



uOttawa

L'Université canadienne
Canada's university

**FACULTÉ DES ÉTUDES SUPÉRIEURES
ET POSTDOCTORALES**



**FACULTY OF GRADUATE AND
POSTDOCTORAL STUDIES**

David Hitchcock

AUTEUR DE LA THÈSE / AUTHOR OF THESIS

M.A. (History)

GRADE / DEGREE

Department of History

FACULTÉ, ÉCOLE, DÉPARTEMENT / FACULTY, SCHOOL, DEPARTMENT

'A Restraint of their Debauchery': Poverty, Power and Social Policy in Augustan England, 1688-1723

TITRE DE LA THÈSE / TITLE OF THESIS

R. Connors

DIRECTEUR (DIRECTRICE) DE LA THÈSE / THESIS SUPERVISOR

CO-DIRECTEUR (CO-DIRECTRICE) DE LA THÈSE / THESIS CO-SUPERVISOR

EXAMINATEURS (EXAMINATRICES) DE LA THÈSE / THESIS EXAMINERS

N. St-Onge

V. Vourkoutiotis

Gary W. Slater

Le Doyen de la Faculté des études supérieures et postdoctorales / Dean of the Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies

**‘A Restraint of Their Debauchery’: Poverty, Power, and Social Policy in Augustan
England, 1688-1723.**

M.A. Thesis

David Hitchcock

Department of History

University of Ottawa



Library and Archives
Canada

Published Heritage
Branch

395 Wellington Street
Ottawa ON K1A 0N4
Canada

Bibliothèque et
Archives Canada

Direction du
Patrimoine de l'édition

395, rue Wellington
Ottawa ON K1A 0N4
Canada

Your file Votre référence
ISBN: 978-0-494-61346-7
Our file Notre référence
ISBN: 978-0-494-61346-7

NOTICE:

The author has granted a non-exclusive license allowing Library and Archives Canada to reproduce, publish, archive, preserve, conserve, communicate to the public by telecommunication or on the Internet, loan, distribute and sell theses worldwide, for commercial or non-commercial purposes, in microform, paper, electronic and/or any other formats.

The author retains copyright ownership and moral rights in this thesis. Neither the thesis nor substantial extracts from it may be printed or otherwise reproduced without the author's permission.

AVIS:

L'auteur a accordé une licence non exclusive permettant à la Bibliothèque et Archives Canada de reproduire, publier, archiver, sauvegarder, conserver, transmettre au public par télécommunication ou par l'Internet, prêter, distribuer et vendre des thèses partout dans le monde, à des fins commerciales ou autres, sur support microforme, papier, électronique et/ou autres formats.

L'auteur conserve la propriété du droit d'auteur et des droits moraux qui protège cette thèse. Ni la thèse ni des extraits substantiels de celle-ci ne doivent être imprimés ou autrement reproduits sans son autorisation.

In compliance with the Canadian Privacy Act some supporting forms may have been removed from this thesis.

While these forms may be included in the document page count, their removal does not represent any loss of content from the thesis.

Conformément à la loi canadienne sur la protection de la vie privée, quelques formulaires secondaires ont été enlevés de cette thèse.

Bien que ces formulaires aient inclus dans la pagination, il n'y aura aucun contenu manquant.


Canada

Abstract:

“‘A Restraint of Their Debauchery’: Poverty, Power, and Social Policy in Augustan England, 1688-1723” examines the connections between ideas and definitions of poverty created by both elites and the poor, and social policy legislation and disbursement of relief. Specifically, Mackworth’s failed 1704 omnibus reform bill, and Knatchbull’s successful 1723 Workhouse Test Act are considered. Successive chapters are dedicated to historiography and methodology, the contemporary pamphlet debates over poverty, pauper self-definition in petitions to the state, and politics and policy during the early eighteenth century. Often this analysis focuses on individuals. Notable subjects include: John Locke, Matthew Hale, Bernard Mandeville, John Bellers, Daniel Defoe, Richard Cocks, Humphrey Mackworth, and Edward Knatchbull. Several observations about the character of contemporary perceptions of poverty are made, and their connection to the resulting legislative and published efforts is explained.

Acknowledgments:

I would like to acknowledge my deep debts to the following people and institutions. First, Dr. Richard Connors, whose tireless work and excellent advice has helped to make this thesis even remotely readable. Second, the Department of History: for providing a first-rate graduate experience and education, and a wonderful working milieu. Third, all of my friends, and finally, to my family, without whom this effort and these rewarding experiences simply could not have been.

Chapter 1: Introduction, Sources and Methods.

In 1697 the famous English philosopher John Locke wrote a treatise for William III's newly appointed Board of Trade which considered the problems of poverty in England. His treatise proposed some rather surprising solutions. The proposal was duly considered by the Board in October of 1697, but like many others, it was rejected. Despite its failure, Locke's proposal provides a clear glimpse of the perceptions and attitudes towards poverty which permeated the 'learned discourses' and print culture of the later seventeenth century. For Locke, the first step "towards the setting of the poor on work... ought to be the restraint of their debauchery by a strict execution of the laws provided against it" and in this fashion "the greatest part of the burden which lies upon the industrious for maintaining the poor would immediately cease."¹

The phrase 'A restraint of their debauchery' evokes an all-pervasive, contemporary set of attitudes towards the poor, views which were increasingly present in popular discussions of social policy by Locke and his contemporaries. Contemporary English attitudes towards poverty were characterized by a powerful dichotomy; paupers were either 'deserving' of relief, or they were 'undeserving', and these categories were assigned based on ideas of industry, deference, sobriety, and general 'improvement'. Paul Slack perhaps best summarizes the peculiarities of this mindset in *Poverty and Policy*, when he writes that "the condemnation of some poor led logically to the idealization of others: the deserving, impotent poor." In turn, this ideal of poverty produced "a satisfying conceptual polarity, which appealed to a society accustomed to

¹ Locke, John. 'An Essay on the Poor Law' PRO CO/388/5/86-95 ff. 232-49. Reprinted in Locke, John. *Political Essays*. Mark Goldie, ed. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997. p. 184.

articulating its view of the world in terms of binary opposites.”² This thesis explores those views of the bottom, from the top; from the elite and middling perspectives found in print and political culture during the years 1689 to 1723. In doing so, it engages with some of the greatest English thinkers, writers, and politicians of the period, as well as a wealth of printed pamphlets, parliamentary debates, broadsheets, and proposals.

However, any study of the *representations* and *understandings* of poverty from the ‘top’ must also account for how the poor created, reinforced, or moulded their own identities and categories from the ‘bottom’ of the social scale. Although primary sources created (directly or indirectly) by paupers are extremely rare outside of parish records, some do exist. Perhaps the best examples that remain of self-representation³ by poor people in early modern England are petitions to the government or Monarch, and court records such as those of the Old Bailey and various Quarter sessions. Using these sources, this thesis will examine popular and printed understandings of poverty higher up the social scale, before turning to an examination of the wilful construction of poor identities from below. An analysis of the political and parliamentary measures enacted to answer the ‘poor question’ will complete the consideration of this contemporary construction of the identity of poverty. By building upon these three themes, this thesis will argue for a wider synthesis of English poverty as an idea and as an identity mutually constructed by both poor people and elites. The explicitly moral qualities of being poor, or helping the poor, will emerge as widely pervasive and crucial to understanding continuity and change in English social policy in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries.

² Slack, Paul. *Poverty and Policy in Tudor and Stuart England*. New York: Longman, 1988. p. 25.

³ See Hitchcock, King, Sharpe, eds. *Chronicling Poverty*, London: Macmillan Press, 1997. p. 7.

Social historians often call the early Augustan age in Britain the 'Age of Improvement', and any study of printed contemporary sources quickly reveals why. A significant number of the English elite busied themselves with proposals for improving and employing the poor, many of which received consideration in the House of Commons, or exposure to a wider public discussion through publication as pamphlets. But this concern with social policy and problems of poverty did not exist in a social and political vacuum. These wider discussions were deeply and unquestionably affected by the heady political climate of the period, which began with the Glorious Revolution and the Bill of Rights in 1689, a political upheaval which forced James II to flee to France and installed William and Mary as joint monarchs. Politics quickly became very heated, spurred on by mandatory elections every three years, the annual sitting of parliament, and a widening and politically engaged franchise. English historians now call this span of years the 'Rage of Party' and no study of social or political history in this period can afford not to engage with this wider context. Traditionally, social histories approached their topics using a narrow methodology or historiographical sampling; although current efforts now strive to comprehend the larger picture in order to rightly ascertain where exactly their particular work fits into that picture. More importantly, however, a broader method echoes a fundamentally more integrated and holistic understanding of the world to which most contemporaries still ascribed. This was the heyday of Natural Philosophy, and the ideas of scientific and philosophical pioneers such as Francis Bacon and René Descartes were hotly contested. We must now turn to this broader methodology, and to the sources and historians which inform it.

The Larger Political World

The political world of the early Augustan Age has been characterized by some as “political chaos”⁴. However, despite the inherent de-stabilizing tendencies of politics in this period, it did manage to witness the growth and shaping of certain fundamental characteristics of British politics and culture which would endure at least until the American Revolution. Nor was social policy neglected either, although successful legislative efforts to control or ‘vanquish’ poverty remained largely local and parochial, Parliament and social elites did try to provide some solutions. Social legislation had increasingly affected poor English men and women since the Elizabethan poor laws were enacted in the late 16th century, and some centralized forms of control did appear later in the 17th century, most notably the 1662 Act of Settlement which aimed to more strictly control the mobility of paupers and to identify them with a parish of birth. Successive Parliaments after the Glorious Revolution would consider (and usually reject) many proposals and bills aimed at further control or ‘improvement’ of paupers or reformation of the parochial system of relief. Politics and Parliament played a direct and important role in shaping not only the English state’s response to poverty, but also the elite and public responses as well, because increasingly these various spheres were becoming interdependent. One key and enduring historical theme of this period was political stability, most notably associated with the work of J.H. Plumb, and it is to this theme that we now turn in order to begin considering the wider context of early modern English poverty.

J.H. Plumb’s political stability thesis, which he explained in great detail in *The Growth of Political Stability in England 1675-1725*, remains both instructive and

⁴ Plumb, J.H. *The Growth of Political Stability in England, 1675-1725*. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1967. p. 16.

important to historians, even today.⁵ Plumb gave the Ford lectures at Oxford in 1965, and the compiled result has remained both germane and informative for over forty years, an accomplishment few academic essays can claim. His central argument is that three crucial developments facilitated the rapid development of a politically stable system under Robert Walpole, who then remained a central figure in British politics until the early 1740`s. These developments were the single party system, which Walpole so adeptly constructed and maintained via patronage and privilege, a legislature firmly under the control of the executive, and a sense of common identity amongst those who wielded social, political, and economic power.⁶ The lectures also explored a larger set of changes which further served to lower the red-hot political tensions of the period and to place power in the hands of fewer players, including the shrinking of the electorate through property qualifications and the reduction in frequent elections held after 1715. Plumb also succinctly explains the demolition of the Tory party which occurred in this period, citing its own internal weaknesses and lack of cohesion alongside a vicious and sustained Whig assault which took advantage of Jacobitism and the 1715 rebellion to label Tories traitorous to the crown.

Plumb's work on the political system of the eighteenth century, alongside the work of other accomplished political and social historians such Geoffrey Holmes and Keith Wrightson, provides a firm and essential understanding of the basic tenets of the 17th and 18th century social and political systems, without which any detailed examination of more specific subjects such as poverty is not possible. By describing a

⁵ Connors, Richard. "The Nature of Stability in the Augustan Age" in Jones, Clyve, ed. *British Politics in the Age of Holmes*. (Oxford, Blackwells, 2009), p. 27-40.

⁶ Plumb, J.H. *The Growth of Political Stability in England*. p. 14. A point particularly important for an examination of identity construction earlier in Plumb's period.

key development of this period; political stability, and by tracing its development over the preceding twenty-five years, J.H. Plumb illuminated a new element of politics in eighteenth century England that no historian of the period can safely ignore, and in doing so he questioned the lingering myth that party affiliation played a minor role in the politics of this period.⁷ Plumb certainly doubted that the complex and highly charged politics of the reign of Anne could be explained using only family connections and factional affiliation, but a more sustained attack would soon follow.

If the work of J.H. Plumb initially questioned the myths of faction in the reign of Anne, Geoffrey Holmes' *British Politics in the Age of Queen Anne* destroyed them. Both scholars were writing in a period when the ideas of Sir Lewis Namier about the structure of politics under George III had been retroactively applied to earlier periods, often calling into question the fundamental importance of party in politics. Typified by detailed studies like Robert Walcott's⁸, the Namierites stressed the intricacies of patronage and generally cited genealogical evidence and personal correspondence in order to prove that factions or 'political connexions', and not parties, were the primary units of political power. In the first few chapters of his book, Holmes methodically dismantles that assertion, replacing it instead with powerful proof that "the inescapable and all-pervading distinction between Tory and Whig" dominated all political considerations in both the country and the coffeehouse.⁹ Holmes' book is exhaustively researched and meticulously written, although his main line of argument is deceptively simple. *British Politics* argues that "without the basic conflict of attitude, policy or

⁷ Plumb implicitly questioned the Namierite understanding of the period before 1725, see his discussion of Walcott, p. 57, and Introduction, p. 10.

⁸ Walcott, Robert. *English Politics in the Early Eighteenth Century*. Oxford, 1956.

⁹ Holmes, Geoffrey. *British Politics in the Age of Queen Anne*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1967. p. 21.

principle” that the Whig and Tory parties embodied; “relatively few political situations of any importance in our period either possess or convey much real meaning.”¹⁰

The enduring value of Holmes’ work lies in his depiction of the character and nature of political life in the reign of Anne, and in his thorough explanation of how the system worked during the so-called ‘Rage of Party’. Each party had both a ‘Court’ and ‘Country’ faction, and Anne’s government was ministered to by a duumvirate of senior figures, whom Holmes labels ‘The Managers’. Until 1710, the two men who managed Anne’s government were Lord Godolphin and the Duke of Marlborough, and after that watershed year the mantle was taken up by the redoubtable Robert Harley, Lord Oxford, until Anne’s death in 1714. Holmes’ analysis reveals that the essential machinery of politics under Anne was tripartite in nature. The first element to consider was always party, but the influence of the Managers and the powerful presence of the Queen herself in politics, despite her abiding distaste for career party men, also could not be overlooked. Ultimately, *British Politics in the Age of Queen Anne* represents a second foundational pillar of the current historical understanding of the Augustan period, a pillar which places the role of political party squarely back into its proper place of centrality.

The foundational character of the Augustan Age has been readily established by Plumb and Holmes, alongside the work of other notable historians of the period such as Tim Harris and Steven Pincus.¹¹ But the broad social structure of the English people; their traditions, religion, and social mores, remains a tantalizing unknown until one

¹⁰ *Ibid.* p. 9 (both quotes).

¹¹ For Harris, see: *Revolution: The Great Crisis of the British Monarchy, 1685-1720*. New York: Penguin Books, 2006. And for Pincus, see: Pincus, Steven C. A. “‘Coffee politicians does create’: coffeehouses and Restoration political culture”. *Journal of Modern History*, 67 (1995), 807-34.

discovers the work of Keith Wrightson. Broad in scope, thorough and insightful, his book *English Society, 1580-1680* remains the essential starting point in English social history. It was this book which first sparked my interest in both the subject of poverty, and in the early modern period, and years later it still provides a keen assessment of the general character of an entire people over a century of change and calamity.

Wrightson turned to economic history with his next offering: *Earthly Necessities*. In this text, Wrightson's central argument is that the Early Modern period was a turning point which "witnessed the fuller emergence and increasing dominance of the structures and culture characteristic of a 'market society'"¹². In the monograph he aims to paint a picture of piecemeal, slow, and surreptitious changes in the economic lives of Englishmen (later Britons) while still stressing the enduring continuities of household, family and locality which remained the bedrock of the entire system, building on his earlier analysis of those continuities in their social context. *Earthly Necessities* covers a vast period of time and a huge array of economic and social issues within that period. Clearly written as a broad survey text aimed at consolidating and updating the field of British economic history, Wrightson's work is also overtly interdisciplinary, drawing to great effect on the work of current British social historians, and a long tradition of economic theory and history beginning with David Hume. *Earthly Necessities* also has certain methodological points to offer the historian too. Wrightson's emphasis on an interdisciplinary approach to the dense field of economic history has produced a work capable of explaining a vast subject and a long period in elegant and readable terms, while refusing to sacrifice nuance. Most readers who began to learn about Early Modern

¹² Wrightson, Keith. *Earthly Necessities: Economic Lives in Early Modern Britain*. London: Yale University Press, 2000. p. 22.

England from J.H. Plumb, Geoffrey Holmes, and Keith Wrightson would find a clear picture of society and politics emerging piecemeal from their work, with few radical disagreements apparent.

The Poor within the Early Modern World

The history of the poor occupies a unique place in the larger historiography of early modern England. Unquestionably social history in its general character, poverty history has the daunting task of trying to recapture and explain the experiences of a significant portion of the English population in any given period. Moreover, this population was generally highly mobile, left few records of their travails, and was constantly changing in size and character over time. Many families hovered near the edge of poverty, but would not be considered poor until a bad harvest or natural disaster pushed them over the edge. As such, multiple 'levels' of poverty exist for the historian to consider. Paul Slack refers to at least two: "Background" poverty and "Crisis" poverty, one level being obviously and substantially higher than the other.¹³ Thus, an initial difficulty that any historian of poverty must confront is the fluid nature of early modern poverty itself.

A second problem arises once the historian begins looking for sources. Most poor people in early modern England were illiterate, and left no personal records. Most often, paupers appear to historians in court records, or as represented by the upper classes in their publications, diaries, and accounts. The only other body of sources which prominently features the poor are parish records and vestry minutes, and of all available material, these sources are perhaps the richest when one is trying to recreate an

¹³ Slack, Paul. *Poverty and Policy in Tudor and Stuart England*. New York: Longman, 1988. p. 39.

‘experience’ of poverty in the period. The historiography of poverty is almost as unique as the histories themselves, and it contains the work of a variety of scholars and approaches. One historian of poverty whose work has broken new ground is Paul Slack, author of *Poverty and Policy* and *From Reformation to Improvement*, both seminal monographs in this field.

Paul Slack’s *Poverty and Policy* is an important overview of poverty as a social issue, as well as the responses to it, in Early Modern England. The book’s main arguments trace how, “for the first time, poverty came to be a central concern of the property-owning and governing classes.”¹⁴ In doing so, Slack offers a very useful theoretical framework for approaching poverty as a subject. Poverty is both economically *and* morally defined by contemporaries, and Slack insists that historians pay attention to their definitions.¹⁵ He also notes the changeable nature of poverty as a category, and reminds us that contemporaries had “other, more precise means of defining their social position.”¹⁶ “In a very real sense” he argues, poverty was “created” by the social and political elite, because they defined it by responding to it in a myriad of ways.

This ‘creation’ of poverty from above stemmed from three distinct views of the poor/rich relationship which were held by contemporaries. First, the poor were “objects of charity”, then they became “a threat to public order and morality”, and finally they were viewed as a “potentially productive resource”.¹⁷ These three views of poverty were embraced to various degrees by people in Stuart and Augustan Britain, and they

¹⁴ Slack, Paul. *Poverty and Policy in Tudor and Stuart England*. p. 2.

¹⁵ *Ibid.* p. 4.

¹⁶ *Ibid.* p. 7.

¹⁷ Slack, Paul. *Poverty and Policy in Tudor and Stuart England*. p. 17.

informed and shaped all debate and all attempts to solve ‘the poor question’ through legislation or schemes for employment. In his work, Slack examines these three fundamental attitudes towards poverty, and explains how each defined a period of poor history in England, beginning with the inception of the Old Elizabethan Poor Laws and ending with the various attempts at ‘improvement’ during the reigns of William and Mary, and Anne. He also explores the changeable nature of poverty; who can be defined as poor and who should not be, by employing ideas of ‘deep’ and ‘shallow’ poverty, and by setting the minimal standard somewhere just above being chargeable to the parish.¹⁸

Poverty and Policy’s contributions to later histories of poverty are immeasurable. Later historians of poverty often speak of writing self-consciously in the tradition of Paul Slack.¹⁹ The clear and rigorous theoretical framework offered in *Poverty and Policy* certainly lends itself well to further and more specialized studies, because it is adaptable to all aspects of poverty in England, without forcing any foregone conclusions on the topic. Slack accurately captured and explained how poverty was approached over a two-hundred year period by using the three prevailing attitudes towards it which were held by those who held authority or wielded political power ; essentially a fluid definition of poverty over time through social exclusion. In his later work, Slack further explores and elaborates on these attitudes, while also stepping back and explaining how the character of social policy also changed over time.

Paul Slack’s *From Reformation to Improvement* is based on his 1995 Ford lectures on the subject of public welfare in early modern England. Slack’s lectures were

¹⁸ *Ibid.* p. 39, 53 for the line ‘just above those who required alms to survive.’

¹⁹ Steve Hindle certainly does so: see *On The Parish? The Micro-Politics of Poor Relief in Rural England, 1550-1750*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2004. Introduction, p. 1.

generally structured around the changes in terminology and motivation which drove reforms and also the changing conceptualization of public good over a two-hundred year period between 1560 and 1740. This particular focus on *ideas* of social policy has become very influential, and the resulting inquiries into *representations* of poverty which this thesis undertakes stem directly from it. Slack's focus, however, is as much about "the agents who translated concepts into activity as it is about the terminology they employed."²⁰ These agents, be they corporations, parishes, individuals, or even officials of state, had to choose between two fundamentally different methods of aiding the public good; they chose either reformation, which implied radical and religious changes, or improvement, which implied piecemeal change over a long period, with no single larger guiding ideology. Slack's title aptly reflects the changing nature of conceptions of welfare over this vast period. It seems safe to assert that methods and ideologies of reformation were chosen during the 1640s, whereas notions of improvement dominated sentiment after 1704.

However, religious convictions could only carry reform so far. Although the Christian duties of charity and hospitality remained an enduring and underlying motivation for local and legal actions throughout this period²¹, the main impetus for reform gradually secularized, and by 1672 the new concept of "Political Arithmetic" as practiced by Charles Davenant, William Petty, and others, heralded a new *way* to reform alongside a revised list of reasons for doing so. Slack succinctly summarizes this new methodology: "large numbers opened eyes to large possibilities, despite their shaky

²⁰ Slack, Paul. *From Reformation to Improvement: Public Welfare in Early Modern England*. New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999. p. 2.

²¹ *Ibid.* p. 156.

foundations, the method caught on.”²² The ultimate purpose of reform also broadened from godly social edification²³ into concern for issues of felicity, *moral* restoration, and improvement of the general good of the English body politic.²⁴ The main thrust of Slack’s successive chapters on Parliamentary reform and “Bodies Politic” lay in his analysis of how political and intellectual battles over the nature and value of social reform played out in local institutions between 1688 and 1740. Slack argues that “Corporations of the Poor are excellent examples of Parliamentary success in orchestrating some kinds of local effort”²⁵, but he also details how any possible public or political consensus on the subject was powerfully undermined not only by the ‘rage of party’, but also by sustained and cogent intellectual challenges.²⁶ Slack concludes that the piecemeal and locally driven reform of the Hanoverian period was, in large part, comparatively successful, and that Britain as a civil society found ‘improvement’ far easier to pursue than ‘reformation’.²⁷

Similarly, Steve Hindle’s *On the Parish* consciously fills a distinct historiographical lacuna in early modern British social history. Hindle writes in the tradition of Paul Slack, and in his introduction he explains the importance of *Poverty and Policy*, noting that it “effectively transformed the historiography of early modern poverty.”²⁸ The important gap that Hindle seeks to fill is explained succinctly by the title; Paul Slack adeptly covered this same period, but he did so using an urban and

²² Slack, Paul. *From Reformation to Improvement*. p. 94.

²³ Slack, Paul. *From Reformation to Improvement*. p. 49.

²⁴ Ibid. p. 83.

²⁵ Ibid. p. 117.

²⁶ Like Bernard Mandeville. See page 119, and for Mandeville, 122.

²⁷ Ibid. p. 165.

²⁸ Hindle, Steve. *On the Parish? The Micro-Politics of Poor Relief in Rural England, 1550-1750*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2004. p.1.

intellectual cast of case-studies and arguments. *On the Parish* aims to provide not only the missing rural and parochial contexts, but also a detailed examination of exactly *how* the poor ‘made shift’ and how the relief system functioned at a local level.

One of Hindle’s central arguments is that the fundamental strength of the Elizabethan welfare system lay in a “paradoxical ability to reconcile statutory requirements of national policies on assessment, disbursement, and audit, with widely divergent practices... across nine-thousand parishes.”²⁹ The main concern of the book lies in examining and explaining that interaction at a parish and individual level, thus further illuminating life on the margins for those on the dole in a rural parish. Hindle also states that mutual obligations between rich and poor, alongside the corresponding notions of ‘neighbourliness’ and Christian charity, must be considered fundamental to understanding the “nature and quality” of social relations in this period.³⁰

Hindle’s observations on the nature of the ‘Dole’ and alms-giving are also particularly striking. He insightfully concludes that “Alms-giving functioned as a quasi-contractual mechanism in which charity was exchanged for prestige and recognition”³¹, a passage which succinctly explains an incredibly complex social (and religious) ritual. The preceding proof of this contractual charity makes a great deal more sense once this general axiom is applied to it. The final conclusions of *On the Parish* are not particularly provocative or startling, and nor should they be, given the preceding detailed exposition. Hindle instead focuses on a few key final observations, two of which are important. First, he notes that without the detailed parish archives still meticulously cared for and

²⁹ Hindle, Steve. *On the Parish?* p. 8.

³⁰ Ibid. p. 6.

³¹ Ibid. p. 170.

stored across Britain, the evidence of the lives he describes simply would not exist.³² Simply due to the character of the available sources, the lives of early modern paupers are fragile and shadowy re-constructions which often pose more questions than they answer. Second, Hindle warns the reader that even though current historiography has shifted towards the agency and relationship aspects of poverty, we must still recognize “the inequalities with which the parish system was saturated.”³³

Sources and Methods of Approach

Reconstructing the negotiated identities of paupers in two social spheres requires a wide range of primary sources. The two major bodies of primary sources which this thesis draws upon are printed and manuscript petitions, as well as pamphlets and early English newsprint. Other primary sources used include letters, parliamentary diaries, legislation, court records, and personal papers. The approach to, and use of, these sources varies considerably, and without methodological examples for the larger bodies of material, proper historical use would be difficult. Fortunately, various historians have already engaged with all of these types of sources, and their work will show this thesis uses them. Some varieties are easier to use than others; sources such as parliamentary diaries often come with an important edited introduction³⁴, and the use of letters and legislation in history texts is commonplace. However, other primary materials require far more rigorous methodologies. Pamphlets and petitions, in particular, pose several unique challenges to the historians who use them.

³² Hindle, Steve. *On the Parish?* p. 451.

³³ Ibid. p. 453.

³⁴ See Hayton, David, ed. *The Parliamentary Diary of Sir Richard Cocks 1698-1702*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996. For an example of an introduction that provides a great deal of pertinent context.

In 1661, shortly after the Restoration of Charles II to the throne of England, Lewis Griffith had cause to write that “Men may be said to shoot from the *Press* as well as the *Artillery*.”³⁵ His statement would prove to be all too accurate for the better part of a century, despite the rising popularity of newsprint. During the seventeenth century, the pamphlet became a “pre-eminent model of public speech, a way of conceiving of the power of the word.”³⁶ For historians, use of pamphlets as a source requires a very complex and ‘historically relative’ definition of them, one which attends not only to content and form, but also to rhetorical devices that they use, their political and polemical uses, and finally, to the powers of authorship. The use of pamphlets to conduct historical research confronts the historian with several distinct methodological challenges, and a wide array of necessary conditions and contexts in which such sources must be understood. More simply, pamphlets alone can never teach a historian about the political context in which they were authored, written, and read by the public, pamphlets alone cannot construct a larger coherent narrative for the historian to follow, and the meanings extracted from pamphlets often remain enduringly ambiguous outside of their original political and social context. What pamphlets can do, however, is present contemporary viewpoints in an articulate, widely read, and persuasive format. Historians can certainly use the views expressed in pamphlets, as well as the responses to those views and the resulting intertextuality, to re-construct the opinions and debates of a ‘public’, although the ‘public’ of pamphlets is a largely illusory one. Ethereal or not, the public of pamphlets still held opinions directly shaped by these texts, and pamphlets are best used by historians to study those attitudes.

³⁵ Raymond, Joad. *Pamphlets and Pamphleteering in Early Modern Britain*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003, p. 53.

³⁶ *Ibid.* p. 26.

