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The Queer Contact Zone: Empire and Military Masculinity in the Memoirs of Hannah Snell and Mary Anne Talbot, 1750-1810

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Abstract
The cross-dressed female soldier played a prominent role within Anglophone popular culture from the American Revolution through the Napoleonic Wars, appearing in ballads, comic operas, plays, and life writing. Feminist and queer analyses of these figures have largely been celebratory, framing historical military cross-dressers as working-class heroines or important examples of an emerging model of female masculinity. However, these interpretations have yet to acknowledge how these transgressive figures’ claims to subjectivity as representatives of the British military depend upon active participation in the imperial project. These female soldiers’ ability to perform masculinity is contingent upon a narrative and discursive investment in colonialism, violence, and racial hegemony. Using concepts from contemporary decolonial theory as a point of entry into eighteenth- and nineteenth-century popular culture, this article documents how the memoirs of two combat veterans--Hannah Snell and Mary Anne Talbot--serve as early examples of what Jasbir Puar and others describe as “homonationalism.” By repeatedly marking the difference between their own “queerness” and the strangeness of the cisgender women, slaves, and indigenous people they encounter, Snell and Talbot garner legitimacy within the dominant by aligning themselves with masculinity, patriotism, and imperialism. Re-examining these warriors’ self-proclaimed “surprising adventures” within their colonial context reveals an unsettling relationship between queer historicism and the history of imperialism.

Keywords: Mary Anne Talbot, Hannah Snell, queer, imperialism, female soldiers, masculinity, military memoir, homonationalism
In 2015 and 2016 the US and UK militaries finally opened all combat positions to women. Significant pockets of resistance to these reforms have already arisen in the US, especially regarding the US Marine Corps. The Marine Corps asked for an exemption from the Defense Department’s full integration policy.¹ Members of the US House of Representatives have also opposed the changes, proposing a bill to include women in the draft as a form of protest.² Representative Duncan Hunter suggested that Navy Secretary Ray Mabus’s support for opening Marine combat posts to women made him “a greater threat to the Marine Corps than ISIS.”³ Those in opposition to full integration cite varying reasons, but concerns about women’s physical strength, increases in sexual assault, and an erosion of unit cohesion arise repeatedly. Given these expressed doubts, one wonders how cross-dressed female soldiers, such as Hannah Snell and Mary Anne Talbot, successfully served in the British Army and Navy roughly 200-250 years earlier, when warfare was less mechanized and sexual violence was more tolerated than it is today. As Snell’s and Talbot’s memoirs demonstrate, soldiers, sailors, and marines of the long eighteenth century lived under cramped, harsh conditions without the contemporary military benefits, such as rest and recuperation, that soldiers have today. Despite these deprivations, Snell and Talbot thrived, skillfully performing their combat duties and earning the esteem of their colleagues.
In their memoirs, Hannah Snell and Mary Anne Talbot recount their participation in battles important to strengthening British imperial dominance during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. In “The Female Soldier; or, The Surprising Life and Adventures of Hannah Snell” (1750), Snell recounts her stalwart performance as a marine at Pondicherry, a 1748 siege integral to establishing British colonial control over Madras. Wounded, she allegedly removed shrapnel from her groin to avoid the detection of her sex and expulsion from the marines. She became a folk hero for her bravery, a status that led to her London stage show and memoir appearing in the summer of 1750. In “The Life and Surprising Adventures of Mary Anne Talbot” (1809), Talbot narrates her participation in two principal land and sea battles: the siege of Valenciennes (June-July 1793) and the Battle of the Glorious First of June (1794). The positions she held in the army and navy (drummer and “powder monkey” respectively) were typically reserved for boys but were also vital to operations.

Naval historian Suzanna Stark has documented that important discrepancies exist between Talbot’s published memoir, an earlier narrative published in the Times of 4 November 1799, and historical documents such as ship and hospital musters. It is important to remain mindful of these discrepancies. At the same time, I would argue that the sub-genre of life writing this article address—the adventure narrative—routinely embellishes and bends the truth in ways that would be unacceptable in the contemporary (auto)biography genre. Even Snell’s narrative, which has its basic facts corroborated, raises the occasional eyebrow. As Isaac Land suggests, these memoirs have an inherent
contradiction; they ask the reader to believe someone whose story is predicated upon perpetuating a “fraudulent identity.” The narrators are, by their own admission, expert liars. From a literary standpoint, the discrepancies render Talbot’s text even more attractive for analysis than a dry account of her movements. These distortions relate to the text’s unstated ideological agenda that I will later discuss in detail. Putting aside this debate, the basic elements of Talbot’s story—that she was a female who fought in the British army and navy in male guise—is based in fact. Thus, if we approach Snell’s and Talbot’s narratives through the lens of liberal feminism, which emphasizes equality of opportunity, these stories still have great bearing on twenty-first century discussions about women’s ability to perform successfully in the military.

As impressive as Snell’s and Talbot’s tales are, they reveal some unsettling content when approached through the lens of intersectional feminism—one that sees the entire system of privilege and inequality as inextricably linked forms of oppression. Intersectional feminism argues that we cannot speak about gender inequality without confronting the ways it works in conjunction with heterosexism, ableism, classism, racism, colonialism, and many other forms of exploitation and marginalization. By looking through this lens, this essay enlarges the perspective of what female military memoirs teach us about how oppression works. I argue that Snell’s and Talbot’s claims to subjectivity as representatives of the British military depend upon active participation in the imperial project. When they become veterans, Snell and Talbot, capitalize on their experiences by publishing biographies, selling their portraits, and--in
Snell’s case—performing onstage. Snell’s and Talbot’s various self-representations demonstrate that their ability to perform masculinity, and indeed their very survival, hinges on a narrative and discursive investment in colonialism, violence, and racial hegemony. Snell and Talbot market their own exceptional bodies to a London audience and lay claim to the Enlightenment ideals of both personal and political “liberty” through rationalizing the unexceptional, routine violence perpetrated on the colonial, foreign, and female bodies they encounter in both formal and informal scenes of military life.

In formal battle scenes, both Snell and Talbot display a cartoonish, jingoistic version of British military masculinity that palliates violence or glorifies its aims. This technique of normalizing aggression is particularly important because Snell’s and Talbot’s literary and dramatic representations address the geographically isolated London audience. As David Cannadine and Laura Chrisman have recently suggested, a complex, reciprocal interplay exists between popular images and narratives from overseas and the administrative center of the British Empire. Thus, I am suggesting that part of what rendered Snell’s and Talbot’s gender nonconformity acceptable in wartime is how their memoirs reflected a soothing image of British imperial masculinity to metropolitan audiences during and after the War of the Austrian Succession and the French Revolutionary Wars.

