and 1793 (London: 1798), 2:172, http://find.galegroup.com/ecco/infomark.do?&source=gale&prodId=ECCO&userGroupName=den0677&tabID=T001&docId=CW3300092502&type=multipage&contentSet=ECCOArticles&version=1.0&docLevel=FASCIMILE.


72. Ibid., 253-254.
Moore, for example described it, “as naked and sandy as the deserts of Arabia,” and Hester Lynch Piozzi called it, “tedious, flat, and tristful.”

English travelers believed Westphalia to be Germany's worst region. A man warned the anonymous author of *The German Spy* to, “prepare to look Poverty and Misery in the Face, in their most ugly shapes,” when he entered the region, and once there complained of the bad bread, shoddy houses, a hovel like public house, and ugly, dirty people. He told of sleeping in straw, “with the Cows champing their Straw on the one Side, the Hogs grunting on the other, three or four Women, with a whole Litter of squawling Brats, on our Right, and their Husbands, blessedly drunk, with Corn-Brandy, some snoring, other ranting, and again others spewing on our Left.” Even though John Toland lavishly praised the court of Prussia, he grumbled about Westphalia’s low population, small production of grain, and rough accommodations, the causes of which he considered being some combination of bad land and bad government.

Hester Lynch Piozzi also chimed in with an account of her journey through Westphalia. “Well may all our writers agree in celebrating the miseries of Westphalia,” she wrote, “well may they, while the wretched inhabitants, uniting poverty with pride, live on their hogs, with their hogs, and like their hogs, in mud-walled cottages, a dozen of which together is called by courtesy a village, surrounded by black heaths, and wild uncultivated plains, over which the unresisted wind sweeps with a velocity I never yet was


76. Toland, *An account of the courts of Prussia and Hannover*, 4-5.
Travelers believed Westphalia's only positive attribute was its high quality pork products.

The following maps display the location of the cities and states described throughout this thesis. During the eighteenth century, the internal borders of the Holy Roman Empire frequently changed as demonstrated below.

Map 1: *Europe in 1648 – Peace of Westphalia.*

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Map 2: Germany in 1789.
CHAPTER 3

THE PEOPLE

English travelers often wrote down observations about the people they encountered on their journeys. Their narratives contained stories of individuals they met and spent time with, comments on characteristics of regional or gender groups, and statements about Germans. Travel authors' depictions of foreigners varied in length but they were a consistent presence in many works. Historian Joan Pau Rubiés argues that “The description of peoples in their variety was one of the most valued parts of the narratives of travel that proliferated after the Renaissance, both for the entertainment value of the depiction of curious behavior, and for the philosophical issues which this evidence for variety raised about the existence, or not, of universal human traits.”¹ One must analyze traveler's depictions of foreigners in light of the ways early modern English people saw their place in the world and how that impacted their writings about others.

English travelers were often xenophobic. Several historians have noted a fear of foreigners in early modern English writings. In his study on the development of seventeenth-century English travel, John Walter Stoye described English involvement in the continent of Europe as one of a “curious, half friendly, half disdainful attitude which was to characterize our exchanges with the general civilization of Europe for several generations.”² Historians have also noticed negative perceptions of foreigners in eighteenth century English writing.


² Stoye, English Travellers, 21.
Wilfrid Prest stated that despite the amount of travel the English participated in and the number of young men sallying forth on Grand Tours, xenophobia was a characteristic of all ranks of people in England, with only slightly less anti-foreign sentiment at the top of the social scale.³ Paul Langford, in his history of English manners and character in the seventeenth through mid-nineteenth centuries, claimed that by the eighteenth century xenophobia had become a predominant element in English society, though it did abate by the end of the century.⁴ Jeremy Black’s work on eighteenth-century English culture includes several pages that describe the ways in which a growing sense of confidence in Englishness included a fear of foreigners, especially of the Catholics and autocrats.⁵ One can also see xenophobia in a number of sixteenth century satirical works that mocked English travelers who their countrymen perceived to have returned possessing too many French manners.⁶ The increase in published travel narratives brought with it many works devoted to questioning the claims that travel was a beneficial activity for Englishmen to engage in.⁷

Clearly a suspicion of foreigners shaped English travelers’ depictions of others.

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In one sense, however, the people of a country need information about foreign lands, if only to explain their own uniqueness and proclaim to themselves how special they are. In this way, travel literature performed an important social function, as people could read about people in other states and gain a greater understanding of their own identity. Percy G. Adams, in his work on early modern English travel liars, wrote: “In a period when tolerance, democracy, and relativity became important, no thinker or historian could do without the voyagers, who taught that each nation had a distinctive, even appropriate, way of life.”

According to historian Anna Suranyi, English people compared various nations to each other on a scale, and, “every country, or ‘nation,’ was believed to have an indigenous character, which could be negatively or positively valued, or more neutrally seen as a place which shared both good and bad qualities.” Moreover, she states: “In the travelers’ depictions, then, each culture exhibited a special character, of which particular aspects could be selected that by contrast or comparison illustrated positive English qualities.”

Thus, English travelers’ depictions of Germans must be viewed through the lens of an emerging English consciousness of other regions and of their own place compared to European countries.

Honest authors understood that identifying common characteristics of people was difficult for a traveler who did not know the language or culture of the place they were visiting. In the beginning of his book on his journey down the Rhine, Thomas Cogan included


10. Ibid., 37.
some caveats to his readers. He admitted that observing people of different countries was somewhat subjective because travelers had different opinions on what they thought was important, and that works often reflected the feelings of the author, not an objective vision of the place visited. He also admitted that visitors are not the best judges of foreign people when he asked somewhat rhetorically: “Since it is not easy for those who have resided some length of time in a country, to do justice to its national character, what are we to think of the observations hastily drawn, from incidents at an Inn, or accidental conversation at a public table, which are the common and frequently the only sources of information to us Couriers de l’Europe.” This sentiment did not stop many visitors to Germany from making claims about its inhabitants using just such criteria.

While the literature under review presents an array of opinions regarding the nature and character of Germans, a number of general characterizations stand out as being particularly noteworthy. English travelers’ positive descriptions of Germans included the belief that they were honest and open, strong, robust, brave, martial, industrious, diligent, and mechanically inclined. They claimed that negative German characteristics included being phlegmatic, heavy and slow, prone to drunkenness and overeating, as well as proud and obstinate. They depicted many Germans as superstitious and ignorant, a trait linked to their religious beliefs, which will be discussed more in a later chapter. English travelers also assigned particular characteristics to German women, most often viewing them as faithful housewives and mothers with fair complexions and well-shaped bodies.


12. Ibid., 4.
English visitors believed that Germans possessed certain positive qualities. Edward Browne ended his travel account by stating that, since he had visited Germany, his opinion of the country had improved.\footnote{Browne, \textit{An account of several travels}, 150.} He praised several virtues he believed Germans possessed, including the fact that they were, “plain-dealing and trusty.”\footnote{Ibid., 151.} Thomas Nugent spent several pages of his work, originally published in 1749, depicting what he believed to be the strengths and weaknesses of Germans. Among his many comments, he described the common people by stating: “They are generally good natured, free from malice and subtlety. The peasants are laborious, sincere, honest, and hospitable, as are withal very complaisant.”\footnote{The grand tour, 2:43.} John Moore, while in the Landgraviate of Hesse-Kassel in the late 1770s, noted that “An open manner, and undesigning civility, distinguish the German character; qualities which naturally banish reserve, and inspire confidence.”\footnote{Moore, \textit{A view of Society and Manners}, 1:183-184.}

Another quality that English travelers emphasized about Germans was their characteristics of physical strength, bravery, and robustness. Many authors, such as John Fransham, noted the physical sturdiness of the German people. Writing in the mid-seventeenth century, he claimed that, in general, Germans are, “pretty large in stature, and they are very strong and robust.”\footnote{Fransham, \textit{The entertaining traveller}, 1:47.} Likewise, Sacheverell Stevens was traveling near Augsburg where he encountered people who, “appeared strong and healthy, and seemed to be very industrious” despite the fact that the country around them was full of, “wretched

\begin{thebibliography}{9}
\bibitem{13} Browne, \textit{An account of several travels}, 150.
\bibitem{14} Ibid., 151.
\bibitem{15} \textit{The grand tour}, 2:43.
\bibitem{16} Moore, \textit{A view of Society and Manners}, 1:183-184.
\bibitem{17} Fransham, \textit{The entertaining traveller}, 1:47.
\end{thebibliography}
poor places.”18 Thomas Nugent included, in his lengthy section on Germans, the claim that they, “are generally a tall, robust, well made people, of fair complexion, and regular features,” and included frequent hunting and sledging as their common diversions.19 Charles Este compared Germans of the late eighteenth century with those found in Tacitus and argued, despite the ancient author’s claims that they could not stand harsh weather, “In constitutional habitude, happily or unhappily, inaccessible to each extreme of thermometrical heat or cold, they sit aloof and indifferent, and bid equal defiance to both.”20 Edward Browne believed Germans to be particularly well suited to the military since they were “naturally Martial, and persons well descended, very averse from a Trading course of Life.”21

Finally, English travelers considered Germans to be industrious, diligent, and particularly gifted in the mechanical arts. John Fransham claimed that Germans, “are allowed to be excellent mechanicks and chymists,” and, as examples of their creative talents, argued that they had invented gunpowder and the printing press.22 Thomas Nugent listed the above virtues among the many that he ascribed to Germans by stating: “The Germans are very industrious in their several professions, few other nations surpassing either their scholars or mechanics in respect to application.”23 As previously mentioned,

18. Stevens, MISCELLANEOUS REMARKS, 373.
20. Este, A journey in the year 1793, 200.
traveler’s descriptions of cities included comments about the trade and work of the inhabitants. Travelers took note of particular cities, such as Nuremburg, for what one author called, “the genius and extraordinary diligence of this people,” that allowed them “so flourishing a trade.”

Not all depictions of German people were positive however. Interestingly, some of the negative characteristics travelers assigned to Germans were in conflict with their perceived strengths. Even when considering such factors as diverse reasons for travel, varied location of travel, and individual temperaments, this lack of agreement on common ideas of what it meant to be German seems to indicate, among other things, that the formation of national identity was still in its latent form. This is not to suggest that no common patterns existed, but simply to affirm that such patterns were present along with a great amount of diversity.

Perhaps the most common negative stereotype that English travel writers held of Germans is that they were phlegmatic, heavy, and slow. Early modern Europeans believed that a phlegmatic person contained a large amount of phlegm, which led them to be sluggish and apathetic. Many English travelers ascribed this characteristic to the people they met in Germany as well as to Germans as a group. In 1738, John Breval claimed “The Germans have for many Centuries past, been observe’d to have a Perseverance in Works of a low and trifling Nature,” and explained that they labored for long periods of time over


objects such as clocks or organs. More than thirty years later, Charles Burney described meeting people he deemed “true Germans” by noting that they possessed “slow apprehension and inactivity.” Joseph Marshall spent several pages in his account of travels undertaken in the late 1760s and early 1770s arguing for changes he believed were necessary in the state of Hannover. He saw much manufacturing potential in the area but the local trade council’s work was slow and unhurried. He also wanted the government to take an active role in promoting land improvement for the benefit of the people because the soil was good for cultivation. He believed the government was necessary for this endeavor because “the Germans are a heavy, phlegmatic people, who are conducted with no great difficulty in improvements and undertakings which do not extend beyond the sphere of their usual practice, but are very obstinate in their opposition to those which are quite new: novel establishments in arts, manufactures, or commerce, scarcely ever succeed well, unless the attention of the Sovereign is acute and unremitting.” The anonymous author of A tour through Germany provided a scathing mockery of some Bavarian peasants whom he called, “dirty and lazy.” He wrote that “Many of them look like caricatures of men,” and that “They have great fat bellies, short clubbed feet, narrow shoulders, a thick


28. Marshall, Travels through Holland, Flanders, Germany, 2:103.

29. Ibid., 105.

30. Ibid., 105-106.

31. Anonymous, A tour through Germany, 163.
round head, and short necks. They are heavy and awkward in their carriage and their small
eyes betray a great deal of roguery.”