Mark Knights' book, *Politics and Opinion in Crisis, 1678-1681*, is one example of a text which utilizes pamphlets to gauge public opinion during a period of political crisis, namely the Popish Plot and Exclusion Crisis, two events which intertwined during the book's period to create general anxiety, and deep public tensions in England. One worried observer even wrote that "[n]ever was a civil war feared more than now."³⁷ To approach the larger question of popular opinion during crisis, Knights begins by assessing politics during the years leading up to 1678, and the nature of these twin crises when viewed in terms of high politics. Knights discusses what many consider to be the birth of party politics in England, when a country opposition coalesced around the Earl of Shaftsbury with the goal of excluding James II from the throne of England.³⁸ In terms of methodology, Knights' approach is, therefore, one in which 'public opinion' is highly contextualized within its immediate political history, which allows the reader to relate the popular responses and fears described in part two to the parliamentary dramas covered in part one. More importantly, *Politics and Opinion* also discusses a central question of readership and concludes that "Whilst [pamphlet material] offers insights into public opinion it must also be treated with caution since it was a 'public' that is often unknown."³⁹ Clearly the concept of an imagined public is an important and problematic one for historians.

Politics and Opinion also asks several other important questions about pamphlets as sources, specifically during the two crises. Not only were pamphlets often published without an author, they also could appear without a published date. As many as one fifth

³⁷ Knights, Mark. *Politics and Opinion in Crisis, 1678-81*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994. P. 4

³⁸ *Ibid.* P. 10 and 11.

³⁹ Knights, Mark. *Politics and Opinion in Crisis*. P. 157.

of pamphlets published during this period carried no date, and only a few have since been corroborated using secondary evidence.⁴⁰ However, general periods can be assigned to many pamphlets by referencing large contemporary collections which have survived. Knights also fills in one final methodological hole by discussing the range of topics which pamphlets generally discussed, and corroborating journal articles flesh out this idea of topical tendencies more fully.⁴¹

Raymond's *Pamphlets and Pamphleteering* covers the English pamphlet from the time of Elizabeth until the Glorious Revolution in 1689, both as a literary genre and a historical source. Raymond provides a history of pamphlets, but more importantly, he also describes several important methods of solving the problems of anonymity and authorship which were so prevalent in this genre. Raymond also explains why the anonymous author was so common, or more particularly, the wealth of reasons that authors wanted to remain unknown. First, some literature was so libellous that being discovered as the author of it was a death sentence in early modern England, and judicial persecution tended to convince even the most prideful propagandist to remain hidden. Second, some authors published material which simply required no name to validate it, because the text itself had a kind of authority.⁴² Finally, anonymity meant the author could avoid social stigma, preserve modesty, and could even indicate collective authorship. In the years after the death of Elizabeth, anonymity became a literary convention in pamphlet-writing, and more often than not, contemporaries did not know who wrote a given tract.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.* P. 157 and 158.

⁴¹ See Speck, W.A. "Political Propaganda in Augustan England", *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 5th ser., no. 22 (1972); pp. 17-32.

⁴² Raymond, *Pamphlets and Pamphleteering*. P. 65 discussed. 'Ghost Dialogues' would be a good example of textual authority.

Initially one might suppose that the anonymous author would pose a great challenge to historians. However, posthumous identifications and collaborating evidence have allowed historians to match many important pamphlets with real authors, and those which remain unclaimed are still useful in a variety of ways. In fact, the very condition of anonymity can be more illustrative than a prominent author. As Raymond notes “even named pamphleteers found their authorial identities appropriated and fictionalised”⁴³, and it was precisely this peculiar quality of unknown authors speaking to an anonymous public which gave pamphlets some of their power as a medium of expression; “pamphlets spoke to everyone and no one and... it was precisely this capacity to speak to the unknown, to the crowd, to the many-headed hydra, that empowered the pamphlet to imagine a public, and to speak to and fashion the public’s opinions.”⁴⁴

Pamphlets and Pamphleteering provides a useful framework through which to approach these documents. However, the nature of the ‘imagined public’⁴⁵ that pamphlets spoke to was not considered in any detail in Raymond’s work. In all likelihood this is because there is no way to directly quantify this audience, given that it is difficult to determine who exactly was reading a given pamphlet, who was not, and it is certainly impossible to find out what various people *thought* about a pamphlet if no written records of such survive. The primary consequence of these difficulties is that historians using pamphlets often have to paint with broad brushstrokes, and they must therefore attempt to reconstruct larger currents in popular thought instead of specific or individual responses to a given event. More specifically, when an individual’s voice is

⁴³ *Ibid.* p 97.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.* A powerful quotation which essentially summarizes the nature of pamphlets for early modernists.

⁴⁵ For an examination of the ‘public life’ and those who were able to live it, as well as their views on poverty, see: Langford, Paul. *Public Life and the Propertied Englishman, 1689-1798*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991. P. 456-64.

absent from the written record, it may be possible to rebuild a larger ‘context of opinion’ in which they would have been situated, and pamphlets are essential to that task.

Some general trends in ‘pamphlet methodology’ emerge from a reading of both of these pivotal texts. First, when used as sources, pamphlets are highly dependent on an understanding of their political context, without which a great deal of their value is lost. Second, the problem of anonymous authorship and falsified dating can be partially solved by using pamphlets to paint a more general picture of opinion and events, as opposed to attempting to reconstruct a single specific viewpoint or agenda. Moreover, the condition of anonymity so prevalent in contemporary publications can also be a blessing in disguise; historians may not be able to use a single anonymous pamphlet to illustrate one specific point, but the effects of pamphlets as a genre on the larger aggregate body politic are both powerful and unique in part *because* the authors and readers are ‘invisible’.

The second major set of sources that this thesis makes use of are petitions. Petitions pose their own methodological challenges, because although they are explicitly not written by an invisible author like pamphlets are, and although their audience is often well documented and clear, the actual person who commissioned the petition typically did not write it because they were unable to, and their format is highly stylized and standardized. Moreover, petitions are not necessarily a truthful representation of reality, since typically the person or persons petitioning are trying to favourably represent themselves to authority to gain some kind of reimbursement or to redress perceived wrongs. Petitions do, however, provide the historian with some very useful information about representations of poverty, ideas of charity and social networks of

support and kinship, which is why they are so crucial to this thesis. Petitions can be used in a variety of specific ways, which vary based on their content, context, and authenticity. For example, Steve Hindle has used a series of petitions from a single poor household in order to analyze “affective relations within and beyond poor households” because they can “confirm the suspicion, raised by the relatively low value of the pensions accounted for by parish officers, that not only before but also indeed long after overseers were required to make provision for an indigent family, informal networks of support remained crucial to plebeian survival strategies.”⁴⁶ Ultimately, a set of petitions end up being used for the pursuit of a specific and often singular end, one which usually deals with aspects of the relationship between those in poverty and those in power.

This thesis will engage with petitions primarily to consider the self-representation of poverty depicted in them. Ultimately it seeks to use petitions to explore a dialectic construction of pauper identity, between those in power who received the petitions, and those on the margins who authored them. The aim is to fit this source-based reconstruction into a larger assessment of the ‘perception of poverty’, in order to recapture an important element of the *experience* of poverty simultaneously. Every contemporary in England would experience poverty in some manner or another, directly or indirectly, and the archetypes and preconceptions that they held served to shape that experience in complex and important ways.

Approach

In 1704 Daniel Defoe wrote *Give Alms no Charity*, a pamphlet in which he reflected on the causes of poverty in England, and potential solutions to them. While

⁴⁶ Hindle, Steve “‘Without the cry of any neighbours’: A Cumbrian family and the poor law authorities, c.1690–1730” Berry & Foyster (eds), *The Family in Early Modern England* (CUP 2007). p. 130/131.

introducing his topic, Defoe laid out four maxims that he considered ‘fundamental’, the last one being that “‘tis a regulation of the poor that is wanted in England, not a setting them to work.”⁴⁷ Such a sentiment opposed the majority of printed opinion on the ‘poor question’, and in his case to Parliament, Defoe argued that idleness, sloth, and a sense of entitlement were all pervasive among paupers, and that these characteristics alone accounted for their increase. A poor Englishman would “work till he has got his pocket full of money, and then go and be idle, or perhaps drunk, till, tis all gone, and perhaps himself in debt; and ask him in his cups what he intends, he’ll tell you honestly, he’ll drink as long as it lasts, and then go to work for more.”⁴⁸ Defoe’s conception of poverty was thus only mildly different from his contemporaries, in that he had no faith in the success of workhouses or parish officials in gainfully employing the poor.

Generally speaking, events would prove Defoe right in some respects, as typically workhouses remained unprofitable. Defoe’s pamphlet called for a more comprehensive set of laws to govern the poor; ironically in 1704 such a large bill was duly considered the House of Lords and eventually tabled. The elite conceptions of poverty visible in Defoe’s work are easily found in a wide range of other pamphlets, proposals, and printed sources. The higher social echelons were, however, not a homogeneous mass of opinion even on this issue, although they did demonstrate a considerable tendency to agree on a ‘core identity’ of poverty, as Chapter two of this thesis shall demonstrate. But elite conceptions of poverty account for only part of the larger picture. While sources in this category are easily more numerous and accessible,

⁴⁷ Defoe, Daniel. *Giving alms no charity, and employing the poor a grievance to the nation...* London, 1704. p. 9.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.* p. 27.

the experiences of poverty, as well as self-conscious representation by paupers, are utterly absent.

This thesis will use petitions and court records to account for the other side of this story. The poor experience inside of an almshouse, for example, can be partially reconstructed from a close reading of petitions like William Howell's, who was a clerk and teacher of grammar in an Oxford county almshouse.⁴⁹ Howell petitioned on behalf of himself and all of the almsmen and women in the house, principally against the master of the place, who appeared to be taking triple his pension, and robbing the accounts of the almshouse blind. Howell's own pension for teaching grammar was also a year in arrears. What makes petitions such as Howell's so crucial is the careful manner in which they were constructed, with an eye gamely cast towards the higher authorities and a style of presentation intended to optimize the response. In Chapter three, these constructed identities, and self-conscious representations of poverty will be explored in detail.

Chapter four will return to the issue of the poor as it was debated in higher society, to explore the systemic political and legislative responses to the larger 'question of poverty'. In doing so, the chapter will examine not only central legislative efforts, but also local initiatives carried out in Quarter sessions by Justices of the Peace, and parish level engagements with authority through the eyes of Overseers of the Poor. A great part of the unique nature of poverty in early modern England stems from the local, piecemeal, and parochial character of responses to it, and this chapter will engage with

⁴⁹ PC 1/2/223 (1712 Aug 18). *Petition of William Howell, clerk, teacher of grammar in the Ewelme Almshouse, and of the Poor Men of the house for their complaints against the Master to be heard.*

those responses to further flesh out both the elite ‘ideal’ and the poor ‘reality’. The final chapter will synthesize these findings, and tell the wider ‘story’ of poverty in this period, ultimately concluding with a few observations about the character of life in the Augustan Age of Improvement. Historians have a great deal of work still to do in recapturing that character, and it is to some of that work which we must now devote ourselves.

Chapter 2: Morality, Dissent, and Reforming Manners: The Pamphlet Debates Between 1680 and 1723.

In 1695, notable cloth merchant and Quaker John Bellers⁵⁰ published an important (and later famous) pamphlet concerning labour and political economy in England, called *Proposals for Raising a College of Industry of All Usefull Trades and Husbandry*.⁵¹ A precursor to his later writings on poverty, Bellers advocated the construction of self-sustaining co-operatives wherein hundreds of poor might be fed and gainfully employed and their children educated. The philosopher Karl Marx would later

⁵⁰ The following discussion of John Bellers, and the basic facets of his life and work owes a great deal to the Oxford Dictionary of National Biography (See bibliography for full references).

⁵¹ See Bellers, John. *An essay for imploying the poor to profit, humbly dedicated and presented to the Lords and Commons of Great Britain, in Parliament assembled, by ...* London, 1723. For a later edition of the same ideas as applied to poverty.

cite Bellers, and his ideas on economic co-operatives, as a powerful influence. Bellers spent over thirty years advocating for these colleges of industry, and his influence was evident in the creation of a workhouse in Bristol in 1696 and later a Quaker workhouse, co-operative, and residence at Clerkenwell in 1702. He repeatedly approached Parliament for legislative support for his initiatives, and through his membership in the Quaker religious community and the Royal Society he managed to widely publicize his ideas.⁵²

The work of John Bellers serves to vividly display the moral and religious dimensions of social policy in England in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. By 1723 Bellers had streamlined and simplified his ideas concerning colleges and workhouses to the point where he could express their advantages in five simple arguments, chief among these were the constant employment of the poor in profitable and self-sustaining labour, and the simultaneous education of their children. Although expressed in practical terms of ‘employment’ for poor people and ‘profit’ for the rich, these ideas were deeply moral ones which engaged with Protestant notions of ‘good’ labour and work ethics, as well as arguments emphasizing the betterment of the self, the charitable assistance of one’s peers, and the larger moral worth of man. After all, Bellers understood that “if there were no Labourers, there would be no Lords”⁵³, and his writings took into account the complex interrelations between varying ‘sorts’ of people,

⁵² For more on John Bellers, see: Davison, Lee, Hitchcock, Tim, Keirn, Tim, and Robert Brink Shoemaker, eds. *Stilling the Grumbling Hive: The Response to Social and Economic Problems in England, 1689-1750*. New York: St. Martin's, 1992. Chapters by Shoemaker, Hitchcock, and especially Mary S. Fissell are all useful. Paul Slack's *From Reformation to Improvement: Public Welfare in Early Modern England*. New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999, also deals with Bellers in two chapters: “Parliament’s Reformation” and “Bodies Politic”.

⁵³ Bellers, John. *An essay for employing the poor...* Title quote. p. 1.

and he repeatedly stressed the moral obligation of the rich to sustain the poor and in so doing, to sustain the social order.

Bellers' primary medium of expression was his pen, and his main exposure to a wider contemporary audience was by publishing his ideas in pamphlets, many of which went through multiple editions. Bellers' choice of medium is far from unique; in fact it made him self-consciously part of a wider public discourse on social policy. Pamphlets and the public discourse which he precipitated are the main subjects of this chapter. In his introduction, Bellers quoted King William III, Lord Chief Justice Mathew Hale, and Sir Josiah Child on provision for the poor.⁵⁴ Both Hale and Child published pamphlets of their own, and William's speeches to Parliament were also widely publicized, and John Bellers drew on each of their public concerns for social policy reform in order to bolster his own propositions. Pamphlets on poverty and improvement, and the more practical question of what to actually *do* about poverty which was debated in the courtroom and coffeehouse, are deeply connected and therefore highly significant.

By studying the broader public context, in this case pamphlets and publications, this chapter will attempt to reconstruct a body of public opinion on the '*publick good*'.⁵⁵ To accomplish this task, the pamphlets discussed will be divided into three main groups or 'schools' of opinion, separated primarily by important differences in their arguments, their categorizations and understandings of the poor, and their varying practical approaches to the problem of poverty in England. For convenience, and reflective of their principal arguments, these schools are named after the three pamphleteers who best

⁵⁴ *Ibid.* p. 2.

⁵⁵ Mark Knights offers an excellent and far more involved discussion of the '*publick good*' in its various iterations, see: Knights, Mark. *Representation and Misrepresentation in Later Stuart Britain: Partisanship and Political Culture*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005.

represent each distinct approach and set of ideas. Firstly, we have the school of John Bellers; members of which were all uniquely concerned with ‘practical’ proposals and schemes for employing the poor, generally through the establishment of workhouses, charity schools or co-operatives, and who are often associated with the Society for the Reformation of Manners.⁵⁶ The Bellers school also tended to focus on the potential public good provided by education and gainful, consistent employment, and tended to call for action based on both a Christian moral duty and on betterment of the body politic. This ‘school’ of thought might also be known as the ‘Dissenting’ school, since it best represents the collective views of religious dissenters about social policy at the end of the seventeenth century and it is notably different from the godly protestant reformations of the poor espoused by Samuel Hartlib and his disciples in the mid-seventeenth century.⁵⁷ Two of the most prolific polemicists to support Bellers were Sir Josiah Child and John Cary. More notable individuals whose approach to poverty followed these general lines include Lord Justice Mathew Hale, as well as MP Sir Humphrey Mackworth in the early eighteenth century. Hale published several significant pamphlets of his own that will be considered, and Mackworth’s repeated attempts to transform these sentiments into legislation during the early eighteenth century merit coverage in Chapter 4.

While studying the publications of the ‘Bellers school’, as with both of the following groups, care will be taken to discuss the complex processes of borrowing, and

⁵⁶ For a fuller coverage of the SRM and its various activities, see: Robert Shoemaker’s chapter in *Stilling the Grumbling Hive*, p. 101, also see Isaacs, Tina. “The Anglican hierarchy and the reformation of manners, 1688-1738.” *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, 33 (1982), 391-411.

⁵⁷ For a fuller discussion of Samuel Hartlib, see Slack, Paul. *From Reformation to Improvement: Public Welfare in Early Modern England*. New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999. See the chapter on “Godly Cities” and the discussions of Hartlib’s circle: pp. 77 to 88.

formulating, ideas found in other pamphlets which were evident in these writings. The world of English pamphlets in the late Restoration and early Augustan periods was interconnected and pamphlet circulation, especially on issues of social and moral reform, could easily reach into the tens of thousands, in fact popular pamphlets often saw multiple re-printings in a very short time span. Many of the thinkers and authors whose work is discussed in this chapter also factor heavily into the discussion of parliamentary and intellectual responses to poverty featured in Chapter 4. This is simply because the two worlds of parliament and the press were actually one and the same, each on its own was merely a constituent part of a larger, and far broader discourse on poverty in England.

The second school of thought on poverty in Augustan England differs from the Bellers view because of where this group places the burden of reform; primarily on poor people themselves. Comprised of notable authors, thinkers, and politicians such as Daniel Defoe, John Locke, the third Earl of Shaftsbury and Sir Richard Cocks, the second school offered a harsher critique of the moral failings evident in the impoverished, and advocated solutions primarily based on tougher or more comprehensive legislation, and additional local measures aimed at controlling pauper mobility or promoting gainful employment outside of workhouses. Shaftsbury's contributions to this body of opinion remained primarily concerned with the virtuous citizen and the natural harmony of societies, and Cocks' were mainly legislative in nature, but both men disagreed enough with Bellers and others to warrant inclusion here, they disagreed particularly over the role of the workhouse in social policy, and instead advocated legislative (or in Cocks' case highly judicial) solutions to poverty. Daniel

Defoe, in particular, was vehemently hostile to the burgeoning use of workhouses as a solution to poverty, considering them to be “*publick* nuisances, Mischiefs to the Nation which serve to the Ruin of Families, and the Encease of the Poor.”⁵⁸ Defoe’s sentiments best summarize this second school of opinion, when he states that “tis a *Regulation* of the Poor that is wanted in England, not a setting of them to Work.”⁵⁹

In many respects, the views of the Defoe school on poverty align nicely with those of the Bellers persuasion. Both sets of authors were primarily concerned with specific measures necessary to alleviate, control, or ‘solve’ the burden of poverty. All of the aforementioned authors appealed to a higher ideal of improving the English nation as a whole, instead of focusing on the betterment of individuals, a common refrain which in many ways defined a larger worldview that they possessed, and that they drew upon as a reference when confronting poverty as a social and moral ill. The main differences are found in the particulars, the Defoe school disagrees on the *means* that should be used to achieve the same common end. As an aggregate, these two schools represent the vast majority of opinion concerning poverty in public discourse in this period. Few authors dissented radically enough from the fundamental premises of Bellers or Defoe to require inclusion into a third school of thought on poverty. In fact, the lone dissenting voice on social policy that was radical enough to consider separately was Bernard Mandeville.

In publications such as *The Grumbling Hive*, and the infamous *Fable of the Bees*⁶⁰, Bernard Mandeville outlined a view of the body politic that was radically

⁵⁸ Defoe, Daniel. *Give Alms no Charity*. p. 9.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

⁶⁰ It should be noted that the separate works of Bernard Mandeville all appear together, aside from *The Grumbling Hive*, and his work for the *Female Tatler*, in an omnibus which becomes regularly reprinted as

different from his contemporaries, and he advocated a conception of the nation based on both the *vices* and the virtues of its citizenry which was immortalized in the phrase “private vices, publick benefits”⁶¹. In effect, Mandeville argued that poverty was a necessary element of a prosperous mercantilist nation, because the poor provided a necessary pool of cheap manpower for menial tasks and hard labour. In this vein, he argued vigorously against charity schools and workhouses, because education and training in trades would raise the expectations of poor youth, who would then shun menial labour in favour of seeking to rise in station.⁶² Mandeville categorized the poor as a ‘sort’ of people who lacked any strong motivations to better themselves, and in effect he argued that a wise government would do well to keep a considerable portion of the population in poverty in order to sustain the overall welfare of the nation.

In his study of Mandeville’s thought, Thomas Horne labelled him a “social mercantilist”⁶³, and went to lengths to prove that “Bernard Mandeville never put forward a moral justification for material society.”⁶⁴ Instead, Mandeville found the roots of a nation’s wealth in the self-interests or ‘vices’ of its citizens, vices which motivated them to innovate, consume and produce far more effectively than virtues ever could. This formulation was a fundamental departure from the core assumptions of both the Bellers and Defoe schools, both of whom pointed to the virtue of ‘public-spiritedness’ as the glue which bound society together and as the desirable outcome of ‘improving’ the poor.

“The Fable of the Bees, and an Essay on Charity and Charity Schools...” and is readily available from Early English Collections online. All of my pagination for Mandeville uses the 1724 edition.

⁶¹ Mandeville’s catchphrase and his alternate title for the *Fable*. See 1723 editions or later.

⁶² Mandeville, Bernard. *Essay on Charity and Charity Schools...* London, 1723. p. 288.

⁶³ Horne, Thomas A. *The Social Thought of Bernard Mandeville: Virtue and Commerce in Eighteenth-Century England*. London: Macmillan Press, 1978. p. 59 for a discussion of the lack of novelty in this general approach.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.* p. 97.

The most effective way to examine all three schools of thought on poverty is to first inquire into the shared assumptions of the majority of pamphlet authors, and then to consider the differences of opinion which lead to such strident disagreements, and the subsequent onslaught of rebuttals and apologies which characterized this heated debate in the eighteenth century.

One side of this debate over the solutions to poverty was dominated by two very powerful groups in the eighteenth century; the Society for the Reformation of Manners (SRM), and the Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge (SPCK). The first of these two groups was far more visible during the early eighteenth century, primarily because of the sheer number of local chapters, as well as their use of paid informers in pursuit of judicial convictions for lapses of morality and behaviour. Robert Shoemaker and Tim Hitchcock each presented an examination of these societies and their activities in *Stilling the Grumbling Hive*⁶⁵, and despite the differing denominational tendencies (the SRM contained many more dissenters, and the SPCK was High Church), the two societies shared many common assumptions about poverty and morality. The defining assumption about the poor which dominated these two societies, and subsequently their publications and those of their members, was the direct connection between *vice* and poverty, as exemplified by evils such as prostitution, idleness or unemployment, and gin.⁶⁶ In the same collection of essays, Mary Fissell considers the reforming movement in Bristol and suggests that the local chapter of the Society for the Reformation of Manners, as well as the activities and writings of both Bellers and Cary, shaped a

⁶⁵ Davison, Lee, Hitchcock, Tim, Keirn, Tim, and Robert Brink Shoemaker, ed. *Stilling the Grumbling Hive: The Response to Social and Economic Problems in England, 1689-1750*. New York: St. Martin's, 1992. The title is obviously a nod at Bernard Mandeville's *Grumbling Hive*.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.* Shoemaker looks at these 'ills' with respect to the Society for the Reformation of Manners. pp. 106 (prostitution), 107 (idle poor), 113 (Gin).

particular town's (Bristol) response to poverty. Charity schools, hospitals, and work houses were all the product of the same reforming 'impulses', writes Fissell: "all were fundamentally about work – providing for it, training for it, healing for it."⁶⁷ Moreover, she even explicitly links this emphasis on work to the influence of political economists like William Petty and Samuel Hartlib, an argument that seems generally substantiated by Petty's personal notes and published work.⁶⁸

The moralizing or reforming influence of 'honest' labour was certainly a central theme in the pamphlets of the Bellers school, as is evidenced by Beller's 1695 motto "Industry brings Plenty"⁶⁹, and the proponents of "colledges of industry" expounded upon its benefits at great length. However, pamphleteers in the Bellers school began their considerations of poverty with a specific set of assumptions concerning the poor which can tell us far more about their preconceptions and ideas. Matthew Hale, John Cary, John Bellers and Josiah Child all perceived a *chain of causality* which linked moral weaknesses to poverty in most circumstances, excluding mainly the aged and impotent poor, who they recognized as largely not responsible for their condition. Beginning with the work of Sir Matthew Hale, and moving chronologically forwards towards the 1723 Workhouse Test Act, this section will consider the particular, and widely popular, set of concepts and attitudes towards poverty that comprised what this thesis terms 'the Bellers School'.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.* p. 124.

⁶⁸ MS Lansdowne 72897, ff. 210 for short notes on possible poor employments, and see SP 9/2/1 (1673 Mar 25, Printed 1690, London) *MS Works of William Petty, 'Political Arithmetic' with etching of James Harrington*, Ch. 8 for relevant material that was actually published.

⁶⁹ Bellers, John. "*Proposals for raising a colledge of industry of all useful trades and husbandry*", London: Printed and sold by T. Sowle ..., 1695. p. 1.

In 1683, Sir Matthew Hale published his *Discourse Touching Provision for the Poor*, which sought to justify assistance for the poor on primarily religious, then moral, and finally political grounds. In particular, Hale's political justifications are fascinating, as he warns the rich and affluent of England that "Where there are many very poor, the Rich cannot long or safely continue such; Necessity renders men of Phlegmatick and dull natures stupid and indisciplinable; And men of more fiery or active constitutions rapacious and desperate."⁷⁰ This attempt to warn the rich about the perils of ignoring poverty becomes a recurring theme in the later literature of the Bellers school, with variations that include not just physical peril, but also spiritual and moral dangers. Hale's clarity of thought and his judicial experience are evident in his writing, as are his denominational leanings: "an attractive mixture of Puritan manners and rational religion".⁷¹ In fact, Hale's *Discourse* sets the general tone and trend of dissenting opinion concerning poverty for at least the next three decades. Rhetorical devices and themes found in Hale are then easily located again in subsequent work by Bellers, Cary, and the rest of the school. Hale believed that in most cases, poverty and industriousness were tied together; where one lacked the other would flourish, but he also advocated a kind of *noblesse oblige* common to many propertied Englishmen, responsibilities for the maintenance of both the social order and the social welfare of their inferiors.

Another one of these recurring and important themes that we can identify in Hale's writings is that of contemporary social degeneration, or 'the English nation's moral failings'. Hale writes that "with us in England for want of a due regulation of

⁷⁰ Hale, Sir Matthew. "A Discourse Touching Provision for the Poor." London; Printed for William Shrowsbery, at the Bible in Duke-Lane, 1683. p. 2.

⁷¹ *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*.

<http://www.oxforddnb.com.proxy.bib.uottawa.ca/view/article/11905>

things the more populous we are the Poorer we are; so that, wherein the Strength and Wealth of a Kingdom consists, renders us the weaker and the poorer.”⁷² The perception that the English body politic was a fallen and imperfect remnant of better and older civilizations was widespread in the late 17th century, but the pamphleteers of the Bellers school explicitly linked this reduced moral state to poverty in their writings, a link which sets them distinctly apart from authors like Defoe or Locke who made no such claims.⁷³ In order to rebuild the industry and virtue of the nation, Hale and others argued vociferously in favour of a consolidation of the existing poor laws into one omnibus Act of Parliament⁷⁴, the establishment of workhouses or charity schools in order to ‘improve’ the existing poor population, and the enactment of a more comprehensive system of parish relief for localities. Hale’s discourse differed from later efforts by Bellers and others in that it set out some very specific criticisms of the existing Elizabethan poor laws from the point of view of a Justice on King’s Bench, and it adopted a more distant legal tone as a result, but the core recommendations remained similar: a local workhouse for every three to six parishes, using poor rates as preliminary funding and the labours of the residents as subsequent provision.⁷⁵ Variations on this remedy to poverty in the eighteenth century were certainly plentiful (Hale makes no mention of private profit, which crops up later as an impetus to create such workhouses), but the argument for (or against) the workhouse remains central to both the Bellers and Defoe schools, and thus to the vast majority of pamphlet authors who considered poverty in Early Modern England.

⁷² Hale, Sir Matthew. “A Discourse Touching Provision for the Poor.” London; 1683. p. 3.

⁷³ For Locke’s claims, see: Beier, A.L. “Utter strangers to industry, morality and religion”: John Locke on the poor’. *Eighteenth Century Life*, 12:3 (1988), 28-41. For Defoe’s views, see my consideration (and references) later in this chapter.

⁷⁴ Hale, Sir Matthew. “A Discourse Touching Provision for the Poor.” London; 1683. p. 3.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.* p. 9 (numbered in the pdf as 9).