Drawing heavily from contemporary decolonial theory, I argue that Talbot’s and Snell’s memoirs and performances move them from a position of marginalization toward an alliance with the dominant through a phenomenon that Jasbir Puar and others describe
as “homonationalism.” Although homonationalism has been deployed in many ways since 2005, I am using the term to signify the ways in which queer politics and identities are involved in state formation and to signify “modernity.” By invoking this term, I risk creating an anachronism, since it was originally conceived to describe the post 9/11 moment. Yet I see many of the same phenomena that Puar accounts for in the twenty-first century happening within Snell’s and Talbot’s narratives--namely how homonationalism authorizes “affective investments in discourses of freedom, liberation, and rights” for some historically marginalized groups but not for others. I apply Puar’s ideas about how homonationalism recreates a new politics of exclusion to establish why figures such as Snell and Talbot were celebrated during an age when the British Empire was rapidly expanding through almost constant warfare. As Suzanne Stark notes, “when a seamen or marine was discovered to be a woman, she was not . . . convicted and punished for having duped the navy by enlisting under a false identity. On the contrary, she . . . was lauded in the press for her bravery and patriotism.” Puar argues that certain forms of “heteronormatively acceptable gayness and queerness” are rendered “tolerable by some subjects’ patriotism, performed both by their comportment and consumption” and through their juxtaposition with “markers of racial/sexual excess, located in the pathological bodies.” For Puar, these pathological bodies are mostly Muslim, non-Western men who become abject through a neo-Orientalist process. In their memoirs, Snell and Talbot create a very similar “politics of exclusion” in which they gain purchase into the dominant by aligning themselves with masculinity, patriotism, and imperialism.
The Social and Economic Costs of Claiming Queer Subjectivity

I began this discussion by remarking that Snell and Talbot performed military duties with an alacrity and capacity that is still doubted by some military leaders in our contemporary moment. Yet much of what I want to discuss about their appropriation of British imperial masculinity requires, at minimum, a brief discussion of how Snell and Talbot did identify and/or represent themselves and what this representation meant in the long eighteenth century. On the most basic level, a brief explanation of my use of pronouns and referents is also in order. Throughout my discussion, I will refer to Snell and Talbot with the pronouns “her” and “she” or as “woman” or “female” based solely on the fact that both of their authorized memoirs employ these specific terms. That said, Snell’s and Talbot’s gender expression remains highly fluid in the historical record and their literary productions. Both Snell and Talbot continued to don masculine dress to varying degrees after they left the military. This choice might have related to their sense of gender identity; or, as I will discuss, it might have been part of their extended marketing of the “woman warrior” persona in a variety of media. “Transgender” does not emerge as a contextual category until the 1990s, and as David Valentine suggests, “to imagine historical subjects as ‘gay,’ ‘lesbian,’ or as ‘transgender’ ignores the radically different understandings of self and the contexts that underpinned practices and lives of historical subjects.” I am, therefore, highly skeptical of labeling Snell’s and Talbot’s gender identity beyond saying that both were “genderqueer” or “gender nonconforming.”
Queer theory offers the most useful (and least anachronistic) lens with which to approach these historical subjects, in that, as Annamarie Jagose notes, “queer describes those gestures or analytical models which dramatise incoherencies within the allegedly stable relations between chromosomal sex [itself problematic], gender and sexual desire.”

It is also important to separate ideas about gender expression and sexual orientation. While both Snell and Talbot appear to have been genderqueer, their sexual lives take on a similar fluidity. Snell was married three times to men, and she gave birth to 3 children. However, her memoir recounts several intimate encounters with women. Talbot records nonconsensual sex with a man and makes oblique reference to a domestic partnership with a woman who follows her into debtor’s prison. I remain sensitive to arguments such as Susan Lanser’s, which suggest that claiming the word “lesbianism” instead of “queerness” has a strategic importance for the historical visibility of what she calls “The Sapphic.” However, Snell’s and Talbot’s reported sexual activity is most accurately characterized as contingent and contextual. Of greater interest than a specific label is how Snell and Talbot repeatedly draw attention to the tension between their female morphology and their male dress and what the consequences or advantages of that nonconformity were in both military and civilian life.

This nonconformity must also be understood within its broader cultural context. As Emma Donoghue notes, cross-dressing female characters are pervasive in Anglophone literature beginning in the medieval period, and their inclusion serves a host of purposes: “suspense, entertainment, poignancy, and a surprisingly polymorphous
eroticism.” While historical cross-dressed female soldiers constitute a relatively small percentage of the overall eighteenth-century British military, the cultural impact of the “woman warrior” figure is high. She played an important symbolic role within Anglophone popular culture from the American Revolution through the Napoleonic Wars. In addition to historical women, fictional heroines appear routinely in a variety of genres. Diane Dugaw has documented hundreds of these figures in popular ballads of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Women warriors also appear frequently in comic operas, novels, plays, and in life writing. As Dugaw points out, crossed-dressed soldiers form one small part of a much larger cultural fascination with sexual and gender masquerade that occurred during the eighteenth century. Catherine Craft-Fairchild documents how cross-dressed women (both historical and fictional) were received differently depending upon the subject’s social class, the venue or genre in which her story appeared, the audience for which the story was intended, and the motivations the subject alleged for appropriating a male guise. For example, a poor heroine who puts on male clothes to follow a sweetheart to war might be characterized as romantic and heroic within ballads intended for the working class. In contrast, the novel’s elite female characters who cross dress for amusement, such as Harriet Freke in Maria Edgeworth’s *Belinda* (1801), are “blamed and punished” (171). Historical cross-dressed women who attempted to live intimately with other women for sexual or economic reasons were subjected to fines, imprisonment, and whipping (175). These cause célèbre were sometimes adapted back into ballads or novels; for example, Henry Fielding’s *The
Female Husband (1746) fictionalizes the most notorious “female husband” case of Mary Hamilton. Time also affects reception. Craft-Fairchild shows that stories of cross-dressed women became less acceptable in certain genres (memoir, drama, the novel) as the nineteenth century approaches. Yet, as Fraser Easton notes, in the periodical press, reports of women’s cross-dressing adventures remained relatively constant through the end of the eighteenth century and into the nineteenth. Julie Wheelwright documents how the narratives of women warriors specifically become softened and feminized as they get redacted and reprinted in the Victorian period.