Many authors commented on the physical size or
strength of Germans; some travelers thought Germans were sturdy and robust, while others
thought of them as fat and corpulent. So common was the image of the slow and heavy
German that the overwhelmingly positive author Thomas Nugent felt it necessary to debunk
this common stereotype, which he claimed originated with the French, “who hardly allow
either wit or sense to any other nation but themselves.” In fact, Nugent claimed, the
Germans had made “many useful and valuable discoveries. They have not indeed the same
vivacity as the French, but they surpass them in application and judgment.” Favorably
comparing the Germans with the French would most likely have been an easy way to appeal
to a reading public prone to mock their Gallic neighbors.

Another common English opinion held Germans to be excessive drinkers and eaters,
prone to indulging in long feasts. While Thomas Nugent rejected the idea that Germans
were heavy, he affirmed the common view that they were prone to drunkenness and
overeating. “Nothing is more common among the Germans than to form drinking societies,
where they contract an intimacy by being drunk together,” he wrote, and he continued by
claiming that they eat too much, arguing that there were “no people indulging their bellies
more than the inhabitants of this country.” Joseph Marshall dined with a local merchant in

32. Anonymous, A tour through Germany, 163.
34. Ibid.
35. Ibid., 45, 46.
Danzig who he claimed, “lives elegantly, but in the German manner, which is all the taste there: they sit long at meals, and drink very heartily: and among all the nations that are fond of the pleasures of the table, there is always much society, and a desire of pleasing, which does instead of the more refined manners of the southern countries.” These opinions did not change at the end of this period. For example, Joshua L. Wilkinson, in a work originally published in 1793, stated that “drunkenness still appears the most predominant vice.” Various authors also described their interactions with the aristocracy in which they spent long evenings eating and drinking. According to English visitors, all classes indulged in this practice.

The above descriptions about Germans may, in some ways, be taken as representative of English views of the German people, but writers also specifically pronounced their opinions of German women. These comments fall into two main categories: virtues and appearance. The virtues that travelers thought German women possessed centered on the idea of being a good housewife. English authors praised German women as faithful, modest, and good tempered, each of which was a virtue a good wife and mother was supposed to possess. English travelers offered a generally positive presentation of the physical appearance of German women, with most claiming that they had good complexions and looked healthy, while a minority regarded them as ugly because of their horrid clothes.

In the late seventeenth century, Edward Browne provided positive coverage of German women and compared them favorably to those of neighboring countries when he


stated: “The Women are generally well-complexioned, sober, and grave, and they have not yet learned the custome of their Neighbors of France and Holland, to admit of being saluted by Men: faithful to their Husbands, and careful in the affairs of their Houses.” Thomas Nugent, the English traveler who probably wrote the most on German national character in his three books on his travels to Germany, claimed that German women were some of the most submissive in Europe. The author of The German Spy, in his coverage of the city of Hamburg, called the women frugal and dedicated to housekeeping.

Most authors attributed favorable qualities to the physical appearance of German women, generally describing them as handsome and possessing good complexions. Hester Lynch Piozzi was impressed with cleanliness of the women she encountered in Bavaria. She noted that “The women’s scrupulous attention to keep their persons clear from dirt, makes their faces look doubly fair; their complexions have quite a lustre upon them, like some of our wenches in the West of England.” She added that they did not chase after men. Near Dusseldorf, Thomas Cogan reported seeing women doing much of the physical labor that men normally did, and while he castigated the men for their laziness, he did note the ease

38. Browne, An account of several travels, 151.
41. Piozzi, Observations and reflections, 279.
42. Ibid.
with which the women performed the task. He asserted: “The number of tall athletic Females, that present themselves to view in every part of Germany I have visited, appears to me to exceed that of our own sex.” The anonymous author of a work published in 1794 reported on the nice appearance of women in several locations around Germany. In Nuremburg, he stated: “The women are handsome, but too apt to stare and laugh at strangers.” In Saxony, “The women are throughout remarkable for the beauty of their shapes, the animation of their looks, and their infinite spirit, ease, and vivacity” and in Hamburg they were “handsome, genteel, and freer in their manners than they generally are in protestant countries.” Occasionally, writers portrayed German women differently as when Adam Walker stated that, along the Rhine, “The women are all fat, with round brown faces, short petticoats, and go bare-footed and bare-legged.” In describing some women near the same area, Charles Burney argued that “The women, among the common people in the country, are miserably ugly, not, perhaps, so much in feature, as from dress, and a total neglect of complexion.” These negative comments focused on the types of clothing rather than on the physical appearance of the women themselves. Thus, the most common view of the physical appearance of German women that English travelers presented was a positive one.

43. Cogan, The Rhine, 1:143.
44. Ibid., 147.
45. Anonymous, A tour through Germany, 144.
46. Ibid., 300, 350.
47. Walker, Ideas, suggested on the spot, 48.
Since many travelers were wealthy to some degree, they frequently interacted with aristocrats on their journeys. Of course, the amount of interaction with the upper classes depended on the purpose of a trip or the social status of the traveler. Those travelers desiring entrance into courts generally presented letters of introduction. German courts were usually quite welcoming to English travelers.\textsuperscript{49} It is therefore not surprising that English visitors often praised German aristocrats and their dwellings during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. However, a wide range of motives were involved in the way that writers chose to present the aristocracy and by no means were all images of German aristocrats positive. Since the aristocrats of Germany were also the rulers, comments about them could certainly reflect political concerns. Fame was also a factor in the portrayal of the wealthy and powerful, and some travelers sought to gain an audience with important personages to be seen as influential and significant. Additionally, as Keith Thomas has argued, comparisons between the English and other Europeans contained social and cultural dimensions. In surveying what people in early modern England valued, Thomas found that wealth and possessions, including, “modes of transport,” were important marks of social distinction.\textsuperscript{50} “In great houses, the stables were important places of display.”\textsuperscript{51} He listed honor and fame as other important goals, and, in that context, claimed: “Any activity involving comparison with other countries could be represented as a matter of national

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\textsuperscript{49} Christopher Hibbert, \textit{The Grand Tour} (London: Methuen London Ltd., 1987), 201.
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\textsuperscript{50} Keith Thomas, \textit{The Ends of Life: Roads to Fulfilment in Early Modern England} (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 117.
\end{flushright}

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\textsuperscript{51} Ibid.
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honour, from architecture to scholarship.”

Paul Langford points out that in describing people’s manner, early modern English expressed important sentiments about the character of the group they were describing, by stating: “Explaining an individual’s manners was a matter of describing his upbringing, education, and experience.” Travel writers often noted the way that aristocrats dressed, carried themselves, and treated others, which were important comments on what they thought of their social inferiors. Some historians argue that the English, in assessing their own country’s leaders, played an important role in defining English national character. Peter Mandler, in particular, makes the case that “When writers of Burke’s age wrote about the ‘national character’, generally they meant the character of the nation – of England, defined by its institutions and its governing classes, or more abstractly by its ‘soul’ or ‘genius’-rather than of the people, the English as a whole.” If this is so, traveler’s observations about the ruling classes of other countries could shed light on what the English believed to be true German national character.

Travelers overwhelmingly praised the ruling classes of Germany as being polite, refined, and possessing true aristocratic bloodlines. Those who provided criticism of the aristocracy thought nobles to be excessively rigid in their observance of etiquette or points of honor and at times despotic. Visitors provided more favorable than unfavorable views of the estates and palaces of the German nobility, and especially of their pleasure gardens and rural palaces. Some travelers, however, noted a lack of noble country estates compared with England and claimed that the elite were too often housed in cities.

52. Thomas, The Ends of Life, 154.

53. Langford, Englishness Identified, 8.

English travelers most often portrayed the ruling elite in favorable terms by praising their aristocratic virtues. Writing in the late seventeenth century, William Carr’s praises of German nobles focused on both piety and aristocratic virtue. He described the Calvinist Landgrave of Hesse-Kassel and his court as being, “well-governed,” particularly “in regard of its Modesty and Regularity in all Things, and especially in the Hours of Devotion.” Carr called the ruler a wealthy man and a great warrior with a wonderful family. In Hannover, he lauded the royal family for its learned princess and, “graceful,” “kind,” and, “Valiant” prince. John Toland presented the royal families of Prussia and Hannover in much the same fawning language in the early eighteenth century. He called Electress Sophia Charlotte of Prussia “the most beautiful Princess of her Time, and who is second to no Person in the Justness of her Thoughts, the Delicacy of Expressions, or the Graces of Conversation.” Toland moved on to Hannover, and while he disparaged the sad physical and economic situation of the state, he praised the royal family after a visit to the theater. He termed the royal family the most polite in Germany, and claimed that, despite the German passion for drinking, the Hanoverian court did not engage in drunkenness. He praised the good breeding and beauty of the aristocratic women and noted that the gentlemen were,

55. Carr, *Travels through Flanders, Holland, Germany*, 97.

56. Ibid.

57. Ibid., 100-101.


59. Ibid., 46-53.

60. Ibid., 53.
“Persons of Worth and Ability.” He spent the last thirty pages of his more than eighty-page book listing the many virtues and accomplishments of the nobility of the court. Lady Mary Wortley Montague enjoyed the city of Dresden and claimed that the Saxon ladies were “very genteely dressed after the English and French odes, and have generally pretty faces.” They acted very daintily there were also very kind to strangers. These many comments suggest that English visitors considered German aristocrats to be a valuable part of the European ruling classes, worthy of respect and possessing positive characteristics.

Not all portrayals of German ruling families were affirmative, however. Negative comments centered around the idea that German nobles were especially prone to fastidiousness on points of personal honor, unduly ceremonious, and were unnecessarily rigid in their etiquette. The anonymous author of The German Spy, a work that certainly contains elements of satire and exaggeration, included stories of Germans defending their honor. He described an encounter with an army major in the city of Bremen who gave him a tour of interesting sites, including an anatomical hall where he viewed a dead body. Upon seeing the body, the author proclaimed that such a vision provided an argument against war, whereupon the major grew so angry at the perceived insult to his profession that he

61. Toland, An account of the courts of Prussia and Hannover, 54.

62. Ibid., 57-81.


64. Ibid.

stewed in anger for some time. The author referred to the incident as “an Instance of those false Punctilios of Honour, of which I had been frequently told, and had sometimes found, the Germans are so full.” Later in his work, the author described the wealthy merchant class of Hamburg and complained that the merchants were too sensitive to honor. He observed: “When a Company meet, who are not perfectly well acquainted with one another, or with whom Rank and Order has not been before settles, Whisperings to know their Quality and Circumstances, and Ceremonies to ascertain their Stations, generally take up the first Quarter of an Hour.” The opinionated Jonas Hanway spent several pages describing King Frederick II and his life. When visiting the opera, Hanway noticed the formal manner in which Frederick interacted with a nobleman who sat near him, causing him to comment: “GERMAN ceremonies are in several instances troublesome, and in some ridiculous.” John Moore described the powers that German nobles possessed and claimed that in their actions they were, “minute observers of form.” Later, while traveling through the countryside, he remarked that there were very few large country estates and that, “I am not surprised that the Germans, especially those of high rank, are fond of masquerades, being so much harassed with ceremony and form, and cramped by the distance which birth throws between people who may have a mutual regard for each other.” He continued by

67. Ibid.
68. Ibid., 255.
71. Ibid., 193.
describing the ways in which Germans fought over placement at court. In these matters, they “rigidly observe etiquette.” \(^{72}\) Thomas Cogan emphasized the idea that Germans were overly ceremonious when he witnessed the coronation of the Holy Roman Emperor. He complained that the leaders no longer philosophically agreed with the courtly ceremonies, but the ceremonies nonetheless continued. He was disappointed that, despite the influence of enlightened thought, the nobles continued to take part in a ceremony that seemed “so childish and absurd.” \(^{73}\) He complained: “when the first personages in the Empire act the most conspicuous parts in these publick exhibitions, they sink themselves down to a level with the Actors in Thespis’ Cart, or the representatives of Lady Godina, and Bishop Blaze.” \(^{74}\)

Since travelers spent time interacting with the German social elite, they also reported on the physical settings of their hosts. The large number of nobles in Germany meant the existence of numerous palaces both large and small. Historian Tim Blanning called the eighteenth century, “the period for palace-building in all European history,” and claimed that “It is difficult to think of one country in which the ruler’s palace was not built, or at least fundamentally reconstructed, between the middle of the seventeenth and the end of the eighteenth century.” \(^{75}\) Nobles intended their palaces to “represent the power of the sovereign before his subjects” in the wake of the upheavals that had taken place in the century and a half prior to the end of the Thirty Years’ War. \(^{76}\) English visitors admired many

\(^{72}\) Moore, *A Vies of Society and Manners*, 194.