The work of Sir Josiah Child, a London merchant of considerable wealth and reputation from the mid 1650s onwards, appears chronologically after Hale's discourses. Child's tracts on trade, the poor, and the riches of the nation fit firmly into a dissenting paradigm, and echo the views of the Bellers school. Indeed, *A Discourse About Trade* was only published in 1689 at the accession of William III, though it was initially drawn up around the time of the Great Fire of 1666, and the publishers introduction specifically endorses toleration and freedom of conscience, while enjoining 'Church of England Men' to "be indulgent to the *Dissenters*" and Dissenters to "put on patience, and not censure or repine the acts of their superiors."⁷⁶ Child's publisher clearly saw value in working within the establishment, regardless of denomination, and Josiah apparently agreed; he was one of several high profile victuallers during the third Anglo-Dutch war in the early 1670s, and eventually amassed a fortune of two hundred thousand pounds.⁷⁷

The opening section of Child's *Discourse* concerns itself almost solely with the general interest rates, most importantly the rate on the sale of lands and the lending of money. Child appeared to agree in principle that "*Luxury and Prodigality* are as well prejudicial to *Kingdoms* as to private *Families*"⁷⁸, in essence concurring with the common critique of luxury that was ubiquitous in publications in the late 17th and early 18th centuries, although once the reader gets to his second chapter on poverty, they find themselves confronted instead with pervasive stereotypes of poverty. Child began his assessment with some generalizations, or assumptions that 'most people take to be true':

⁷⁶ Child, Sir Josiah. "A Discourse about Trade..." p. 11.

⁷⁷ Josiah Child's entry. Oxford DNB. <http://www.oxforddnb.com.proxy.bib.uottawa.ca/view/article/5290>, for information on cross pollination between the Dutch and English intellectual and political traditions, see the work of Steven Pincus, especially Pincus, Steven C. A. "'Coffee politicians does create': coffeehouses and Restoration political culture". *Journal of Modern History*, 67 (1995), 807-34, as well as the work of Lisa Jardine: *Going Dutch: How England plundered Holland's Glory*. London: Harper Press, 2008.

⁷⁸ Child, Sir Josiah. "A Discourse about Trade..." Preface, (A 4).

the children of the poor were “bred up in beggary and laziness”, that a life of such activities predisposed them to avoid labour, and instead to “stock the kingdom with thieves and beggars.”⁷⁹ Child condemns these tendencies using the context of one of the seven deadly sins: sloth, and these religious overtones carry sharply over into his rebuke of paupers, as well as his solutions for their condition. Child argued that if all of the land’s able poor could be successfully and gainfully employed it would provide some: “hundreds of thousands of pounds *per annum* to the publick good.” Child’s explicit description of vice as the cause of poverty and his suggestion that gainful employment would lift paupers out of their condition was hardly novel, but he made the case forcefully and publically, contributing in turn to a swiftly growing ‘moral panic’⁸⁰ with issues of social policy and morality.

As always, appeals to both religious and moral duties of the better sorts quickly follow, completing the necessary set of conventions and expressions which the vast majority of authors on this subject included. Child then quickly entered into a mock Socratic dialogue, posing and answering questions about the conditions of the poor in England, the underlying causes of such poverty (including sloth, idleness and drink), as well as possible solutions. He agreed with Matthew Hale that a lack of charity or aid stems from “a defect in our laws”⁸¹, an argument that is characteristically indicative of a member of the Bellers school.⁸² Child also frankly disagreed with the system of parish-

⁷⁹ *Ibid.* p. 56.

⁸⁰ Slack, quoting D.W. Hayton: “Moral Reform and Country Politics in the Late Seventeenth Century House of Commons.” *Past and Present*, vol. 128 (1990). For the quote see *From Reformation to Improvement*. p. 122

⁸¹ Child, Sir Josiah. “A Discourse about Trade...” p. 60.

⁸² For more detailed considerations on why such a lack of charity would occur and how that could be blamed on the law, see: Donna Andrew, *Philanthropy and Police: London Charity in the 18th century*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989.

based relief, which he believed merely shifted poor from one locality to another in an attempt to rid parishes of both them and their expense.⁸³ Historians now agree that this was often indeed the case, especially if the poor person in question was not ‘ancient poor’, that is, well settled in the community somehow, in a given parish.⁸⁴

Josiah Child’s remedies for poverty, in and around London, provide a classic example of the Bellers school’s approach to, and mindset on, the problem of the poor. He advocated the amalgamation of London’s parishes into one larger ‘Province’ or jurisdiction, that a body be incorporated and set up to manage the relief of all the poor in that province, with officials called “Fathers of the Poor”, and that these “fathers” should have the power to erect hospitals, workhouses, and houses of correction, and to transplant poor people overseas to plantations.⁸⁵ Particularly striking was that Child also advocated “that there be no Oaths, or other Tests imposed upon said Fathers of the Poor”⁸⁶, mainly because many dissenters actively participated in the relief and reformation of poor people in the localities already, and Childs argued such a test would bar many able people from assisting in the poor relief process.

Child’s solutions to poverty provide the historian with a clear look at the 17th century definition and management strategies concerning poverty, more specifically those advanced by the elites or patricians of English society. These strategies were self-

⁸³ Child, Sir Josiah. “A Discourse about Trade...” p. 61- 62.

⁸⁴ See: K.D.M. Snell. *Annals of the Labouring Poor: Social Change and Agrarian England, 1660-1900*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985. Steve Hindle also has a detailed consideration of parish removals, see: *On the Parish? The Micro-Politics of Poor Relief in Rural England, 1550-1750*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2004. Particularly chapter 5: “Exclusion”, p. 300.

⁸⁵ For a more detailed consideration of London and its unique solutions to poverty, see: MacFarlane, Stephen M. “Social policy and the poor in the later 17th century.” in Beier, A. L. and Finlay, Roger A. P., eds. *London 1500-1700: The Making of the Metropolis*. London: Longman, 1986. Specifically p. 252 to 277.

⁸⁶ Child, Sir Josiah. “A Discourse about Trade...” p. 68, 69.

consciously paternal in tone, proposed potentially massive redistributions of the population as far away as across the Atlantic, and ultimately justified all of it as beneficial to the poor, and to the nation as a result. Child's idea of what poverty actually *was* seems very clear; it was a drain on the national economy, an affront to the godly conscience of any good Englishman, and a terrible condition from which large masses of people must be rescued by any effective means. This whole model of poverty -- its causes, conditions, and solutions -- which crystallized so clearly in Child's writing, changes only slightly over a period of thirty years of discourse in the 'Bellers' tradition. The two additional authors reflective of this school (Bellers and Cary) differentiate themselves from Child mainly because of the scale of their efforts and publications concerning poverty. Child's *Discourse* was primarily about trade, and Hale's work, although it dealt exclusively with poverty, still confined itself to examining defects in the poor laws, and the possibilities of newer legislation. Over a period of twenty years, both John Cary and John Bellers preached about remedies for poverty, but they also *practiced* them as well. Both men were influential in the creation of the Bristol workhouses, Quaker or otherwise, and their influence was evident in the quickening pace of incorporation across England that occurred in the early eighteenth century.⁸⁷

John Cary (1649-1719) was a merchant, trader, and writer who lived in Bristol, and he was a central figure in local politics, and instrumental in the incorporation and eventual management of the city's first workhouse, which was opened in 1698 after parliamentary incorporation in 1696. Cary was a classic mercantilist. He advocated low

⁸⁷ Slack has an excellent chapter on the rapid incorporation in English towns, see "Bodies Politic" in *From Reformation to Improvement*. Also see: MacFarlane, Stephen M. "Social policy and the poor in the later 17th century." in *London, 1500-1700: The Making of the Metropolis*.

excise and loan interests, low duties on English exports, and economic protectionism in addition to his proposals concerning poverty; a set of policies almost identical to the economic thought of Josiah Child. Cary's *Essay on the State of England* outlined his thoughts on economics and poverty generally, but his next publication in 1700, entitled *An Account of the Proceedings of the Corporation of Bristol* is far more important to our study.

By this time, Cary had successfully established two workhouses, one for girls and the elderly, and one for boys. The parishes of Bristol had been amalgamated and control had been wrestled from the local Tory notables. The *Account* significantly influenced many other contemporaries who were engaged in similar work improving the poor, and workhouses quickly began to appear in other cities and larger towns like Exeter and Hull. Cary's *Account* offered a powerful portrayal (accurate or not) of the ideology of improvement actually playing itself out in real circumstances. This may explain why it and his other works remained popular through multiple editions and at least two decades. The *Account* provides us with an opportunity to study the practical beginnings of a powerful workhouse movement in England, as it was represented by private philanthropists like Cary at the turn of the century. Cary's work combines the classic dissenting, Whig, and economic paradigm characteristic of earlier writers with an account of the apparently successful genesis of his two workhouses in Bristol. The results provide a perfect example of a discourse defining reality.

Cary began his account by relating how the local corporation in Bristol was organized, as well as some difficulties he encountered with a local magistrate who had control of funds allotted to the workhouse, but who was withholding them. Navigating

rough waters at the beginning sets the context for smooth sailing later in the text, which was exactly what he described, at least when discussing the treatment of the poor. Cary began with an account of the workhouse for one-hundred girls, noting how they were washed, fed three square meals, and set to work spinning yarn for ten hours a day. The girls also went to Church ‘every Lord’s day’, prayed twice daily otherwise, and were taught the Catechism. They were also given some time to play and ‘walk the hills with their mistress’, and through these means Cary states that “we won them into Civility, and a love of their labour.”⁸⁸ One of Cary’s most fascinating statements follows shortly thereafter: “But we had a great deal of trouble with their Parents, and those who formerly kept them, who having lost the sweetness of their Pay, did all they could to set both the Children and Others against us; but this was soon over.”⁸⁹ While it is possible that some parents and caregivers deeply felt the economic loss of their children from the ‘economy of makeshifts’⁹⁰ which sustained poor families, it is far more likely that they loved their children as well, and missed them, and that this was the primary motivation to protest. Cary’s bland assertion that ‘this was soon over’ likely obscures a very strident and emotional local resistance; protests which remain obscure here and buried underneath the larger constructed discourse of the Bellers school narrative.

But what of John Bellers, the pamphlet author whose work best exemplifies the particular combination of preconceptions, ideas, and attitudes towards poverty, morality, and relief that we have been discussing? Bellers, more than any of the other authors in

⁸⁸ Cary, John. *An account of the proceedings of the Corporation of Bristol...* London, 1700. . p. 11.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

⁹⁰ For economy of makeshifts, see: Colin Jones: “Olwen Hufton’s ‘Poor’, Richard Cobb’s ‘People’, and the Notions of the *longue durée* in French Revolutionary Historiography.” *Past and Present* (2006), Supplement 1. p. 178-203, and Olwen Hufton: “Women without men: widows and spinsters in Britain and France in the eighteenth century.” *Journal of Family History*, 9:4 (1984), p. 355-76.

this school of opinion, consciously identifies himself as part of a pamphlet tradition. He quotes Child and Hale at the beginning of most of his published works, and he appealed consistently and directly to Parliament. Few authors used a rhetoric as godly as Bellers', when he writes that "the morals and miseries of the poor are scandalous to our Religion", and describes their bodies, properly "Temples for the Holy Ghost", as replete with "Vice and Vermin".⁹¹ Bellers also had a knack for making lists. His list of the 'Evils and Wants that attends the poor' is particularly striking. First, and presumably most important for Bellers, was that poor parents "gave their children an evil education."⁹² The poor also wanted constant employment, food to feed themselves, and some way to sell what they did produce. Bellers argues that the creation of 'colledges of industry' solve all of these evils and wants, through the provision of work, food, shelter, and a godly education, in short, the exact same solution tendered by Hale, Child, and Cary.

What separates Bellers' work from that of his predecessors is his use of political arithmetic, and his consistent and direct attempts to make his colleges of industry a reality. Throughout his pamphlets, Bellers tried to show that various numbers of poor people (typically around five-hundred thousand⁹³) could produce millions of pounds annually if employed. The burgeoning appreciation in pamphlet literature for political economy and rational governance during this period inspired a growing recourse to large numbers in order to assert a position, especially concerning trade or manufacturing, where contemporaries would have found it very difficult to disprove them. Bellers' use

⁹¹ Bellers, John. "*Essays about the poor, manufactures, trade, plantations, & immorality*". London: Printed and sold by T. Sowle ..., 1699. p. 1.

⁹² *Ibid.* p. 3.

⁹³ *Ibid.* p. 7.

of hypothetical situations and arithmetic was more pronounced than any other pamphleteer at the time. His language and arguments, supported by such figures, tended to seem reasonable, and were clearly expressed in numbered, orderly lists. Combined with his constant petitions and appeals to Parliament, and his later position in the Royal Society, Bellers' influence on the emerging workhouse movement was immense, especially given its predominantly Whig and dissenting character and the role of the Society for the Reformation of Manners in its inception. Historian Tim Hitchcock notes that Bellers was considered one of the most radical thinkers concerned with poverty around the time of the Glorious Revolution, but we also know that his ideas received a broad hearing.⁹⁴ Bellers appeared before the Board of Trade Inquiry into the Poor Laws in 1696⁹⁵, and we know that he was instrumental in erecting a Quaker workhouse in Clerkenwell. Bellers made his life's work the improvement of the poor, and this wholesale determination bore fruit just before his death in 1725, Knatchbull's Workhouse Test Act had passed Parliament in 1723, and it actively encouraged the creation of workhouses across all English parishes and counties, and laid down rules allowing them to combine in order to more efficiently build and maintain them.

What then, are the fundamental tenets and ideas of the Bellers school? First, and most importantly, for Bellers and his colleagues poverty in England was a sign of moral weakness, a lack of virtue in any case where the person could otherwise work. The categories of deserving and undeserving, or more properly, of the godly and sinning poor, could not be clearer to them. The poor raised their children in vice and sin, and

⁹⁴ Hitchcock, Tim. "Entry for John Bellers" Oxford Dictionary of National Biography Online.

⁹⁵ Both Bellers and Cary appear before the commission, and both earn part of the responsibility for starting the workhouse movement in *Stilling the Grumbling Hive*. See p. 124.

inculcated them into a comprehensive under-culture of beggary, thieving, and idleness. However, the poor could, in fact, be improved, both for their benefit and for the benefit of the Kingdom, and it was a Christian duty to do so and their improvement must therefore be undertaken by any man of conscience. The ideal way to lift families out of poverty was to begin early, with the children, by placing them in a workhouse and providing a proper and godly education. Only in this manner could the material and spiritual wealth of the English nation be guaranteed and increased, and only in this manner could virtue and 'civility' replace idleness and sin. The next school of thinking, typified by authors like Daniel Defoe and John Locke, likely held greater sway in London and with Ministers and MPs of state (Locke was on the Board of Trade from around 1696 until 1704). Both Defoe and Locke agreed that the poor lacked virtue, and that much needed to be done for the good of the kingdom, but they both offered alternative solutions to the workhouse, which firmly separates them from the Bellers School.

Our study of the 'Defoe school' appropriately begins with Daniel Defoe himself, because he, far more than John Locke or the Earl of Shaftsbury, possessed the ability to clearly and engagingly articulate his arguments for the moral regulation of the poor. Moreover, the format he chose to do this in; a public pamphlet addressed to Parliament, structurally bridges the gap between the practical and plainspoken discourse of John Bellers, and the more esoteric musings of John Locke, whose perspectives on poverty were only aired through the Board of Trade hearings and report during his lifetime.⁹⁶

⁹⁶ Locke's manuscripts contain no overt considerations of poverty directly. PRO 30/24/47/30-34 are his various private papers. There are some admonishments over the schooling of his son which touch lightly

Daniel Defoe was an author, polemicist and publisher during the age of Anne, made justifiably famous by his timeless work *Robinson Crusoe*. Defoe maintained a distinctly ambivalent relationship with both Parliament and the Ministers of Anne throughout his lifetime, sometimes paid to publish alongside Jonathan Swift in favour of a Tory government policy, sometimes mincing no words in his attacks on the established hierarchy, as in his *Dialog Betwixt and Whig and Tory*, when in his initial address to William III he notes that the principal blame for the ‘present misfortunes’ lay with: “those who declared to your face King *James* the only King.”⁹⁷ Judging by his writing at this time, and his rather revealing choice of the alias ‘Jacobite’ for the Tory in his dialog, one would assume Defoe to hold to some rather strong Whig sensibilities, but once he enters the pay of the Harley ministry around 1710, his public tone quickly changes.⁹⁸

Generally, this wider context reveals that Defoe’s political loyalties were as changeable as his polemical interests (a characteristic by no means unique to him). However, Defoe did publish two pamphlets on poverty, each of which appears to remain ideologically consistent with the other; *Giving Alms no Charity* and *A Brief Case of the Distillers*, a more sardonic look at one of the causes of poverty which Defoe saw as endemic: alcohol. In both cases, Defoe’s style, his development of arguments, and his methods of proof are similar. *Giving Alms no Charity* begins with a lengthy history of Queen Elizabeth, and her decision to let immigrants from the Dutch Flanders into England to escape persecution. Defoe draws exaggerated comparisons between the

upon the importance of education and industry, but Locke deals with those subjects in more detail in his Board of Trade proposals.

⁹⁷ Defoe, Daniel. *A dialogue betwixt Whig and Tory, aliàs Williamite and Jacobite.*” p. ii.

⁹⁸ For a discussion of Defoe’s rapid changes in tone and behaviour based on who he was working for at the time, see: Downie, J.A. *Robert Harley and the Press: Propaganda and public opinion in the Age of Swift and Defoe*. London: Cambridge University Press, 1979, particularly p. 57 onwards as it explains Harley and Defoe’s relationship.

famous virtues and industry of the Dutch people, and the sloth and wastefulness of the English poor. By 1726, Defoe had refined his critique of the poor further, and in his *Case of the Distillers*, he argued that the poor would consume gin regardless of the hardships it caused or the financial or legal obstacles in their way, and that it would be best to at least have them consume English gin, ideally distilled by the poor themselves.⁹⁹ Again, however, the exposition remains the same; comparisons with the ever-industrious Dutch are drawn¹⁰⁰, and Defoe returns to his primary and enduring critique of the poor, and the general cause of poverty: their idleness and waste.¹⁰¹

Defoe argued stridently against workhouses mainly because he did not see how they would convince the poor as a whole to rise out of their moral rectitude. Defoe took direct aim at workhouses like the one in Bristol, sarcastically labelling it “such a Terror to Beggars that none will come near the City.”¹⁰² Perhaps most fascinating, he used a classic mercantilist argument to contend that each roll of wool or linen spun in the workhouse, and then sold, was one less roll created by “some poor family that spun it before.”¹⁰³ The workhouses were in effect only “taking bread out of the mouths of the Poor of Essex, to put it into the mouths of the Poor of Middlesex.”¹⁰⁴ This critique of the workhouse solution to poverty seems very elegant and powerful when considered in isolation. However, we know that the creation of local workhouses was increasingly

⁹⁹ Defoe, Daniel. “A brief case of the distillers, and of the distilling trade in England, shewing how far it is the interest of England to encourage the said trade...” p. v, see also: Clark, Peter. “The ‘Mother Gin’ Controversy in the Early Eighteenth Century.” *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 5th ser., 38 (1988), 63-84.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.* p. vii, ‘Gin’ as ‘Geneva’, or ‘Dutch Malt Spirits’.

¹⁰¹ Comparisons with the Dutch were in fashion in pamphlets and polemics at the time. See: Israel, Jonathan Irvine, ed. *The Anglo-Dutch Moment: Essays on the Glorious Revolution and its world impact*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991.

¹⁰² Defoe, Daniel. *Giving Alms no Charity*. p. 15.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.* p. 16.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*

viewed as a desirable and effective policy for poor relief and improvement; does this mean that Defoe's critique had little effect? Defoe's ambiguous public persona and his powerful grasp of the politically absurd may indeed have lessened the impact of any sincere arguments he made, but as the fourth Chapter on the politics and legislation of social policy shall seek to demonstrate, Defoe and his school did have a profound impact. His *Review* virulently criticised Mackworth's 1704 legislation, and his criticisms of workhouses impacted the consciousness of the public and policy makers enough to engender a healthy scepticism towards radical reform and a reluctance to centralize too quickly.¹⁰⁵

However, of all the responses to poverty considered in this chapter, John Locke in particular had the most profound impact on the formation of English political philosophy and public policy in the eighteenth century, a period widely known for the burgeoning reverence for, and protection of, property. Locke was easily the most politically connected and influential contemporary personality to weigh in on this debate, and he sat on the newly reformed Board of Trade during its deliberations over social policy which took place beginning in 1696. Locke's recommendations to the Board, published much later and known to us now as his *Essays on the Poor Laws*, were ultimately rejected. However, the contents of the essay allow us to determine with some precision what Locke thought about poor people, and what he considered legitimate solutions to poverty within the wider framework of his philosophy of Whig politics¹⁰⁶ and property; a philosophy enthusiastically embraced by a post-1689 political culture.

¹⁰⁵ Paul Slack discusses this. See *From Reformation to Improvement*. p. 121.

¹⁰⁶ See: Ashcroft, Richard. "Revolution, Legitimacy, and Lockean liberalism" in Englehart, Stephen F.; Moore, John Allphin, jr. eds. *Three Beginnings: Revolution, Rights, and the Liberal State: Comparative*

Locke's recommendations to the Board began with the lines used in the title of this thesis. He advocated a restraint of the 'debauchery' of paupers, firstly by enforcing a "strict execution of the laws providing against it"¹⁰⁷. Unlike Defoe, Locke did consider setting the poor to work as the primary goal of future reforming policies, and also as the most feasible way of addressing the poor question and improving the nation. However for Locke, the workhouse, and the moral education and labour that it provided, was not the only option. Locke's proposals did allow for the use of 'houses of correction', a term clearly different from 'workhouse', and I believe this distinction to be important, as it seems to imply that Locke did not envision paupers remaining in these houses for longer durations¹⁰⁸, nor did he intend the purpose of such houses to be primarily for furnishing the poor with work. Locke advocated a series of other penalties and policies aimed at further restricting the mobility of the rural poor, policies which seem to generally fall in line with his philosophical support of private property, and his 'enough and as good' justifications for enclosure. These policies were rather draconian, such as the press ganging of able-bodied poor men of impressible age if they were caught outside of their parish bounds, or found guilty of petty law-breaking.¹⁰⁹ If a pauper was caught with a forged pass permitting travel between parishes, they were to lose an ear. Boys and girls under fourteen caught outside of their bounds were to be "soundly whipped", and then sent to a house of correction if they re-offended.

Perspectives on the English, American, and French Revolutions. Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1994. p. 141-62.

¹⁰⁷ Locke, John. *Political Essays*. Mark Goldie, ed. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997. p. 184

¹⁰⁸ His essays tend to support this view, most penalties listed as sending a pauper to a house of correction call for 4 to 8 weeks as a duration of stay. Locke, John. *Political Essays*. p. 185-187.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.* p. 185.

By calling on figures of potential production and earnings very similar to those of Josiah Child, Locke argued that the poor, if gainfully employed in sufficient numbers, could actually generate for the English state hundreds of thousands of pounds annually, while still providing for their own maintenance.¹¹⁰ He considered the parish-based relief system wasteful but largely sufficient for the task for which it was designed. However, he noted that parish rates levied for the maintenance of idle poor were an unnecessary drain on the labour of the industrious, and thus on the national economy. Locke is somewhat unique in arguing that all poor people even remotely capable of labour should be forced to pursue it; even older widows and the infirm were capable of spinning small amounts of wool or helping in other ways.¹¹¹ Despite many distinct similarities between Locke's proposals and those of someone like Josiah Child, he has been grouped with authors like Defoe, Shaftsbury, and William Petty because he seemed to be chiefly concerned with remedies on a strictly economic level, his proposals made little to no mention of religious education for the poor, and while he did explicitly and repeatedly condemn the poor for their lack of industry and their moral failings, these denunciations occurred in the absence of the Christian call for charity that is ubiquitous amongst the authors in the Bellers school. John Locke was explicitly concerned with the good of the nation, and not necessarily the good of the individual poor person in this case.¹¹² In this respect, his work on poverty bears some similarities to Bernard Mandeville's as well, although Locke, as a fierce proponent of natural laws and the virtuous political nation under the rule of law, would certainly never have based his conception of the good of

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.* p. 187.

¹¹¹ Locke, John. *Political Essays*. p. 186.

¹¹² Beier, A.L. "Utter strangers to industry, morality and religion": John Locke on the poor'. *Eighteenth Century Life*, 12:3 (1988). p. 29-31.

society on a mixture of vice and virtue as Mandeville did. As we turn to Mandeville's work in the final 'school' of opinion on poverty, it remains important to note that the similarities between the first two schools often far outweighed their differences. Both Bellers and Cary appeared before the Board of Trade meetings¹¹³ (and thus before Locke) in the late seventeenth century, and the interplay of ideas between these men was only strengthened by their shared political leanings towards the Whig party, and towards religious toleration of Protestant dissent.

Both John Bellers and Daniel Defoe readily agreed that widespread virtuous behaviour; more specifically sobriety, deference, and industry, served to enrich and 'improve' the individual and more importantly the nation. In his introductory remarks, Bellers cited King William III and was quick to point to the public gains from widespread use of workhouses, namely; "the great Increase of our Manufactures, as well as remove[ing] a Heavy Burden from the People."¹¹⁴ After laying out his proposal in some detail, Bellers also appealed directly to both religious obligations and enlightened self-interest when he wrote: "Duty and Interest are two as great Obligations as can be laid upon Mortals, and they both, as powerful Advocates, call upon the Rich to take care of the Poor."¹¹⁵ Similarly, in *Giving Alms no Charity*, Daniel Defoe frequently mentioned the frugality of the Dutch people, and he noted that the English poor in particular compared unfavourably.¹¹⁶ Both authors, as well as every other author in their respective schools of thought, reached backwards to a basic set of attributes commonly

¹¹³ PRO CO 391/9/11.

¹¹⁴ Bellers, John. *An Essay for Employing the Poor to Profit...* London, 1723. p. 2.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.* p. 8.

¹¹⁶ Defoe, Daniel. *Giving Alms no Charity.* .p. 26.

believed virtuous, and proceeded to either admonish the poor as a group for their lack of these virtues, or to propose means by which to instil such qualities into them.

By contrast, the work of Bernard Mandeville simply does not rely on such principles, in fact his arguments largely discount charity as a self-interested pursuit hidden in the guise of the public good. Mandeville instead begins with the Hobbesian idea that man is a primarily selfish creature, and that he will be motivated mainly by self-interest when he operates within society. The noted historian of political thought, Thomas Horne, traces the origins of Mandeville's formulations on human nature to the Jansenist strand in French moral thought, particularly La Rochefoucauld and La Fontaine, both of whom were famous *moralistes*. Jansenism was a strand of catholic theological thought which took root in 16th Century France, and it emphasized human depravity, original sin, the necessity of the divine grace of God, and a form of predestination, and it was eventually declared heretical by the Pope. It ties in sharply with Mandeville's thinking, particularly because his definition of true virtue was very exacting, which allowed him to substantially broaden the category of vice, in effect maximizing the depredations of human depravity.¹¹⁷ Of particular interest to us is the fact that Mandeville formulated many of his ideas, and published many of his pamphlets in *direct* opposition to the other schools of opinion we have examined. He took aim at the reformation of manners in particular in *The Grumbling Hive*:

Then leave Complaints: Fools only strive
To make a great an honest Hive
T' enjoy the worlds conveniences
Be famed in war; yet live in ease,

¹¹⁷ Horne, Thomas. *The Social Thought of Bernard Mandeville*. P. 19, French moral tradition, and p. 22, 'rigorous moral standard'.

Without great vices, is a Vain
 Eutopia seated in the brain
 Fraud, luxury, and Pride must live
 While we the benefits receive...¹¹⁸

Mandeville's bees are motivated by their greed to expand and grow powerful, to pursue wealth, luxury and personal aggrandizement wherever these may be found, and in the process they enrich their nation.¹¹⁹ Once again, Horne best summarizes the exact character of the differences between Mandeville and the reformers of the Bellers school when he writes: "It was not self-centeredness that had to be expunged, but the refusal to accept that egoism and to use it in such a way as to make virtue friends with vice."¹²⁰ The essential nature of Mandeville's opposition to workhouses and charity schools stemmed from the moral improvement and education they provided to poor people, a service that the Bellers school in particular considered essential to addressing poverty in the English nation. For Mandeville, such moral improvements at best only masked the true nature of man, and in the case of the poor he felt that they would become dissatisfied *en masse* with their condition, and would cease to produce and to labour while striving to change it by various means. "The fewer things a man wishes for," wrote Mandeville, "the more easily his necessities may be supplied."¹²¹ To a mercantilist like Mandeville, truer words were never spoken.

Mandeville's attack on charity went deeper than his material and largely economic critique of schools and the reformation of manners. His rigorous moral definitions extended directly to charity, which he defined as "that Virtue by which part

¹¹⁸ Mandeville, Bernard. *The Grumbling Hive*. London, 1705. p. 36.