Since female soldiers were viewed as patriotic and motivated by laudable romantic or economic reasons, their cross-dressing was not only accepted, but even celebrated, in popular culture. Soldiering was also condoned if viewed as temporary—an important contingency I will discuss in detail—and subject to a woman’s participation in a national project. This context explains why a figure such as Snell is a source of British pride who gets to stage her own variety show after her sex is revealed, whereas her contemporary cross-dresser, Mary Hamilton, was publicly whipped for a similar, yet private performance of masculinity in becoming a “female husband.”

Previous scholarship recognizes that the popularity of these figures throughout the eighteenth-century Atlantic world has important political implications. Daniel Cohen, Diane Dugaw, and Fraser Easton have suggested that female militants can be framed as working-class heroines or important examples of an emerging model of female masculinity. By extension, these figures can serve a progressive, even feminist, purpose
by highlighting gender performativity and destabilizing heteronormativity. Scarlet Bowen demonstrates how the memoirs of Christian Davies and Hannah Snell worked to shame men into masculine aggression and to bolster nationalism during the Anglo-Spanish War (1739-45) and the concurrent War of the Austrian Succession (1740-48). In the early American context, Cohen argues popular pamphlets on female soldiers “constructed a vision of female autonomy and self-assertion far more radical than the images of a Republican Wife, Republican Mother, and True Woman.” In the British context, Dugaw argues that these plucky heroines demonstrate “both sides of the traditionally bifurcated ideal of western heroism: female Love and male Glory” as they escape dysfunctional domesticity and appropriate male military guise to pursue lovers across the seas or to fight patriotically for king, country, and prize money.

Within their memoirs of active service, Snell and Talbot narrate how they become “brothers in arms,” earning the trust and respect of their cisgender male comrades, through exercising the British, male privilege associated with their appropriated identity in taverns, on foraging expeditions, and in the street. With a sense of dramatic irony, they consistently mark differences between their own surprising queerness and the strangeness of the cisgender women, colonial subjects, or foreigners they encounter—a strategy I will investigate in detail in the second half of this discussion.

When Snell and Talbot returned to the imperial center and entered civilian life, they found economic and social survival extremely difficult. Both women relied upon an alliance with the dominant--British military masculinity—to create self-sustaining
economic and social opportunities. When that alliance dissolved after a brief burst of fame, so did the privilege Snell and Talbot had enjoyed. As Craft-Fairchild suggests, the literary trope for female soldiers creates an expectation that in civilian life she will be briefly celebrated and then become domesticated. If she continues to live as a man, her social and occupational options become severely limited. “Once her transvestism was discovered and her hard-won male privilege annulled, her deviations from cultural expectations for female delicacy diminished her chances of economic advancement through traditional channels (i.e. marriage)”\(^{28}\) Snell and Talbot, however, express their desire to continue with their male identities and to forego domesticity. Diane Dugaw explicates the problems of tone and message created when Snell’s memoirist frames Snell as a real-life version of Samuel Richardson’s heroine, Pamela, who is rewarded for her commitment to chastity by an upper-class marriage proposal.\(^ {29}\) Snell, however, refuses a marriage proposal she receives from one of her messmates soon after revealing herself and vows to “never submit herself to the marriage yoke any more.”\(^ {30}\) Talbot also repeatedly resists attempts to feminize and domesticate her; for example, she violates the sartorial terms of a subscription collected for her support, which demand she dress as a female, and sneaks out in sailor’s dress to carouse with her messmates in taverns.\(^ {31}\) In short, although Snell and Talbot were initially lauded for their bravery and patriotism, their refusal to settle down into heterosexual femininity placed them at the fringes of civilian life. They were marginalized figures (genderqueer, wounded veterans) within an already marginalized group (eighteenth-century women) attempting to market their
stories to a popular audience. To find their way back to the cultural center, Snell and Talbot emphasized what audiences found commendable about their experience: their nationalism and participation in building the British Empire.

Snell was particularly adept at this public relations feat. With her printer, editor, and amanuensis, Robert Walker, she launched into a multi-media campaign aimed at capitalizing on her extraordinary service. Walker already had a reputation for promoting other celebrity fads. Snell was thus well-positioned to increase her fame and fortune. This campaign included a 46-page memoir; an expanded 9-part periodical serial; four separate engraved portraits sold in the streets; and a variety show, which ran for roughly two months at the New Wells Spa. At the New Wells, Snell sang autobiographical ballads, performed martial exercises, and staged a mini-parade “with tabor and drum” all while “dressed in her regimentals from top to toe” (48). While the mostly veteran audience initially sought the performance as a kind of curiosity, Walker affirms that they left impressed by Snell’s “extraordinary [military] merit” and her unparalleled patriotism (49). She demonstrated to the London metropole not only what she could do individually in the field, but also what feats the British navy was accomplishing all over the globe.

Snell’s nationalistic fantasy was, above all, accessible. The products were mostly priced within the reach of and marketed toward the lower-middling classes and above. The memoir cost 1 shilling, which is roughly £7 in 2016, and the price of admission to the New Wells was the purchase of a pint of wine. Indeed, the New Wells, as a seasonal, non-patent theater was considered a venue of modest status. It attempted to
compete with other area theaters by offering a variety of non-speaking entertainments, including military spectacle. As Georgina Lock and David Worall note, “The New Wells Spa had long been involved with representations of empire.”

An examination of the timeline associated with the products’ release suggests that the performance and the published memoir worked in tandem to support the “monetization” of Snell’s life experience and to serve as leverage in gaining her petition for a military pension. The events are as follows: on June 23, 1750, the *London Evening Post* (Issue 3537) reports her solicitation of a pension from the Duke of Cumberland then serving as Captain General of the British Army. On June 29, 1750, a classified ad appears in the *General Advertiser* (Issue 4905) announcing her performance at the New Wells. On June 30, 1750, the *General Advertiser* prints Snell’s affidavit signed by the Lord Mayor of London and two witnesses confirming the veracity of her story. That same day (June 30, 1750) the *Whitehall Evening Post or London Intelligencer* (Issue 685) publishes an announcement, including a transcript of the affidavit, that Snell’s memoir will be published the following day, July 1st. Once published, the memoir serves to both advertise Snell’s ongoing performance at the Wells and to encourage Cumberland to award a greater pension.