\(^{74}\) Ibid., 236.


\(^{76}\) Ibid., 425.
of the German nobilities’ palaces and urban pleasure gardens that they encountered along their journeys.

In lavishly praising the nobles he visited, John Toland noted the number and quality of their homes. He explained that the King of Prussia was someone who understood that “the Charms and Pleasures of a Country Life; which were so much belov’d, prais’d, and cultivated by the Great men of Antiquity.”77 Toland continued by describing in detail each of the palaces he visited. For example, at Oranienburg Palace, he wrote of the canals and waterworks, the gardens with statues, and the splendid building which contained gems and porcelain, which he preposterously claimed could rival the Chinese emperor.78 In Hannover, he wrote of his experience at Herrenhausen where he again generously celebrated the delicate garden, interesting waterworks, well-tended gardens, and an orangery that, he said, “is counted one of the largest in all Europe.”79 Not long after Toland wrote of his experiences, Thomas Frankz visited Berlin and also reported on the beauty of the king’s palace by describing it as “most elegant and spacious.”80 It was “a most delightful Situation, especially before the present King destroyed the renowned Pleasure Garden.”81 Thomas Nugent likewise lauded the Prussian palaces he visited. He called the king’s palace in Berlin, “a magnificent structure of free-stone,” Charlottenburg, “extremely elegant,” and Sans-

77. Toland, An account of the courts of Prussia and Hannover, 26.

78. Ibid., 27-28.

79. Ibid., 72.

80. Frankz, A tour through France, Flanders, and Germany, 22.

81. Ibid.
Souci, “elegantly furnished,” though he was unimpressed with the gardens there.\(^\text{82}\) It was not just the palaces of Prussia, as others praised the palace of Nymphenburg. Charles Burney stated, “The gardens of this Chateau are reckoned the finest in Germany,” and lavishly praised their beauty.\(^\text{83}\) The anonymous author of A tour through Germany reckoned the Nymphenburg palace to be “charming” with “fine stables, and grand gardens.”\(^\text{84}\)

It is interesting that, during this period of explosive palace growth, the lack of lesser gentry’s country houses struck some English observers as noteworthy. Lady Mary Wortley Montagu stated that, since she had traveled much of Germany she felt able, to state accurately the difference between the country she was in and her own. Germany, she claimed, possessed no “fine seats of noblemen,…nor anything like a country gentleman’s house.”\(^\text{85}\) Instead, “the whole people are divided into absolute sovereignties, where all the riches and magnificence are at court, or into communities of merchants,…where they live always in town for the convenience of trade.”\(^\text{86}\) Likewise, Joseph Marshall claimed not to have seen any notable manor houses in his travels near Hannover and contrasted this absence with his homeland and with Holland. “In our countries, even in the most distant parts of the kingdom, we see seats of all ranks and degrees thickly strewed over the parishes, with a strong appearance of comfortableness and ease among the gentlemen even

\(^{82}\) Nugent, The grand tour, 188, 195, 196.

\(^{83}\) Burney, The present state of music in Germany, 1:131.

\(^{84}\) Anonymous, A tour through Germany, 159.

\(^{85}\) Montagu, Letters of Lady Mary Wortley Montague, 49.

\(^{86}\) Ibid.
of very moderate fortunes,” he wrote. Adam Walker saw, near Bonn, his first, “gentleman’s country-seat” in continental Europe. He added: “though some of these seats are large, and have a grand appearance, they seem to stand naked, without either gardens or pleasure-grounds; and we have not seen a deer-park in the whole country.”


89. Ibid.
Religion was an important identity marker for early modern Europeans. The Protestant religion, in particular, became closely related to English identity during this era and influenced the way English men and women perceived other European states. The close identification between England and Protestantism can be seen in travelers’ descriptions of the religious situation in Germany. English travelers almost universally lampooned Catholics and Catholic states as superstitious, bigoted, lazy, ignorant and economically backward. Interestingly, though they usually scorned Catholics, many travelers praised Catholic churches for their beauty, and even lauded the hated Jesuits' places of worship. Travelers noted the excluded place of Jews in German society and typically depicted them as outcasts.

English travelers presented their fellow Protestants in more nuanced ways. They often praised Lutherans, though some complained of Lutheran bigotry or superstition. Travelers also provided a mixed treatment of Calvinists, but as a positive aspect held them to be the richest inhabitants in their cities. Numerous writers commented on the practice of religious toleration. English visitors took note of the fact that three different Christian groups, and sometimes even Jews, tolerated each other, and that many German states allowed several religious groups to exist side by side. They heralded religious toleration as a positive development that reflected the true spirit of Christian brotherhood and increased economic prosperity. Travelers concluded that those states that did not pursue religious toleration experienced a lack of economic growth because they did not allow prosperous groups to reside in their realms. Travelers’ praise of religious toleration makes sense as the
eighteenth century in England witnessed a decline in the coercive power of the Church of England.¹

English travelers described Catholics more frequently than they did any other religious group during the early modern period, harshly depicting Catholic beliefs and practices such as the Mass, religious processions, and adoration of saints. These critiques of particular practices were more common in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. Gilbert Burnet was an early example of such coverage. In the 1680s he published a work on his travels through various parts of Europe. On visiting the city of Worms, he told of seeing a painting above an alter that depicted an image of Jesus being thrown into the hopper of a windmill from which he came forth in the form of Eucharist wafers.² He was surprised that Catholics depicted this scene in a serious manner and that the faithful there believed it, but he concluded that those who adhered to such a ridiculous doctrine as transubstantiation would be just as likely to believe in other charades.³ A decade later, Theophilus Dorrington, a Church of England clergyman who published several books on personal devotion, took a trip to Germany for the purpose of studying Roman Catholicism.⁴ He continually complained about the various aspects of Catholicism he found preposterous, including their religious processions. In Cologne, he witnessed a procession celebrating the


³. Ibid.

Holy Sacrament and noted that the Council of Trent had cursed all who taught against the Catholic view of the Eucharistic elements.\(^5\) He stated that, despite the Catholic Church’s warning, Anglicans would continue to believe differently, “being assur’d that the Curse causeless will not come.”\(^6\) Since the Pope claimed direct revelation as the reason for the ceremony, Dorrington rejected the practice, arguing that, if God had intended the entire Church to follow the Catholic practice, he would have revealed it to all believers and not just one person.\(^7\) The unknown author of *The German Spy* contributed sarcastic remarks about Catholic practices when he told of an experience in Paderborn in which he saw a crowd of people, “which put me in Mind of Butler’s Description of a Rabble going to a Bear-baiting...For so they seem’d to me to be, a confus’d promiscuous Rabble of Men, Women, and Children.”\(^8\) Though the people looked like a restless mob, he revealed that in fact they were in a Catholic procession walking through town. Lady Mary Wortley Montagu provided negative coverage of Catholic religious practices in her account of her travels through Germany in the early eighteenth century. She criticized “the farce of relics, with which I have been entertaine in all Remish churches,” and laughed at a statue of Jesus dressed in a powdered wig, which she thought her friends would find hard to believe.\(^9\) She encountered

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7. Ibid.


more relics in the town of Regensburg, and claimed that many of them were surrounded by fake pieces of jewelry that the priests had replaced from the real ones because “the good fathers have found it convenient to apply them to other uses, and the people are just as well satisfied with bits of glass amongst these relics.”

English travelers also depicted Catholics as believing in farcical and superstitious doctrines. Theophilus Dorrington ridiculed the idea that a Catholic church in Cologne contained the bodies of the wise men who visited Jesus at his birth when other churches claimed to have the same bodies, and mockingly stated that the wise men could have used their powers to both visit Jesus and stay in their comfortable homes simultaneously. John Breval lambasted Catholics at several points in Remarks on several parts of Europe. He witnessed a service commemorating St. Ursula, a women who supposedly led 11,000 virgins on a pilgrimage in which they were killed. Several authors in this study recounted this story, and Breval, like the others, did not believe it. He mocked the story, saying that “Nothing can be more absurd than the Jumble of Fictions of which this Tale is made up, without any one Circumstance that has the least Glimmering of Likelyhood.”

Alexander Drummond visited a Catholic church in the mid-eighteenth century where he witnessed parishioners venerating the Virgin Mary and commented that “if it is at all surprising to find the vulgar so blinded with absurd superstition, it is infinitely more astonishing to see people

10. Montague, Letters of Lady Mary Wortley Montague, 16.

11. Dorrington, Observations concerning the present state of religion, 328.


13. Ibid.
of the first distinction and best education which that country affords, offering these oblations with all the credulity and zeal of the most ignorant enthusiasm.”

14 William Penn traveled to Germany and Holland in the late seventeenth century and, as is to be expected from a Quaker, described the Catholic faith in Germany in negative terms. In Paderborn he stated that he was in, “a dark Popish Town, and under the Government of a Bishop of that Religion.”

15 In summarizing his time in the two countries visited, he claimed that they were spiritually “long dry and barren.” Of course, the latter quote demonstrates a general dislike of all the religious groups in those countries Penn visited, but, while he did write positively of some Calvinists and Lutherans, he wrote nothing of a similar nature about Catholics. These documents clearly show that English travelers in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries depicted Catholics harshly, especially for the specific beliefs and practices English found abhorrent.

As the eighteenth century wore on, the anti-Catholic diatribes continued as authors focused on presenting Catholics as being guilty of superstition, bigotry and ignorance. English travelers believed that the ecclesiastical states of Germany were particularly restrictive as they did not allow others to worship in the way they thought fit, and suffered

14. Alexander Drummond, Travels through different cities of Germany, Italy, Greece, and several parts of Asia, as far at the banks of the Euphrates (London: 1754), 11, http://find.galegroup.com/ecco/infomark.do?source=gale&prodId=ECCO&userName=den0677&tabID=T001&docId=CB3329911187&type=multipage&contentSet=ECCOArticles&version=1.0&docLevel=FASCIMILE.


16. Ibid., 277.
the consequences of economic decline because they expelled productive Protestants. In the middle of the eighteenth century, the prolific and opinionated Jonas Hanway complained of the fact that “The government of these ecclesiastical princes does not seem to establish charity or politeness; at least I found the people insolent and given to extortion.” In another town, he stated that “Poverty seemed to prevail here; but superstition still more, in consequence of that ecclesiastical power which had erected crucifixes almost on every hillock.” Francis Garden confessed that he had “A dislike of, and perhaps an unreasonable aversion to ecclesiastical power,” which caused him, “to hasten away from the capital seats of princely bishops, and their swarms of domineering priests, and deluded people,” an attitude that is clear throughout his writing. John Gardnor’s account of his travel down the Rhine is littered with anti-Catholic rhetoric. Gardnor, a clergyman in the Church of England, composed his work based on a trip he undertook with his nephew in the late eighteenth century. He reported that, in the town of Boppard, he saw a convent “where beautiful ladies, peeping out at the windows, seemed impatient of confinement.” The sight caused him to state: “Such an object is apt deeply to affect the mind of a Protestant; the inhabitants


18. Ibid.


passed by, without seeming to bestow a thought on the anguish and misery within.”  

The anonymous author of a work published in 1794 wrote of the Catholic clergy of the city of Cologne as “rough dirty clowns, besmeared all over with tobacco,” and summarized his feelings by writing, “The superstition of this little place surpasses every thing of the kind you can imagine. They are not contented here with single saints, but must have whole armies of them.”  

Thomas Cogan, in his trip down the Rhine took the opportunity to disparage the Catholic religion whenever he could. Like Gardnor, he lamented the nun's situation: “The system of Cloysters and Monasteries is in itself an absurdity. It is an institution that proposes to please the Supreme Being by counteracting his fundamental laws.”  

He stated that the aristocrats of Cologne did not really believe in Catholic teachings anymore, but, “they think it absolutely requisite that the necks of the vulgar should be rendured supple to the yoke of servile obedience, by the aids of ignorance and superstition.”  

Having reflected on the many Catholic legends he claimed to have heard, he tartly noted that “after having tasted of both, I really think the Germans have a much better hand at making coffee than in making systems of theology.”  

In Mainz, Charles Este stated that the Bishop spent as much money as the government of the United States and that he was surrounded by so many churchmen and nobles who “differ also from our noblemen in education and accomplishments,” as well as priests and monks who were, “equally ill-conditioned, both as

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25. Ibid., 294.