¹¹⁹ For further reading on the changing nature of virtue, see: Burt, Shelley. *Virtue Transformed: Political Argument in England, 1688-1740*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992.

¹²⁰ Horne. *The Social Thought of Bernard Mandeville*. p. 9.

¹²¹ Mandeville. *An Essay on Charity and Charity Schools*. P. 288.

of that sincere Love we have for ourselves is transferr'd pure and unmix'd to others, not tyed to us by the Bonds of Friendship or Consanguinity..."¹²² Against such an exacting definition, Mandeville found that charity schools fell well short of true virtue, and instead exhibited all the characteristics of pride and a desire for praise on the part of their creators and proponents. Poor people, however, receive no better treatment in Mandeville's work. He argues that beggars play to both the pride and the pity of passerby, first by displaying their infirmities and injuries, and then by using many titles and honorific descriptions to coax out alms.¹²³ And thus "many a half-penny is given to impudent and delightedly persecuting Rascals, whom... a Man would cane with much greater satisfaction."¹²⁴ To Mandeville, all men and women are motivated by self-interest more than they are by genuine virtues, and because of these radically dissenting views his ideas on poverty and the poor do not fit neatly into the prevailing contemporary dichotomy of paupers 'deserving' or 'undeserving' of relief.

Mandeville's chief aim always remained the exposition of the contradictory nature of man and society, and he painted with a broad brush. As such, moral judgements concerning which men deserved or did not deserve their lot in life had no bearing on his thinking. Mandeville was primarily concerned with the betterment of the English state, and he opposed the Society for the Reformation of Manners because he felt that their efforts were counterproductive to his own. Just like John Bellers or John Locke sincerely believed that improvement or regulation of the poor would strengthen the nation, Mandeville sincerely believed the opposite: a large class of poor people was

¹²² Mandeville. *An Essay on Charity Schools*. p. 285.

¹²³ *Ibid.* p. 287.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.* p. 293.

in fact necessary to economically strengthen the state, primarily through the provision of plentiful and cheap labour.

What then, should be drawn from an examination of this pamphlet literature? We can say with certainty that the subject of poverty and poor relief was widely discussed and debated during the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. One can discern a distinct ideological trend towards the creation and maintenance of workhouses as the primary means of controlling, relieving and improving the poor, with few authors dissenting from this fundamental premise. In fact this tendency would become a fully realized legislative reality in 1723, when Parliament ceded authority to local parishes and encouraged them to incorporate workhouses.¹²⁵ It is also clear that a large segment of the publishing authors concerned with poverty, especially those with the greatest influence, justified poor relief as a Christian duty, and explicitly linked it with a moral reformation of manners and habits. Authors as diverse as D. Defoe, J. Bellers, M. Hale, J. Locke, and even B. Mandeville argued that the poor were not only morally deficient, but *sinful* and lacking the virtues necessary to prosper and grow wealthy, and although they certainly disagreed on exactly what should be done about that, this pervasive moral categorization of the poor remained a cornerstone of all arguments for their relief through paternalistic systems largely designed to restrict the mobility and choice of the poor. Individual paupers could certainly be deserving of the dole; those who were infirm or old, widows with young children, and the maimed soldiers from past wars, and as the next chapter shall examine, these paupers certainly knew which archetypes and stereotypes to play upon as they appealed in public and in petitions for relief from the

¹²⁵ This theme is discussed in greater detail in Chapter 4: 'Parliament and Poverty'. See Knatchbull's Workhouse Test Act and subsequent discussions, Ch. 4.

state. But those paupers sound of limb and able bodied were repeatedly exhorted to work, and not to fall into idleness or waste their meagre coins on drink. As the eighteenth century advanced they were also increasingly excluded from casual or outdoor relief, and with the advent of the 'workhouse test' in 1723, 'able-bodied' or 'sturdy' paupers were almost fully excluded from, or ostracized in, the parish relief system.

The construction of poverty as a category within which people could be assigned was thus primarily a moral matter, and only secondarily considered the economic circumstances. Contemporary pamphlet authors were far more concerned with the vagrant and the beggar than they were with the chronically poor family who had lived in a given parish for several generations. The undeserving poor was a stranger, known to authors such as Bellers and Defoe only through highly constrained and socially constructed encounters on the streets of the metropolis, or through accounts of workhouse life such as John Cary's, replete with its own biases and omissions. By speaking in general moral terms, and by discussing singular solutions to an entire social and economic condition, the construction of a coherent identity of poverty by these pamphlet authors from elite perspectives omitted the poor as an actual subject of inquiry. Why a given family or person was destitute was not as important for Bellers or Hale as the reasons why they hadn't yet improved their conditions, a circumstance which both men took to be an amalgam of moral deficiencies and errors in judgement. Generally speaking it was not the world that should be remedied to improve the condition of the poor; it was the pauper who required reformation.

In the third chapter, we shall examine the use of archetypes, tropes, and traditional appeals in poor petitions to the state, as well as some court dispositions and records from the Old Bailey archive. The aim is to explore the wilful construction and use of pauper identity from the 'bottom' of the system, and in specific individual cases, after having examined it superficially and at a general level at the 'top'. These two competing constructions of poverty, one primarily concerned with improving the undeserving, and one concerned with proper justification of deserving relief, each have an effect on the actual formation of social policy as the Age of Improvement progresses, and perhaps the localism of the English system well past the advent of collective workhouses can be ascribed to the enduring influence, and success of, paupers defending their common rights to relief.

Chapter – 3: Seeking Mercy: Worthy Widows, Lame Veterans, Contrite Thieves and the Construction of Identity by the Petitioning Poor in Early Modern England

The National Archives at Kew holds an incredible array of documents from early modern England, most of which have been carefully catalogued and organized. The ballooning State papers of British Monarchs after 1688 are a particularly rich set of sources, with index volumes dominating an entire shelf on the third floor of the archives. These indices are arranged by chronology where possible, and when paging through them the historian is confronted with two essential characteristics of politics in early modern England: first, that the English state kept an immense amount of records that other states would have deemed less important, and second, that a large chunk of those records were *petitions and depositions from private citizens*. The comprehensive collection and storage of all of these petitions increased markedly during the reign of Anne. An evaluation of the number of petitions alone between the rule of William and Mary, and that of Anne shows the increase: between 1689 and 1702 the archives hold *three* formal petitions in the state papers which remain from that reign. In Anne's state papers, we find *one-thousand and forty-six* petitions which were kept. We can assert that Queen Anne's state papers are a gold mine if an historian wants to work with petitions as primary sources, and that they will offer valuable insights into both the experiences of paupers and the state's responses to poverty.¹²⁶

Petitions, depositions, and court records are certainly not easy sources to use. Almost no petitions are accompanied by supporting testimonies or documentation. Each of these sources also suffers from a lack of context, especially when dealing with the 'poorer sorts', who are unlikely to appear on other official records, excluding parish

¹²⁶ On the rise of the information state and development of government surveillance from Gregory King to the present day, see Higgs, Edward. "The Rise of the Information State: the Development of the Central State Surveillance of the Citizen in England, 1500-2000," *Journal of Historical Sociology*, Vol. 14, No. 2 (2001), pp. 175-197.

baptismal and death records. Reconstructing the lives of the modest labouring poor who appear before us in the sources *because* they instigated petitions or participated in court processes thus becomes an effort reminiscent of Sisyphus' labours in the Greek afterlife. Nevertheless, petitions and depositions do offer several germane insights into the character of pauper relationships with authority.

For example, there are numerous petitions similar to that of Frances Spencer, who was caught stealing goods worth thirty shillings and sentenced to death some time during the reign of Anne. Jailed in Newgate, Frances likely paid for a formal petition to be sent to the Queen, one which observed all of the conventions and traditions of English petitioning, and which attempted to 'most humbly sheweth' that "your petitioner hath seven children whom by her honest endeavours she hath kept from becoming chargeable to her parish as was testified by several of her neighbours..."¹²⁷ Frances pled for a commutation of her sentence to transportation, though we do not know what became of her. According to historians such as Cynthia Herrup and Douglas Hay, Frances' odds of having her sentence commuted to transportation were very high for a whole number of social and moral reasons.¹²⁸ There is no indication that she was a recidivist, having "never been condemned before nor ever received mercy", and her petition admits that she did indeed steal the goods valued at thirty shillings, and she took great pains to sound contrite about her actions as well; she was "tempted" and took some of the shop owner's goods, but these were "immediately restored", likely because she was caught right away. Frances was not young, and there was no mention of a husband

¹²⁷ PRO: SP/34/35/65 f.78: Petition of Frances Spencer, prisoner in Newgate, to queen. She has been condemned to death for shoplifting, but prays for clemency with transportation.

¹²⁸ Herrup, Cynthia B. "Law and Morality in Seventeenth-Century England," *Past and Present*, No. 106 (Feb., 1985); p. 102.

in her petition either, instead it mentions that she had seven children, none of whom had become chargeable to the parish, and assuming their occupations were legal this was a considerable accomplishment on Spencer's part.

As we can clearly see, petitions like the one submitted to Queen Anne by Frances Spencer are fraught with loose ends and ambiguities that are extremely difficult for a historian to reconcile. However, the use of, or respect for, contemporary social norms within petitions like Frances' is both striking and illuminating for historians and provides one of the few avenues allowing meaningful parallels and the illumination of pauper life experiences and expectations. Frances' petition was carefully constructed, perhaps by a scribe who regularly wrote petitions of a similar nature for many inhabitants of England's prisons and parishes, and it made use of three distinct tropes in order to make a case for a commutation of her death sentence; she was *female* (and had children), she was *industrious* (by keeping her family off of the parish dole), and she was *contrite*.

This chapter provides an examination of petitions submitted by a diverse array of the poor: widows, maimed veterans, a school clerk writing on behalf of workhouse inhabitants, petty thieves, and parishioners fallen on hard times. In doing so, it will focus on the self-representation of the poor through archetypes in their encounters with the state, with the machinery of the law, and with the elite. However, these individual primary sources demand a wider historiographical context to make them more helpful in reconstructing the problem of poverty in early modern England. Central to the contextualization of this problem are several ideas, namely; the concept of *neighbourliness*, ideas of the feminine and masculine spheres and of gender, and notions

of censure and community.¹²⁹ However, the single most important concept which this chapter must first engage with is “the Economy of Makeshifts”; the famous title of one of Olwen Hufton’s early chapters in her book *The Poor of Eighteenth Century France, 1750-1789*, which was published in 1974.

The concept of an economy of makeshifts is a methodological boon to historians of poverty everywhere, but in order to use it we must first contextualize the discrete historical moments and individual pauper experiences related to us in petitions, in effect providing a more general assessment of where poor petitions fit into a larger experience of poverty. Generally, we know that stable demographics, enforceable settlement legislation, fairly consistent harvests (excepting 1708-11), and slowly rising real wages generated a largely static level of ‘background poverty’ in the English social and economic environment from 1697 to 1723.¹³⁰ Furthermore, we also know that despite the heated character of politics and the push for moral reformation, no real sweeping legislative changes were enacted either; instead practical policy on poor relief remained largely in the hands of local justices and parish officials. The poor did not yet have to face down the threat of systematic enclosure of commons or wastes either, a process which saw its beginnings in this period, but which becomes a much greater danger closer to the middle of the century. They could still ‘make shift’, a general subsistence we

¹²⁹ For Neighbourliness, see Keith Wrightson’s chapter on the same in Jones, Norman L and Woolf, Daniel, eds. *Local Identities in Late Medieval and Early Modern England*. New York: Palgrave, 2007. For feminine and masculine roles / spheres, see Hindle: “The Shaming of Margaret Knowsley: Gossip, Gender, and the Experience of Authority in Early Modern England” *Continuity and Change*, vol. 9, 1994. p. 391-419, and Sarah Lloyd: “Cottage Conversations: Poverty and Manly Independence in Eighteenth Century England,” *Past and Present*, Vol. 184 (2004): pp. 69-108.

¹³⁰ Fideler, Paul A. *Social Welfare in Pre-Industrial England*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006. p. 142.

understand now mainly due to the work of Steve Hindle and the larger movement of scholars towards Olwen Hufton's concept of "an economy of makeshifts."¹³¹

The evidence presented in this chapter indicates that petitioning by paupers remained an act essentially *outside* of their economy of makeshifts; that it was instead a supplement to their strategies of survival, an attempt to receive relief they felt 'entitled' to get, or a desperate plea for relief from people in extraordinary positions of want and necessity. But a glimpse at the wider historiography on this particular subject casts the findings concerning the 'entitlement' of certain categories of poor into some doubt. Hufton's makeshifts were examined in meticulous detail in Steve Hindle's book *On the Parish?*, though in English historiography the concept generally includes the local parish dole, gleaning at harvest time, traditional use-rights and exploitation of commons land, as well as networks of kin and charity tied together by parish belonging or familial obligations.¹³² Hindle continued to engage with and study economies of makeshifts with a contribution to *The Poor in England 1700-1850: An Economy of Makeshifts* in 2003¹³³. This edited volume also made use of petitions, and tendered some advice about the unique difficulties inherent in using them as sources.

¹³¹ Jones, Colin. "Olwen Hufton's 'Poor', Richard Cobb's 'People', and the Notions of the *longue durée* in French Revolutionary Historiography." *Past and Present* (2006), Supplement 1. p. 179, for Hufton's own work: "Women without men: widows and spinsters in Britain and France in the eighteenth century." *Journal of Family History*, 9:4 (1984). p. 355-76.

¹³² *On the Parish?* examines these strategies in great depth. It is also important to note that Hindle's analysis of makeshifts does seamlessly include local and legal practices too, which is why we will return to his book for additional context in the fourth chapter.

¹³³ His chapter is titled: "Not by Bread Only? Common right, parish relief, and endowed Charity in a forest Economy, c. 1600-1800".

Why are petitions so problematic? The first primary suspicion about any petition stems from the fact that its author “had a direct material interest in its success”¹³⁴ and, therefore, had every reason to manipulate his or her case, using anything from “mild exaggeration and emotive language” to lying or complete omission. As such, Tompkins and King warned that anything beyond an analysis of the “language of request”¹³⁵ requires considerable caution from historians. Since this chapter aims to re-construct a ‘lower’ half of a negotiated pauper identity between 1688 and 1723, its use of petitions is confined to the relatively safe territory of textual and linguistic analysis; in effect conducting examinations of individual petitions as indicative of a set of conventions and expectations, not literal truth. However, other difficult problems with petitions present themselves. We know that written conventions and formulations were widely used across the entire body of petitioning paupers, and the petitions examined here bear this out. Unfortunately, this use of convention means that problems of authorship and authenticity arise. Who actually wrote out each petition, a literate neighbour, a paid scribe, a local vestry official, or even more unlikely, was it written by the petitioner themselves? Are the events about the lives of paupers which are detailed in these petitions actually accurate depictions of their desperate condition, or are they ‘manufactured circumstances’ designed to break through the “charitable reluctance to relieve the able-bodied”¹³⁶, a reluctance which certainly existed at all levels of discretionary relief?

¹³⁴ King, and Tompkins eds. *The Poor in England, 1700-1850: An Economy of Makeshifts*. New York: Manchester Press, 2003. p. 16.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.* p. 18.

¹³⁶ King, and Tompkins eds. *The Poor in England, 1700-1850: An Economy of Makeshifts*. p. 17.

An Economy of Makeshifts labels petitions an “attractive if slippery”¹³⁷ set of primary sources; a wholly accurate summation if their examination in this chapter can be any indicator. However, there are legitimate ways to use petitions beyond a mere textual analysis. They can also be used ‘tangentially’, as the work of scholars like Natalie Zemon Davis shows, in order to answer questions about kinship and support, employment, or crime. Davis used pardon tales to cast light on the thoughts and behaviours of her sixteenth century French subjects, but the practice works equally well in early modern England. Ultimately the point of her endeavours was to restore direct contact with those voices effaced in the archives.¹³⁸ Regardless of how exactly petitions are used by historians of early modern England, they remain one of the single most problematic primary sources, and yet simultaneously one of the most fascinating; they are authentic contemporary pleas for mercy set against a backdrop of deference, hierarchy, and discretion, and they offer us at the very least an echo of the voices of the poor as they struggled to make ends meet.

Kinship and community are also powerful contextual elements of petitioning which merit consideration before even reading the sources themselves. The petitions and legal actions of paupers, as well as their negotiated relationship with the state, did not exist in a communal vacuum. Petitions from self-professed Vagabonds are almost unheard of; instead the vast majority of the poor who interact with the English relief system do so based firmly in a local community that was familiar to, and with, them. Keith Wrightston’s work on ‘neighbourliness’ is thus crucial for framing the wider

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*

¹³⁸ *Ibid.* Also, for Natalie Davis, consider *Fiction in the Archives: Pardon Tales and Their Tellers in Sixteenth Century France*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1987. Also see *The Return of Martin Guerre*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1983.

context from which individual petitions about specific events emerged.¹³⁹ The term “neighbourliness” refers to the broad spectrum of local, communal relationships as they *should* be conducted, and its practice was deeply informed by tradition and a Christian moral code. Wrightson breaks the concept down into five elements: a sense of ‘place’, personal knowledge of community, “active reciprocity” among members, avoidance of conflict, and aspirations towards a “condition of Christian charity.”¹⁴⁰ Parochial conduct in England during our period widely aspired to this ideal, but when referencing communal responses to poverty, neighbourliness could cut both ways. Communal attestations of the worthiness, good behaviour, industry, and godliness of a poor petitioner are common in the historical records, and several notable examples will be examined in this chapter. However, we also know that parish communities routinely attempted to control the composition of the neighbourhood, through manipulation of the settlement laws to expel or transfer paupers, as well as through the control of poor marriages when reading the bans.¹⁴¹

Poor petitioners in good standing with their communities, the ‘ancient’ poor of the parish, were thus exponentially more likely to receive all manner of support regardless of their moral character, whereas paupers forcibly removed back to their parishes of origin, as well as highly mobile poor populations, were instead trapped into a cycle of hostility and distrust of the stranger, and were also victims of parish attempts to be rid of them once again. Wrightson concludes that the historical ‘death’ of neighbourliness in the later eighteenth century is somewhat overblown, and he feels that

¹³⁹ Wrightson, “Neighbourliness” in Jones, Norman L and Woolf, Daniel, eds. *Local Identities in Late Medieval and Early Modern England*. p. 31.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.* p. 35, also, see: Snell, Keith. *Annals of the Labouring Poor: Social Change and Agrarian England, 1660-1900*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985.

neighbourliness “persisted in a manner that was more sharply segmented socially”¹⁴² and he suspects that a slow change in the boundaries and meaning of the term took place over time, perhaps facilitating a gradual decline as communities in England became connected to the wider country and processes of industrialization took hold. In the early modern period, however, the effects of the tradition and expectations of good conduct amongst neighbours retained its full proscriptive and normative force.¹⁴³

Expectations of community were not the only ones which deeply affected the character of interactions between the poor and the state. Expectations based on gender and public/private spheres also played a leading role in the pageantry of the Quarter Sessions or careful composition of petitions. Steve Hindle considered these themes in “The Shaming of Margaret Knowsley”¹⁴⁴, a piece in which he recounts the story of a local case of slander in Newcastle-upon-Tyne, a case which saw a local poor woman (Margaret Knowsley) publicly shamed by way of legal punishment, and which also ruined the credibility of the town’s preacher (Stephen Jerome), after Knowsley accused him of making an assault on her chastity. The article is a riveting piece of micro-history, but it is important because Hindle engaged with concepts of gossip and gender, as well as with communal and eventually legal responses to public disorder. Hindle’s article also draws upon petitions to reconstruct the events surrounding the legal proceedings against

¹⁴² Keith Wrightson: “The Decline of Neighbourliness Revisited.” in Jones and Woolf, eds. *Local Identities in Late Medieval and Early Modern England*. p. 39, for additional work by Wrightson on communal obligations and charity, see: *English Society 1580-1680*. London: Routledge, 2003. p. 47, and later chapter 6 on Order, 7 on Godliness.

¹⁴³ On the proscriptive norms of ‘being a good neighbour’ also see: Heal, Felicity. *Hospitality in Early Modern England*. Oxford; Oxford University Press, 1990.

¹⁴⁴ Hindle, Steve. “The Shaming of Margaret Knowsley: Gossip, Gender, and the Experience of Authority in Early Modern England” *Continuity and Change*, vol. 9, 1994.

Jerome, and the punishment meted out to Knowsley, thereby also offering some methodological guidance to studies reliant on petitions.

The case of Margaret Knowsley and Stephen Jerome presents a classic example of private and public ‘transcripts’ clashing, where the net result predictably marginalized the woman who spoke out; who was poor, unwilling initially to break her silence, and angry about her treatment at the hands of the law. Hindle’s analysis of her two petitions suggests that they were open acts of defiance, drawn up once it became clear that the restoration of the local order would hinge upon her public punishment.¹⁴⁵ Jerome ultimately lost his post in the parish because of the scandal, but Margaret suffered a public shaming in the stocks, although it appears she was protected by several community members. While telling Knowsley’s story, Hindle examined the political nature of gossip, and he also explored the different expectations of male and female spheres; gossip fuelled much of the speculation and disorder surrounding the event, and it eventually forced Margaret to publicly accuse Jerome, and to appear in court, actions she was unwilling to do. As his domestic, poor and female servant, Margaret’s morality and sexuality were already suspected, and these expectations played out in her sentencing. Margaret’s shaming also serves as a potent reminder that despite the high level of petitioning and legal activity undertaken by the English poor, oftentimes the answers they received from the judicial system were determined by the expectations and the wishes of those in authority locally.

Constraints of gender also intersect with those of fiscal and social (in)dependence as well, as Sarah Lloyd points out in “Cottage Conversations”, an article

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.* p. 396.

looking at poverty and manly independence. Lloyd argues that the concept of a poor person's cottage was entirely manufactured by contemporary commentators, and that this creation of the cottage idea went hand-in-hand with a gendered categorization of paupers as well.¹⁴⁶ The cottage of an industrious but impoverished widow would be well-kept, albeit shabby. Flowers might be planted regularly when in season and the inhabitants would be orderly and socially deferent. The cottage of an unlicensed alehouse keeper would conversely be rowdy, ill-kept and noisy, a blight on the godly parish easily recognizable as such. Such cottages were almost always illegally built on the commons or the wastes of a parish, and always inhabited by the poorer sort, usually those also in receipt of out-relief. The sexual division of labour, and the moral proscription of the poor also figured quite heavily into their common descriptions; the labouring man, upon his return to his cottage, was supposed to be welcomed by "the cheerful emanations of the evening fire, and upon whose homely board is spread wholesome but frugal plenty!"¹⁴⁷ Ideally, the industrious inhabitants of cottages would not petition for poor relief, instead they would eke out a living by their own means from the ancient common rights that they held. Indeed, the actual place of residence inside of the parish was rarely mentioned in petitions found in the state papers, and it seems reasonable to assume that similar conventions would apply to petitions made to local authorities concerning an application for relief, though they would likely seek to establish their relationship to their parish as rightful 'settled poor'.

¹⁴⁶ Lloyd, Sarah. "Cottage Conversations: Poverty and Manly Independence in Eighteenth Century England." *Past and Present*, Vol. 184 (2004): pp. 71.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.* p. 78.

The work by S. Hindle, K. Wrightson, and S. Lloyd on the varying aspects of poverty and neighbourliness shares several common themes, and the most important of these is the importance of the local parish community as context. The petitioning poor did not operate outside of communal bounds unless they had absolutely no choice; that is, they were jailed or bereft of a support network. Even paupers travelling far afield from their parishes of birth looking for work could at least draw on some measure of indirect support through the certificates that parishes issued allowing them to leave. The second major theme is the gendered dimensions of proscriptive morality, especially if paupers ‘forgot their station’, or behaved beyond the bounds of this stringent set of social norms. Petitioning widows were hemmed in by a set of expectations every bit as rigid as those which bound male criminals petitioning to enter Her Majesty’s service instead of being executed for their crimes. Each discrete petition contained in this chapter was crafted by a poor person (most likely they dictated to a scribe) fully aware of the categories of representation that they were using. In a sense this particular element of the identity of poverty was mutually reinforced from both ends of the social scale. Paupers willingly made use of tropes which the parochial system and the state were likely to accept as valid, and the actual truth of these presentations became largely immaterial. Petitions were part of a social minuet which delineated those in power from those without it, which was danced by both rulers and ruled throughout the parishes of England, and each participant knew their part in the script. Their construction indicates an active negotiation, by *paupers themselves*, of archetypes of poverty, which were willingly or tacitly accepted by the state, and then acted upon by parish overseers and local justices. One element of this negotiation; the English state’s responses to petitions, is one that we must be careful not to search for patterns in, because the sheer breadth of

varying circumstances and responses, as well as the local nature of the system itself, makes challenging beyond sketching the most general of trends.

Let us turn to the primary sources by looking at separate pauper petitions. They have been divided into three categories, based on the general tropes used by the petitioners; repentant (generally female) thieves, widows, and lame war veterans. Several additional and exceptional petitions will then be considered, including a petition penned by William Howell, a poorhouse clerk, on behalf of all the inhabitants, which complained about the conduct of the master of the house. The general aim of presenting these petitions is to analyse the complex relationships between the petitioning pauper and officials of the state, as well as the support or resistance of their community. Beginning with contrite female thieves, each category of petition will be considered in turn.

The relationship of women to criminality is, according to Garthine Walker, exceedingly complex and, until recently, understudied. She also notes that “the constraints of women’s social and economic position in early modern society precluded, minimized, and concealed female criminality to varying degrees.”¹⁴⁸ The assumptions ran that women would steal goods valued less than what men took, that they tended to steal things more immediately usable like food, and that they were more often the recipients of some form of legal clemency.¹⁴⁹ The petitions of Jane Dennis, Elizabeth Way, and Mary Bennett made conscious use of these assumptions in order to plead for clemency.

¹⁴⁸ Kermode, Jenny and Walker, Garthine, eds. *Women, Crime, and the Courts in Early Modern England*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1994. p. 83.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.* p. 82.

The petition of Jane Dennis from Newgate, like those from Elizabeth Way and Mary Bennett, is undated. We know that she had it drawn up during the reign of Anne, and that she had been convicted of stealing goods valued at thirty shillings from the shop of a Mr. Biggs.¹⁵⁰ She was convicted at the Old Bailey, thus making her at that moment a resident of London, and she claimed to be twenty at the time that she sent the petition. Jane's main plea was that "it is the very first fact of this kind your petitioner was ever accused for, having always till this unhappy time lived honestly and justly in several reputable families."¹⁵¹ There are several important elements to this plea. First, the general tone is contrite and apologetic. Second, Jane was not a recidivist, and finally, she was a young domestic servant, ostensibly living 'honestly and justly' with several families before her fall from grace. The general impression that this petition was meant to convey was one of a bad choice made in a moment of moral weakness, and instantly regretted. Jane's petition plays on her young age, and the nature of her crime, which lend themselves to leniency, by contriving to create an impression of a young life decently lived, about to be cut short by a single impetuous mistake in Mr. Bigg's shop. At the end of her petition, Jane pleads for clemency by Royal prerogative, and although she is not specific the most likely form of clemency would be transportation to the colonies.

Mary Bennett's petition presents a similar case, with several important additions: she was pregnant, and she had a husband serving in the military. Mary was also incarcerated in Newgate, and was convicted of theft of goods valued at twenty shillings. This was her first offense, she had been "unhappily seduced to commit this effort" and

¹⁵⁰ SP 34/35/58 f.69 (Anne) Petition of Jane Dennis, prisoner in Newgate, to Queen. She has been convicted for stealing from Mr Biggs' shop, but prays for clemency.

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*

she was now “great with child.”¹⁵² Mary’s petition for mercy was unconditional in a fashion similar to Jane’s, and she pleaded for compassion and consideration of her condition. In fact, many petitions for clemency by women during this period seem to be constructed around very similar themes. Ameliorating circumstances which the petitions would cite often included husbands serving in the military, youth, familial responsibilities, as well as pregnancy or “pleading the belly” as it was called, or a ‘moment of feminine weakness’ which lead to theft and sin.

When used as tropes or common elements in petitions, these mitigating circumstances could be laid on rather thickly, sometimes to a point which strains credulity. Elizabeth Way was convicted alongside another woman named Anne Day for stealing stitching silks valued at three pounds, a considerable sum of money. Her petition begins by noting that she had a husband serving under the Duke of Marlborough who was “wounded and disabled” in service, that she had two small children, and that she had recently become pregnant by him again. She goes on to state that Anne received a commutation, and that she had “pleaded her belly”, unfortunately miscarrying during the intermediate nine months. Elizabeth is “now againe really with child as a midwife is ready to make oath”¹⁵³ and she had been “only accidentally in company with the said Day” when the goods were stolen. Elizabeth’s petition uses many common circumstances to plead for clemency except for a ‘moment of weakness’, instead asserting that she was only incidental to the crime that took place and that Anne did all of the actual stealing. Her petition concludes by asking that “her miserable sad case” be

¹⁵² SP 34/35/120 f. 149 (Anne) Petition of Mary Bennett, prisoner in Newgate, to Queen. She has been condemned to death for stealing, but prays for mercy.