When the book went to press, Snell had been promised £18 5s per annum, but the memoir pleas for “a more substantial reward” (49). Walker and Snell suggest that because of her exceptionalism, Snell deserves a windfall. The income value of this pension in 2016 is roughly £41,080—not an insubstantial amount of money—and Snell is
still young and relatively able-bodied. What the reader might perceive as over-reach, however, has solid reasoning behind it. She and Walker admit that she must capitalize on her fleeting fame, as the public will soon lose interest in her story. “As it is not natural to suppose that the martial exercises of our heroine can continue long to be an entertainment to the town . . . our . . . actress is determined . . . to lay up a little stock to support her against a rainy day” (49-50). Snell means to have a few months’ work garner seed money for a business, later outlined in the memoir. This idea was prudent, as the historical record suggests that Snell was regularly paid a more modest pension of 5p/day from Chelsea Hospital, but never received the substantial allowance promised by Cumberland.

Paying attention to the calculated nature of Snell’s and Walker’s marketing strategies underscores how Snell’s economic and social future depends upon the products’ success. Snell’s performance attracts an audience partly because of its ability to create a meta-performance in which Snell re-represents how she successfully performed masculinity in both formal and informal scenes of military life. Walker tells us that “she begins her military exercises, and goes through the whole catechism (if I may be allowed the expression) with so much dexterity and address . . . that great numbers even of the veteran soldiers . . . have frankly acknowledged that she executes what she undertakes to admiration” (49). I want to press on Walker’s use of the word “catechism” to describe Snell’s series of exercises. By saying “if I may be allowed . . .” Walker draws attention to his strange invocation of the term, which typically connotes “instruction in the principles
of the Christian religion. In this context, however, Walker seems to be referring to what today we would call “muscle memory,” that is, Snell’s ability to respond automatically to a series of physical stimuli and to go through the drill motions in precise military form. This precision allows her to “pass military muster.” Most important, in terms of her gender queerness, it allows her to “pass.” The military has catechized her in the most acceptable mannerism of masculinity--an idea that will be key to understanding Snell’s ideological investment in imperialism in this article’s second section.

To turn this performance into profit, however, Snell must disrupt such seamless passing and instead draw attention to the fact that she is, as Walker relates, a “perfect actor” (27). Those spectators who are inspired by the show to buy the memoir find out that Snell’s long-term support plans hinge upon opening a pub called “The Woman in Masquerade.” The sign for this establishment, which has already been commissioned, forms a stunning visual symbol of how Snell hopes to assimilate into society despite her queerness. The sign depicts “her in her regimentals on one side . . . and in her jacket and trousers on the other” (51). The sign’s text draws attention not only to Snell’s biological female sex but also to her gendered status as an adult “woman.” By positioning Snell as “in masquerade,” the text suggests that the illusion of masculinity can be thrown off at any time. Yet, the sign’s images belie such a reading, offering only two types of masculine iconography in military and civil forms. The viewer sees Snell in trousers or Snell in uniform, but not Snell in petticoats. The option of femininity hinted at in the text is foreclosed by the images. The text and image resist categorization and remain
fragmented messages that refuse determination of Snell’s gender or sexuality. The public appears to have rejected this indeterminacy as the contemplated public house never opened.

Mary Anne Talbot’s initiation into military masculinity differs vastly from Snell’s. While Snell chose to enlist for economic reasons, Talbot alleges being forced into her martial career as a cover for what can now be described as sexual slavery. Talbot recounts becoming an orphan and subsequently being raped at age 14 by her legal guardian, an army officer named Captain Bowen. Suzanne Stark disputes Bowen’s existence, yet Talbot’s story reflects the historical reality of rampant sexual violence perpetrated against working-class girls. As Frank McLynn discusses in his recent book on eighteenth-century crime, rape between powerful adult men (“masters”) and working-class girls (“parish girl apprentices” and “parlourmaids”) “was regarded as a peccadillo.”

Talbot’s narrative also resonates with common tropes from eighteenth-century art and literature. These include such high-profile examples as William Hogarth’s series The Harlot’s Progress (1731-2) and John Cleland’s Memoirs of a Woman of Pleasure (1748), both of which feature a physically and economically vulnerable girl being initiated into a life of sexual servitude through sexual violence. Talbot’s narrative differs from these examples, because military hierarchy and convention facilitates the ongoing sexual abuse. When he is deployed to the West Indies, Bowen forces Talbot to dress in male clothing so she can pose as his cabin boy and the abuse can continue. Talbot is known from this point forward as “John Taylor.” Thus, Talbot’s gender
expression and sexual behavior are queered from the outset despite having their roots in abusive compulsory heterosexuality. Because the navy is ostensibly a homosocial environment, she must dress as a boy. Since Bowen consistently abuses her, the pair routinely engage in—what appears to others as—a sodomitical relationship. Bowen dies in the siege at Valenciennes. At this point in the narrative, Talbot could return to a conventionally female life. Instead, she deserts the army and enlists in the navy using the John Taylor identity. Her career, at least in masculinist terms, is highly successful. She participates in famous sea battles, is severely wounded, recovers enough to win the love of an “unsuspecting” woman and to become famous (however fleetingly).

Her two portraits published with the 1804 and 1808 printings of her memoir memorialize her increasingly masculine self-representation. (See Fig. 1.) The 1804 edition portrait resists categorization within the masculine/feminine binary. The bust portion depicts Talbot with a man’s shirt and cravat. Her hair is covered by a men’s “low topper” hat. From the neck down, she is swathed in neoclassical robing. Such modish dishabille was popular costuming for female celebrity portraits, but in Talbot’s case, the amorphous draping takes on greater significance. Rather than advertising her feminine charms (as it does in famous portraits of poet Mary Robinson, the Duchess of Devonshire, et. al.), the robing creates a kind of androgyne sacking that makes it difficult to discern the contours of Talbot’s body. Provocatively, her disproportionately long arms clutch the robing near her genitals, as if to draw attention to what is hidden but with a decidedly unfeminine mannerism.
This frisson of contrast is lost in the second 1808 edition portrait that, without its caption, could easily be taken for a standard engraving of a male subject. Talbot appears in full menswear: shirt, cravat, and jacket with cropped hair. Besides the fineness of her features—a commonplace in fashionable portraiture of the time—nothing suggests underlying femininity. As with Snell’s pub shingle, the sexual indeterminacy is created by the contrast between the text, declaring in large script her female name, and the gendered signifiers of the image. For both Snell and Talbot, these visuals declare their intention to live now as men. Although the veteran spectacle and memoirs are marketed as cross-dressing novelties, Snell’s and Talbot’s “second act” suggests that their desire to enter military life had greater impetus behind it than chance or economics.