26. Ibid., 2:63.
to idleness and ignorance.”

Joshua Wilkinson also wrote in abusive terms about the monks he encountered. Near the town of Allof, he wrote of “The sons of the church, who did once hold an unlimited control over the infant minds of society, and now have too much sway over the actions and passions of mankind, and invariably selected the most beautiful and rich, or the most romantic and sublime situations for their religious houses. On this insulated hill, the monks can amuse their pious hours with the exhilarating food of grapes, or under the shades of an ancient sacred wood, may view the delicious prospects.”

Despite the anti-Catholic spirit of the writing, several authors still commented favorably on the beauty of the Catholic buildings that they saw. Even while mocking certain aspects of Catholic practice, Lady Mary Wortley Montague toured a Jesuit church in Cologne and reported on the, “magnificence of the altars, the rich images of the saints (all massy silver), and the enchasures of the relics.”

After writing a number of negative comments on Catholics, the anonymous author of *A tour through Germany* praised the Catholic city of Munich’s religious buildings by writing, “the magnificence of its churches and convents are such, that it surpasses most of the cities of Germany.”

Several other authors wrote positively about the Catholic churches they encountered, perhaps a nod to aesthetics more than piety, considering the larger context of anti-Catholic sentiment. These positive comments could also be seen as critiques of the Church of England.

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English travelers gave Lutherans mixed reviews. Generally, travelers praised them for their piety and identified them as fellow Protestants. Occasionally, travelers described them as bigoted or possessing superstitious elements in their worship. Theophilus Dorrington spent a morning worshiping with a Lutheran congregation in Dusseldorf and lavishly praised the believers there. Many of his compliments were based on the belief that the Lutherans were not tainted with the Catholic Church, as when he wrote: “The Church was very neat, but not fine. There were but Three distinct Pictures in it, and all very free from Popery or Superstition.”

He added: “I never saw in any Quire of Monks of Priests in the Roman Church, that they sung their Devotions with so much Solemnity and Abstraction, as they speak, as the People generally here do.” Since his stated aim on this trip was to investigate the Catholic Church, he used the Lutherans as a foil for the elements he strongly disliked in the Catholics. He stated that, in the Lutheran churches, the minister follows what the congregation wanted, “and conforms to the Methods there with the Spirit of Meekness, and Charity, and Wisdom; which was in the Primitive Christians.” In his work covering the state of Mecklenburg, Thomas Nugent praised the Lutheran ministers there, if not the people, by stating that they, “are generally men of sound learning, exemplary lives, and particularly remarkable for the eloquence of the pulpit. Hence their influence over the minds of the vulgar is very considerable.”

Hester Lynch Piozzi praised the people of Dresden's Lutheran piety when she argued that, despite the fact that they have images in their churches, “no


32. Ibid., 348-349.

33. Ibid., 351.

people can be further removed from idolatry, or better instructed in the Christian religion, than the common people of this town; where a decent observation of the Sabbath struck me with most consolatory feelings.”

While in her comments on the religious situation of Dresden she included some positive images of reasonable Catholics, she clearly believed the Lutherans were superior. She ranked Lutherans ahead of Anglicans and Calvinists as possessing the most suitable communion services, and gushed over the fact that it was “very pretty though to see the little clean-faced lads and wenches running to school so in a morning at every protestant town, with the grammar and testament under their arm, while even the meanest house has a folio bible in it, and all the people of the lowest ranks can read it.”

Some travelers were critical of the Lutheran churches of Germany. William Penn complained to a Lutheran minister that as many German Protestants as Catholics had lost “the power of Godliness,” a sentiment to which his audience agreed.

While visiting the city of Wittenberg, Jonas Hanway wrote, “The people here, as in most places, where the LUTHERAN religion prevails, have a strong tincture of ROMISH superstition,” and used as an example the fact that ignorant local people believed that Luther had to contend with the Devil while working in his library. Thomas Nugent wrote that the Lutherans of Hamburg “are more particularly bigoted than the inhabitants of any other part of Germany,” as they

35. Piozzi, Observations and reflections, 2:328.
36. Ibid., 2:347.
37. Penn, An account of W. Penn’s travaile, 51.
allowed little religious freedom. These examples run counter to the majority of opinions but do demonstrate that travelers did not exclusively praise Lutherans.

Travelers likewise gave Calvinists mixed reviews, with several commenting on Calvinist industry and wealth and a smaller number disparaging Calvinist religious practices. In the late seventeenth century, William Carr claimed that the Calvinists were the richest inhabitants in the city of Frankfurt, praised the city of Heidelberg for its thriving university, and the surrounding countryside for its fruitfulness, along with its particularly pious Calvinist ruler and his wife. In Bremen, Jonas Hanway claimed that the Calvinists “appear to live in comfortable circumstances,” and that “One would imagine that the people are extremely pious, SOLI DEO GLORIA being in large characters over their doors and windows, within doors and without.” Near the end of the eighteenth century, John Moore noted that while the Calvinists were not allowed to worship in the city of Frankfurt proper, they were “the most industrious” and “unquestionably are the richest part of the inhabitants.” In a quip found in several works, Francis Garden reported that, in the city of Frankfurt, “The Catholics have the churches, the Lutherans the magistracy, and the Calvinists the money.” Some authors who disliked the Calvinists disparaged their religious practices in the same way they did the Catholics. The author of The German Spy was harsh in his judgment of Westphalia, condemning both Protestants and Catholics, and claiming that, despite the slightly better

40. Carr, Travels through Flanders, Holland, Germany, 88, 91.
42. Moore, A View of Society and Manners, 1:160.
43. Garden, Travelling memorandums, 2:154.
economic conditions of the former, because of the Calvinists, “we met with daily Instances of those two great Weaknesses of human Reason, Enthusiasm and Superstition.” 44 In Bremen he engaged in a friendly conversation with a man of similar sentiments who described the Calvinists as “horridly Priest-ridden” and given to many disputations and strict manners. 45 A short time later he spoke with another man who blasted the local Calvinist clergy for their long-winded sermons, overly enthusiastic prayers, blatant hypocrisy, and tendency to spend too much time visiting the pious women of their parishes. 46 William Penn met with some Calvinists who he considered to be “of a more religious, inward and zealous frame of Spirit, than any Body of People we met with or heard of in Germany.” 47 Later in Bremen, he complained of a lack of spiritual vitality in the Reformed churches there. 48

Travelers wrote about Jews with less regularity than they did any of the Christian groups. What they wrote predictably depicted Jews in either neutral or negative terms. Jews in the empire often faced both popular anti-Semitism and legal restrictions. 49 Nevertheless, individual princes in some states offered Jewish communities limited toleration in exchange for financial services. 50 Many of the authors who mentioned Germany’s Jews did so without comment, merely noting their existence in separate quarters of the cities. The remainder of

44. Anonymous, The German Spy, 7.

45. Ibid., 55.


47. Penn, An account of W. Penn’s travels, 122.

48. Ibid., 203.

49. Wilson, From Reich to Revolution, 76 – 77.

50. Ibid., 77.
travelers who described Jews did so in brief, derogatory ways. Though Gilbert Burnet, in the late eighteenth century, did praise the ruler of Manheim for being tolerant of all Christians, as well as Jews, and reaping the benefits of such a policy, he described the Jewish synagogues he saw as being “very nasty” and the women wearing, “tawdry” clothes.51 In the town of Altena, the author of The German Spy encountered people he described as, “chiefly of the meaner Sort; Artificers, petty Shopkeepers, keepers of Public-Houses of every Sort, good and bad, Jews without Number.”52 Thomas Nugent also commented on the Jews in Altena, complaining of their control of the money trade and the fact that Christians would have been punished if they were allowed to provide loans at such high interest rates.53 In Frankfurt, Thomas Cogan noted of the Jews: “These people are too useful in a commercial town, to be totally eradicated, and therefore they have a partial toleration; but religious zeal induces bigotry to persecute them as far as self interest will permit.”54 English travelers did not mention Jews very often but generally relied on stock images and crass stereotypes when they did.

One aspect of the religious situation in Germany that most authors lauded was the religious tolerance they found in many states. Nearly half the authors surveyed in this study mention the fact that many of the states in Germany allowed Catholics, Lutherans, Calvinists, and sometimes even Jews, to worship freely. Some authors simply mentioned this situation and made no further comment on it, but a large number of authors praised the

51. Burnet, Some letters containing an account, 294.


53. Nugent, Travels through Germany, 1:79.

practice. Brian Tierney argues that Germany’s numerous wars of religion helped lay the basis for the idea of religious toleration. The Peace of Augsburg in 1555 had granted a measure of religious toleration to Lutherans, and Article V in the Treaty of Westphalia expanded and altered German’s religious rights. The treaty provided full rights to Protestants, protection to religious minorities, and a variety of individual rights for nonconformists. Germany's religious toleration had two elements: the political, in which the German states allowed the major religious groups in their state to practice as they saw fit, and the social, in which the people living in those states treated people from the other religious groups respectfully. At times travel authors noted that legal equality was a reality but the people still maintained what the authors believed was a bigoted attitude and a lack of respect. Some authors saw toleration as important because the doctrinal differences among the groups were superficial or at least not worth fighting over. More authors praised toleration for its economic benefits. As explained above, travelers portrayed those states that did not provide religious toleration as economically depressed and bigoted.

William Carr used the occasion of his trip to the Continent to write on the benefits of freedom of worship. Upon seeing the tolerant situation in his travels, he wrote: “I could heartily wish that Papists and Protestants could live as lovingly together in England, as they do in Holland, Germany, and other Countries,” and even added that he had observed “Turks and Jews, who in their Lives and Manners have far exceeded many of our Enthusiastick


56. Wilson, *From Reich to Revolution*, 139.

57. Ibid., 139 – 140.
Professors at home; and when ever this happened, I could not forbear to love the Men without embracing their Religion, for which they themselves are to account to their great Master and Judge."58 Most authors did not go as far as embracing Turks and Jews or censoring their home country, but others shared similar sentiments for different reasons. Gilbert Burnet, writing at nearly the same time as Carr, likewise praised the toleration he found in Germany but claimed that it was partly due to England’s influence, not the other way around. He recounted his time in the Palatinate when he met with two learned men who seemed above the usual petty disputes roiling the universities there and assured his readers that “they have that generous largness of Soul, which is the Noble Ornament of many of the English Divines.”59 Though this passage hints at no lack of religious tension in the Palatinate during that period, it also speaks of the fact that various groups were allowed to exist with each other in ways they were not in other areas of Europe. Burnet pointed out that the ruler of Manheim allowed Jews and the three major Christian groups to worship together because “He saw of what advantage Liberty of Conscience was to the peopling of his Country.”60 William Penn, writing at the same time, lauded the practice of religious toleration he found in Manheim. For Penn, liberty to practice one’s own variety of Christianity carried practical benefits and fit with the spirit of Jesus Christ.61 According to Penn, religious toleration “encourageth People to transplant into this Land of Liberty, where

58. Carr, Travels through Flanders, Holland, Germany, 99, 99-100.

59. Burnet, Some letters containing an account, 290.

60. Ibid.

61. Penn, An account of W. Penn’s travails, 102-104.
the Sweat of the Brow is not made the Forfeit of the Conscience,” and that it was favorable to the ruler because, “he is not govern’d or clogg’d with the Power of his Clergy, which in most Countries is not only a Coordinate Power,...but a Superior Power, and rideth the Prince to their Designs.”