¹⁵³ SP 34/36/110 f. 150 (Anne) Petition of Elizabeth Way to queen. She has been condemned with Anne Day, who stole some silk, and prays to be spared because she is pregnant.

taken into consideration “to spare her poor life for her Innocent baby and husband saike.”¹⁵⁴ While it is impossible to reconstruct exactly what occurred in this case, simply by drawing upon what Elizabeth tells us in the petition some questions about the legitimacy of her story arise. How did she get pregnant a second time while jailed, given that her husband was wounded and disabled and she was incarcerated in Newgate? Did she feel it was necessary to note that a midwife stood ready to swear that she was, in fact, pregnant for reasons of character, or because of convention?

Despite misgivings about the veracity of Elizabeth’s petition, it does fully showcase many of the strategies and conventions used by convicted women petitioning the court or crown for clemency. These foregoing petitions actively attempted to renegotiate the identities of their authors in reference to the gaze of those in authority, presenting at the outset of their appeals a set of ameliorating and morally charged considerations for a reprieve or pardon. Walker and Kermode, noted scholars of women and the law, wrote that “women’s silence was a consequence of institutional exclusion – it might not denote an ignorance of the process”¹⁵⁵ and these petitions do seem to substantiate that observation. These women clearly understood how best to raise their chances of surviving the ‘bloody code’ of the English legal system, and they put their legal knowledge to work by actively petitioning authority and representing themselves very specifically as *worthy of mercy*.¹⁵⁶ This idea of constructed moral worth applied equally to lame or wounded veterans, and to the widows of soldiers killed in action, whose petitions we turn to next.

¹⁵⁴ SP 34/36/110 f. 150 (Anne).

¹⁵⁵ Kermode and Walker, eds. *Women, Crime, and the Courts in Early Modern England*. p. 12.

¹⁵⁶ For a more detailed coverage of mercy and the law, see Douglas Hay’s chapter in *Albion’s Fatal Tree: Crime and Society in Eighteenth-Century England*. New York: Pantheon Books, 1975, entitled: “Property, Authority, and the Criminal Law.”

War widows occupy a unique place in the history of poor relief and pensions in England. In the mid-seventeenth century, they received state pensions which had previously only been awarded to maimed servicemen, and they continued to request these pensions into the early eighteenth century as well, when the focus of England's wars with France shifted to the European continent. For example, Geoffrey Hudson writes that widowed women in the seventeenth century were actually quite "forthright" about their pension requests, and that their words and actions "show[ed] a knowledge of entitlement existed among war widows."¹⁵⁷ Petitions from Queen Anne's reign revealed that this sense of entitlement extends into the eighteenth century, at least to 1714. Hudson concludes his chapter by observing that the Restoration of Charles II was, in fact, detrimental to the efficacy of petitions from widows. With the civil war over, there were few compelling reasons to provide money from the treasury to supplicants who would likely receive money through parish relief. However, the following petitions demonstrate that the sense of deserving recompense which accompanied petitions from widows during the 1650s had changed very little when it appears again in petitions in the early 1700s. In fact, the use of language and the principled demand for relief could have been lifted directly from earlier sources.

Barbara Furnier petitioned the English crown by way of Charles Hedges in 1704, then 'a principal Secretary of State' for the kingdom. It appears that she did so from "a strange country"¹⁵⁸ which could have either been England or Germany; where her husband, a member of the armed forces, had recently died after a sudden march. He had

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.* p. 148.

¹⁵⁸ SP 34/5/34 f. 64 (1704) Barbara Furnier, widow of Cornet John Furnier, to Secretary Hedges. Prays for Queen's charitable consideration...

been serving with the ‘Royal Regiment of Scots Dragoons’, and when he expired, Barbara explained that he left her “with four young children” and “in great grief and distress and already reduced to the utmost extremity”¹⁵⁹. She was unwilling to burden the state of England, and requested that her transport home to Scotland be paid for by “Her Majesties Royal Bounty”. Several formulaic details of her petition also merit mention. Barbara was very careful to note exactly which regiment her husband had served in and under which commander, and she also noted precisely when he died, but not exactly how, a detail she might not have known. She also requested modest funds from the English state, although it is likely that she would further petition the Scottish authorities for relief or a pension once she had returned home.

Joyce Bush, widow to Henry Bush, petitioned the Earl of Rochester in late 1704. She too, had not received recompense upon the death of her husband, who served as an officer and was killed in Jamaica. Henry apparently did not receive any pay while serving in Jamaica, and his wife thus requested “some relief” for her and “two small children ready to starve.”¹⁶⁰ What makes this petition particularly fascinating is that on the bottom of the original manuscript there is a handwritten note from the Earl of Rochester, noting that Henry was in fact under his command, and that he “could not in charity and Justice refuse”, because he had indeed sent Henry from Ireland to Jamaica. It follows then that with the patronage of a peer like Rochester, Joyce likely received a pension of some kind. Joyce’s petition, therefore, powerfully demonstrates the perceived moral currency of widowhood, particularly the standing of war widows when

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁰ SP 34/5/85 f.158 (1704/5 feb 27 latest) Petition of Joyce Bush, wife of Lieut Henry Bush... prays for charitable consideration...

negotiating their relationship with the state. These women earned an identity as an unmistakably deserving object of charity through the loss of their husbands; who were always perceived as the primary source of family income. The loss of a husband betokened equal parts of emotional and economic hardship and these petitions carefully construct their case for pensions around that central loss and its implications, usually for a bereft widow and ‘small children’. Women were also particularly vulnerable at certain stages in their life-cycle, especially poorer women, and this vulnerability could further strengthen their case for relief.¹⁶¹

However, widowhood alone was not always enough to receive a pension from the state. Catherine, widow of Edward Atkinson, made at least two separate petitions to the English crown for some kind of “reliefe and preservation”¹⁶² during Anne’s reign. We have no mention of her success or failure, but we can surmise that she was turned down at least once. Edward apparently served with great distinction for many years, and died during an assault on Gibraltar. Both petitions were accompanied by certificates attesting to Edward’s courage, but these do not survive in the archives. Her first petition does not mention the circumstances of his death at all, but her second notes that she accompanied him to Gibraltar and subsequently “endured such hardships as grieve her to repeat and are very improper”¹⁶³, a turn of phrase which suggests that Catherine may have been fairly well bred and not, in fact, poor at all. Even so, her petitions made conscious use of the imagery and language of the poor petitioner, often using turns of

¹⁶¹ On the subject of such life-cycle vulnerabilities, see Cressy, David. *Birth, marriage and Death: Ritual, Religion, and the Life-Cycle in Tudor and Stuart England*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997.

¹⁶² SP34/7/33 f. 73 (1705 or 1706) Petition of Catherine, widow of Lieut Edward Arkinson, to queen. She has been in want since husband killed in action....

¹⁶³ *Ibid.* SP34/7/33 f. 73.

phrase such as “reduc’d to great want” and “forced to begg her bread”¹⁶⁴ to plead her case. Indeed, it is entirely possible that Joyce and Catherine were both fairly well off while their husbands were alive, but it is equally possible that they had indeed seen their economic status plummet sharply and dangerously upon their deaths as well. Taken at face value, Catherine’s petition provides a glimpse of the mutability and precarious nature of economic conditions in early modern England. We know that poor rate contributors could easily end up on the parish dole the next week, and this general character of volatility seems to hold true for widows, as well as maimed servicemen and the infirm, whose petitions we turn to next.

Thus far, our analysis of petitions has been dominated by archetypes and tropes associated with gender, specifically female thieves and war widows. But men petitioned for relief at least as much as women did, typically making use of a different yet interconnected set of archetypes in order to plead for charity. Some of the strongest moral cases for remuneration came from veterans who served in the various branches of the English military; maimed seamen and soldiers, but the aged and infirm man incapable of industrious work was also a common author of petitions in the records. Usually these men asked for a place in an almshouse or hospital, and their petitions often contained attestations to their good community status from the local vestry or parish notables, something that we did not find as often in the petitions of widows. Joseph Clark asked for a place in the hospital in Exeter in 1704 because he was “very lame and impotent, which has rendered him incapable of any Laborious Employment for a

¹⁶⁴ SP/34/7/33 f.75 (Anne) Further Petition of Katherine, widow of Lieut Edward Atkinson...

Livelihood.”¹⁶⁵ Joseph specifically labelled himself an “Object of Pity” and certified that the attached document from parish officials would attest to his condition. He asked only for a position in the hospital when a vacancy allowed for it, and lived at “Her Majesties’ Disposal”. Several classic character archetypes are in use here, all of which we have seen in pamphlets published during this period. Joseph implicitly states that he would work if he *could*, and that only owing to his lameness is he requesting an alms place, which is a conscious play directly on widely held notions of industrious paupers as worthy objects of charity. The attached certifications from his community fit into our larger discussion of neighbourliness and community too, and Joseph’s petition serves as an attestation to the power of such parish support, at least in principal. Joseph’s petition made it into the state papers of Anne, marking it, like many of the other petitions here, as rather unique elements of the historical record. It is likely that petitions such as his were far more common at a local county and Quarter Sessions level, and records or copies of such petitions would prove far more common in county records offices, or the records of Justices of the Peace.

Maimed seamen and soldiers often utilised the same strategies and tropes in their petitions, and this follows from the similarities between their distressed conditions and those of a long-time impotent pauper. Henry Simmonds lost his left hand in service aboard the Kingston, fighting the French “near Malligo”¹⁶⁶, and he too petitioned for an alms place, in this case at St. Peter’s Collegiate Church in Westminster (Middlesex), better known then, as now, as Westminster Abbey. At the bottom of Henry’s petition,

¹⁶⁵ SP 34/5/15 and 15A ff. 31-32 (1704 dec?) Petition of Joseph Clark, infirm, for place in hospital... and supporting paper from officials.

¹⁶⁶ SP 34/4/106 f.160 (1704 Oct 20 latest date) Petition of Henry Simmonds to Queen, begging an alms place at St. Peter, Middlesex, on account of his maiming during service....

local officials from his parish of Putney in the county of Surrey attest to the fact that he also served as apprentice to a John Hostler in Putney for seven years before his unfortunate encounter at sea, an oblique reference to his stature as deserving, since he clearly worked for a living before being maimed. The attestation was signed by two Churchwardens and the local minister, lending it some fairly heavy local credibility. These attestations also serve an important secondary purpose to historians, since the support of such local officials in the county and parish communities speaks directly to concepts of place and belonging within those communities¹⁶⁷, as well as the idea of neighbourliness. Furthermore, when analysing petitions, the sort of wider context provided by such attestations is rare and thus exceptionally valuable.

John Coussins also petitioned Queen Anne for an alms place at the Abbey in 1711. He too had served aboard several ships in her navy, apparently for twenty years.¹⁶⁸ John lost “his left Legg and most of his Thigh in the Mediteranian”¹⁶⁹ in 1704, and found himself unable to support his “great Charge of famillie, who is in great poverty and Want.” Attached to his petition was an entirely separate written statement by the overseers, the minister and the churchwardens of St. Paul’s parish, Middlesex.¹⁷⁰ As before, this attestation supported John’s story of twenty years of naval service, and recommended that he be given an alms man position once one became available. Both Henry and John applied for an alms place at Westminster Abbey, and given the location it was probably one of the most lucrative begging spots in all of London. Like many

¹⁶⁷ On Place and Belonging, see: Snell, Keith D. M. *Parish and Belonging: Community, Identity, and Welfare in England and Wales, 1700-1950*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006.

¹⁶⁸ SP 34/28/64A f. 108 (1711) Petition of John Coussins, maimed seaman, seeking to become an almsman of St. Peters Church.

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁰ SP 34/28/64B f.109 (1711) Statement of Support for Coussins from minister, churchwardens and overseers of the poor of St. Paul's Middlesex.

other petitioners, Coussins made use of events or elements in his life that were archetypical; a large family in poverty, a grievous injury while serving as a longstanding sailor in the Royal Navy, accompanied by an ever-present inference that he would support his family on his own, if only he could. John's petition intimated that he would be industrious if he could be, and that he was humble and deserving of mercy only through the charity of the monarch, another construction used by every other petitioner examined in this chapter. The plea to a monarch ideally disposed towards charity was a use of existing hierarchy and tradition in the pursuit of the common goal of all of these petitioners: *mercy*¹⁷¹, either in the form of clemency or poor relief.

However, not all petitioners pled for mercy or clemency, some actually petitioned the Crown in order to call attention to abuses of the system or to change the status quo, a few of which offer quite a formulaic departure from our previous examples. One unique and fascinating petition drawn up during this period was not penned by a scribe on behalf of a poor person, it was instead written by William Howell, a clerk in an almshouse in Oxfordshire, on behalf of all of the poor inhabitants of the house. Howell's petition asked for a Royally appointed `visitation` to the house, so that "our several complaints be Heard, and our Grievances redressed, according to your Majesties good pleasure."¹⁷² These grievances were all against the Master of the House, and in an attached document Howell details exactly how he had been abusing his position. The list totalled nine separate transgressions, most of which are chiefly concerned with

¹⁷¹ As a further note, Douglas Hay dealt with mercy and the law in: Thompson, E.P., ed. *Albion's Fatal Tree: Crime and Society in Eighteenth Century England*. London: Allen Lane, 1975. Chapter 1. Mercy was part and parcel of his explanation for how the system of English law worked, and how it was ideology.

¹⁷² PC 1/2/223 (1712 Aug 18). Petition of William Howell, clerk, teacher of grammar in the Ewelme Almshouse, and of the Poor Men of the house for their complaints against the Master to be heard.

abnormally high fees, and suspicious practices with the almshouse account books, such as presenting them only at the last minute to be signed. Howell also complains that the Master's stipend recently trebled while the pensions of the twelve poor inhabitants and his own did not rise by any comparable amount, and that the "Treasure" or revenue associated with the house was not kept under "diverse keys and wards"¹⁷³ as it should have been, but was instead kept by the Deputy Master in his chambers. Howell also complained that his pension was over a year in arrears, a personal but highly grievous offense given that he also taught grammar to the poor inhabitants.

Howell's diction and penmanship are impeccable (See Appendix A for the full petition), and his petition stands out as a rare (surviving) case of collective petitioning to the crown from within an almshouse or workhouse. It is unlikely that Howell himself was particularly poor, given that he was a man of letters and employed as a clerk and teacher, but even so his petition self-consciously moulds itself as one on behalf "of the poor men of the said House"¹⁷⁴ and it uses language to that effect. In this particular case the poor petitioners remain voiceless and the construction of identity inherent in the source was done on their behalf but largely without their personal input. Details of the grievances appear to largely center around what Howell has noticed, and we cannot know whether or not the alms men living in the house even feel the same way without access to any surviving records from the institution. However, the humble-yet aggrieved tone and the collective nature of the petition are still very significant; the petition casts the nameless Master of the House as the morally culpable and greedy Overseer of the

¹⁷³ *Ibid.* PC 1/2/223 (1712 Aug 18). *Petition of William Howell*. Attached list of complaints.

¹⁷⁴ PC 1/2/223 (1712 Aug 18). *Petition of William Howell*, clerk, teacher of grammar in the Ewelme Almshouse.

Poor, a powerful archetypal characterization which increasingly gains favour in newsprint and in Parliament during this period, who uses his power to abuse the deserving poor inhabitants of his almshouse. Just like the petitions of maimed seamen or worthy widows, or even contrite thieves, Howell's petition had to be consciously constructed using widely held perceptions and stereotypes of poverty and moral worth in order to achieve its purpose. It stands out from many others due to its exceptional clarity, but the essential process of a negotiated pauper identity being simultaneously constructed by both elites and paupers themselves remains a central characteristic of Howell's petition, as well as each other petition examined in this chapter.

It is challenging to uncover much more about William Howell beyond what we can learn from his petition. It bears repeating that one of the major enduring problems with petitions as primary sources is that reconstructing a wider context for them proves difficult, and this remains true for all of the petitions examined in this chapter. Howell's petition is unique because he wrote it himself, ostensibly on behalf of all of the 'poor inhabitants', whereas the rest of the examples were likely penned by a clerk or scribe for a small fee. While this does raise a methodological problem; namely, how these sources *can be* used when the context is lacking, their construction, especially the crucial life story details that they provide to the reader, the tone, methods and tropes that they employed, and the sympathy that they ultimately sought, are legitimate elements of these petitions which can inform our understanding of Augustan poverty. Finally, each of the petitions considered have shared several important characteristics which tell us a great deal about motivations and experiences of the poor.

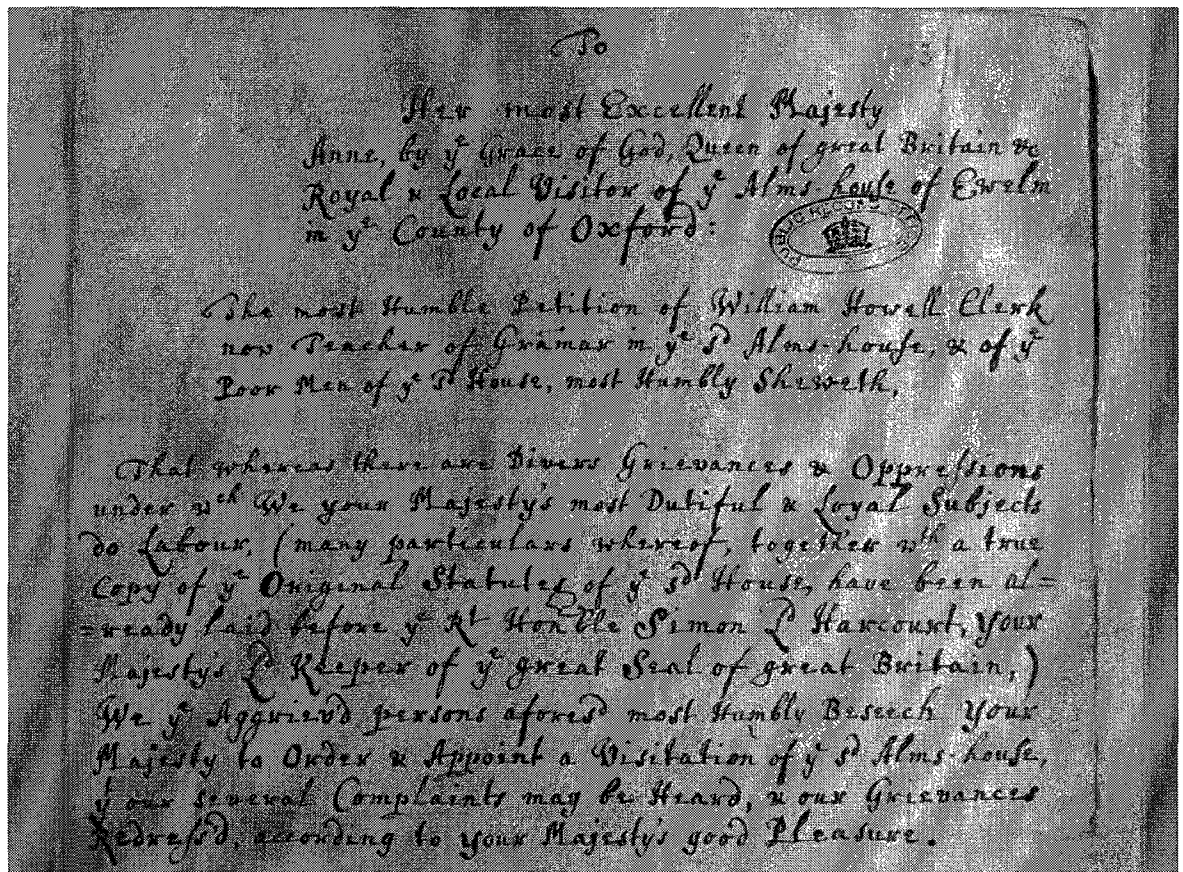


Figure 1: The Beginning of Howell's Petition

Three main points can summarize this chapter's findings. First, these petitions were all humble and contrite offerings to authority. Paupers self-consciously petitioned authorities within the state apparatus, including the monarch, as inferiors approaching a social superior for charitable consideration, which played directly into existing structures of deference, hierarchy, and gender within the early modern English system. Petitions were routinely ended with variations on the phrase "And Your Humble Petitioner shall ever pray", and often their authors "in all humility implore[ed]" the Queen "in your wisdom and mercy"¹⁷⁵ for compensation or consideration. Poor petitioners knew that the answer they received from the state could be "no" just as easily as it could be positive, and they sought to use every means possible to carefully craft their individual cases to

¹⁷⁵ SP 34/35/65 f. 78 (Anne) [Frances Spencer].

maximize their chances of success. Second, these petitions made self-conscious use of particularly effective archetypes of poverty: apologetic thieves with young children and thus deserving of clemency, loyal wounded veterans unable to support themselves or their families, grieving war widows seeking only transport home or due redress, and humble grammar teachers representing the oppressed. Tragic stories like that of John Coussins implied 'deservingness' through demonstration of a deep commitment to the crown and state (twenty years of naval service), a sense of sacrifices made or uncontrollable circumstances (losing a leg), as well as the needs of kin. Real or not, these types of stories became archetypal and ubiquitous when used in petitions, most likely because they evoked special consideration from the state, or paupers thought that they did. Finally, all of these petitions show a *negotiation of the accepted* with the English state. Who was considered deserving of relief, and who was determined to not be worthy of it, was a discretionary process which drew upon local, communal, and traditional definitions of poverty and morality which petitions like Howell's built upon and *used* to great effect. The Early Modern English state was inundated with petitions during the Reign of Anne, and each one authored by, or on behalf of, a pauper who almost certainly used the strategies detailed herein in order to press their own case for mercy; and this mercy (whether granted or withheld) remained the central linchpin of poverty relief, and the negotiated identities of the poor, well into the 19th century.

**Chapter 4 – Parliament and Poverty: The effects of Legislation, Policy,
and a ‘Discretionary Calculus of Eligibility’ on the Wider Search for
Stability in the Augustan World.**



Figure 2: Photo of the Cover Art from a Manuscript edition of Sir William Petty's "Political Economy", National Archives At Kew: SP 9, f. 1. Depicted is King Charles II.

After the Glorious Revolution and continuing into the reigns of Anne and her successors, both Houses of Parliament addressed the ‘poor question’ and the problems of social policy. Specifically, problems of poverty, vagrancy, moral reformation and dearth, ancient responsibilities which acquired a new political significance, in turn prompting Parliament to engage with problems of social policy in a sustained fashion that had not been seen since the enactment of the Elizabethan poor statutes. Paul Slack aptly titles this period “Parliament’s Reformation”, and for him, the contemporary question was whether or not successive, elected, and highly fractious Parliaments after 1688 *could* fare any better with relieving, controlling, and ‘improving’ the poor than the monarchs or godly authorities who had preceded them.¹⁷⁶ Accounts of debates over policy and legislation during the period between 1694 and 1704 indicate that Parliament certainly tried; both houses debated changing the laws thirteen different times in this period, but still “the poor law of Elizabeth was not replaced by the poor law of Anne.”¹⁷⁷ Moreover, during the general period covered by this thesis (1689 to 1723), Parliament considered, changed, and ultimately rejected over forty additional pieces of legislation specifically concerned with poverty and social policy.¹⁷⁸ Successful social policy enactments for the entire eighteenth century amounted to over two hundred total bills, and most peculiarly of all: they were introduced into the Houses by private MPs or Lords, not by ministers of

¹⁷⁶ Slack, Paul. *From Reformation to Improvement: Public Welfare in Early Modern England*. New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999. p. 100.

¹⁷⁷ *Ibid.* p. 117.

¹⁷⁸ Connors, Richard. “The Nature of Stability in the Augustan Age” in Jones, Clyve, ed. *British Politics in the Age of Holmes*. (Oxford, Blackwells, 2009). p. 37.

the government, suggesting that the groundswell of interest in social policy reforms did not originate with the executive.¹⁷⁹

The cast and character of social policy, as well as parliament's involvement with it, is particularly unique because no wide ranging reforms successfully made it through both the House of Commons and the House of Lords until 1723, when Knatchbull's Workhouse Test Act was successfully enacted. Richard Connors advances the thesis that until the Rage of Party had effectively ended and the whiggish, Walpolean political stability had arrived,¹⁸⁰ such omnibus legislation was effectively impossible because of the superheated political climate, as well as the effective criticisms levied by contemporary opponents of moral and workhouse reform.¹⁸¹ This chapter will examine and develop that contention using conceptual tools provided by authors such as Douglas Hay, Peter King, Joanna Innes, and Paul Slack. In particular however, it will examine Steve Hindle's concept of a "discretionary calculus of eligibility" that governed the allocation and character of poor relief, and this chapter will argue that it can be equally applied to conceptions of poverty held to by parliamentarians. Several individuals and pieces of legislation will then be considered in turn. By drawing from the parliamentary diaries of Sir Richard Cocks and, to a lesser extent, Sir Edward Knatchbull, and by

¹⁷⁹ Innes, Joanna. "Parliament and the Shaping of Eighteenth-Century English Social Policy." *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, Fifth Series, Vol. 40 (1990), p. 63, and for a more specific study of the local context, and its effect on general legislation, see: Handley, Stuart. "Provincial Influence on General Legislation: The Case of Lancashire, 1689-1731." *Parliamentary History*, 16 (1997), p. 171-84.

¹⁸⁰ Plumb, J.H. *The Growth of Political Stability in England, 1675-1725*. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1967.

¹⁸¹ Connors draws upon Slack, Innes, and Sydney and Beatrice Webb to this effect, see "The Nature of Stability in the Augustan Age" p. 39. Slack in particular developed the effective nature of "intellectual criticisms", *Reformation to Improvement*, p. 119. I have discussed the vocal and printed criticisms of some opponents in Chapter 2: Mandeville and Defoe, both strident opponents of workhouses and omnibus legislation during this period.

examining the particular contexts surrounding the failure of Humphrey Mackworth's 1704 omnibus poor law legislation as well as the success of Knatchbull's Workhouse Act in the early 1720s, this chapter will explain the effects of poverty and social policy, as understood by MPs and by Parliament, on the pursuit of wider political and social stability in England.

This pursuit of stability would often be found enshrined in law, enacted by Parliaments that were deeply concerned with issues of dependence, relief, morality, and social control. In *Albion's Fatal Tree*, Douglas Hay argues that the English legal system was inherently linked to these ideas through its use of majesty, judicial discretion (justice), and mercy.¹⁸² Hay's primary contention was that English Law was ideology, and that it was "critically important in maintaining bonds of obedience and deference, in legitimizing the status quo, in constantly recreating the structure of authority which arose from property and in turn protected its interests."¹⁸³ The Law existed to protect and to reinforce the current social structure, and through its role as the primary and highest authority within the post-1688 state, it became a self-reinforcing entity which enshrined certain concepts of property and morality at the center of English life. However, those who propagated, interpreted and adjudicated the laws also held a unique sway over their effects; an awesome authority both temporal and moral in structure, which was distilled as the power of the pardon. Justices of the Peace routinely pardoned or mitigated the sentences of offenders they deemed deserving, in fact "latitude in the direction of mercy caused some critics to complain that many justices... judged cases: 'frequently from

¹⁸² Hay, Douglas, Thompson, E.P. eds, et al. *Albion's Fatal Tree: Crime and Society in Eighteenth-Century England*. New York: Pantheon Books, 1975. p. 26.

¹⁸³ *Ibid.* p. 25.

benevolent views improperly indulged”, or “‘partly or entirely from their own unauthorized ideas of equity.’”¹⁸⁴ The pardon also allowed the bench to recognize poverty as an excuse when the law did not, in effect accepting ‘claims of class’ and incorporating discretion directly into social relations between inferiors and their betters.

Discretion then, was the primary vehicle for the display of moral censure, and for the maintenance of deference and the social divide, both in the courtroom *and* by extension the parish vestry.¹⁸⁵ Contemporaries in Parliament appreciated this discretionary process and moved to maintain it as a central aspect of poor relief, either through tabling or blocking many centralizing pieces of legislation like Mackworth’s 1704 bill, or by carefully allocating new powers of incorporation to the localities themselves in 1723. For Peter King, discretion was more than just an important element of the English system of Law; instead it became in effect the sum totality of how the Law operated. King aims to fill out the ‘partial picture’¹⁸⁶ provided by Hay, who focused mainly on the law as used and understood by the handful of elites who wielded it as Justices and MPs. In his 1984 article “Decision-makers and Decision Making”, King argues that a substantial set of additional participants exercised discretion within the legal system, including “the prosecutor, the witnesses, the accused’s neighbours, the parish officials, the magistrates as committing officers or as summary court, the grand jury, the petty jury, the trial judges or quarter sessions bench, the department of the

¹⁸⁴ *Ibid.* p. 40.