Neither Snell nor Talbot found a way to integrate permanently their queer subjectivity into civilian British culture. Although Snell’s memoir announces her desire to remain independent, earning a sustainable wage proved impossible. One diarist, James Woodforde, claims to have seen her peddling buttons in male dress in May 1778, but this account contains factual errors and is not corroborated. Other records demonstrate that Snell had to retreat from her initial boast and submit to “the marriage yoke” twice more: to Samuel Eyles in 1759 and to Richard Habgood in 1772. That less than one year elapsed between Eyles’s death and her new alliance with Habgood suggests that the necessity of connecting with a man—either economically or socially—was somewhat urgent. Widowed for the second time, she eventually moved back in with her adult son.
She became mentally ill in 1791 (allegedly from excessive drinking) and was admitted to the notorious Bethlehem (Bedlam) Hospital, where she died in 1792.\textsuperscript{43}

Talbot, who never married, had even less success in civilian life. Although she continued to dress frequently as a sailor, she was never able to appropriate the type of privilege associated with her performed masculinity. She also suffered chronically from the wounds she received during her service. Her narrative recounts a wearying series of appeals to different elites and institutions necessary to receive first her pay and prize money, and as her condition worsens, her pension. She is constantly thwarted in a game of bureaucratic cat and mouse. Sadly, Talbot’s frustrating experience is typical, as recruits were often lured with the promise of pensions but had difficulty securing them as veterans.\textsuperscript{44} Talbot was arrested for debt several times, and she died in a workhouse at age 30, about one year before the second printing of her memoir. As these brief histories show, no social place existed for these queer figures once they were no longer associated with British military imperialism.

**The Ethical Costs of Claiming Queer Subjectivity**

Given the difficulties Snell and Talbot faced when attempting to cross-dress in civilian life, it is logical that they would represent themselves as highly invested in military imperialism and British nationalism in their memoirs. Yet, as I have suggested, this “buy in” came at a cost to the colonial subjects, cisgender women, and foreigners they encountered while pursuing their own form of queer subjectivity. Snell and Talbot
do not challenge the terms of their queer marginalization. Rather, they seek purchase into the dominant by subjugating others. This phenomenon is not unique to Snell and Talbot, but rather describes a much more widespread process of participating in a master/slave dialectic. As Diane Prosser MacDonald argues, “When the marginalized of a culture speak out of the underside of this dialectic, without calling into question the dialectical structure itself. . . they are merely perpetuating the dialectic of a culture which oppresses them, trying to change from a position of the disadvantaged to that of privilege, and in so doing, condemning some ‘other’ to victimization and domination.”

Thus, Snell’s and Talbot’s memoirs, while highlighting gender performativity, also work to bolster racial hegemony and patriarchy in ways that underscore the unsettling relationship between queer historicism and the history of imperialism.

To avoid anachronism, one must contextualize Snell’s and Talbot’s memoirs within ideas about ethics and affect circulating in the long eighteenth century. One of the main markers of the moral subject was his or her ability to participate in sensibility. Beginning with Shaftesbury in the late seventeenth century, English moral philosophy began to conceive of variants of sensibility as foundational to human nature. These ideas reach their effulgence in the writings of David Hume and Adam Smith. As Michael Bell suggests, although ideas of sentimentalism can be traced to classical sources, “the eighteenth-century’s massive investment of feeling in subjectivity was the moment when this became peculiarly self-conscious,” which led to a more sophisticated delineation between true sensibility and mawkish sentimentality. Although there are myriad subtle
differences between each articulation of sensibility, for this discussion, one can approach sensibility as a belief that human beings have an innate capacity to sympathize with others, including literary characters. This capacity, in turn, aids individuals in making moral judgments. Further, the instructive potential of sensibility can be strengthened through reading, positioning texts as major resources for moral education. At the same time, scholars such as Simon Dickie remind us of a counter-discourse circulating in the eighteenth century, in which both male and female writers rejected sympathetic high-mindedness, mocking the poor, elderly, and disabled. Of interest for this article are the ways in which Dickie argues that women authors “repeat and elaborate on some patriarchal assumptions about sexual violence.”

As Mary Favret and Samuel Baker have suggested, some military men embraced the tenets of sensibility in their memoirs, using identification with suffering to critique the human cost of conventional warfare. Neil Ramsay describes one particularly touching moment from Robert Ker Porter’s Letters from Portugal and Spain (1809) in which he recounts “grotesque images of suffering: horses dying on the roads, wrecked houses, famished peasants . . . and everywhere the naked bodies of soldiers who had died . . . and been stripped of their uniforms.” Christine Pichichero’s work on humanitarianism and eighteenth-century warfare draws on a variety of American, Continental, and British primary sources to document how military reformers designated the “soldierly figure . . . as a site where humanity, civilized spirit, and progress could be realized.” In contrast, Snell and Talbot deny sensibility, instead allying themselves with
traditional masculine aggression and nationalism to claim legitimacy. As biological females, whose stoicism is already suspect, they want to be taken seriously in what Tim Fulford calls “an age in which manhood was increasingly defined in terms of a willingness to go to war.”

53

Not all military cultures are the same, however, and as Isaac Land suggests, in choosing to impersonate “Jack Tar,” women such as Snell and Talbot had to mimic the behaviors of “one of the era’s most notorious misogynists.”

54

Hannah Snell’s successful passing depends not only on professional ability, but also her convincing exhibition of aggressive heterosexuality. Snell recounts often being invited to attend her shipmates on visits to taverns and brothels on shore leave. In these venues, Snell again “passes” with flying colors. Walker relates that, though “she played the part of a boon companion so naturally and so far distant from what bore the least appearance of effeminacy, that she answered the end proposed . . . for as she came into all their wildest measures with the utmost alacrity and readiness, she gave them no grounds to suspect her sex” (27). Her “alacrity” contains sinister elements, as she uses metaphors of military violence to joke about a contemplated rape of one of her girlfriends, a “Miss Catherine,” while carousing in a tavern.

Our heroine. . . made her courtship no secret to her brother marines . . . She drunk to the successful battering of Miss Catherine’s fort, and they advised her to take it by storm. By this stratagem she got rid of her raking, drunken companions without giving the least disgust and spent her hours . . . in the familiar
conversation with Miss Catherine. . . [H]er amorous caresses were so engaging
to Miss Catherine that she fell a victim to the young God of Love. (33)

Here, the reader receives several conflicting messages. On the one hand, the narrator
suggests that Snell must pretend to be a drunken bawd to fit in with her colleagues. Yet
she betrays the trust of her sweetheart and female solidarity generally to protect her own
cover, rendering problematic a liberal feminist reading of this text.