Travelers in the eighteenth century continued to praise religious toleration where they found it in Germany, particularly for its economic benefits. Along with several other authors, John Toland pointed to Prussia’s acceptance of the Huguenots as one reason for that state’s prosperity. In surveying Prussia in the early eighteenth century, Toland believed that it held the promise of a great future, due in part to the fact that Prussia allowed Protestant refugees in, which doubled the money in the treasury and promised to lure others. Furthermore, Toland claimed, Prussian prosperity was owing to a policy that allowed “that intire Liberty of Conscience which all good Christians enjoy in this place, and throout all his Majesty’s Territorys.” Jonas Hanway was in Leipzig when he lauded religious toleration. He claimed that the city allowed “liberty of conscience which has been indulged to all sorts of people,” and that, because of this, the people were “industrious in the cultivation of knowledge and moral accomplishments.” Travelers believed this policy of religious toleration filtered down into everyday life, as when Hester Lynch Piozzi praised the Saxon women she encountered for their ability to discuss religious matters without

62. Penn, An account of W. Penn’s travails, 104.

63. Toland, An account of the courts of Prussia and Hanover, 22-23.

64. Ibid., 23.

acrimony and referred to them as “exceedingly sensible,” and “well informed.”\textsuperscript{66} She also believed that this toleration fostered good moral behavior as the different religious groups attempted to persuade the others of their superiority by their actions, thus leading them to live like model Christians.\textsuperscript{67}

In the late eighteenth century, travelers continued to develop the belief that religious toleration was positive and that it led to good Christian behavior. Thomas Cogan, writing in the 1790s about Dusseldorf, claimed that the ruler “was too wise a Prince to admit of persecution” and expounded upon the virtues of the policy of religious toleration, which he claimed was a “source of harmony, and mutual affection.”\textsuperscript{68} Charles Este praised the people of Frankfurt for their ability to live together in peace despite their differences by claiming that they were “In opinions different: but in practice the same-each respecting the protecting each.”\textsuperscript{69} Near the Rhine, Francis Russell complemented the people from different Christian groups because “They intermarry, since the peace of Wesphalia; and, like the most part of Europe, are fairly unshackled from prejudice and bigotry; insomuch that religion, instead of being an incendiary of disunion, is never mentioned in public or private companies, and every one adores the great God as he thinks best.”\textsuperscript{70} The anonymous author of \textit{A tour through Germany} noted that the city of Coblenz had grown considerably over the

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\item 67. Ibid., 330.
\item 68. Cogan, \textit{The Rhine}, 1:153, 154.
\item 69. Este, \textit{A journey in the year 1793}, 251.
\item 70. Russell, \textit{A descriptive journey}, 17-18.
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last twenty years and claimed that the cause was “freedom of religion, and the exemption from taxes.” Adam Walker praised the people of Manheim for their generous attitude toward those with whom they disagreed, and stated that in fact “the triumvirate act in concert, (often in one and the same church) cutting of throats, and beating out of brains, have ceased to be necessary to salvation.”

Just as travelers believed religious toleration, both political and social, caused economic prosperity and provide a model of Christianity, they claimed the lack of toleration caused economic decline or stagnation and a stifling social situation. While the author of *A tour through Germany* had praised the situation in Coblenz, he also lamented the situation in Mainz, where there was much trade but not as much as there could have been given such a splendid situation on the Rhine. He argued that “Religious principles are the true cause of this evil,” since the city did not allow Huguenots to settle there when they had wanted to.

The author of *The German Spy* noted several times in his work that religious toleration was not a reality in parts of Germany. In Hamburg, he stated that Lutheranism was the major religion, and that, while other Christian groups were allowed to practice their faiths the Lutheran ministers still harassed them. A few pages later he continued to lament the lack of agreement between the Lutherans and Calvinists, positing that the issue of predestination and consubstantiation were the only doctrines keeping the two groups apart.


74. Ibid., 50.

In refusing to work together, the Lutheran ministers were harming trade and “are sacrificing the Interest of the Public to their ill-tim’d Zeal, for their own Religion, they publicly and avowedly follow a Practice, which is a Scandal to that Religion, and which, in the Roman Catholics, was the first Reason of Luther’s Diffention.” Christopher Hervey provided a mixed picture of religious toleration. The city of Augsburg allowed various religious groups to worship, but they did not necessarily respect each other. He wrote about the situation in the city of Augsburg where the Catholic and Lutheran clergy “appear walking about the streets in their proper habits. They seem to scowl, however, a little at each other when they meet.” He wrote that the Catholics and Lutherans shared everything evenly in the city, even some churches which they both worship in, and exclaimed: “Both parties must have been heartily tired of hostilities to enter into such a union, tho’ it is to be wished the rest of Europe would take example from the present tolerating behaviour of the Germans.” John Gardnor looked forward to the day when a secular movement would provide tolerance in the city of Cologne. The Protestants wanted to build a church in which to worship in the city, “but the Catholics have destroyed every attempt toward erecting the edifice, and the poor Protestants must wait the full effect of the French Revolution on the spirit of the German governments, to obtain a peaceable toleration of their public worship.”

English visitors spent much of their writing reflecting on the German religious beliefs and practices they encountered on their travels. They spent much less space describing


77. Hervey, Letters from Portugal, Spain, Italy and Germany, 3:503.

78. Ibid., 504.

79. Gardnor, Views taken on and near the Rhine River, 119.
other cultural elements they experienced. Judged partly by the lack of coverage, English authors were generally unimpressed with the artistic culture they found in Germany. Except for a handful of notable exceptions, few writers described in any detail the visual arts or the writing of Germans, the latter possibly because most travelers to Germany seem to have been unable to speak the language there. More authors praised the music they heard while in Germany, with most providing favorable comments about church music and a handful writing positively about music at courts.

A small number of noteworthy exceptions stand out amidst a general silence about German contributions to literature. Thomas Cogan wrote about the book fair at Leipzig and believed that the large number of volumes sold there demonstrated “zeal and assiduity with which the Germans apply to the subject of literature.” He expounded upon the idea by examining the number of writers devoted to reviewing literature and the large number of volumes they reviewed. A few pages later, he stated that “Germany has always been renowned for learned and elaborate writers in the different branches of the abstuser sciences. Since their emancipation from the Latin language, the Germans have greatly distinguished themselves in every department of the Belles Lettres,” though he did not provide any specific examples. Such flattering might make sense since Cogan, on the same page, attempted to convince his readers that the Germans and English were quite alike in their many accomplishments. Another exception was John Moore, who, in his generally


81. Ibid., 262.


83. Ibid., 265.
favorable account of his travels in Germany, praised German poetry and language. Moore stated that, while they were late on the scene, “the German muse is now admired all over Europe.”\(^8^4\) He added that, in the courts, “The native language of the country is treated like a vulgar and provincial dialect, while the French is cultivated as the only proper language for people of fashion.”\(^8^5\) Though he did not speak German himself, he reported: “I have been assured by many who understand that German language well, that it is nervous, copious, most expressive, and capable of all the graces of poetry.”\(^8^6\) Few other writers gave any notice to written German, providing evidence that English travelers did not consider it important enough to cover in their travelogues.

The only cultural product that English writers described in detail from Germany was its music. Some writers claimed that the noble courts were the best places for music. Charles Burney took his trip expressly to experience German music, and thus spent much of his work discussing the subject. In Augsburg he grew weary of hearing music in the imperial cities.\(^8^7\) He explained that “The fine arts are children of affluence and luxury: in despotic governments they render power less insupportable, and diversion from thought is perhaps as necessary as from action. Whoever therefore seeks music in Germany, should do it at several courts, not in the free imperial cities.”\(^8^8\) The anonymous author of *A tour through*...

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85. Ibid.

86. Ibid.


88. Ibid.
Germany listed music, along with militaries and the hunt, as the best aspects of the courts in Germany.\textsuperscript{89}

More authors noted the quality of singing they heard in churches or the religious music they heard being sung in the streets. In Magdeburg, Jonah Hanway noted the singing in the Lutheran countries and described how pleased he was to see a group of singing students appear at houses after the morning service as a way of earning money.\textsuperscript{90} Thomas Nugent listed ability in music as a German characteristic, and in Hamburg he spoke of the love that the Germans had for church music with organs.\textsuperscript{91} Theophilus Dorrington attended a church service in Aix-la-Chapelle, and was pleased with the music, “which was made by a mixture of Organs and Voices, both very good, and perfectly harmonious and agreeing.”\textsuperscript{92} William Carr praised the church music he heard in Hamburg as enjoyable and accompanied by large organs.\textsuperscript{93} One hundred years later, Joseph Marshall provided a rare uncomplimentary depiction of German music in the town of Hamburg by stating: “Their amusements do not deserve the name, music excepted, and that is often bad.”\textsuperscript{94} Charles Burney, who spent the most amount of time discussing German music was mixed in his assessment. In the preface to his work he proclaimed that “though Italy has carried vocal

\textsuperscript{89} Anonymous, \textit{A tour through Germany}, 97.

\textsuperscript{90} Hanway, \textit{An historical account of the British trade}, 2:241.

\textsuperscript{91} Nugent, \textit{The grand tour}, 2:51, 99.

\textsuperscript{92} Dorrington, \textit{Observations concerning the present state of religion}, 258.

\textsuperscript{93} Carr, \textit{Travels through Flanders, Holland, Germany}, 107.

\textsuperscript{94} Marshall, \textit{Travels through Holland, Flanders, Germany}, 2:120.
music to a perfection unknown in any other country, much of the present excellence of instrumental is certainly owing to the natives of Germany.”

Nevertheless, he remarked that along the Rhine the people lacked a strong desire for music and, later in Prussia, “there are more critics and theorists in this city, than practitioners; which has not, perhaps, either refined the taste, or fed the fancy of the performers.” At the end of his two volumes he concluded by claiming, after his travels were over, that Germans were probably the best in Europe at making musical instruments and second to the Italians for singing. He claimed that “the musical virtues of its natives, are patience and profundity, and their vices, prolixity and pedantry,” that German music could be, “too elaborate,” and that music was, “work to the Germans,” and that “Germans have alone the power to render even labour pleasing.”

English travelers generally praised German music, but that was one of the few cultural accomplishments English travelers believed Germans attained.

95. Burney, The present state of music, 1:vi.

96. Ibid., 1:72(V1), 2:224 (V2).

97. Ibid., 2:339.

98. Ibid., 2:341.
CHAPTER 5

SOCIETY AND THE STATE

English travelers to Germany wrote much on the states they encountered on their journeys. Traveling through Germany authors experienced a diversity of institutions and rulers. They depicted the multiplicity of German nobles and governing bodies in a variety of ways. Nevertheless, a few trends stand out. The general consensus among English travelers was that most German nobles were absolute and held too much power, though some provided positive changes for their subjects and lands. Principle among the states that received positive coverage were Hanover and Prussia. Travelers presented the imperial cities favorably as being free and possessing some sort of representative government. Travelers believed ecclesiastical governments were the worst of the lot, adding an element of religious oppression to a system that they already viewed as very powerful. During the latter half of the eighteenth century, English visitors began writing more on the political situation of the German states and increasingly began to present the ruling nobles in negative terms, with many travelers simply not mentioning that the rulers were absolute, but blasting them for poor governance, profligate spending, and oppression. English travelers believed that these nobles (sometimes described with their particular titles and other times simply lumped together as a group) held nearly total control over their people and oppressed them with their power, causing poverty and problems. The most negative portrayals came during the 1790s when travelers clearly wrote with political motivations in mind.

One common trend was to describe the noble’s power as absolute, or even despotic. An early example of this view was William Carr’s work (1693), which asserted that a prince in Herminshine “governs his Subjects as the other Spiritual Electors do, that is, both by
Temporal and Spiritual Authority, which in that Country is pretty absolute.”¹ Later, in Hamburg, Carr stated that the people there “groan under heavy Taxes and Impositions,” as they maintained a heavily military force because the Danes and raiding pirates constantly threatened them.² He described the types of unique revenue-raising schemes Hamburg’s rulers imposed in order to pay for the cost of running the state.³ William Bromley, while in Passau, also described the ruler there as “an absolute Prince, only a Feudatory, as all the Princes of Germany are.”⁴ Gilbert Burnet was in the Lower Palatinate when he described the elector there as the most absolute in Germany and even claimed that the people owed him more allegiance than the emperor. He wrote: “And here I saw that which I had always believed to be true, that the Subjects of Germany are only bound to their particular Prince; for they swear Allegiance singly to the Elector, without any reserve for the Emperor; and in their Prayers for him, they name him their Soveraign.”⁵ Thomas Frankz took the opportunity on his trip to the Continent to lament the lack of liberty those outside of England possessed. He traveled through Flanders and France along with several of the German states, and while he stated that arbitrary governments ruled all of the places he had been, France was the

¹ Carr, Travels through Flanders, Holland, Germany, 86.

² Ibid., 104.

³ Ibid., 105-107.

⁴ William Bromley, Several years travels through Portugal, Spain, Italy, Germany, Prussia, Sweden, Denmark, and the United Provinces. Performed by a Gentleman (London, 1702), 224, http://find.galegroup.com/ecco/infomark.do?&source=gale&prodId=ECCO&userGroupName=den0677&tabId=T001&docId=CW3300484763&type=multipage&contentSet=ECCOAritcles&version=1.0&docLevel=FASCIMILE.