¹⁸⁵ Peter King actually argues for this assertion too, see “Decision-Makers and Decision-Making in the English Criminal Law”, p. 55, also see his book: *Crime, Justice, and Discretion in England, 1740-1820*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000.

¹⁸⁶ King, Peter. “Decision-Makers and Decision-Making in the English Criminal Law, 1750-1800.” *The Historical Journal*, Vol. 27, No. 1 (Mar., 1984), p. 26.

secretary of state and the king.”¹⁸⁷ Any number of these participants could strongly affect the outcomes of legal proceedings, making them categorically communal and social affairs, especially in the localities and on circuit. Intriguingly enough, King argues that the most important discretionary powers lay with the victim of a crime themselves; the decision of whether or not to prosecute was almost always theirs to make in cases of property crime.

King concludes that English law, more specifically criminal law, was essentially a “multi-use right”¹⁸⁸ held by English men and women to varying degrees based on their placement within the system; as jury members, plaintiffs, and neighbours. Moreover, when summarizing the characteristics which determined the exercise of discretion and mercy in the courts, King’s list contains, to a letter, all of the important characteristics of petitions examined in the previous chapter: youth or age, good character and conduct, ‘prospects of employment or reform’, the financial needs of family, the possibility of innocence, ‘the nature and surrounding circumstances of the crime’, and the respectability of the defendant’s background.¹⁸⁹ In essence the legal system conformed to and reflected the moral and social expectations of all the participants, and the aspirants and defendants within the system knowingly did the same. Interaction with the law was a regular facet of life in early modern England; it would reach out to shape lives from as far away as Whitehall, and from as close as the local church or meeting hall.

In *On the Parish*? Steve Hindle is explicitly concerned with the latter location and with the social weight of dependence, deference, and good behaviour by paupers in

¹⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁸ King, Peter. “Decision-Makers and Decision-Making in the English Criminal Law, 1750-1800.” p. 53.

¹⁸⁹ King, Peter. “Decision-Makers and Decision-Making in the English Criminal Law, 1750-1800.” p. 56.

the localities. Hindle called the mental criteria by which poor relief was allocated or withheld a “Discretionary Calculus of Eligibility”¹⁹⁰ which was applied by Overseers of the Poor and by local notables in the parish vestry. He takes his cue from a Justice of the Peace, Michael Dalton, in the early seventeenth century, whose criteria was widely followed by successive generations of JPs. Dalton stated that ‘poore by impotency and defect’ as well as ‘poore by casualtie’ (dearth, life-cycle, and injury or accident) were both worthy of parish relief of some kind, either a dole or the allocation of work. However, the ‘thriftlesse poore’, those who drank or refused to work, were to receive no relief of any kind, either inside or out of a workhouse.¹⁹¹ This calculus was particularly striking for Hindle, and he goes on to argue that “among the canons of social respectability to which pensioners were expected to conform were church attendance, industriousness, sobriety, deference, and the duties of parenthood.”¹⁹² In the context of this thesis, those responsibilities seem rather familiar, because we have seen them repeated in contemporary pamphlets and in petitions, authored by people from across the social spectrum. If a given claimant on parish relief did not meet those criteria, they could be removed, or their pension reduced or taken away altogether, and although Hindle finds that this punishment was not exercised particularly frequently by Justices of the Peace, he does note that it was effective when it was invoked, and that it was explicitly linked to notions of exemplary punishment.¹⁹³

If a discretionary set of criteria determined eligibility for relief, what prompted paupers to seek it, and to defend it by appealing against local Overseers, beyond the

¹⁹⁰ Hindle, Steve. *On the Parish? The Micro-Politics of Poor Relief in Rural England*. p. 379.

¹⁹¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁹² *Ibid.* p. 380.

¹⁹³ *Ibid.* p. 397.

realities of their material concerns? Hindle looked to Paul Slack and volumes like *Chronicling Poverty* for an answer, and the consensus among social historians appears to be that ‘a sense of entitlement’ to customary relief, especially when old or sick, dominated the justifications of paupers for relief.¹⁹⁴ However, Hindle points out that this question of a ‘right’ to poor relief in the existing literature involves some “slightly fuzzy thinking”¹⁹⁵, and no clear indication of whether it comes from a moral, legal, or intellectual basis. If any such ‘right’ did exist it would certainly have had to derive from all three strands, but the term ‘right to relief’ is largely inaccurate. Instead, it seems more appropriate to suggest that the English legal system was predisposed towards relieving the poor *as was customary* locally, and that discretion at all levels of the process as well as the comportment of the poor towards the machinery of relief and those responsible for it played critical roles in its final disbursement or retraction.¹⁹⁶

Furthermore, the next natural question that follows from this is whether or not this “discretionary calculus” is also an accurate interpretation of how parliamentarians and elites at the center of English politics and social policy viewed the process of poor relief in the localities. Historians generally agree that the two were linked, and that ‘general principles’ and ideas transmitted themselves back and forth from the localities to the center on these very questions.¹⁹⁷ Joanna Innes has looked at the social policy concerns of MPs and local officials in the eighteenth century, and she framed her

¹⁹⁴ See Hindle’s discussion, *On the Parish?* p. 400-402, or Tim Hitchcock, Peter King and Pamela Sharpe (eds.), *Chronicling Poverty*, Introduction, 10, or Pamela Sharpes’ chapter: “‘The bowels of compation’: A labouring family and the law, c.1790-1834’, p. 102. Slack also discusses this, *Poverty and Policy*, p. 192.

¹⁹⁵ Hindle, Steve. *On the Parish?* p. 402.

¹⁹⁶ Please see Wrightson’s take on this predisposition in Wrightson, Keith and Levine, David. *The Making of an Industrial Society: Whickham, 1560-1765*. Oxford, 1991. Chapter 2.

¹⁹⁷ Joanna Innes in particular makes that contention in her second footnote, in “Parliament and the Shaping of Eighteenth-Century English Social Policy.” *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, Fifth Series, Vol. 40 (1990), p. 64.

approach as such: “Why should local officeholders not being harassed by civil servants have taken the trouble to implement new laws? Often they did so, surely, because they shared the concerns that had prompted Parliament to pass them in the first place.”¹⁹⁸ It also logically follows that Parliament would be generally resistant to any redefinition of local discretion and authority with respect to poor relief, because they were the same men who had to exercise that discretion in their own counties, or they would be in touch with those who did exercise it.

This general resistance to any centralizing of parish authority appears to be the common downfall of all failed attempts at consolidation of the Poor Laws in the eighteenth century, and the key to determining why a select few bills *did* pass. To Innes, the various attempts in the eighteenth century, including Mackworth’s 1704 Bill, all anticipated the 1834 reforms with suggestions to centralize authority in Guardian’s Councils and larger districts. As a result “a complex mix of factors appear to have operated against these bills, but an important stumbling block was almost certainly the proposal to establish new kinds of local authority, a project fraught with troubling political implications, quite apart from its other disadvantages.”¹⁹⁹ This resistance to the centralization of power, alongside the abiding concern with the problems of poor relief, crime and vagrancy manifested as a series of smaller but no less powerful bills passed from 1699 to 1723. The Vagrant Removal Costs Act of 1700 placed the financial burden of doing so in the hands of the county, and not the parish rate-payer, and revised bills on criminal punishment (which led to the increasing use of transportation for clergyable, or non-capital, offences during the eighteenth century) and debt imprisonment also passed

¹⁹⁸ *Ibid.* p. 68.

¹⁹⁹ Innes, Joanna. “Parliament and the Shaping of Eighteenth-Century English Social Policy.” p. 70-71.

both Houses. The 1723 Workhouse Act appears to have enacted only a few substantive changes in the actual practice of poor relief, but it did strongly encourage county officials to incorporate workhouses, and within fifteen years it was rare to find a county in England without one.²⁰⁰

In summary, does this parliamentary and legal resistance to centralization, as well as the high level of political activity and interest in social policy and moral reforms, represent a set of attitudes and principals towards poverty that is consistent with Hindle's discretionary calculus? In the pamphlets examined in Chapter Two, the powerful categories of 'deserving' and 'undeserving' support this interpretation, but parliamentary attitudes were generally more complex and malleable, although many MPs would certainly have read and considered the arguments advanced in the pamphlets discussed. Paul Langford has considered this tendency towards voluminous local legislation and the assiduous avoidance of general reforms for the entirety of the eighteenth century, and from the perspective of the propertied eighteenth century mind. In his Ford lectures, published as *Public Life and the Propertied Englishman*, Langford looked at two general themes in the legal and social debates of the middle and upper class elites on what to do for those without property who lived in poverty or on its edge: first, it was procedurally much easier to add new statutes specifically addressed to local circumstances than it was to revise old laws, which explains the rash of local acts incorporating workhouses and amalgamating urban or town parishes after Bristol's early incorporation in 1690s.²⁰¹ Second, and far more important for this study, he argued that

²⁰⁰ *Ibid.* p. 73, A more detailed comparison of Knatchbull's successful Act in 1723 vs. Mackworth's failure in 1704 will be offered later in this chapter.

²⁰¹ Langford, Paul. *Public Life and the Propertied Englishman: 1689-1798*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991. p. 157

as a rule, the general legislation that did pass both Houses offered new powers of control and consolidation to the localities which had already been successfully enacted elsewhere through local and private bills.²⁰² The net result was that large areas of the country ‘paradoxically’ became governed by the same principles of social policy *despite* the intense localism of the existing legislation. Langford labels this spread as a kind of “legislative contagion”, and notes that it created legal situations where Overseers controlled and administered to workhouses and poor relief in a way that was not at all consistent with Parliament’s reluctance to centralize.²⁰³

Although distinctly different in form, parliamentary discretion when dealing with issues of social policy appears very similar to the local calculus of eligibility in substance. Otherwise, every extant contemporary incentive, both legal and moral, would have pushed successive Parliaments from 1689 to 1723 to comprehensively reform and consolidate the poor laws. The refusal to do so stemmed from a two-fold moral judgement: on one hand parliamentarians judged the existing system of Justices, Overseers and parish vestrymen to be sufficient for the enforcement of the poor and settlement laws, on the other they judged poverty to be an undesirable condition for any deserving English citizen to abide in, and as such they set about attempting to both alleviate the plight of the deserving while improving the ‘parts’ of the undeserving.

Parliament pursued social policy in order to procure stability, and although ultimately the kind they sought from legislation affecting the poor was substantively

²⁰² *Ibid.* And the 1723 Workhouse Act is explicitly mentioned here as well.

²⁰³ *Ibid.* p. 158, in particular, Langford’s phrasing: “legislative contagion”, and his brief discussion of exemplary Acts like the Canterbury Workhouse Act of 1728, which served as a model for many other towns seeking incorporation afterwards..

different from J.H. Plumb's notion of stability²⁰⁴, contemporaries did not separate the social and political elements of English society so cleanly. For MPs and peers considering legislation in the eighteenth century, stability was maintenance of the social order, good government and law in the localities, and provision for projects of social and national improvement. They had to operate in the context of a comparatively large electorate; almost 5.5% of England's population²⁰⁵, as well as frequent elections after the Triennial Act of 1694.²⁰⁶ Moreover, until about 1713, Parliament's attention was almost wholly consumed with the prosecution of war against France, and sharp party divisions on almost every conceivable issue persisted even after Anne's death and the first Jacobite rebellion. In general, concerns about morality and poverty made their way into the House of Commons through individual schemes and petitions, private bills, or through the actions of a few MPs who "wore their piety on their sleeve."²⁰⁷ Submissions from the public also played a certain limited role in Parliament's involvement with social policy legislation, as schemes for everything, from the improvement of workhouses to a reduction in the price of coal for paupers, made their way into the House.²⁰⁸

²⁰⁴ Which ultimately boiled down to a political settlement of ruling, propertied oligarchs, a stable or shrinking electorate, fewer elections, a strong executive guiding a more complacent parliament, and shared economic and social interests between the middling sort and the rulers. See *The Growth of Political Stability: 1675-1725*, for him, Parliament is the key to political *instability*, p. 31.

²⁰⁵ Speck. *Stability and Strife*. Figures vary; 200,000 in 1701, 250,700 in 1715, and 'at least' 300,000 eligible by the reign of George I. p. 16.

²⁰⁶ 6 and 7 Will. & Mar. c. 2.

²⁰⁷ Hayton, D.W. ed. *The History of Parliament: The House of Commons 1690-1715, Vol. I – Introductory Survey, Appendices*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002. p. 318, Sir Humphrey Mackworth was included in this group, as was Sir Richard Cocks.

²⁰⁸ One particular example of this is SP 34/4/31A ff. 48-49 (May 18, 1704 c) *Scheme for regulating the price of coal...*, in which the author details how such a reduction would alleviate all paupers in cities, and rural cottages.

However, individual MPs in the House of Commons such as Sir Humphrey Mackworth, Sir Edward Knatchbull and Sir Richard Cocks remained the principle impetus for broad parliamentary reforms of the poor laws, or at least for their consideration. Mackworth's efforts bore the first legislative fruit in 1704, after two years of labour on it, beginning in 1702 when Parliament began to sit. However, although his omnibus bill carried through the Commons, it died quietly in the Lords after they considered it on February 16th 1705, but adjourned the session with the Bill still tabled. By contrast, Knatchbull's legislation in 1723 passed through both the Commons and the Lords smoothly with minimal debate, and his parliamentary diary scarcely makes any mention of it, other than to list the dates when he "moved for" the Bill to be brought in, and when it was amended and passed.²⁰⁹ The difference is stark, and detailed consideration of both bills will show that there are only a few substantive differences beyond their scope, as well as the means by which they entered and left Parliament. We may need to search for political causes to explain why Mackworth's Bill was never enacted, but Knatchbull's passed with scarcely a whimper. We will also consider the particular opinions of Sir Richard Cocks, whose parliamentary diary covers the years between 1698 and 1792. Cocks had very strong opinions on morality and the poor, and although he never distilled these opinions into legislation, his diary provides us with a first-hand account of the interrelations between MPs and social policy, as well as his views on paupers; in effect we can analyse Cocks' 'discretionary calculus of eligibility'

²⁰⁹ Newman, A.N. ed. *The Parliamentary Diary of Sir Edward Knatchbull 1722-1730*. London: Offices of the Royal Historical Society, 1963. p. 7, for bringing in the bill, which he moved for on Nov. 17, 1722, and then "the Poor Bill read a second time and I chose chairman." on Dec. 13th 1722 (p. 8). Knatchbull then "reported" the bill Jan 16th, 1723, and "consideration was put off till Monday" (p. 10). On Jan 21st, "some amendments were made and agreed to" and that is the end of Knatchbull's coverage of his own bill, p. 11.

in his diary, and we can reconstruct the same for Mackworth and Knatchbull through their biographies and their legislation. We will begin this process with Sir Humphrey Mackworth.

Sir Humphrey Mackworth was “a collection of apparent paradoxes”²¹⁰: Country Tory Industrialist, godly protector of the High Church, and a pious and charitable ‘swindler’, about whom “not one among his contemporaries could find a kind word.”²¹¹ His familial roots lay in Wales; and the Mackworths had a long history of Parliamentary service, as well as distinctly Republican and godly perspectives. Humphrey married into industrial wealth, and the majority of his time and energy over his life was dedicated to the expansion or protection of his mining concerns.²¹² However, when in Parliament Mackworth remained a loyal Country Tory; he opposed occasional conformity and was a solid supporter of High Church initiatives and Country principles, going as far as to scheme against Robert Harley and the Court Tory faction in the early sessions of 1704-5. Mackworth is best known to historians as a prolific pamphlet author, although none of them are strictly about social policy and he tends to inject long diatribes on the nature of providence into most of his work. Mackworth also stood out as the author and prime moving force behind a sustained attempt in the early eighteenth century to consolidate the poor laws, culminating in several bills before the Lords, and one infamous failure in 1704/5. Mackworth was deeply religious, and his public rhetoric and demeanour reflected his godly preoccupations, although shady stock lotteries and business practices

²¹⁰ Cruickshanks, Handley, Hayton, eds. *The History of Parliament: The House of Commons 1690-1715*, Vol. IV – Members G-N. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002. p. 724.

²¹¹ *Ibid.*

²¹² See the Oxford DNB article, by William P. Griffith, which was almost entirely taken up by Humphrey’s various Mining Company adventures and schemes. <http://www.oxforddnb.com.proxy.bib.uottawa.ca/view/article/17631>, My discussion of Mackworth’s larger concerns draws heavily on this entry.

likely soured those who looked too closely. He was a founding member of the Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge (SPCK), and he often mingled his business interests with charitable concerns; he established a charity school for the children of his mine workers at Neath, and in pamphlets he often called for investments because one fortieth of his profits would be directed to establishing workhouses and a hospital. “Mackworth saw no incongruity in the juxtaposition of philanthropy and profit”²¹³ and these views carried into his parliamentary career.

In Parliament Mackworth’s chief concerns were social policy reform and the defence of his own mining operations. Mackworth began his legislative work on poverty in November of 1702, when he chaired two committees of the whole House to look at ‘the most effectual ways for setting the poor on work.’²¹⁴ He was subsequently ordered to prepare a bill reducing all existing statutes on poverty into one piece of legislation; the first of many attempts at consolidation that he would pursue. The Bill foundered in the Commons, and Mackworth decided to reintroduce it himself on December 20th 1703, and again the bill got killed on the Commons floor. Mackworth was meanwhile garnering many political enemies in the Court Tory and Whig parties, mainly due to his militant and vocal High Church stance on the occasional conformity of dissenters, and on the right of ‘Free Parliaments’ unencumbered by meddling from the House of Lords or the Executive.²¹⁵ During 1704/5, Mackworth’s efforts on the Poor Bill came to a

²¹³ Cruickshanks, Handley, Hayton, eds. *The House of Commons 1690-1715, Vol. IV – Members G-N*. p. 725/6.

²¹⁴ Thomas, Peter David Garner. *The House of Commons in the Eighteenth Century*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1971. pp. 264-281.

²¹⁵ See his Pamphlets on the subject: “Free parliaments: or, a vindication of the fundamental right of the Commons of England in Parliament assembled, ...” London, 1704, or his defence of the Occasional Conformity Bill, and the Subsequent Tack in future Parliaments: “Peace at home: or, a vindication of the

head. One of his previous bills was reprinted and circulated in London, and with backing from the SPCK, Mackworth brought the bill into Parliament himself on November 2nd 1704. The bill passed the Commons this time, but failed in the Lords, in no small part due to Mackworth's many enemies, including Daniel Defoe, who savaged workhouses in *Giving Alms no Charity* and fired cannon blasts at Mackworth from the *Review*. The bill only managed to get as far as the Lords because of broad social support from High Churchmen who also believed in notions of social obligation to the poor, and the bill in effect became a 'climax'²¹⁶ of a decade or so of pamphleteering and efforts by both dissenters and Anglicans alike to push widespread social reform through the parliamentary system. Building upon our understanding of the contemporary pamphlet discussions²¹⁷ and polemical arguments, the connection between the printed discourse and this legislation is now clear: the Reformation of Manners movement and the SPCK backed the bill. However, it appears Mackworth's own personality and proclivities got in the way of his legislation, and disinclined Whigs to vote for it. Moreover, a story also apparently circulated among contemporaries: that when the Lords considered the bill, Lord Sunderland spoke against it, saying 'it was not fit to be passed because Sir Humphrey Mackworth was the author of it, and accordingly their lordships rejected it.'²¹⁸ Mackworth would try to reintroduce the bill several more times before he lost a re-election in 1708; in fact, he personally brought the bill in twice, first on November 14, 1705, and then once more on February 13, 1707. These legislative initiatives were *again*

proceedings of the Honourable the House of Commons, on the Bill for preventing danger from occasional conformity..." 3rd ed. London, 1703.

²¹⁶ Terminology from Cruickshanks, Handley, Hayton, eds. *The House of Commons 1690-1715, Vol. IV – Members G-N*. p. 729.

²¹⁷ See Chapter 2, particularly the discussion inspired by *Stilling The Grumbling Hive*, as well as the first (dissenting) school of pamphlet authors.

²¹⁸ *Ibid.* And without the debates it is impossible to tell whether or not this was actually the case.

killed in the House of Lords. Mackworth's attempts at policy reform had consistently and miserably failed, and he had to turn his attention to protecting his mining interests and deflecting attention from his shady business dealings, against the wrath of competitors, and from the prying eyes of Parliament.

Several important characteristics of Mackworth's tenure in Parliament lend credence to recent arguments concerning the nature of poor relief, parliament, and stability in this period, and the resulting inability to produce meaningful changes in national social policy.²¹⁹ First and foremost was Mackworth's personal and political character: a 'hot' Tory of largely country interests, overzealous and publicly pious, with financial interests and dealings that rapidly established him as corrupt. During a period of almost yearly elections and contests, as well as deep divisions by party on larger issues like conformity, the war with France, and Union with Scotland, Mackworth's peculiar character and vocal High Church opinions earned him far more enemies than friends, and his relentless pursuit of godly principles in tandem with personal gain likely jarred even the most complacent Court placemen in the Commons. However, the particularities of Mackworth's Bill, especially the version which made its way to the Lords in 1705, tell a separate story about Parliament's (or at least one segment of it) discretionary calculus. The bill can provide some insight into what changes in social policy were acceptable to the Commons even during the Rage of Party, and it can also be compared against Knatchbull's later Act in 1723, in effect providing some evidence about the character of reforms necessary to pass both houses.

²¹⁹ More appropriately a synthesis of Plumb's ideas of stability with Holmes' descriptions of the mercurial character of politics during the 'Rage' of party, as cited previously: Connors, Richard. "The Nature of Stability in the Augustan Age" in Jones, Clyde, ed. *British Politics in the Age of Holmes*.

On February 16th 1705, the House of Lords considered an ‘Act for the relief, employment, and settlement of the poor’, the stated objective of which was “to consolidate and amend the laws then in existence for the relief of the poor.”²²⁰ This bill was Mackworth’s successful offering in the Commons; the first of a series he would push through the lower house, and the one with the largest body of parliamentary and public support during a period preoccupied with improvement and the reformation of manners. The bill sought to rewrite the poor law provisions virtually from the ground up. The provisions which were read to the Lords began with a section about the office of Overseer of the Poor; what duties overseers had, how they were elected, and so forth. The bill also stated that in any given parish, all paupers on relief were required to wear “a badge in brass, or red or blue cloth, upon which is to be marked the letter P”²²¹ in order to prevent “idle, disorderly and sturdy beggars” from consuming parish relief. Other changes included that county Justices could rate parishes or even the entire county to pay money to poorer parishes with large populations of people on relief. In fact, the bill even appeared to call for consolidation of the rates paid in larger counties, in order to remove the direct burden of poor rates from smaller hamlets and villages inside these counties.²²² Another provision existed which allowed parish overseers to ‘unite’ and provide materials for work (or ‘out-relief’) from a common fund. The vast majority of the work associated with maintaining, employing and settling the poor would have remained with the overseers and the local Justices of the Peace, which the heaviest administrative burden falling on the JPs, who were tasked not only with rate adjustments

²²⁰ House of Lords Manuscripts, Volume VI (New Series). *The Manuscripts of the House of Lords, 1704-1706*. London: His Majesties Stationary Office, 1912. p. 273.

²²¹ Historical Manuscripts Commission [Hereafter H.M.C], Volume VI (New Series). *The Manuscripts of the House of Lords, 1704-1706*. London: His Majesties Stationary Office, 1912. p. 274.

²²² *Ibid.*

and legal recourse for petitioning paupers, but also with appointing assistants for overseers, managing the pricing and sale of goods produced by paupers, determining their wages, as well as disciplining overseers who ‘defraud the parish’ or who do not submit a yearly report.²²³

The bill also revisited and revised the settlement laws of 1662 and 1697 and the statutes on apprentices and ‘sturdy beggars’. The settlement laws were consolidated into three sets of provisions: determining where a pauper was legally settled or able to settle, how the parish could remove paupers illegally settled there, and separate rules for temporary work in other parishes like harvesting.²²⁴ Regarding apprentices, overseers could exercise almost unlimited control over apprenticeships of pauper children, including who they were indentured to and for how long. ‘Sturdy Beggars’ and ‘lewd women’ fared little better; Justices could commit any woman bearing a bastard to a house of correction, or fine and jail both the mother and ‘reputed father’ until they paid the fine for the child’s maintenance. ‘Sturdy Beggars’, otherwise known as gypsies, Egyptians, “idle persons using any subtle craft or unlawful games or pretending to have knowledge in physiognomy or palmistry”, fencers, ‘bear wards’, tinkers, minstrels, and those who ran away from home or avoided honest labour, were to be “whipped or sent to the nearest house of correction, and afterwards to be sent to where they were last

²²³ The list goes on. *Ibid.* p. 275, It appears that Justices were tasked with arbitrating / managing virtually every task related to poor provision that could have a county wide impact. There is some division between JPs and the quarter sessions, but only regularly in cases of Overseer fraud, which were mandated to go to the Quarter Sessions judges.

²²⁴ There has been considerable debate on the nature of these laws and their effects: See: Snell, Keith D. *M. Annals of the Labouring Poor: Social Change and Agrarian England, 1660-1900*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985, for one side of this debate, and for the other side, see Landau, Norma. “Who was subjected to the laws of settlement?: Procedure Under the Settlement Laws in Eighteenth-Century England”. *Agricultural History Review*, Vol. 43 (1995), pp. 139-59.

settled.”²²⁵ All told, Mackworth’s bill consolidated and would have repealed over twenty-five Acts, beginning with the Elizabethan system (43 Eliz. c. 1603) and moving right up to contemporary statutes on fraud in the textile industries.²²⁶ The bill touched on almost every aspect of poor relief in some fashion, it was comprehensive, massive, and it reflected parliamentary concerns about provision for paupers, but also about their ‘idleness and lewdness’, their excessive mobility, and about maintenance of the existing social order. The bill failed because it was simply too comprehensive, and because despite the popularity of many individual ideas that it contained, it would have enforced a national conduct towards poverty that would have radiated from the political center, and would therefore have had to be consistently regulated and maintained by it as well. The legislation did leave most of the concrete decisions about actual relief and settlement to the justices and overseers, but those provisions were not really functionally different from the system that already existed in parishes across the country since Elizabeth’s reign, and the Lords saw little of value in the remainder. Parliament’s calculus on social policy in effect mirrored the intense localism and discretion of the existing parish system, and MPs and Lords alike were wary of any legislation that sought to fundamentally change or undermine that.

Legislators also had to balance the needs of the localities with the demands of opinion and interest which emanated from the political center. The early eighteenth century witnessed the apex of the ‘reformation of manners’ movement, and the pressures of this segment of propertied public opinion exerted pressure on even a deeply fractured

²²⁵ H.M.C, Volume VI (New Series). *The Manuscripts of the House of Lords, 1704-1706*. p. 281, including the excellent definition of ‘sturdy beggars’.

²²⁶ First statute to be repealed: 14 Eliz. “An Act for the punishment of Vagabonds and for the relief of the poor”, although large portions of the act would have remained in force, the ‘Elizabethan system’ would have largely been replaced.

and politicised parliament for legislative reform. Some of this pressure was public and overt, the Society for the Reformation of Manners (SRM) routinely published ‘accounts’ extolling their local successes and prosecutions in towns in all three kingdoms for offences such as breaking the Sabbath, ‘profaneness’, swearing and excessive drinking.²²⁷ Some historians consider their influence to be a more militant aspect of a larger ‘critique of luxury’ that was prevalent during the late 17th and early 18th centuries.²²⁸ This influence could surface in parliament in rather odd ways and in interesting characters, as we have already seen with Humphrey Mackworth’s bill and his connections to the SPCK. Insightful here too is a study of Richard Cocks, whose parliamentary diary, which seems more autobiographical than legislatively inclined, provides a lively and highly personal account of his experiences in parliament from 1698 to 1702.

Richard Cocks was not particularly appreciated by his contemporaries, a characteristic we can also ascribe to Mackworth. Alternatively labelled ‘cockbrain’, ‘a whimsical crazed man’, or a ‘peevish elf’, Cocks was regarded as a crank that harboured “an obsessive animosity” towards his parliamentary opponents.²²⁹ Historian David Hayton considers Cocks to be a “perfect specimen”²³⁰ or ‘true picture’ of a Country

²²⁷ These accounts run over 200 pages routinely. The Fifth edition, 1701, was 203 pages long and signed by many “Lords Temporal and Spiritual” from Scotland, England, and Ireland. See: *An account of the Societies for Reformation of Manners, in England and Ireland. With a persuasive to ... be zealous and diligent in promoting the execution of the laws against profaneness and debauchery, ...* London : printed by J. Downing: D. Brown, 1701.

²²⁸ Robert Shoemaker argues this most eloquently, see his Chapter: “Reforming the City: The Reformation of Manners Campaign in London, 1690-1738,” in Davison, Lee, Hitchcock, Tim, Keirn, Tim, and Robert Brink Shoemaker, eds. *Stilling the Grumbling Hive: The Response to Social and Economic Problems in England, 1689-1750*. New York: St. Martin's, 1992. p. 101.