As Susan Lanser argues, heteronormativity is so pervasive that “most women’s . .
. non-heteronormative experiences are likely to be lived out within, rather than beyond,
heteronormative structures and spaces.” It is unfair to ask Snell to reimagine same-sex
desire outside of a heteronormative paradigm. As an unlettered woman, Snell most likely
remained unaware of a critical mass of “Sapphic picaresque” texts circulating in the early
eighteenth century that depicted same-sex intimacy “as primary and chosen bonds.”

However, heteronormative paradigms that represented both sexual coercion and
seduction also existed. (This is the era of Casanova after all.) Snell’s narrative deploys
the most phalloaggressive model—sex as war—to describe her trysts. This model is as
old as literature, but for reference, one can think of Falstaff’s speeches in which he
frames sex as swordplay. The narrative invokes this trope when Snell appropriates a
symbolic phallus with which she “batters” Miss Catherine’s physical and psychological
defenses, her “fort.” Further “to take it [the fort] by storm” suggests an onslaught that
dispenses the need for Miss Catherine’s consent. If sex is a battle, then soldiers are best
qualified to engage in it, but then the contemplated sex can only be imagined as rape.
Even if no physical damage ensued, Miss Catherine’s good reputation—so key to eighteenth-century women’s economic survival—is certainly tarnished by being bandied about in a tavern. Snell admits physical intimacy with Miss Catherine. Boasting to the reader about how Catherine “fell a victim” to Eros is bad form regardless of the sex of the narrator.

Snell’s performed misogyny is even more troubling when she travels to British India and encounters women of color who do not enjoy the same rights as the British subject Miss Catherine. The narrator attempts to justify Snell’s and her messmates’ violence against Indian women while she is stationed at Fort St. David:

. . . she was an eyewitness of a thousand unseemly actions which they were too frequently guilty of; and which almost shocked her, yet considering she was in masquerade and a brother tar, she was not only forced to connive at but seemingly to countenance and approve. As there were but very few white women upon the place, and as she found they were resolutely bent to gratify their lustful appetites at all adventures, she must, doubtless, be under dreadful apprehensions lest her refusal to partake in their vicious pleasures should give grounds to suspicion, and be the means of their making a too narrow search into the motives that induced her to decline the like amorous adventures. However, she had no other way for the protection of her innocence and person than to show that her will was her law, and that if they offered in the least to be rude that she had courage and resolution enough to make them feel the weight of her resentment. By this imperious way of
deportment, though only affected, she screened herself from the danger to which she was almost daily exposed. (25)

I quote at length here, because Walker purposefully obfuscates. His oblique references to several groups of “they” elides Snell’s exploitative behavior. Walker implies that because there were few white women available, Snell’s friends had to “gratify their lustful appetites” by assaulting native women. Snell would not or could not participate in “their vicious pleasure,” but she worries that her lack of participation will make her comrades suspicious of her female sex. To maintain her cover she, at a minimum, countenances their actions; she stands by while these assaults occur. It is unclear if she also participated in the violence. Is it the Indian women or the messmates who will feel the “weight of her resentment”? The way Snell treats Miss Catherine suggests she is comfortable extending her male mimicry to acts of sexual violence if it helps to retain the camaraderie of her fellow soldiers. Here the cost of acceptance for the queer figure (Snell) is to exploit the sexual vulnerability of those that are even more marginalized than she is—namely women of color.

This vignette is particularly disturbing because it occurs soon after Snell relates how an Indian woman preserved Snell’s secret and her life after Snell was wounded. Because the shrapnel is lodged in her groin, Snell performs the extraction herself with the aid of “a black woman who attended on her” (21). Snell makes herself vulnerable to this woman—“she discovered her pain and resolution to this black”—and the woman responds with kindness, stealing “lint and salve to dress the wound” (22). For this act of
“friendship” Snell gives her one rupee when she leaves. Yet, the precarity of Snell’s position precludes her from extending the same type of solidarity to other Indian women.

Snell’s exploitative behavior extends to non-white males as well. Snell’s great claim to fame was her fighting in the siege at Pondicherry, which would determine whether the French East India Company or the British East India Company dominated the subcontinent. Her stage show begins with a song entitled, “Come and listen to my ditty,” which represents her military service in unproblematic terms that legitimize the imperial project.

. . .

I more bold (though tender-hearted),
Left my friends and native land;
Bravely by his side maintaining
British rights, I shed my blood,
Still to him unknown remaining,
Watched to serve and do him good.

In the midst of blood and slaughter
Bravely lighting for my king,
Facing death from every quarter,
Fame and conquest home to bring.
Sure you’ll own ‘tis more than common,
And the world proclaim it too,

Never yet did any woman

More for love and glory do. (48)

There are some interesting things happening inter-textually here that are beyond the scope of this paper to treat fully. Namely, Snell’s song (the lyrics of which were for sale at the bar) places her firmly within the balladic tradition Diane Dugaw traces, in which women primarily go to sea to serve alongside their lovers. Yet, these lyrics, which are embedded within the text of the memoir, offer a totally different version of Snell’s early life than the prose narrative. She never serves beside her husband, but rather enlists in the marines because he leaves her destitute and pregnant. (Her daughter Susanna dies at age five months.58) Of interest here is not the romantic theme, but the imperial one. The lyrics suggest that Snell receives her wounds in defense of “British rights,” yet she is wounded in a British offensive on a colonial French fort, the purpose of which is to shore up British economic domination of India.

Tory in tone, she invokes the name of her desired patron, “my King” George, to authorize her participation in “blood and slaughter.” The subsequent lines reveal that she understands the political implications of her military service. She “fac[es] death” in pursuit of “conquest,” that is, gaining territory by force and subjugation. When Snell recounts the siege of Pondicherry, she demonstrates a steely determination and indifference to human life that is reflected in the song lyrics. Pondicherry was well-fortified and the English “victory” there came at great cost to the English, the French, and
their colonial colleagues. In describing the fort, Snell states that “the place consisted of 2,000 Europeans, besides a multitude of Indians, is well supplied with ammunition, provisions, and all manner of necessaries so that it would take at least 10,000 veteran troops to reduce it, and then be thought a great acquisition, they having upwards of 300 large cannon” (20). In keeping with the military memoir genre, Snell quantifies everything that she considers significant: the number of French living at the fort, the number of English that will die taking it, and the number of cannons that will defend it, yet she does not feel compelled to quantify the “multitude” of Indians who will also suffer and die in the action. This one sentence does not necessarily demonstrate a kind of apathy toward the suffering of racial others; yet, Snell repeatedly elides the human cost of non-whites and diminishes their collaborative efforts in the action. When she describes the colonial subjects, who fight alongside the English, she does not recognize them as brothers-in-arms but instead as a kind of support staff. When describing the taking of French POWs she states: “Our Peons intercepted and brought into camp 102 French Prisoners, which were coming. . . to reinforce the garrison of Pondicherry” (18). Given that Pondicherry was defended by 1,800 French troops and 3,000 “Sepoys” that the British colonials took such a great number of prisoners is a notable and laudable task. Yet, Snell—perhaps because so much of her narrative is preoccupied with proving her martial valor—glosses over the accomplishments of non-Europeans.