⁵ Burnet, Some letters containing an account, 290.
most just and Flanders the happiest.⁶ He did not portray the German states positively: “The Electors of Cologn, Palatinate, Saxony, and Brandenburg, are, doubtless, all of them miserable enough; but I am apt to imagine the last is the most so.”⁷ He also described Hannover as absolutist with the caveat that they had a virtuous ruler, and Mecklenburg as the worst state, as it was poorly governed and burdened with heavy taxes and foreign invasions.⁸ John Fransham discussed the structure of the empire in his work from the mid-eighteenth century and claimed that the nobles possessed too much power and did not follow their emperor enough.⁹ He mocked the imperial diet meetings by repeating a claim he heard from another foreigner. He reported that the imperial diet met in four phases and that “one is taken up in disputes about precedency; a second in drinking-matches; a third about their privileges; a fourth on the business propos’d from the throne.”¹⁰ John Moore wrote positively about the reign of Margrave of Baden-Durlach yet noted that “he, as well as the other sovereign princes in Germany, has an unlimited power over his people,” and that though the people claimed that they had rights, in reality the sovereign ultimately determined the laws.¹¹

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6. Frankz, A tour through France, Flanders, and Germany, 30.

7. Ibid., 31.

8. Ibid., 31-32.

9. Fransham, The entertaining traveller, 1:49

10. Ibid., 51.

11. Moore, A View of Society and Manners in France, Switzerland and German, 1:152.
Despite the belief that the nobles held absolute power, English travelers praised some for the positive impact they made in their states. Even as he called the ruler of the Palatinate absolute, Burnet praised him for his ability to help his land recover after the ravages of war and his policy of religious toleration.\textsuperscript{12} John Campbell lauded the imperial princes due to their lack of activity in the two years between the first and revised third editions of his work, stating, “In this the Princes of the Empire act slowly, and with great Sagacity; for the very Consumption of Time, while it contributes to keep Things in Peace and good Order, answers a very important End.”\textsuperscript{13} He added that the empire “becomes by this Means productive of Measures not unprofitable to particular Interests, or inconsistent with the common Good.”\textsuperscript{14} Travelers generally provided these positive views only of certain rulers.

Some travelers praised the state of Prussia in particular, and seemed to view the nobles there as models for others. John Toland’s account of Prussia was almost exclusively positive. After describing Prussia’s many positive attributes, he wrote that he would, “take occasion, SIR, to tell you, that in this regard there is not Prince at present in Europe, who has a nobler and greater Soul than FREDERIC the 3\textsuperscript{rd}. If the antient Romans cou’d return again to the World, they wou’d be amaz’d to find Barbarism overspread all their belov’d Italy, while

\textsuperscript{12} Burnet, \textit{Some letters containing an account}, 290.

\textsuperscript{13} John Campbell, \textit{The Present State of Europe; explaining the interests, connections, political and commercial views of its several powers...}, 3rd ed. (London: 1752), preface, http://libproxy.library.unt.edu:2142/ecco/informark.do?&source=gale&proddId=ECCO&userGroupName=den0677&tabId=T001&docId=CW3304412028&type=multipage&contentSet=ECCOArticles&version=1.0&docLevel=FASCIMILE.

\textsuperscript{14} Ibid.
the Arts and Science flourish in the midst of Germany.”  

When Frederick II took the throne in 1740, several English visitors commented favorably on his accomplishments. John Campbell considered Prussia a rising power in the mid-eighteenth century due to its numerous accomplished princes. He argued that some were brave, some fervent Protestants, some particularly learned and some were politically intelligent, while the current ruler, Fredrick II was also gifted. He lavishly praised Frederick by stating that “he has so conducted his Affairs, as to be universally considered as a German Patriot; that is, as one resolved to maintain the Essence of the Germanick Constitution, and to preserve the Liberty of its Members from all interior Influence, as well as foreign Subjection.” Campbell added: “He has great Forces, large Revenues, a Genius capable of conducting both, and a Moderation that will restrain him from Attempts superior to these.”

Martin Sherlock likewise provided a nearly hagiographic treatment of Frederick II in his work published in 1780. Sherlock based the book on his travels in Europe from 1776 to 1778 and published it in part with an eye on gaining a diplomatic post. Sherlock described Frederick as “the greatest man that ever existed” and stated that his subjects loved him, his neighbors feared

15. Toland, An account of the courts of Prussia and Hannover, 18.


17. Ibid., 118-131.

18. Ibid., 139.

19. Ibid., 141.

him, and he was greatly misunderstood.\textsuperscript{21} He compared him to Horace, described him as a man with “a strong and brilliant imagination, always regulated by a solid judgment.”\textsuperscript{22} He remarked that “the most sage philosophy and the profoundest morality are blended with the most poignant wit and happiest sallies.”\textsuperscript{23}

The majority of English travel writers, however, provided a more nuanced review of Frederick II’s reign and praised his accomplishments and talents while they bemoaned his imposition of heavy taxes and repression. Jonas Hanway, for instance, generally disparaged the oppression he found in Prussia, but believed that Frederick II also had positive attributes and ruled the state well. Upon entering Prussia from Poland, he stated, with some backhanded compliments, that the situation began to improve, as he was now in a place “where the inhabitants seems to wear their chains with great cheerfulness and elegance.”\textsuperscript{24} Hanway was surprised to find that “considering this country is so extremely despotic, and military...manufactories here may be said to flourish.”\textsuperscript{25} He was impressed with some of Frederick’s personal qualities, which, though still found in a despot, nevertheless demonstrated that he was a better despot than most. He stated that the king “is reputed by many a free-thinker in the worst sense of the word, but the rule of his government, and his

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\textsuperscript{21} Martin Sherlock, \textit{Letters from an English traveller Martin Sherlock, ESQ.} (London, 1780), 2, 3, http://find.galegroup.com/ecco/infomark.do?&source=gale&prodId=ECCO&userGroupName=den0677&tabId=T001&docId=CW3302037189&type=mulipage&contentSet=ECCOArticles&version=1.0&docLevel=FASCIMILE.
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\textsuperscript{22} Ibid., 23.
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\textsuperscript{23} Ibid.
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\textsuperscript{24} Hanway, \textit{An historical account of the British trade}, 2:181.
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\textsuperscript{25} Ibid., 195.
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superiority to the vanities and mean gratifications of life, does not favor so harsh a judgement,” and described his disciplined army, personal work ethic, and frugality.²⁶

Hanway concluded his coverage of Prussia by arguing that the king’s frugality and the wealth it generated “make the people’s chains fit easy, and secure their property enough to animate their industry.”²⁷ Around twenty-five years later, Nathaniel William Wraxall similarly asked that, given the amount of energy Frederic II had and how much he had accomplished, “can we wonder that he has attracted the universal attention of mankind, and that every other Prince sinks into comparative obscurity near him?”²⁸ Nevertheless, Wraxall stated: “Much as we admire, we are little tempted to love him.”²⁹ He argued that Frederick was oppressive and ruled for his own personal glory, and that that his frugal monetary policy was only for the maintenance of a large army.³⁰ Likewise, Joseph Marshall regarded the Prussian state and its rulers as heavy handed, though he did highlight the benefits of the king’s reign. In Breslau, Marshall noted, “The ease and happiness of the peasants in this country is the more surprising, as their taxes are very heavy.”³¹ But Marshall also argued that the peasant’s situation "can be attributed only to the regularity of his Prussian majesty’s government,” and claimed that the people “had better be heavily taxed by him, than pay less, but be open with it to those numerous and accidental oppressions

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²⁷ Ibid., 2:212.


²⁹ Ibid., 106.

³⁰ Ibid., 106-121.

common in all other arbitrary governments.” 32 John Moore wrote in 1779 that Frederick II’s subjects paid high taxes and the young men had to serve in the army, but he nevertheless praised the king’s use of resources and his many talents, including his genius, energy, and attention to detail. 33

Additionally, English visitors presented some imperial cities as free, possessing elected bodies, and enjoying prosperity. Even during the late eighteenth century, English travelers’ coverage of German governments turned particularly harsh, English visitors praised the imperial cities as islands of freedom in a sea of despotism. The major exception to this proved to be Cologne, not surprisingly considering its strong Roman Catholic rule. The author of The German Spy found much to like about Hamburg’s government. He described the various bodies that made up the city and called it a mixed government with democratic and aristocratic elements. 34 He claimed that city elections did not suffer from the problem of corruption or division into political parties, and even stated that the cities’ burghers could argue with the senators, even the burghers who were poor cobblers. 35 He was not completely impressed, however, as he ended his coverage on Hamburg by stating that “The Balance of Power, was then, beyond all Dispute, too great in the Hands of the Commonality.” 36 These positive views are all the more important as in the next section of

32. Marshall, Travels through Holland, Flanders, Germany, 3:271.

33. Moore, A View of Society and Manners in France, Switzerland and Germany, 1:228, 238.


35. Ibid., 179, 186.

36. Ibid., 187.
his book, the author depicted ecclesiastical states as places where the Church defied the senate, and its leaders were, “extream proud and haughty, and expect a more than ordinary Deference from every other Rank of Men.”³⁷ Lady Mary Wortley Montague also included a comparison between the impact that governments of free cities and those of the nobility had on the character of their territories. The free cities possessed “an air of commerce and plenty; the streets are well built, and full of people neatly and plainly dressed; the shops are loaded with merchandize, and the commonalty are clean and cheerful,” while those states under absolutist nobles contained “shabby finery, a number of dirty people of quality tawdered out; narrow nasty streets out of repair, wretchedly thin inhabitants, and above half of the common sort asking alms.”³⁸

Francis Garden’s work, published in 1792, criticized many states, but depicted Frankfurt as a place where “The never failing blessings of civil and religious liberty are visible in the appearance and condition of this people, compared with Cologne and some others.”³⁹ He later compared Nuremberg’s government to the republic of Venice, and stated that it too “evinces the happy consequences of civil and religious liberty.”⁴⁰ Unlike the government of princes, Frankfurt did not suffer from misery and want.⁴¹ Charles Este also praised Frankfurt as thriving and free in the midst of the surrounding oppressive states. Having


⁴⁰. Ibid., 161.

⁴¹. Ibid., 162.
made a dreary trip through the surrounding countryside, he wrote: “At Frankfort, however, and all immediately around it, they live and move again-naturally showy, and rationally gay-in the blessings of a Republic, formed on independence, toleration, and peace.” He praised the thriving trade, low taxes, republican government, and small army, and the fact that “There were no debtors nor criminals when we were there.” Ann Ward Radcliffe wrote almost nothing positive about Germany, but praised the city of Frankfurt, calling it a free city amongst “arbitrary power, ignorance and poverty.”

While the generally negative tone toward German rulers was a consistent, if not entirely one-sided presentation, in the late eighteenth century a number of travel writers published works that depicted the German nobles and their reigns in harshly negative terms. Travelers published several major volumes in the 1780s and 1790s that blasted the German ruling classes for their profligate spending, excessive pride, and idle living and portrayed them as petty despots. In the early 1790s Francis Garden, Lord Gardenstone, published a work on a tour he undertook in the late 1780s. Though it contained many positive elements, his book also included comments about how the nobles wasted money. While he was impressed by the economy and culture of Prussia compared to other states, he also complained, “I wish that I could find a German Prince, who, in place of an uninhabited palace of paintings, shall shew me a gallery of elegant manufactories, such as the merchants of Lyons exhibit.” According to Garden, only large states with extra money

42. Este, A journey in the year 1793, 250.

43. Ibid., 253-257, 256.

44. Radcliffe, A journey made in the summer of 1794, 226.

45. Garden, Travelling memorandums, 2:135.
should have been indulging in the arts the way some German princes did.\textsuperscript{46} Later, he lamented, upon entering Saxony, “that the Saxons do not enjoy that measure of ease and plenty, which a wise and good administration of government would secure to an industrious people in so fine and fertile a country.”\textsuperscript{47} He claimed that rather than working to improve their country, the Saxon princes were power hungry and spent too much on, “dead treasures of paintings and precious rarities.”\textsuperscript{48} John Gardnor, in his book describing his tour down the Rhine, enjoyed the scenery but was less impressed with several of the governments he found there. While he praised the rulers of Manheim, in Marxburgh he encountered a man who complained of his prince and defended the common people. According to Gardnor, “He related this with strong marks of indignation; and seemed very desirous to impress me with an opinion, that the poverty, idleness, and ignorance which every where appeared in the ecclesiastical states of the empire, were the effects only of superstition, and that the subjects of these states were not in reality (what every stranger must conceive them to be), an inferior order of beings.”\textsuperscript{49} A few pages later he recalled looking up at all the castles perched over the Rhine and reflected that they, “were used as places of security to petty lords, or heads of robbing parties.”\textsuperscript{50} He concluded: “Hence the

\textsuperscript{46} Garden, \textit{Travelling memorandums}, 2:135.