²²⁹ Hayton, D.W. ed. *The Parliamentary Diary of Sir Richard Cocks 1698-1702*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996. p. xiii.

²³⁰ Hayton, D.W. ed. *The Parliamentary Diary of Sir Richard Cocks 1698-1702*. p. xv, Hayton’s description of the ideals important in Cocks’ life and upbringing is stellar. Cocks was extremely conscious

Whig, whose political and personal ideologies blended so seamlessly that they were indistinguishable, and who championed ‘Revolution Principles’ with a fervour that alienated many of his contemporaries. Compounding this was a constant stream of ‘lapses in judgement’; speeches or rebuttals in Parliament where Cocks managed to annoy or alienate almost every faction and interest group simultaneously, as with his vitriolic rhetoric about “those unthinking creatures about court” who “keep great tables, have many attendants, liveries and other innumerable fineries”.²³¹ Cocks was ‘obsessed with the upkeep of morality’ both privately and publically, and his attendance and activities in Parliament bear this out. He was a regular member of committees for bills on “immorality”, all of which failed, and he, like Mackworth, subsequently re-introduced those bills himself in later parliamentary sessions. But Cocks’ most interesting ideas and views, especially on morality and poverty, were never properly revealed to the House of Commons. Instead, they remained in his diary, in the form of speeches not delivered and in musings about deficiencies of moral character and judgement.

Cocks parliamentary diary paints him as “the hero of his own story”, and contains more than enough material to determine his own personal ‘discretionary calculus’ with respect to poverty, deservingness and eligibility.²³² Cocks’ views on paupers were draconian (much like John Locke’s views) but also theological in nature (similar to John Bellers perhaps), and they centered on magistracy and legal control and

of his responsibilities as a propertied squire: a view contrasting “civic responsibility with governmental corruption”, emphasizing the duty of a man of property to “uphold virtue”. xiv, and xv.

²³¹ Re-Quoted from Cocks’ entry in: Cruickshanks, Handley, Hayton, eds. *The History of Parliament: The House of Commons 1690-1715, Vol. III –Members A-F*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002. p. 632.

²³² Hayton, D.W. ed. *The Parliamentary Diary of Sir Richard Cocks 1698-1702*. p. xii.

discipline of the poor. Paupers appeared only once directly in his diary entries, where he labels them “a burthen to the rich a charge and damage to the nation a scandal to the [Christ]ian religion...”²³³ and appears to consider the origins of great masses of paupers to be based on pricing and supply of corn, as well as wages and the inclination of many paupers to avoid work. At the center of his views on poverty was a requirement for the civil magistrates to impose discipline, “like a schoolmaster correct faults, punish idleness and instruct all under our care”.²³⁴ Cocks held a simplistic view of the causes of poverty, and advocated severe solutions; the poor existed in their present condition because of “the negligent ways of living of the poor families, their wakes, their frequ[ent hol]idays, their fiddlers, their debaucheries, their liberalities to their children, with no other intent [than to] become chargeable themselves.”²³⁵

Sir Richard’s solutions involved workhouses so inhospitable that paupers would anything not to be committed, frequent whippings or flogging, imprisonment, and transportation for vagrants. His language and proposed solutions are highly reminiscent of Locke’s Board of Trade proposals in 1697, especially the use of words such as “debauchery”; a term which seems to indicate a very particular view of poverty as an ill literally caused by those that suffered from it. In Sir Richard’s mind, all paupers appeared alike; ‘thriftlesse’²³⁶, indeed godless, bereft of the industrious nature necessary to personal gain, and deserving only of magisterial discipline and tight social controls. At best, his personal calculus exercised only slightly more discretion than a plague outbreak, but Cocks’ views on morality do serve to inform us about the most militant

²³³ Hayton, D.W. ed. *The Parliamentary Diary of Sir Richard Cocks 1698-1702*. p. 26.

²³⁴ *Ibid.* p. xxxi, but drawn from MS Eng. Hist. B. 209, fo. 39, Entries on Cocks span several folios, Hayton lists 39 for schoolmaster analogy, but also 29, 94 for Cocks views on religion.

²³⁵ *Ibid.* p. xxxii, again Bodlean materials: MS Eng. Hist. b. 210, fos. 58-60.

²³⁶ See Hindle’s quote of JP Michael Dalton earlier in this chapter, p. 5.

side of parliamentary opinion. Perhaps they also point to another element that explains why substantive social reform was so sparse during the Rage of Party; peculiar characters like Mackworth and Cocks espousing such ‘hot’ political convictions and ‘hot’ Protestantism caused many contemporaries to doubt the wisdom of adopting any national strategies put forward by them, instead Parliament between the years of 1689 and 1715 continued to rely on local discretion and local initiatives of varying intensity.

It must be said that in history; controversy breeds coverage. With political temperatures rapidly cooling and the rise of Robert Walpole as the premier manager of Parliament in the early 1720s, historical coverage of Sir Edward Knatchbull’s Workhouse Test Act has proven to lag far behind comparable bills like Mackworth’s.²³⁷ The act merits little more than a paragraph from Joanna Innes, and light references from other historians as a kind of bracketing piece of legislation; a marker which determines the end of an era of national concern with social policy. In a more substantive treatment of the act and its consequences, Paul Slack notes that the “demise of a consensual public virtue” by the 1720s meant that a variety of agents both private and public now acted to deliver social welfare and charity to the deserving, and that Parliament’s role in this sharply diminished as the “moral panic” abated.²³⁸ This diminution of widespread public concern meant that smaller interest groups and private investors or philanthropists moved in to provide relief.²³⁹ Knatchbull’s Workhouse Act was in many ways a reflection of this tendency; enabling officials from different parishes to ‘contract’ with

²³⁷ 9 Geo. I c. 7, which points to a Poor Relief Act passed in 1722, but which contains all of the listed provisions of Knatchbull’s Act, which likely means that they are one and the same, and that the dating is simply marred by the new to old calendar conversion. See: Innes, Joanna. “Parliament and the Shaping of Eighteenth-Century English Social Policy.” *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*. p. 73.

²³⁸ Slack, Paul. *From Reformation to Improvement*. p. 124.

²³⁹ For further coverage of this phenomenon, see: Andrew, Donna T. *Philanthropy and Police: London Charity in the 18th century*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989.

each other in order to set up a workhouse for both localities if they so chose, using their own money and reaping their own rewards or penalties. The act secured the wholehearted backing of the SPCK²⁴⁰, just like Mackworth's bill, and they continued to publish 'accounts' of 'the several workhouses lately erected', including one in 1725 which further popularized the workhouse as a remedy to poverty and as a deterrent to idle paupers.²⁴¹ The characteristics of workhouses erected or contracted for under the 1723 Act further drive home the primacy of local concerns in social legislation: the majority of the workhouses were erected at a parish level, with only few combinations of multiple parishes. Moreover a new principle of deterrence had emerged; the Workhouse Test as it was called, which was enacted in order to address concerns over local paupers refusing to enter a workhouse due to a preference for outdoor parish relief or through sheer unwillingness.²⁴²

Knatchbull's Act stressed local concerns and powers rather than central governance, exactly as Mackworth's bill had done, so aside from a shift in social consciousness towards workhouses in the 1720s and away from a 'moral panic' exemplified by the Society for the Reformation of Manners, only the political and personal contexts remain to explain why one act passed smoothly and the other failed repeatedly. Certainly the rather typical political character of Sir Edward himself contributed to the bill's smooth sailing; by 1722 he was a seasoned veteran of procedure

²⁴⁰ *Ibid.* p. 134.

²⁴¹ Anon. *An Account of Several Workhouses for Employing and Maintaining the Poor; Setting forth the rules by which they are governed, their great usefulness to the publick, And in particular, to the parishes where they are erected.* London, 1725.

²⁴² Slack, Paul. *From Reformation to Improvement.* p. 134.

in the Commons, and of the vagaries of parliamentarians.²⁴³ He had largely abandoned his Tory friends by the 1720s as well, preferring instead to side with Robert Walpole and the burgeoning Whig-Court interest. It is highly likely that Walpole's powerful presence in the Commons and Knatchbull's ties to him aided his bill in its passage through both committee hearings and the Commons. Knatchbull was also not included in any list of MPs still 'wearing their piety on their sleeves', his approach to politics seems eminently practical from any reading of his diary.²⁴⁴ Indeed, his parliamentary entries record no controversy over the 'poor bill' at all, noting only that some 'minor amendments' were made near the end of its consideration. The Act itself also seems ill-suited to controversy, its main provisions dealt with guidelines for combined parish efforts towards erecting a workhouse, and the only provision that was at all radical was the 'workhouse test':

(poor refusing to be lodged, &c are not entitled to relief) and in case any poor person or persons or any parish, town or township or place, shall refuse to be lodged, kept or maintained in such house or houses, such poor person or persons so refusing, shall ... not be entitled to ask or receive collection or relief from the churchwardens and overseers of the poor of the same parish, town or township.²⁴⁵

Tim Hitchcock examined the act in more detail than most in his unpublished PhD thesis, and in his chapter in *Stilling the Grumbling Hive* he repeats one of his conclusions; that in effect there was "no government policy or interest in workhouses"²⁴⁶ between 1703 and 1751. It is doubtful that neither Knatchbull's act nor Mackworth's unsuccessful bills

²⁴³ He entered Parliament first in 1702 as a Tory, largely disposed towards Harley and the Court interest. He lost a contest in 1715, but was re-elected for Kent again in 1722, by which time he was far more Whiggish, and a follower of Walpole. Discussion of Knatchbull's career and personality owes much to the Oxford DNB entry, see bibliographical reference.

²⁴⁴ Newman, A.N. ed. *The Parliamentary Diary of Sir Edward Knatchbull 1722-1730*. London: Offices of the Royal Historical Society, 1963.

²⁴⁵ 9 Geo. I c. 7, *Statutes at Large: Reign of Geo I*. Great Britain.

²⁴⁶ Tim Hitchcock's Chapter: "Paupers and Preachers: The SPCK and the Parochial Workhouse Movement," in Davison, Lee, Hitchcock, Tim, et al, eds. *Stilling the Grumbling Hive*. p. 146.

should fail to register at all in this survey of parliamentary interest, but there certainly was a decline in parliamentary and public *controversy* over issues of social policy, even if there was no slackening of interest; a phenomenon already well covered by Paul Slack. Parliament's time as the chief impetus for social policy was drawing to a close even as Sir Humphrey tried to pass his omnibus bill one last time in 1707, and by 1723 it is clear that local strategies of control and improvement had emerged as clear favourites over a more centralized national policy of reformation, however, these strategies were still accepted or discarded by Parliament. Knatchbull's own personal calculus of eligibility remains unclear and would be very difficult to reconstruct, but his Test Act is indicative of a specific parliamentary trend towards further localization and private charity, and it signalled a shift in contemporary attitudes towards remedies to poverty, if not the causes of it. Some paupers still did not deserve relief.

The 'Age of Improvement' then, remains the most accurate moniker for the period between 1689 and 1723, though its effects extended well beyond and into the Walpole and Pelham eras of British politics.²⁴⁷ Parliamentary responses to poverty during this period reflect and relate to public concerns; articulated in pamphlets or 'humbly shewn' in petitions. Popular participation in government and law proved ubiquitous during the 'Rage of Party' if it was not already so, and the effects of a wide franchise, frequent elections, and fractious parliaments can all be measured by the amount of attention to, but lack of success of, social policy legislation. Looking at the events of 1704, it appeared that the advent of political stability so insightfully described

²⁴⁷ For a treatment of a similar subject during the Pelham years, see Richard Connors: "'The Grand Inquest of the Nation': Parliamentary Committees and Social Policy in Mid-Eighteenth-Century England." *Parliamentary History*, Vol. 14, pt. 3 (1995), pp. 285-313.

by J.H. Plumb would have to wait almost two decades, and that social stability would have to find private and local interests to be its champions

Chapter 5: Conclusions

“Often social change is imperceptible to those living in its midst. It is like water oozing through a dam – at first a faint dampness, a spurt, the cracks multiply and either the dam crumbles or the pushing waters are sufficiently eased to create a new, if unstable, equilibrium.” –J.H. Plumb²⁴⁸

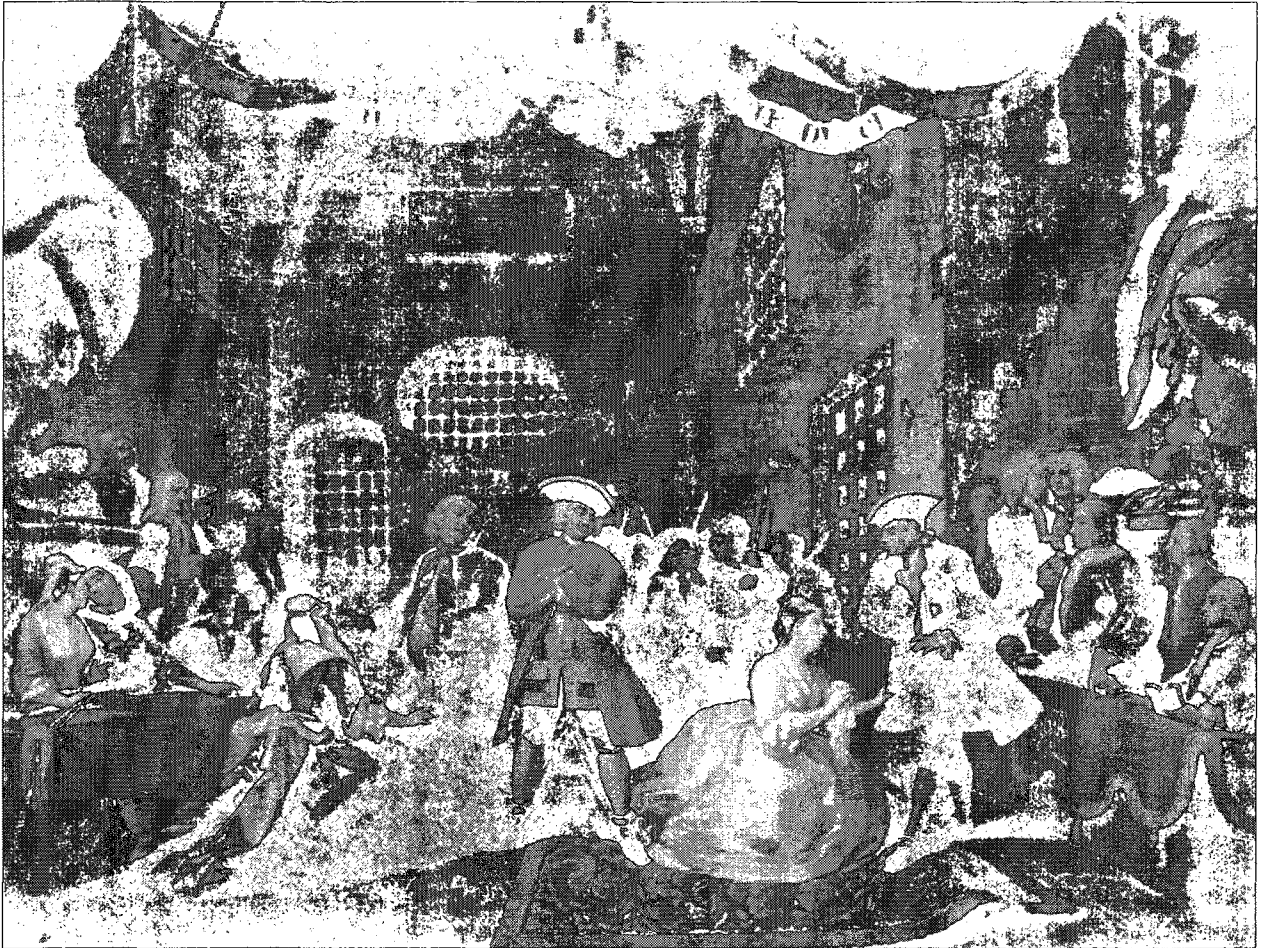


Figure 3: William Hogarth's "Beggar's Opera", painted in 1728. Popular and satirical interest in social inequality never really abated in the Eighteenth Century, as this wildly popular satirical play by John Gay would suggest.

²⁴⁸ Plumb, J.H. *In the Light of History*. London: Penguin Press, 1972. P. 102

The pressures of poverty between 1689 and 1723 were strong, steady, and very similar to water pushing against a dam, an edifice built during the Tudor period and routinely shored up throughout the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. Contemporaries of Locke, however, saw poverty in a different light; as a moral weakness, a pervasive social ill, a raging tide of beggars and thieves and vagabonds that warranted strict and harsh social control. To the vast majority of those concerned, paupers needed to be ‘improved’; set to work, settled in their parish, as their children were taught in charity schools, and poverty itself needed to be ‘vanquished’; partly out of Christian duties to one’s fellow man, partly out of a patrician *noblesse oblige*, and partly to strengthen the nation as a whole. Between 1689 and 1723, pamphleteers and parliamentarians saw cracks in the dam of social policy; their only barrier between a ‘great encrease’ of the poor, and civil society. Advocates of varying stripes proposed different types of repairs: centralization of parishes, harsh punishment of the poor, the incorporation of workhouses, and the establishment of charity schools. For almost everyone, the goal was the same: improve the poor to improve the nation. The methods they sought to employ, however, were distinctly different.

Thus debate raged amongst contemporaries about what to do and about which solution to choose. By 1723 historians know which solution England had chosen for the time being: prioritize local relief, and build workhouses in towns, parishes, or otherwise; erected to set the poor to work, to create some profit from their labour, and to improve their general condition. The cracks had been caulked, the dam strengthened, the poor had been controlled and were labouring in workhouses, allowing one contemporary to write triumphantly that wherever a workhouse was erected, there quickly followed “the

introducing among the Poor, habits of *Sobriety*, *Obedience*, and *Industry*, [which] will secure any parish from an Entail of *Poverty* and *Idleness* and lay such a Foundation for the future comfort of their Poor, as will make them useful to one another, and not a little beneficial to the Publick.”²⁴⁹

This thesis examined more than just the edifice of parochial relief and the political debates surrounding it. To understand poverty within the context of both continuity and change across all of England over a thirty year period, poverty itself: the economic, social, and moral pressures which pushed against every restriction and every law, must to be understood as contemporaries saw it. That all-important ‘conceptual polarity’²⁵⁰ of “deserving or undeserving” had to be accounted for, the distinct ‘discretionary calculus’²⁵¹ applied by every Overseer, parliamentarian and reformer had to be explained, and the voices of the poor themselves, often lost but always active in the negotiation of their own identity, also merited the fullest consideration. This thesis has argued that poverty was both an identity and a reality, it was the grim experience of daily life for paupers, it was worried about and controlled by patricians, and that its very essence was constructed by every neighbour, every county Justice, every unlicensed alehouse and every legislative effort. Poverty was merely ideas in abstract for some; a social problem with a solution comprised of some mixture of morality, Christian duty, social norms, and social policy, but it was reality for many more; a personal state of being and a mighty challenge for the godly simultaneously. Poverty was not class

²⁴⁹ *An Account of Several Workhouses for Employing and Maintaining the Poor; Setting forth the rules by which they are governed, their great usefulness to the publick, And in particular, to the parishes where they are erected.* London, 1725. p. vi.

²⁵⁰ Slack, Paul. *Poverty and Policy in Tudor and Stuart England.* New York: Longman, 1988. p. 25.

²⁵¹ See Steve Hindle. *On the Parish?* and subsequent discussion, Chapter 4.

bound²⁵², not yet, but in this period the seeds were sown, the workhouses were erected, and over the course of a century it would change from a symbol of the poor taught and improved to a symbol of the poor incarcerated and abused, eventually forced to ask for that second bowl of gruel. Poverty could be represented archetypically: the maimed soldier, the widow, the vagabond, the contrite thief, and these constructions were used by paupers themselves as part of their own strategies of survival. Poverty could also be generalised in the eyes of authority: as 'debauchery', a 'burthen to the rich', and as idleness and indolence.²⁵³

This thesis has considered two sides of poverty in Augustan England, but more particularly it has illuminated aspects of the construction of pauper identity and the resulting effects on social policy up to 1723. In so doing, it considered continuities in moral thought, argument, and policy towards poverty, as well as changes in the perceptions and politics which so profoundly affected the experiences of English men and women on the parish and on the margins. This dissertation has contended that poverty itself could not be studied outside of its all-important political context, and as a result a wider historiography examining the political history of England required consideration. The central concept of 'stability', so crucial to the arguments advanced in contemporary parliamentary debates on social policy, was explored, and the particular character of the Age of Anne, including its heady political climate during the 'Rage of Party', was explained. The first chapter then moved on to situate the poor within this

²⁵² See Thompson, E.P. particularly: 'Patrician society, Plebeian Culture.' *Journal of Social History*, 7:4 (1974), 382-405. The best distillation of Thompson's work on the development of class is: "Eighteenth-century English society: class struggle without class?" *Social History*, vol. 3, no. 2 (1978). p. 133-65.

²⁵³ "Restraint of their debauchery" Locke, *An Essay on the Poor*. in Locke, John. *Political Essays*. Mark Goldie, ed. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997. p. 184, "burthen to the rich" is Richard Cocks: Hayton, D.W. ed. *The Parliamentary Diary of Sir Richard Cocks*. p. 26.

early modern political world, drawing upon a range of social historians to do so, with an emphasis on the seminal works most germane to this study.²⁵⁴ We learned that poverty was both economically and morally defined by contemporaries, but that they also had more accurate and pressing ways of self-definition and social gradation.²⁵⁵ Pauper strategies of survival or ‘making shift’, were also explored, as were the overarching changes in economic conditions which so profoundly affected them during the eighteenth century, most importantly the transition in England towards an integrated market society. The first chapter ended with a discussion of the methodological dangers inherent in the use of pamphlets and petitions, the two major bodies of primary sources which chapters two and three would make use of to further explore poverty as an idea and an identity.

Chapter two surveyed the pamphlet literature on poverty and social policy published during the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries by authors such as Mathew Hale, Josiah Child, John Bellers, Daniel Defoe, John Locke, and Bernard Mandeville, a printed debate which revealed that their varying opinions on poverty and its remedies (or lack thereof) could be divided into three distinct ‘schools’ of opinion. These categorizations assisted in the examination of both the similarities and differences of motivation and method between authors. Care was taken to examine the use of language, the justifications, and the categorization of paupers without presupposing any supporting reality in the actual lives of the poor, because ultimately this chapter was dedicated more to discussing *ideas* of poverty, in print, legislation, and petitions, rather

²⁵⁴ In particular, the works of Paul Slack, Keith Wrightson, and Steve Hindle have proven to be the most germane.

²⁵⁵ Slack. See *Poverty and Policy*. p. 9.

than poverty as a social and economic reality. Several general trends emerged from this consideration of pamphlets on the poor. First, the majority of pamphlet authors advocated the use of workhouses and charity schools as the primary means of 'improving' the poor, with harsher methods of social control being the next most common solution. For the Bellers school in particular, combating poverty and reforming individual paupers was a Christian duty laid upon all of the 'better sorts' and they always made use of moral injunctions to this effect in their published work. Others saw the poor as a key facet of the body politic which could be improved in order to strengthen the nation as a whole, indeed they argued that thousands of pounds annually could be made, if only the poor could all be set to work productively. Some authors argued stridently against workhouses using mercantilist theories of labour, in effect saying that the work produced by the erection of a workhouse, which raised one pauper out of indolence and want, only further impoverished another elsewhere in the nation.

The ultimate effects of this debate were twofold: initially a 'moral panic'²⁵⁶ took hold in English society during the late seventeenth century, as typified by the activities of the Society for the Reformation of Manners, and the Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge. However as this panic abated, the sustained and cogent intellectual critiques offered by people like Defoe and Mandeville took their toll on the centralizing legislative efforts of reformers such as Humphrey Mackworth, an effect which in turn promoted the localized relief and legislation which parliament opted for in the early eighteenth century. Germane to this entire process was the *dialectic negotiation of pauper identity*, and while chapter two explored this negotiation at the top of the

²⁵⁶ See Slack for the origin of the term: *Reformation to Improvement*. p. 129.

social ladder, chapter three examined its construction from below, in pauper petitions and encounters with the machinery of the law.

Chapter three concerned itself with the archetypal self-representation of paupers in their petitions to authority. However it precluded this examination with a discussion of how the poor operated within the English legal system, as well as within their communities. Olwen Hufton's "Economy of Makeshifts" provided the thematic framework for the initial discussion, which then turned to ideas of neighbourliness, community, gender, and self-representation. The remainder of the chapter was dominated by primary evidence: pauper petitions found in state papers, which were individually considered within the framework of several general pauper archetypes. The case was made that these people were fully aware of the constructed representations that they were making use of in their petitions, and the nature of the act of petitioning itself was also considered, with a particular emphasis on the *plea for mercy* that all early modern petitions contained to some degree or another. By offering up their experiences in the most sympathetic way possible, widows, thieves, vagabonds and veterans pled for charity from the moral state, professed their own humble worth, and in turn contributed to the contemporary dichotomy between 'deserving' and 'undeserving'.

Several conclusions about petitioning and the identity of poverty were reached near the end of chapter three. It was argued that the evidence bore out three important observations. First, the self-representation of paupers to authority was *humble* and *contrite*, and petitioners played directly into existing structures of hierarchy, deference, and gender in order to maximize their chances of success. Second, petitions self-consciously made use of particularly effective archetypes of poverty, regardless of

whether or not the terms actually applied to the real life of the pauper petitioning. Women convicted of thievery were always young mothers of starving children, in the wrong place at the wrong time, caught in a moment of weakness. Soldiers and widows had always served and suffered for the crown long and faithfully. Each petitioner created, as best they could, a case for their own moral worth within their petition. Finally, petitions depicted a *negotiation of the accepted* with authority; determining who was deserving of relief, and who was not worthy of it, was a discretionary process which drew upon definitions of poverty and morality which were constructed by both elites and paupers. The chapter concluded by observing that mercy, and the discretion which it entailed in all its forms, be it legal, social, or individual, would remain the central linchpin of English social policy well into the nineteenth century.

The fourth chapter returned to high politics, at least in part, with a discussion of parliament's relationship with poverty during the early eighteenth century. This chapter advanced an argument using two important conceptual tools from other historians: the idea of 'political stability' from J.H. Plumb, and the 'discretionary calculus of eligibility' discussed by Steve Hindle. The argument was that poverty defined in parliamentary terms, and through legislation, was a political issue deeply linked to both the pursuit of stability during an age of political turmoil, and to local discretion in determining the eligibility of the poor. Parliament in effect preferred the discretionary calculus of the Overseers and vestrymen to that of their own, and legislation that sought to change or impede the primacy of parochial decision-making and systems of relief was blocked. This argument was then supported with several case studies of individual MPs: Richard Cocks, Humphrey Mackworth, and Edward Knatchbull, as well as some discussion on

the flight or failure of their legislative efforts. It was concluded that personality and politics did play a role in Mackworth's repeated failures in the House of Lords, but that the true deficiencies lay in the early emphasis on heavy centralization and the sheer scope of the bill itself, which included provisions and injunctions on almost all aspects of poor-relief, in effect endorsing a uniform national conduct towards poverty that the House of Lords was not willing to accept. Knatchbull's 1723 bill later relegated the decision to combine to the parishes and counties, and provided incentives for them to erect joint workhouses, power which had already been allocated to many parishes through private bills already.

Chapter four concluded that by 1723, the onset of a Walpolean stability and the primacy of local and private initiatives in the arena of social policy had effectively ended parliament's sustained engagement with the issue. However, this dearth of concern did not last very long²⁵⁷ and we must not confuse a lack of noise in the historical records with a lack of contemporary activity. As the effects of the 'Rage of Party' diminished and politics increasingly became a tightly managed network of patronage and place, as the activities of 'hot' party stalwarts and the incidence of incendiary election contests decreased, so too did debate over issues like social policy, after 1723 and the ensuing rise of workhouses in hundreds of parishes across England, it must have seemed as if the dam had been repaired, at least for a time.

With the benefits of hindsight, we can gaze backwards at the history of early modern England and explain it, compartmentalize it into periods and administrations,

²⁵⁷ See Richard Connors: "'The Grand Inquest of the Nation': Parliamentary Committees and Social Policy in Mid-Eighteenth-Century England." *Parliamentary History*, Vol. 14, pt. 3 (1995), pp. 285-313, for a discussion of parliament's engagement with social policy during the years of the Pelham administration.

divide it between crises and wars, and study any number of the massive array of important events, ideas or people that existed, happened, or lived within it. However while doing so we must be careful to avoid two very dangerous pitfalls. The first pitfall is ‘Whig’ history, most famously described by Herbert Butterfield²⁵⁸, which is history written anachronistically with the purpose of justifying the present; a pitfall that historians would extend to any attempt to create a sustained upward notion of ‘progress’ in history itself. The second major pitfall or danger follows closely on the heels of the first: the entire contemporary discourse on poverty (or any historical subject), its causes, solutions, and moral or economic properties, must be at least as important to us as *our* understanding of that discourse is *now*. In fact, if the eighteenth century mind was absent from an examination of poverty in the eighteenth century, then we would not really be discussing it historically. Although one can never truly capture exactly what a period or a person thought about, there is still value in looking through the glass, even if the view is dim.