Talbot enacts her own brand of homonationalism while overseas by aligning herself with masculinity, patriotism, and imperialism and marking the difference between
her own body and the “pathological bodies” of the indigenous people she encounters while traveling along the “Musquito shore” (contemporary Nicaragua and Honduras). During a foraging mission, Talbot and her comrades encounter a group of Miskito. Perceiving the Miskito as “menacing,” the troops fire on the Miskito, who are armed only with axes.

Before quitting the island, we proceeded farther in search of water, and fell in with a party of the barbarous natives, who make a practice of scalping the unfortunate victims that fall into their hands. These people approaching us in a menacing manner, we fired on them, and killed one . . . On coming up to the dead man, we found that he was naked, except a wisp round his body, like a hay-band; his hair was long, black, and strong as that of a horse. He was about six feet in height, and proportionally lusty; armed with a tomahawk, or scalping hatchet . . . They [his companions] were of tawny complexion, and had no more clothing than their deceased comrade. (152)

The description reads like a “first contact” narrative. Talbot paints the Miskito as roving sadists, ready to scalp any hapless wanderer. The Miskito man’s nudity and equine hair suggests an animality that palliates the British party’s disproportionate show of force. This homicide occurs just after the killing of a bear—linking the two deaths as equal forms of animal slaughter. Talbot’s rhetorical positioning, of course, has its antecedents in much eighteenth-century “adventure” literature, but it belies historical reality. The British relationship with the Miskito dates to the 1630s, and in 1740 the coast became an
English protectorate to ward off Spanish territorial incursion. When Talbot visits in the 1790s, several hundred Britons reside on the coast, and Miskito elites are sending their children to English schools in Jamaica. As Nicholas Rogers notes, “the Mosquito Coast in the eighteenth century is essentially the history of a borderland between two rival empires, the Spanish and the British.” Thus, the Miskito maintained a long, albeit tense alliance with the British and were fully habituated to European landing parties. The reader is left to wonder why Talbot feels the need to represent the Miskito as aggressive and bestial despite Britain’s ongoing official political relationship and cultural exchange with the Miskito.

The answer lies in the sexual subtext of the passage. For Talbot, who is trying to authorize her own queer identity, it becomes imperative to destroy the Miskito man—the object of same-sex desire and the symbol of sexual difference. A close look at Talbot’s description suggests that the slain man both elicits her comrades’ desire and frightens them with a sublime form of masculine sexuality. He is “naked, except for a wisp round his body” and clearly of an athletic, attractive build: “six feet in height, and proportionally lusty.” The choice of the word “lusty” here is provocative. In the eighteenth century, it had a variety of meanings—many of which suggest the subject’s social or physical attractiveness. It can mean “full of healthy vigour,” “pleasing in appearance” or “full of lust or sexual desire.” I argue here that the Miskito man’s seductive qualities—not his threatening ones—truly incite the party’s violence. This phenomenon is depressingly regular in colonial history and narrative. As Scott
Morgensen notes “Native peoples were marked as queer by projecting fears of sodomy on them that justified terrorizing violence. At the same time, diverse modes of embodiment and desire in Native societies challenged colonial beliefs about sexual nature and were targeted for control.” This vignette stands out, however, because a marginalized, queer figure is narrating and normalizing the violence. While “passing” Talbot is constantly vulnerable to the threat of rape and forced outing. The tenuous nature of her own position explains her willingness to dehumanize the Miskito man.

As if to underscore such an interpretation, the next vignette Talbot recounts is being threatened with discovery and expulsion when she resists the sexual advances of her superior officer, Captain Bowen. While docked in Saint Domingue (Haiti), Bowen vows to sell Talbot into slavery if she does not enroll as a drummer in his regiment:

I was now doomed to undergo another change of character; for Captain Bowen, judging it not convenient to continue me in the situation of his foot-boy, proposed my being enrolled in the regiment as a drummer. On my objecting to this, he threatened to have me conveyed up the country, and sold as a slave. From the dread of his really putting his threat into execution, I reluctantly acquiesced in his desire . . . (152-3)

Bowen wants Talbot to become a drummer so that she can accompany him on his next deployment to Flanders. Her resistance to the change signifies an attempt to escape his sexual abuse and tyranny. Yet something about this passage and her reasoning rings falsely. As a white British “male,” it is unlikely that Talbot could successfully be sold
into chattel slavery by Bowen. That Talbot represents herself as fearful of Bowen
enacting his threat raises several questions. Does she fabricate the threat and use it as a
disingenuous rationalization for why she continues to accompany Bowen? Or, is her fear
an authentic reflection of her own naïveté? Perhaps she wants to demonstrate that she is
unaware of the sovereignty of her body. Or, does her belief that she is one step away
from chattel slavery reflect a more profound understanding of her position than what the
letter of the law allows? It can be understood as a sage assessment of just how marginal
her subject position is as a lower-class female orphan who has already been
systematically exploited and abused. Certainly, from her vantage point the safest position
to occupy is that of Captain Bowen’s—of a fully grown, white male—who uses violence
to secure his livelihood and satisfy his desires. That Talbot chooses to perform in
adulthood the same type of aggressive masculinity Bowen models is perhaps not
surprising given the tenuousness of her own situation.

The most potent example of Talbot’s identification with masculine aggression
occurs in her memoir’s main battle scene, which recounts how she fought on board the
*Brunswick* and was wounded during the “Battle of the Glorious First of June” 1794. This
battle was the first and largest fleet action of the naval conflict between Great Britain and
the First French Republic during the French Revolutionary Wars; that is, the beginning of
a new chapter of aggression aimed at dominating the seas militarily and economically.

Talbot frames the battle as a source of pride both for herself, as participant, and
for the reader, as a British subject. She declares that the 1st of June was “an event which
will ever be remembered with heartfelt satisfaction by the brave fellows who shared the toils of that auspicious day, and indeed by every lover of our glorious constitution and country” (158). Two things are remarkable about this apostrophe. First, although her presence ostensibly proves that both men and women participated in this action, she mentions only “brave fellows.” Talbot elides women’s role in naval history and claims exceptional status. Although the navy is mostly a homosocial environment, undisguised women maintained a presence in certain situations. In addition, women’s participation in the largest battles of the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars is well documented.