\textsuperscript{47} Francis Garden, \textit{Travelling memorandums, made in a tour upon the continent of Europe in the years 1786, 1787, and 1788} (London: 1791) 3:260, http://libproxy.library.unt.edu:2142/ecco/infomark.do?option=gale&prodId=ECCO&userGroupName=den0677&tabId=T001&docId=CW3301465055&type=multipage&contentSet=ECCOArticles&version=1.0&docLevel=FASCIMILE.

\textsuperscript{48} Ibid., 260.

\textsuperscript{49} Gardnor, \textit{Views taken on and near the River Rhine}, 84.

\textsuperscript{50} Ibid., 91.
origin of those numerous petty princes with which Germany abounds, and who have lineally succeed each other to the present time.”

Upon stopping at one of the castles, a soldier greeted him and demonstrated “the usual jealousy and interested insolence of arbitrary governments.”

The anonymous author of *A tour through Germany*, published in 1794, displayed a similarly cynical attitude as he issued a steady stream of criticism toward the German rulers. Along the Rhine, he lamented that the area could have been thriving but was overburdened by the numerous taxes that all the petty princes imposed.

Further down the Rhine, he claimed that the best land for vineyards went to the wealthy nobles and complained that “Ignorance of the true principles of government are the causes of this evil. The consequences are, that a great number of persons, who might be usefully employed, live in idleness. Even the military establishment of the country appears to me more calculated for the purpose of feeding a hungry nobility, than for real use.”

In the city of Darmstadt he noted that the rulers took in a fair amount of revenue, but that most of it went to pay off their debt, which he claimed was “the situation of all the German courts.” In Augsburg, he criticized the rulers for harming trade by stating, “As soon as the princes discovered the value of industry, and gave it free encouragement in their dominions it fled into their protection, and abandoned the dark walls of cities in which a system of monopolies, little policy, and narrow-minded envy of the successful, laid it


52. Ibid., 103.


54. Ibid., 65-66.

55. Ibid., 92.
under so many restraints.”\textsuperscript{56} He claimed that the situation was so bad in Augsburg thanks to its rulers, that, though there appeared to be some nice buildings in the town, “it is as with the false bloom on a courtezan’s cheek, it may beguile the passing stranger, but whoever sees her at her toilet will soon be undeceived.”\textsuperscript{57} At roughly the same time, Charles Este published his work on Germany and presented a mixed image of German rulers. Like many of the other works published that decade, it included the complaint that most German rulers were poor leaders. He praised the location of Mainz but thought that war and abuse by leaders had led to it being underdeveloped, and specifically referenced the numerous tolls that the princes established along the Rhine.\textsuperscript{58} A few pages later he wrote about the election of the bishops and argued that they were not qualified for their positions, though “in Germany they do not find it necessary to insist, like other people, upon this.”\textsuperscript{59} He mocked this fact as a “very curious national character! For in most other countries, age and name do not imply a moral certainty of the character and qualifications necessary for office.”\textsuperscript{60} Another example of this type of critique is found in Joshua Wilkinson’s work about his trip through Germany in the early 1790s, originally published in 1793. He portrayed the German rulers as little despots, who were “in general, shut up in the fortresses and petty castles.”\textsuperscript{61} He denigrated the nobles who “though surrounded by ten thousand body guards,

\textsuperscript{56} Anonymous, \textit{A tour through Germany}, 112.

\textsuperscript{57} Ibid., 113.

\textsuperscript{58} Este, \textit{A journey in the year 1793}, 291-292.

\textsuperscript{59} Ibid., 299.

\textsuperscript{60} Ibid., 300.

\textsuperscript{61} Wilkinson, \textit{The wanderer}, 1:16.
and the little servile imitation of some sovereign princes of Germany, whose domestic servants, clothed in military uniform, play the soldier before the fancied palace of their masters.” He lampooned the petty princes “whose revenues scarcely equal the yearly rents of some English esquires” for pretending that they needed an army. His political intentions were clear when he mocked those “whose pay is small, although some of their princes receive extravagant douceurs from the purses of England, nearly equal, in rapacity and plunder, their dear brothers of Prussia and Austria.” He continued to harp on this theme by stating, “The hermitages of Lucerne, the Rhine, the Moeuse, or the Mozelle, are filled by men, who are recluse from profession, and who support an idle life upon the benefactions and labour of the poor believer.” Likewise, Anne Ward Radcliffe portrayed the German nobles and their states harshly. Upon entering Cleves from Holland she claimed that there was a marked difference because in Prussia, she encountered many poor begging children. Though the land itself did not look poor, it was so because “The great landholders know what should be done, and the peasantry are directed to do it.” In Cologne, she wrote, “The government has an affectation of being formed upon the model of Republican Rome; a form certainly not worthy of imitation, but which is as much disgraced

63. Ibid., 1:249.
64. Ibid., 252.
65. Ibid., 285.
66. Radcliffe, A journey made in the summer of 1794, 85.
67. Ibid.
by this burlesque of it.”  

She complained of the high taxes and regulations that made the place “inferior, perhaps, to half the minor seaports in England.”  

It is not as though these accounts contained nothing good about Germany, but their common complaints about the aristocratic ruling classes’ ineptitude and greed, and their emphasis on the negative aspects of their government reached unprecedented levels in the years leading up to and during the early years of the French Revolution.

During the early modern period, German governments placed a high value on their army. This fact drew a fair number of comments from English visitors, who respected the soldiers’ discipline and ability, but saw them as unnecessary in such small states, and as mechanically drilled tools of despotism. Travelers portrayed German states as places that contained oppressive soldiers beginning at least by the late seventeenth century. Many travelers’ works mentioned extraordinary numbers of soldiers and generally did so negatively. Most writers focused on the Prussian troops, though not exclusively so. In the late seventeenth century, William Carr visited Brandenburg and noted the existence of strictly disciplined troops who their rulers forced to attend church.  

Forty years later, Thomas Frankz was in Prussia when he expressed admiration about the size and strength of the military there. After watching 12,000 troops parade, he confessed: “I must own, it was surprising to see their extraordinary Dexterity in Exercising, and quick, exact Firing.”

68. Radcliffe, *A journey made in the summer of 1794*, 105  
69. Ibid., 107.  
70. Carr, *Travels through Flanders, Holland, Germany*, 114.  
was especially interested in the tall soldiers who he claimed where not paid well, and noted that “almost one half of the Army are Foreigners, who have been accustomed to live in a quite different Manner from any thing in this barren, cold Country,” later claiming that they were not treated well.  

The negative comments about the existence of large armies in small aristocratic states continued through the eighteenth century. Richard Pococke, whose account originally appeared in 1793, expressed interest in a Prussian soldier he encountered who was over seven feet tall. Upon reflection, he stated that the Prussian rulers had the ability to press any man in the country into the army. Jonas Hanway spent several pages discussing the Prussian, Saxon, and Hanoverian troops that he encountered, praising them all for their prowess. He remarked that, due to their being subsidized and, “owing to the pride of those GERMAN princes, and the custom of their forefathers,” all the princes of the small states kept soldiers even in times of peace. Not long after, John Moore noted the discipline and regular drilling of soldiers in several states but claimed that Hannover’s were not forced into their positions or were as rigid in their adherence to etiquette as those of

72. Frankz, A tour through France, Flanders, and Germany, 25.


74. Ibid., 230-231,


76. Ibid., 244.
other states. He claimed that the Prussian troops were the “best disciplined, and the rediest for service at a minute’s warning, of any now in the world, or perhaps that ever was in it.” The anonymous author of a work from 1794 noted, in Frankfurt, after watching some rigid military exercises that “Every other part of garrison duty is performed with equal exactness, and all neglects as severely punished as if an enemy were at the gates.” He argued that many of the troops there wanted to desert because of the harsh treatment they received. He noted the efficiency of the troops in Würzburg who traveled the woods and kept the countryside free from thieves, as well as the handsome men and officers he encountered in Saxony, and the grand marching in Prussia. The Bavarian troops impressed John Owen, who wrote that “They are numerous, and in general of a fine make and stern countenance. This warlike air was not a little augmented by large whiskers, and crested helmets.” In Potsdam, though, he saw that the town was sad that its soldiers were going off to fight the French because life would now be boring, and editorialized that “Thus are men under arbitrary governments amused and cajoled into servitude; amused at the expense of their liberty, they forget in this fatal fascination the chains they are compelled to wear.” Joshua Wilkinson’s acerbic account of Germany included an encounter with “a

78. Ibid.
80. Ibid., 90.
81. Ibid., 124, 292, 322.
82. Owen, *Travels into Different Parts of Europe*, 2:399–400.
83. Ibid., 522.
savage whiskered serjeant,” who “recalled us to prostrate ourselves before the Cremonian representative of the German Caesar.”

He castigated the Prussian army as being “formed out of the outcasts of every nation of Europe,” and “universally addicted to rapine and plunder.” Wilkinson affirmed that the troops in the imperial army were willing tools of despotism because they believed “that the cause of Caesar is the cause of God.”

In another work, he began by stating that there was a rumor of indiscriminate plundering by Hessian troops but, in defense of his nation, he refused to believe it. He claimed that he had taken the trip to investigate the true nature of the fighting and that he was prepared to see the French as the enemy. Once there, however, he argued that the rumors of abuse were true as he talked with a man who told him that the Hessians robbed him of everything, and claimed to have seen that “The faithful dog lies dead at the door for having defended the property which his master had not time to carry off.” Wilkinson wrote of plundered corpses and noted that “Great complaints have been made against the French for their

84. Wilkinson, The wanderer, 1:50.

85. Ibid., 1:251.

86. Ibid., 2:297.


88. Ibid., viii.

89. Ibid., 6.
contempt of religion, and the profanation of the churches; but neither have they escaped
the ravaging hands of the Hessians.”

English travelers presented these images of both individual and groups of German
soldiers to their reading public. They viewed German soldiers as highly disciplined and rigid
in their obedience, yet often tools of oppression and the focal point of petty nobles.
Germany was becoming a byword for militarism.

90. Wilkinson, Political facts, 7,8.
CHAPTER 6

COMPARISONS WITH ENGLAND

Travel to other countries inevitably means comparisons between the place visited and one’s home. English travelers were no different from others in this regard as their voyages through Germany allowed ample opportunity to notice and describe how they were similar to and different from their continental neighbor. Comparisons to other countries was an important part of building national identity. Some authors, like Linda Colley, have emphasized the role that outsiders played in establishing the meaning of Englishness. She argues that English identity developed more as a result of contact with other countries than from common understandings forged within England.¹ Others, like Katherine Turner, have argued for a more complex reading of travel literature, but nevertheless maintain that the popularity of travel writing helped foster national identity through comparisons with other countries.² Historians have also examined the ways that the process of identity building through the images of others functioned in travel literature. English travel writers often directly compared their home country to the place they were visiting. According to Anna Suranyi, as travelers wrote about foreign places they did so with the belief that “each culture exhibited a special character, of which particular aspects could be selected that by contrast or comparison illustrated positive English qualities.”³ While this may be a

simplification of the complexity of travel literature, it is certainly true that travel writers in this study wrote of Germans acting certain ways and then directly relating those to English character or behavior. Of course, as Suranyi points out, most of the comparisons were favorable to England and allowed the English to show how they were better than others. In accounts of their voyages, travelers also included discussions with or comments by the local German populace, and revealed that Germans held favorable views of England and its people. Paul Langford argues that most foreigners viewed England as a place of progress and a symbol of the future. Thus, English travel writers certainly believe that England impressed Germans. Authors also used comparisons between England and Germany to comment on English political policy or to reflect on how their time abroad left them more appreciative of their home country.

English travelers' most common claim was that Germans had very favorable opinions of the English and were sometimes envious of England’s political situation. Travelers did not reciprocate the feelings, however, as they frequently wrote of the ways that their country was superior to the German states. English also wrote of the differences between the two lands, most often citing the freedom they possessed in England and their distance from the Continent's troubles. Travelers also drew positive comparisons between the Church of England and German Protestant churches, noting the fact that Germans described English troops as brave, and sometimes asserted that parts of Germany reminded them of England. Travelers reflected on the value of their voyages by claiming that having ventured overseas,


they returned with a renewed love of their home country. With a few notable exceptions, they found no ethnic or linguistic connection between the English and the Germans.

