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Editor: Diane Labrosse | Commissioning Editor: Thomas Maddux | Production Editor: George Fujii

REVIEW BY JENNIFER MORI, UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

Graeme Callister is a student of what Tim Blanning calls *The Culture of Power and the Power of Culture*, work which is producing the 'new' diplomatic history. While Blanning called upon scholars to give serious attention to the social and cultural factors that shaped the perceptions and decisions of early modern statesmen, Callister has taken this a step further by integrating the study of elite public opinion into eighteenth-century foreign policymaking. The article under review develops ideas and concepts advanced in his first monograph: *War, Public Opinion and Policy in Britain, France and the Netherlands, 1785-1815*.¹ It constitutes a case study of British executive attitudes to the United Provinces during the first phase of the French Revolutionary Wars: two years of blunders in which the British failed to give effective military aid to their Dutch ally. This ended in the signing of a separate peace by the United Provinces with France and the creation of the Batavian Republic.

The inadequacies of the First Coalition are an old topic in British military and diplomatic history. Michael Duffy and John Erhman observed some time ago that lack of co-operation between the allies and British underestimation of the French were primarily responsible for the failure of the Combined Armies to defend the United Provinces.² Nathaniel Jarrett and Andrew Limm have recently added that the British army was plagued by unreliable intelligence about the enemy, to which it added rushed strategic and operational planning throughout the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars.³ Callister does not challenge these orthodoxies, placing British military failings first in order of importance for the loss of the United Provinces. His article also does not add anything to the usual English documentation through which these things are studied: a mix of private correspondence and official papers. Instead Callister performs a revisionist reading of well-known English-language sources. His work in the Netherlands National Archives, notably the papers of Hendrik Fagel the Younger, Speaker of the States-General is new and valuable. Distrust between Britain and the United Provinces was mutual and it transpires that neither state's leading men had anything positive to say about the other. The fault, says Callister, lay primarily with the

¹ T.C.W. Blanning, *The Culture of Power and the Power of Culture. Old Regime Europe, 1660-1789* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002); Graeme Callister, *War, Public Opinion and Policy in Britain, France and the Netherlands, 1785-1815* (Cham: Springer International Publishing AG, 2017).

² Michael Duffy, "British Policy in the War against Revolutionary France," in Colin Jones, ed., *Britain and Revolutionary France: Conflict, Subversion and Propaganda* (Exeter: Exeter University Press, 1983), 13; John Ehrman, *The Younger Pitt: The Reluctant Transition* (London: Constable, 1983), 274-97.

³ Nathaniel W. Jarrett, "False Start: Britain and Coalition Warfare in 1794," *War in History*, 24/2 (2017), 134-153; Andrew Limm, *From Walcheren to Waterloo: The British Army in the Low Countries during the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars, 1793-1815* (Barnsley: Pen & Sword Military, 2018), 159.

British, whose attitudes towards the Dutch and United Provinces were based upon outdated beliefs. These stretched back to at least the 1740s, the days of the last active Anglo-Dutch military alliance, and probably further to the Glorious Revolution and the 1689 grand alliance against Louis XIV's France (630, 632). Assumptions of Dutch military and commercial strength were thus inextricably woven into the Whig world views of eighteenth-century Britain and its public men.

This is part of what Callister calls "latent" public opinion, an "intangible measure of 'truth'" consisting of "learned prejudices, perceptions, preconceptions and assumptions about the world" (630). Since these were shared by politicians, diplomats, and the military alike, they underlay all British attitudes towards the Netherlands. Callister quotes Manfred Beller (620) on the unconscious psychological components of national identity though his vision of latent opinion is more akin in its implications to Pierre Bourdieu's *habitus*: "a subjective but not individual system of internalised structures, schemes of perception, conception and action common to all members of the same group or class."⁴ Because the *habitus* is unconscious, it is rarely a subject of contemporary awareness, much less debate: and its operations can only be deconstructed and analyzed by those outside its sphere of influence.⁵

A classical education, points out Callister, was *the* formative experience that united British statesmen and diplomats. Although no Grand Tour is mentioned, Callister quotes many of its sources: both the guidebooks and private memoirs that helped stock the heads of elite Englishmen with the ideas and perceptions which they brought to Europe. (13, 644) British views of the Dutch and United Provinces were thus deeply rooted in the "hegemonic discourse" (631) of its ruling elites. Callister illustrates this through a discussion of the portrayals of the Dutch in London newspapers produced primarily for a readership of the upper ten-thousand. It should not consequently surprise us to find old illusions, as opposed to contemporary realities, dominating all Britain's dealings with their old allies. The same could be said for other states.

British statesmen of this time have often been judged harshly for their mistakes but Callister reveals that they could not have acted otherwise. The inward-looking cultural constituents of eighteenth-century British national identity are well known.⁶ What Callister has begun to explore are the international and outward-looking components of British self-perception. Cosmopolitanism usually takes a back seat to xenophobia in analyses of British identity, although Callister demonstrates why it needs at least equal attention. Because Britain's status as a polite, maritime, and commercial power was partly upheld in the domestic public mind by its many similarities to the United Provinces, the British persistently overestimated and misread the wealth, military strength, and political will of their old ally. The United Provinces was regarded almost as an extension of Britain because of its longstanding enmity to France and its common interests in global and European trade. (632-3) This sense of kinship clouded British assessments of the pro-French Dutch Patriots, an unpopular Stadholderate, the weakness of the Dutch armed forces, and the deficiencies of Dutch public credit. (639-41) The British therefore ignored the inability of the Dutch to contribute much to their own defense and could not give them the military assistance they needed.⁷ History affected eighteenth-century British attitudes to France too. Delight at the bankruptcy and emasculation of the old Bourbon enemy led the Cabinet to underestimate the forces of the republic until the later 1790s.

Callister's arguments are convincing, being grounded upon both the old evidence and current state of academic opinion. He re-reads well-known documents looking out for the subconscious worldviews they embody, and produces a clear picture of

⁴ Manfred Beller and Joep Leerssen, *Imagology: The Cultural Construction and Literary Representation of National Characters, a Critical Survey* (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 11; Pierre Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), 86.

⁵ Didier Bigo, "Pierre Bourdieu and International Relations: Power of Practices, Practices of Power," *International Political Sociology* 5:3 (2011), 231, 241-43.

⁶ Linda Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation 1701-1837* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992).

⁷ Simon Schama, *Patriots and Liberators. Revolution in the Netherlands 1780-1813* (London: Fontana Press, 1992), 163-190.

the interplay they embody between cultural prejudices and political motives. This reviewer would have liked to see more Dutch primary sources brought to light but this criticism may be unfair in an article primarily about Britain. Callister has suggested where, in research, one goes from here: to “more detailed studies” (632) of diplomatic *mentalités* from a widening range of print and manuscript sources.

Jennifer Mori took her D.Phil. from Worcester College, Oxford in 1992. She has taught at the University of Toronto since 1996. She is the author of *William Pitt and the French Revolution, 1785-1795* (St. Martin's Press & Keele University Press, 1997), *Britain in the Age of the French Revolution, 1785-1820* (Longman Pearson, 2000) and *The Culture of Diplomacy. Britain in Europe, c.1750-1830* (Manchester University Press, 2010). Two things currently dominate her research attentions: principally a monograph on British popular print in the long eighteenth-century and a biographical study of Russian diplomat Dorothea, Princess Lieven.