In the Navy, the wives of Warrant Officers often sailed with first-rate ships and sometimes served as “powder monkeys” during battle.63 Those who served on five-person musket crews in the Battle of the Nile even applied for medals.64 Paintings, such as Augustus Earle’s “Divine Service as it is Usually Performed on Board a British Frigate at Sea” (c. 1820), demonstrate that undisguised women also stayed aboard during peacetime, although their presence was typically limited to coastal cruising. In short, Talbot might have been the only disguised woman on board the Brunswick—a third-rate ship—but she must have been aware of the other women in the fleet. Talbot glosses over these women’s presence, because her exceptionalism foregrounds her contribution as particularly heroic and forestalls any suggestion that the British navy is feminized.

Most important, Talbot’s aside attempts to preempt a less sanguine or jingoistic political reading of the battle. She implies that if one does not feel “heartfelt satisfaction” then one cannot claim to be a “lover of our glorious constitution and country” (158).
However, the victory on the first of June came at great cost, and the British public both celebrated and criticized the battle. The blockade was incomplete, allowing France to maintain its position in disputed West Indian territory. Some disagreed with the action on principle. Sam Willis’s comprehensive book on the battle says it all with its chapter headings: chapter 10 “first reaction: honor and glory,” chapter 11 “second reaction: acrimony and disgrace.” This ambivalence manifests in Philippe de Loutherberg’s painting “The Battle of the First of June, 1794” that celebrates the victory, while depicting the human cost of this hard-won battle and displaying sympathy with the drowning French sailors. The tattered sails of the French and British ships in the background and the bloodied comingled bodies in the foreground frame the so-called “Glorious” battle as a pyrrhic victory for the British.

Talbot’s memorialization takes a much different tone from de Loutherberg’s. She gives an imaginative recounting of the Brunswick’s engagement with the Vengeur du Peuple, the only French ship that foundered. The account is detailed and militaristic, counting the guns and masts of each ship, cataloging specific forms of destruction—anchors torn away, fires fore and aft, and crew “scattered . . . like mice upon the ocean” (159). There were quite a few of these “mice” drowning. Talbot tells us that 200 of the Vengeur’s crew were saved, whereas “the rest, in number about six hundred, went to the bottom in the ship” (159). Her attempt to liken the slain to animals resonates with the previous dehumanization of the killed Miskito man and reads as a method to palliate the impact of military violence in the Atlantic theater and on colonial terra firma.
Talbot might simply be attempting to steel herself against charges that she is overly-sentimental. The essentialist criticism that women are too emotional to perform in battle is well-rehearsed, but Talbot’s reported reaction to these mass casualties seems to be an over-correction that denies any human feeling. She tells the reader “During the whole of this engagement, in which I was either actor or spectator, I felt not in the least intimidated” (160). Rather than expressing dismay or regret, she emphasizes her stoicism, as she deals with a grapeshot wound to the leg. She represents herself as fearless—as more male than the men—but to the reader, she also appears unwilling to recognize the real carnage around her.

Conclusion

In parsing Snell’s and Talbot’s interactions with marginalized figures, I risk reading without sensitivity to historical context, of not assessing Snell and Talbot in relation to their own moment, but rather a set of contemporary feminist principles, which are skeptical about women’s increasing military involvement. Yet during the long eighteenth century, writers across the political spectrum display deep concern about women eschewing sensibility and embracing military and political violence. Edmund Burke famously voices outrage at the naked aggression working-class French women display toward Marie Antoinette, citing it as emblematic of a broken social order. As Catherine Addison argues, Robert Southey’s “Joan of Arc” invokes a legendary female warrior to challenge the legitimacy of warfare. The strangeness of Joan operates by
pointing out the strangeness of military violence more generally. Southey’s poem is allegorical, addressing his contemporaries’ dismay over Charlotte Corday’s brutal assassination of the invalid Marat. History frames Corday as a heroic Girondin ideologue; she “killed one man to save a hundred thousand.” Narratives such as Snell’s and Talbot’s, however, ask us to rethink what complicity feminist and/or queer historicism should own in the perpetuation of global military violence and racial oppression. As this discussion demonstrates, Snell and Talbot embraced the European, male privilege associated with their military personas first to “pass” as men among their colleagues and later to market jingoistic narratives, performances, and images to the populace at the imperial center. These women’s very sad ends suggest why they might have felt the need to disenfranchise others to enfranchise themselves. That said, feminist and queer scholarship has a responsibility not only to celebrate these women for their physical bravery, but also to document how they perpetuated forms of exploitation.


5 Isaac Land, *War, Nationalism, and the British Sailor* (New York, 2009), 64.


7 I am indebted to my colleagues in the “Decolonizing Gender/Gendering Decolonization” seminar at the Institute for Research on Women (Rutgers University 2013-2014) for their critique of this work.


10 Stark, *Female Tars*, 111.


Hannah Snell, “The Female Soldier or The Surprising Life and Adventures of Hannah Snell,” in *The Lady Tars*, ed. Tom Grunder (Tucson, 2008), 42. All subsequent references to this text.

Mary Anne Talbot, “Life and Surprising Adventures of Mary Anne Talbot, in the Name of John Taylor,” in *The Lady Tars*, ed. Tom Grunder (Tucson, 2008), 170. All subsequent references to this text.


There were two “New Wells” theaters operating in proximity. For information on Snell’s venue see, Georgina Lock and David Worrall, “Cross-Dressed Performance at the


38 Officer and Williamson, “Five Ways to Compute.”


42 See Dugaw, “Female Sailors Bold,” 41 and Easton, “Gender’s Two Bodies,” 143.
Wheelwright, “Snell, Hannah (1723–1792)”

Caroline Louise Nielsen, “Disability, Fraud, and Medical Experience at the Royal Hospital of Chelsea in the Long Eighteenth Century,” in *Britain’s Soldiers: Rethinking War and Society 1715-1815*, eds. Kevin Linch and Matthew McCormack (Liverpool, 2014), 183-201.


See David Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature* (1739) and *An Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals* (1751) and Adam Smith, *Theory of Moral Sentiments* (1759)

Michael Bell, *Sentimentalism, Ethics, and the Culture of Feeling* (Basingstoke, 2000), 11.


I am indebted to participants of the 2015 Indiana Center for Eighteenth-Century Studies Workshop for this suggestion.

Wheelright, “Snell, Hannah (1723–1792)”


Rogers, “Caribbean Borderland,” 135.