This thesis proceeded on the premise that by understanding what people *thought* about something as powerful, pervasive, and amorphous as poverty, then what they *did* about it, at least in a historical context, could also be explained. Simply put: ideas and ideology, properly contextualized, help to explain history. But history is more than a compilation of concepts finely shaded by details, or experiences explained, it is also the recovery of voices and people, often those on the margins, whose stories were lost to us, and the delicate insertion of their lives and words back into the historical record. Thus, the relief of poverty could be a “charge a burthen to the rich” to Richard Cocks, an “Act

²⁵⁸ Butterfield, Herbert, Sir. *The Whig Interpretation of History*. 1931.

of Great Piety towards Almighty God”²⁵⁹ to Matthew Hale, and the “restraint of their debauchery”²⁶⁰ to John Locke. But poverty itself could also be conditions of “great grief and distress and already reduced to the utmost extremity”²⁶¹ to Barbara Fournier, or the hard life and sea injuries that rendered John Coussins unable to support his “great Charge of familie, who is in great poverty and Want.”²⁶² Poverty in early modern England was these things to each of these people, great or small, and yet it was simultaneously also the sum of their ideas and experiences, it was ideology, policy, politics, and law. It was lived experience and wishful thinking, religion and reality, and successive generations of Britons lived it, thought about it, and struggled with it, in a manner not all that alien to the efforts and concerns of today. After all, contemporaries knew all too well what Jesus had advised: “I tell you the truth, whatsoever you do for one of the least of my brothers, you do for me.”²⁶³

²⁵⁹ “A Discourse Touching Provision for the Poor.” London; Printed for William Shrowsbery, at the Bible in Duke-Lane, 1683. P. 1

²⁶⁰ Locke, John. ‘An Essay on the Poor Law’ PRO CO/388/5/86-95 ff. 232-49. *Political Essays*. p. 184

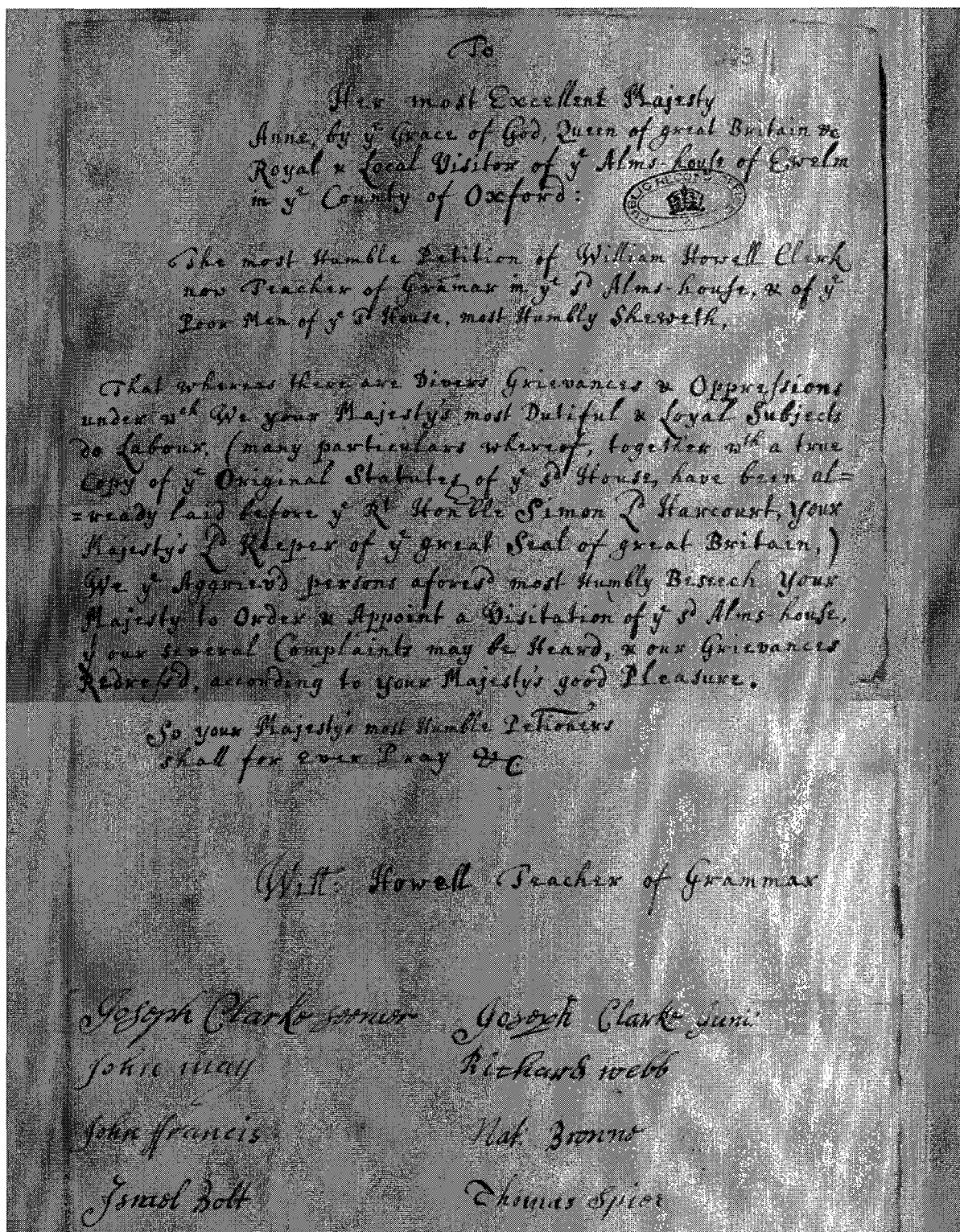
²⁶¹ SP 34/5/34 f. 64 (1704) Barbara Furnier, widow of Cornet John Furnier, to Secretary Hedges. Prays for Queen's charitable consideration...

²⁶² SP 34/28/64A f. 108 (1711) Petition of John Coussins, maimed seaman, seeking to become an almsman of St. Peters Church.

²⁶³ Matthew 25:40.

Appendix A: The Petition of William Howell, in Full:

PC 1/2/223 (1712 Aug 18). Petition of William Howell, clerk, teacher of grammar in the Ewelme Almshouse, and of the Poor Men of the house for their complaints against the



Bibliography:

Primary Sources:

1. National Archives at Kew Gardens:

a. Privy Council petitions:

PC 1/2/223 (1712 Aug 18). *Petition of William Howell, clerk, teacher of grammar in the Ewelme Almshouse, and of the Poor Men of the house for their complaints against the Master to be heard*

PC 1/1/31 1f (1696 July 16) *Petition of 'poor pensioners' to have a speedy payment of their pensions*

b. Other papers:

SP 9/2/1 (1673 Mar 25, Printed 1690, London) *MS Works of William Petty, 'Political Arithmetic' with etching of James Harrington*

2. State Papers of Anne (SP 34):

SP 34/4/31A ff. 48-49 (May 18, 1704 c) *Scheme for regulating the price of coal in london, suggesting that the Queen should supply coal at a moderate price for the benefit of the poor, with details on how the scheme could be funded.*

SP 34/4/106 f.160 (1704 Oct 20 latest date) *Petition of Henry Simmonds to Queen, begging an alms place at St. Peter, Middlesex, on account of his maiming during service....*

SP 34/5/15 and 15A ff. 31-32 (1704 dec?) *Petition of Joesph Clark, infirm, for place in hospital... and supporting paper from officials*

SP 34/5/34 f. 64 (1704) *Barbara Furnier, widow of Cornet John Furnier, to Secretary Hedges. Prays for Queen's charitable consideration...*

SP 34/5/85 f.158 (1704/5 feb 27 latest) *Petition of Joyce Bush, wife of Lieut Henry Bush... prays for charitable consideration...*

SP34/7/33 f. 73 (1705 or 1706) *Petition of Catherine, widow of Lieut Edward Arkinson, to queen. She has been in want since husband killed in action....*

SP/34/7/33 f.75 (Anne) *Further Petition of Katherine, widow of Lieut Edward Atkinson...*

SP 34/28/64A f. 108 (1711) *Petition of John Coussins, maimed seaman, seeking to become an almsman of St. Peters Church*

SP 34/28/64B f.109 (1711) *Statement of Support for Coussins from minister, churchwardens and overseers of the poor of St. Paul's Middlesex*

SP34/28/107 f. 189 (1710) *Petition to the queen from Ann Fittsharris, requesting that the pension granted to her father, the late Capt William Finch, be renewed due to present hardships*

SP 34/29/13 f. 16 (Dec 28 1710) *Petition to the queen from Dorothy Searle, widow of Capt Henry Searle, now no longer able to support herself, requesting a pension*

SP 34/32/61 f. 106 (July 15, 1712) *Letter to Mr. Lewis, Principal secretary to Lrd. Dartmouth, sec state, from Robert Legard, concerning Mrs. Brooks second request that... she be granted poor relief.*

SP 34/35/58 f.69 (Anne) *Petition of Jane Dennis, prisoner in Newgate, to queen. She has been convicted for stealing from Mr Biggs' shop, but prays for clemency*

SP 34/35/65 f. 78 (Anne) *Petition of Frances Spencer, prisoner in Newgate, to queen. She has been condemned to death for shoplifting, but prays for clemency with transportation*

SP 34/35/120 f. 149 (Anne) *Petition of Mary Bennett, prisoner in Newgate, to queen. She has been condemned to death for stealing, but prays for mercy*

SP 34/36/110 f. 150 (Anne) *Petition of Elizabeth Way to queen. She has been condemned with Anne Day, who stole some silk, and prays to be spared because she is pregnant*

3. British Library Manuscripts Collection and the Early English Books Online Database (17th C), as well as the Early English Collections (18th C).

Marquis of Lansdowne, ed. *The Collected Works of Sir William Petty*, 8 Volumes. Routledge Press, 1997.

“The Petty Papers” Add. MS 72850 to 72908f

72865 “Economic Tracts”

72866 “Recommendations to James II”

72897 (includes) “Provision for the Poore, On Bankruptcy, Work for Poore”

<http://eebo.chadwyck.com.proxy.bib.uottawa.ca/home>

<http://galenet.galegroup.com.proxy.bib.uottawa.ca/servlet/ECCO>

Bellers, John:

“Essays about the poor, manufactures, trade, plantations, & immorality”,
London: Printed and sold by T. Sowle ..., 1699. p. 1-26

“Proposals for raising a colledge of industry of all useful trades and husbandry”,
London: Printed and sold by T. Sowle ..., 1695. p. 1-24

Cary, John:

“An account of the proceedings of the Corporation of Bristol, in execution of the Act of Parliament for the better employing and maintaining the poor of that city.”
London : printed by F. Collins, and are to be sold by John Nutt near Stationers-Hall, 1700. p. 1-12

“An essay on the state of England in relation to its trade, its poor, and its taxes, for carrying on the present war against France.” Bristoll: Printed by W. Bonny for the author, and are to be sold ... by Sam. Crouch ... and Tim Goodwin ... also by Tho. Wall, and Rich. Gravett ..., 1695

Child, Sir Josiah:

“A Discourse about Trade, wherein the reduction of Interest of money to 4 L. Per centum, is recommended, Methods for Employment and Maintenance of the Poor are proposed...” London, printed by A. Sowle, 1689.

Cocks, Sir Richard:

“A charge given to the Grand-Jury of the county of Gloucester, at the midsummer-sessions, 1723. “London : printed: and sold by the booksellers of London and Westminster, 1722.

“The Church of England secur’d; the Toleration-Act enervated; and the dissenters ruin’d and undone. Dedicated to the Right Honourable the Earl of Nottingham.”

London : printed: and sold by the booksellers of London and Westminster, 1722.

Defoe, Daniel:

“A dialogue betwixt Whig and Tory, aliàs Williamite and Jacobite.” London: Printed in the year 1693.

“The age of wonders: To the tune of Chivy Chase.” London: 1710.

“A brief case of the distillers, and of the distilling trade in England, shewing how far it is the interest of England to encourage the said trade, as it is so considerable an advantage to the landed interest, to the trade and navigation, to the publick revenue, and to the employment of the poor...” London: 1726

Sir Matthew Hale:

“A Discourse Touching Provision for the Poor.” London; Printed for William Shrowsbery, at the Bible in Duke-Lane, 1683.

Sir Humphrey Mackworth:

“Down with the mug: or, reasons for suppressing the mug-houses; humbly offer’d to the consideration of the Parliament of Great-Britain. By Sir H. M.” London: 1717.

“A treatise concerning providence: by way of dialogue.” The second edition. London: 1704.

“A treatise concerning the divine authority of the scriptures, the divinity of our blessed Saviour, and the divine personality of the Holy Ghost...” The second edition. London: 1704.

“Free parliaments: or, a vindication of the fundamental right of the Commons of England in Parliament assembled, ...” London, 1704.

“Peace at home: or, a vindication of the proceedings of the Honourable the House of Commons, on the Bill for preventing danger from occasional conformity...” The third edition. London, 1703

The laws concerning the poor: or, a complete treatise of the common and statute law relating to the relief, settlement, punishment, &c. of the poor. ... The fourth edition, very much enlarged [London], 1720. Based on information from the **English Short Title Catalogue**. *Eighteenth Century Collections Online*. Gale Group.

An Account of Several Workhouses for Employing and Maintaining the Poor; Setting forth the rules by which they are governed, their great usefulness to the publick, And in particular, to the parishes where they are erected. London, 1725.

An Account of the Charity Schools Lately Erected in Great Britain and Ireland, With the Benefactions Thereto; and of the Methods whereby they were set up, and are governed. London, 1710.

An account of the Societies for Reformation of Manners, in England and Ireland. With a persuasive to ... be zealous and diligent in promoting the execution of the laws against prophaneness and debauchery, ... London : printed by J. Downing: and are to be sold by him, and D. Brown, 1701

Alcock, Thomas. *Observations of the Defects of the Poor Laws, and on the causes and consequences of the great increase and burden of the Poor, with a proposal for redressing these grievances, in a letter to a member of parliament.* London, 1752.

Allen, William. *The mistery of iniquity luckily discover’d. Or, a horrible plot and wicked contrivance against poor honest people of this nation. In a commical ...* London, 1708.

Bellers, John. *An essay for imploying the poor to profit, humbly dedicated and presented*

to the Lords and Commons of Great Britain, in Parliament assembled, by ... London, 1723.

Braddon, Laurence. *A corporation humbly propos'd, for relieving, reforming, and employing the poor. Herein there will be more private gain to the subscribers, and ...* London, 1720.

Defoe, Daniel. *Giving alms no charity, and employing the poor a grievance to the nation, being an essay upon this great question, whether work-houses, corporations, and houses of correction for employing the poor, ... are not mischievous to the nation, ...* London, 1704.

4. Additional Primary Sources:

Historical Manuscripts Commission (H.M.C.), Volume VI (New Series). *The Manuscripts of the House of Lords, 1704-1706*. London: His Majesties Stationary Office, 1912.

Defoe, Daniel. *Giving Alms no Charity and Employing the Poor A Grievance to the Nation, Being an Essay Upon this Great Question...* London, 1704.

King, Gregory. *The Earliest classics [facsimile reprints of] John Graunt, Natural and political observations made upon the bills of mortality, 1662 [and] G. King, Natural and political observations and conclusions ... with an introduction by Peter Laslett*. Farnborough UK: Gregg, 1973.

Locke, John. *Political Essays*. Mark Goldie, ed. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997.

Newman, A.N. ed. *The Parliamentary Diary of Sir Edward Knatchbull 1722-1730*. London: Offices of the Royal Historical Society, 1963.

Nicolls, Sir George. *A History of the English Poor Law in Connection with The State of the Country and the Condition of the People (1854)*. London: Frank Cass and Co, 1967. Reprint.

The London Journal. Issues: No. 161-168 (Saturday 25 August 1722 - Saturday 13 October 1722); No. 171 (Saturday 3 November 1722); No. 177 (Saturday 15 December 1722); No. 261 (Saturday 25 July 1724). 1720-1731. London: Printed for J. Roberts. Accessed through Eighteenth Century Journals Online.

Secondary Sources:

Ashcroft, Richard. "Revolution, Legitimacy, and Lockean liberalism" in Englehart, Stephen F. Moore, John Allphin, Jr. eds. *Three Beginnings: Revolution, Rights, and the Liberal State: Comparative Perspectives on the English, American, and French Revolutions*. Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1994. p. 141-62.

Andrew, Donna T. *Philanthropy and Police: London Charity in the 18th century*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989.

Beier, A. L. and Finlay, Roger A. P., eds. *London 1500-1700: The Making of the Metropolis*. London: Longman, 1986.

Birtles, Sara. "Common Land, Poor Relief and Enclosure: The Use of Manorial Resources in Fulfilling Parish Obligations, 1601–1834." *Past and Present*, Vol. 165 (1999); pp. 74-106.

Burt, Shelley. *Virtue Transformed: Political Argument in England, 1688-1740*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992.

Butlin, R. A. and H. S. A. Fox, eds. *Change in the Countryside: Essays on Rural England, 1500-1900*. London : Institute of British Geographers, 1979.

Butterfield, Herbert, Sir. *The Whig Interpretation of History*. London: W.W. Norton, 1931.

Clark, J.C.D. *English Society 1688-1832*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985.

Clark, Peter. "The 'Mother Gin' Controversy in the Early Eighteenth Century." *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 5th ser., 38 (1988), 63-84.

Clark, Peter and Paul Slack, eds. *English Towns in Transition 1500-1700*. London: Oxford University Press, 1976.

Cobbett, William, ed. *Cobbett's parliamentary history of England, from the Norman Conquest, in 1066 to the year, 1803: from which last-mentioned epoch it is continued downwards in the work entitled, "Cobbett's Parliamentary Debates" (Volume 8: 1722-1733)*. London (England): Printed by T.C. Hansard, 1811.

Colley, Linda. *Britons: Forging the Nation 1707-1837*. London: Yale University Press, 1992.

Connors, Richard. "The Nature of Stability in the Augustan Age" in Jones, Clyve, ed. *British Politics in the Age of Holmes*. Oxford: Blackwells, 2009. pp. 27-40.

Connors, Richard. “‘The Grand Inquest of the Nation’: Parliamentary Committees and Social Policy in Mid-Eighteenth-Century England.” *Parliamentary History*, Vol. 14, pt. 3 (1995), pp. 285-313

Connors, Richard. “Parliament and Poverty in Mid-Eighteenth Century England.” *Parliamentary History*, vol. 21, no. 2 (2002); pp. 207-231

Cressy, David. *Birth, Marriage and Death: Ritual, Religion, and the Life-Cycle in Tudor and Stuart England*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997.

Cruikshanks, Handley, Hayton, eds. *The History of Parliament: The House of Commons 1690-1715, Vol. I – Introductory Survey, Appendices*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002.

Cruikshanks, Handley, Hayton, eds. *The History of Parliament: The House of Commons 1690-1715, Vol. III – Members A-F*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002.

Cruikshanks, Handley, Hayton, eds. *The History of Parliament: The House of Commons 1690-1715, Vol. IV – Members G-N*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002.

Davison, Lee, Hitchcock, Tim, Keirn, Tim and Shoemaker, Robert, eds. *Stilling the Grumbling Hive: The Response to Social and Economic Problems in England, 1689-1750*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1992.

De Krey, Gary Stewart. *A Fractured Society: The Politics of London in the First Age of Party, 1688-1715*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985.

Downie, J.A. *Robert Harley and the Press: Propaganda and public opinion in the Age of Swift and Defoe*. London: Cambridge University Press, 1979.

Fideler, Paul A. *Social Welfare in Pre-Industrial England*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006.

Handley, Stuart. “Provincial Influence on General Legislation: The Case of Lancashire, 1689-1731.” *Parliamentary History*, 16 (1997), p. 171-84.

Harris, Tim. *Revolution: The Great Crisis of the British Monarchy, 1685-1720*. New York: Penguin Books, 2006.

Hay, Douglas, Thompspon, E.P. eds, et al. *Albion's Fatal Tree: Crime and Society in Eighteenth-Century England*. New York: Pantheon Books, 1975.

Hayton, David William. 'Constitutional experiments and political expediency, 1689-1725'. In Ellis, Steven G., 1950-; Barber, Sarah (ed.), *Conquest and Union: fashioning a British state, 1485-1725* (London & New York: Longman, 1995), 276-305

Hayton, David William. "Moral Reform and Country Politics in the Late Seventeenth-century House of Commons", *Past & Present*, vol. 128 (1990), 48-91

Hayton, David William (ed.). *The Parliamentary Diary of Sir Richard Cocks, 1698-1702*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996

Heal, Felicity. *Hospitality in Early Modern England*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990.

Herrup, Cynthia B. "Law and Morality in Seventeenth-Century England", *Past and Present*, No. 106 (Feb., 1985); pp. 102-123

Higgs, Edward. "The Rise of the Information State: the Development of the Central State Surveillance of the Citizen in England, 1500-2000," *Journal of Historical Sociology*, vol. 14, no. 2 (2001). pp. 175-197

Hindle, Steve. "The Shaming of Margaret Knowsley: Gossip, Gender, and the Experience of Authority in Early Modern England," *Continuity and Change*, vol. 9, 1994. p. 391-419

Hindle, Steve. *On the Parish? The Micro-Politics of Poor Relief in Rural England, 1550-1750*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2004.

Hindle, Steve. "Power, Poor Relief and Social Relationships in Holland Fen. C. 1600-1800," *Historical Journal*, vol. 41, no. 1 (1998): pp. 67-98

Hindle, Steve "'Without the cry of any neighbours': A Cumbrian family and the poor law authorities, c.1690-1730," Berry & Foyster (eds), *The Family in Early Modern England*. CUP, 2007.

Hitchcock, Tim, Peter King and Pamela Sharpe (eds.), *Chronicling Poverty: The Voices and Strategies of the English Poor 1640-1840*. Macmillan: Basingstoke, 1997.

Holmes, Geoffrey. *British Politics in the Age of Queen Anne*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1967.

Holmes, Geoffrey. "Gregory King and the Social Structure of Pre-Industrial England," *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 5th ser. Vol. 27 (1977): pp. 41-68

Holmes, Geoffrey. *The Trial of Doctor Sacherevell*. London: Eyre Methuen, 1973.

Horne, Thomas A. *The Social Thought of Bernard Mandeville: Virtue and Commerce in Eighteenth-Century England*. London: Macmillan Press, 1978.

Huften, Olwen. "Women without men: widows and spinsters in Britain and France in the eighteenth century." *Journal of Family History*, 9:4 (1984), p. 355-76.

Innes, Joanna. "Parliament and the Shaping of Eighteenth-Century English Social Policy," *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, Fifth Series, Vol. 40 (1990), pp. 63-92

Isaacs, Tina. "The Anglican hierarchy and the reformation of manners, 1688-1738." *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, 33 (1982), 391-411.

Israel, Jonathan Irvine, ed. *The Anglo-Dutch Moment: Essays on the Glorious Revolution and its world impact*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991.

Jardine, Lisa. *Going Dutch: How England plundered Holland's Glory*. London: Harper Press, 2008.

Jones, Clyve, ed. *Britain in the First Age of Party, 1680-1750: Essays Presented to Geoffrey Holmes*. Great Britain: Continuum International Publishing Group, 1987.

Jones, Clyve, ed. *British Politics in the Age of Holmes*. Forthcoming; Oxford, Blackwells, 2009.

Jones, Colin. "Olwen Huften's 'Poor', Richard Cobb's 'People', and the Notions of the *longue durée* in French Revolutionary Historiography," *Past and Present* (2006), Supplement 1. p. 178-203

Jones, Norman L and Woolf, Daniel, eds. *Local Identities in Late Medieval and Early Modern England*. New York: Palgrave, 2007.

Jordan, W.K. *Philanthropy in England 1480-1660: A Study of the Changing Pattern of English Social Aspirations*. London: Routledge Press, 2006.

Kermode, Jenny and Walker, Garthine, eds. *Women, Crime, and the Courts in Early Modern England*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1994.

King, Peter. *Crime, Justice, and Discretion in England, 1740-1820*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000.

King, Peter. "Decision-Makers and Decision-Making in the English Criminal Law, 1750-1800," *The Historical Journal*, Vol. 27, No. 1 (Mar., 1984), pp. 25-58.

Knights, Mark. *Representation and Misrepresentation in Later Stuart Britain: Partisanship and Political Culture*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005

Landau, Norma. "Who was subjected to the laws of settlement?: Procedure Under the Settlement Laws in Eighteenth-Century England". *Agricultural History Review*, Vol. 43 (1995), pp. 139-59.

Langford, Paul. *Public Life and the Propertied Englishman: 1689-1798*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991.

Lloyd, Sarah. "Cottage Conversations: Poverty and Manly Independence in Eighteenth Century England." *Past and Present*, Vol. 184 (2004): pp. 69-108

Muldrew, Craig. *The Economy of Obligation: The Culture of Credit and Social Relations in Early Modern England*. Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1998

Oxford Dictionary of National Biography.

<http://www.oxforddnb.com.proxy.bib.uottawa.ca>, accessed routinely. Entries for: Knatchbull, Defoe, Cary, Bellers, Mandeville, Cocks, Mackworth, Hale, et al.

Pincus, Steven C. A. "'Coffee politicians does create': coffeehouses and Restoration political culture," *Journal of Modern History*, 67 (1995), 807-34.

Pincus, Steven. "The Making of a Great Power? Universal Monarchy, Political Economy, and the Transformation of English Political Culture," *The European Legacy*, No. 5 (2000). P. 541

Plumb, J.H. *In the Light of History*. London: Penguin Press, 1972.

Plumb, J.H. *The Growth of Political Stability in England, 1675-1725*. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1967.

Rushton, Paul. "The Poor Law, the Parish and the Community in North East England 1660-1800." *Northern History*, Vol. 25 (1989): pp. 135-152

Sedgwick, Richard Romney. *The History of Parliament: The House of Commons, 1715-54*. 2 Vols. 1970.

Slack, Paul. *From Reformation to Improvement: Public Welfare in Early Modern England*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999

Slack, Paul. *The English Poor Law, 1531-1782*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995.

Slack, Paul. *Poverty and Policy in Tudor and Stuart England*. New York: Longman, 1988.

Slack, Paul, ed. *Rebellion, Popular Protest and the Social Order in Early Modern England*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984.

Snell, Keith D. M. *Annals of the Labouring Poor: Social Change and Agrarian England, 1660-1900*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985.

Snell, Keith D. M. *Parish and Belonging: Community, Identity, and Welfare in England and Wales, 1700-1950*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006.

Speck, W.A. *The Birth of Britain: A New Nation, 1700-1710*. Wiley-Blackwell: 1994.

Stone, Lawrence. "The New Eighteenth Century," in Stone, Lawrence, ed. *The Past and Present Revisited*. London; Routledge Press, 1987.

Taylor, James Stephen. "The Impact of Pauper Settlement, 1691–1834," *Past and Present*, Vol. 73 (1976): pp. 42-73.

Thomas, Peter David Garner. *The House of Commons in the Eighteenth Century*. Oxford, 1971.

Thompson, E.P. *Whigs and Hunters: The Origin of the Black Act*. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1977

Thompson, E.P., ed. *Albion's Fatal Tree: Crime and Society in Eighteenth Century England*, London: Allen Lane, 1975

Thompson, E.P. *The making of the English working class*. Harmondsworth, 1968.

Thompson, E.P. "Patrician society, Plebeian Culture," *Journal of Social History*, vol. 7, no. 4 (1974). p. 382-405.

Thompson, E.P. "Eighteenth-century English society: class struggle without class?" *Social History*, vol. 3, no. 2 (1978). p. 133-65.

Thompson, F.M.L., ed. *The Cambridge Social History of Britain, 1750-1950: Volume 1: Regions and Communities*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990.

Wales, T. "Poverty, Poor Relief and the Life-Cycle: Some Evidence from Eighteenth Century Norfolk." In Richard Smith, ed. *Land, Kinship and Life-Cycle*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002. pp. 351-404.

Winch, Donald. *Riches and Poverty: An Intellectual History of Political Economy in Britain, 1750-1834*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996.

Wootton, David, ed. *Political Writings of John Locke*. Mentor series, Penguin Press, 1993.

Wrightson, Keith. *Earthly Necessities: Economic Lives in early Modern Britain*. Boston: Yale University Press, 2002.

Wrightson, Keith. *English Society 1580-1680*. London: Routledge, 2003

Wrightson, Keith and Levine, David. *The making of an industrial Society: Whickham, 1560-1765*. Oxford, 1991.

Wrightson, Keith and David Levine. *Poverty and Piety in an English Village: Terling, 1525-1700*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995. Revised ed.