Many travelers emphasized England's connections with Germany by comparing the two states in which the Hanoverian monarchs reigned. On several occasions, John Toland reported on the favorable treatment he and his party received at the Hanoverian court and described how the rulers there lavished their English visitors with food and drinks. Another visitor to Hanover exclaimed: “Here I had the singular Pleaseure in beholding the Liberty and Prosperity of my Fellow Subjects, and in hearing their Prayers and tender Wishes for the Health and Prosperity of their Majesties, the Royal Family, and the whole English Nation; every Native, whereof, in travellin thro’ this Country, is shewn the utmost Civilities and Respect by all Ranks of People.” In Mecklenburg, Thomas Nugent met a German who expressed joy that his country’s princess married the king of England, and mentioned that the connection was natural since the English emigrated from the area around Hannover.

Additionally, English travelers described the friendliness of Germans in other areas of the empire. John Gardnor stated that people from the Palatinate had a reputation for not welcoming English visitors, though he assured his readers that this was not the case. He humorously wrote of an experience that occurred as he was sketching the countryside. When the local populace crowded around him to watch him work, he described their


8. Nugent, Travels through Germany, 158.

behavior as "very like what voyagers relate of harmless savages." He later described an experience with a man near Marxburgh who lamented that his ruler was, “the most bigoted of all the ecclesiastical electors,” and who congratulated Gardnor, “on the happiness of living under the English government.” John Owen recounted his journey in the early 1790s in which he dined with some soldiers. After praising their politeness and civility, he remarked that Germans were much friendlier than the people he encountered in France near the Rhine River. He later wrote of the Anglomania he found in Prussia, and claimed that the Germans there felt very close to England. Joshua Wilkinson seemed upset that Germans generally favored the English. He believed that English wealth, dynastic connections, and generous English subsidies accounted for the positive feelings. These favorable comments, along with a lack of negative ones, demonstrate that English travelers felt respected as they traveled through Germany.

English travelers also used their experiences to compare themselves to the people they were visiting. Of course, these comparisons included a wide spectrum of topics depending on the reason for the author's travel. Travelers compared German music, plant growing techniques, judicial punishment, crops, baths, religion, military, economics, and many other aspects of life with those of England. Some authors wanted to stress the


11. Ibid., 84.

12. Owen, Travels into Different Parts of Europe, 2:404.

13. Ibid., 533, 538.

similarity between the two countries. Theophilus Dorrington stressed the connection between the English and German Protestants. He visited Germany to demonstrate how different the Church of England was from Catholicism, to persuade his readers that Anglicanism did not maintain vestiges of Popish ceremony, and to argue that England was the natural country to lead international Protestantism.¹⁵ During his time in Germany, he spent time worshiping with a Lutheran congregation and encountered a pastor who lavishly praised the Church of England and compassionately but firmly condemned the English who wanted to break away from the Anglican Church because it would slow the Reformation's progress.¹⁶ A century later, Charles Este touted the religious connection between England and Germany. On visiting Worms, he noted Martin Luther's contribution to the Protestant Reformation, and basked in “that religious consummation, of liberty and sound words, which Englishmen so well, thank God, are taught to price.”¹⁷ Other authors, such as Hester Lynch Piozzi, wrote of the affinity between German and English landscapes. She described the cleanliness and comfort of the inns near the Elbe River as making her feel that she was back in England.¹⁸

Most authors, however, assured their readers of English superiority. For all the parallels she drew between England and Germany, Hester Lynch Piozzi, upon listening to a story of a German soldier killing an infant, claimed that such incidents made her thankful to

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¹⁶. Ibid., 350.


God she was English. Some writers compared the mechanically drilled German troops with the bravery of the English soldiers. James Douglas spent nearly his entire travel narrative recounting his experience with an English colonel and a Prussian major. A lengthy discussion ensued in which the major called several prominent English military leaders “brave men, but no generals.” Douglas stated: “This was commencing hostilities with the Colonel, whose patriot bosom glowed with indignation at the haughty superiority he showed for his king.”

After a series of angry exchanges, the Prussian allowed that England had won its wars because “they conquer along by the bravery of their men,” although he was unimpressed by their tactics. He compared the English and Prussian armies by stating that the Prussians won wars “by the mechanical power of their art.” He added: “Tis true, your men stand in the point blank direction of a cannon ball by a constitutional firmness. We do not trouble our heads with stamina, we compel them to stand firm by the severity of our discipline.”

The conversation continued until the Prussian lamented: “What happiness that in your country, your youth can be trained to such a variety of professions; we alas! are born under the influence of this national misfortune, and sent to the camp before our years can impress


21. Ibid.

22. Ibid., 269, 270.

23. Ibid., 271.

24. Ibid.
a sound reflection on our minds, to judge of the fatal disasters which it inflicts on us.” 25 The narrative ended with the Prussian crying over the loss of his soldier son who died of a fever shortly after witnessing Prussian wartime atrocities and lamenting that God would bring judgment on his country for them. 26

In a related way, English travel writers expressed happiness at the liberty they experienced in England compared to Germany. In one of his three travelogues about his trips to Germany, Thomas Nugent recalled seeing emigrants leaving the city of Lubeck to move to Russia and claimed that the reason was the nobility’s oppression of the peasants. 27 Though the people seemed glad to be leaving, he stated: “At the same time I could not help reflecting on the happy situation of the common people in England, where liberty rescues the poor from oppression, and enables them to pass their days in peace, inured it is true to rustic toil, yet blessed with homebred plenty.” 28 After commenting on the oppression he found in Prussia, Jonas Hanway expressed: “Happy were it for us did we know half the misery which other nations feel,” and added that knowledge of Prussian oppression would cause the English to complain less. 29 Ann Ward Radcliffe wrote bitingly about much of Germany, and listed the many ways that England was better. In Cologne, which she described as “inferior, perhaps, to half the minor seaports in England,” she wrote

26. Ibid., 282.
27. Nugent, Travels through Germany, 1:132.
28. Ibid., 133.
“Englishmen, who feel, as they always must, the love of their own country much increased by the view of others, should be induced, at every step, to wish, that there may be as little political intercourse as possible, either of friendship or enmity, between the blessings of their Island and the wretchedness of the Continent.”

Joshua Wilkinson recounted his time on the ship leaving England on a trip to Germany, from which he gazed upon the English Channel thankful that it divided his country from continental Europe. Safely on their island, his countrymen could observe “the pride of the German Caesars,” and, “the murderous glory of the Prussian.” His remarks reached a crescendo of praise when he predicted: “In the sweet enjoyment of liberty, and domestic quiet, revered abroad, as a nation valiant, generous, and free, under the halcyon reign of a constitutional King, and by the rapid extension of virtue and philosophy, Britons shall industriously cultivate the blessings of peace, and soon spurn the ministerial devices, which have too often deluged the world with blood.”

Other authors used the opportunity of their travels to demonstrate how their time abroad grew their love and appreciation of England. William Carr claimed patriotic reasons for writing when he stated upon entering Germany that he would only record important details for his readers and attempt to convince them "that no Country that ever I was in, affords so great Conveniencies for the generality of People to live in, as the Kingdom of

30. Radcliffe, A journey made in the summer of 1794, 108.
32. Ibid., 2.
33. Ibid., 2-3.
After visiting many of Europe's important courts, and ceaselessly attempting to demonstrate his cosmopolitan connections, John Taylor ended his three-volume account of his travels by arguing that England was the best country in the world as it was the richest and possessed everything necessary for life. These authors, and others, felt the need to justify their travels as beneficial to England.

Finally, travel to Germany afforded the opportunity to comment on English government policy. It is not surprising that this was the case, as English policy on continental Europe was an important part of eighteenth-century diplomacy. John Campbell suggested, at the end of his work in 1752, that England should continue to maintain good relations with the German states of the Holy Roman Empire “so long as we preserve a Respect for the Protestant Religion, and for that great Principle of Independence, which has been no where cultivated so much as in Germany, and where it still continues to make a considerable Figure.” Most political commentary, however, was critical of England's involvement in German affairs. Joseph Marshall argued against the English policy of funding Hannover in a recent war and complained that, while the money was ultimately ineffective, even if successful, “the whole electorate, in fee simple for ever, is not worth more than half the sum; so that never was such a vast sum expended to so poor a purpose.”

34. Carr, *Travels through Flanders, Holland, Germany*, 80-81.


on this while overseas, because, he explained, “I think, that on subjects of such importance, every good citizen should ever take such opportunities of arraigning a public conduct so reprehensible.” 38 Jonas Hanway likewise complained of English subsidies to a German state, in this case, Bavaria. He argued that this policy would come back to hurt England as, “these GERMAN princes whose interest or inclination may induce them to enter into an alliance with us, will as naturally demand of us some kind of reward for their friendship, as the poor expect to be relieved by the bounty of the rich.” 39 Joshua Wilkinson’s opinionated works included heavy political context and comments. In writing about possible English intervention on the Continent, he expressed the wish that his country would not get involved and extensively depicted the oppressive nature of the petty German princes. 40 In another work, he spent several pages bemoaning the conduct of the German states in the wars of the French Revolution and wrote of his dislike of the English policy of subsidizing German armies because “British money drags the peasants of the Landgraviate of Hesse from their houses and families, and compels them to serve a government no ways connected with their interests.” 41 These comments show the importance that travel could play in the political discourse of England during the early modern period.

38. Marshall, Travels through Holland, Flanders, Germany, 2:95.


41. Wilkinson, Political facts, collected in a tour, 75.
CONCLUSION

By the French Revolution, English travelers had created and presented to the public a series of images, stereotypes, and characteristics about Germans and Germany. They were impressed with much of Germany’s physical setting. They largely praised Germany’s Protestant imperial cities and claimed that these cities were particularly economically productive. It is not surprising that English visitors would emphasize the connection between Protestantism and economic prosperity at a time when Protestant England was growing wealthy on overseas trade and colonial development. Travelers’ views of Catholic states and peoples also reflected eighteenth-century England’s fierce anti-Catholicism. Their depictions of Catholic Cologne as being full of oppressed, dirty, and bigoted people, perhaps reflects less the actual situation in that place than it does English preconceptions.

English visitors largely praised the German countryside, believing the regions around the Rhine River, in particular, were beautiful. Travelers focused on the Rhine because they perceived it as a romantic and sentimental place, full of ruined castles and verdant vineyards. They believed Germany possessed productive land, although some travelers believed Germans did not always use it to its fullest capacity. These travelers asserted that Germany lacked a fully developed landscape because of poor governance and ignorance. Travel writers also recognized the toll that constant warfare took on Germany, and noted that all German states contained armed forces that were often oppressive. Since many English travelers possessed an elevated opinion of their home lands, they praised England’s liberty and lack of numerous swarming soldiers. Travelers attributed a low crime rate to the presence of large numbers of soldiers, and believed this was one positive element of militarism.
Travelers praised the religious toleration they noticed in Germany, and while they often wrote anti-Catholic diatribes, writers believed freedom of religion to be valuable. Visitors to Germany argued that Germany served as a model for other states to follow, perhaps a reflection of the influence of Enlightenment ideas or the lessening power of the Church of England. They stated that religious toleration helped economic growth and allowed Christians to practice freely the teaching of Christ, such as loving one’s neighbor. Travelers’ connection of religious toleration with economic growth reflected their own beliefs that prosperity trumped strict orthodoxy. Their praise of religious toleration generally only extended to Christian groups, because although Germany contained several Jewish communities, English travelers rarely deemed Jews worthy of positive comments.

English visitors presented mixed views of the German people. They depicted ruling nobles as true aristocrats, but believed that the rulers were also formal, rigid in their manners, and oppressive. Travelers held a higher opinion of the common people, and considered them to be honest and hard working. However, travelers also believed that the German people were dull and could be drunkards. Travelers’ accounts contain a relative dearth of references to ethnic similarities between English and German peoples, although some visitors believed that Germans in some regions followed English manners and customs. This suggests that, while English visitors felt some connection with Germans, they nevertheless lacked strong enough ties to emphasize that they were of the same stock.

Travelers’ ideas helped shape the reading public’s views of Germany. When travel accounts entered the public, they met a growing demand for literature about foreign lands that reflected English curiosity and fear. Travel literature is revealing and interesting, and sheds light on how early modern people saw themselves and the world.
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