



*NOON*

**The Influence of ‘Foreignness’:  
How Immigration and Imported Commodities affected England’s  
Cloth Industries and Consumer Habits, 1685-1755**

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## **Glossary**

*Terms that appear in the text without explanation*

**Alamode** a thin, lightweight, glossy silk used for scarves and hoods

**Batiste** a fine, even weaved linen. Also known as Cambric (the synonym of the French word)

**Bizarre** a figured silk fabric, characterized by large-scale, asymmetrical patterns

**Bombazine** dress material entirely of silk, later of silk and cotton

**Calendering** the glazed finish given to calicoes

**Callicoe (Calico)** a plain cotton which could be and often was printed

**Chintz** From the Hindi word chint, meaning variegated. A printed or painted calico. A glazed printed cotton (the glaze perhaps not visible today) distinguished in the mid eighteenth century as a cotton printed with five or more colours, the pattern a little larger than usual and very colourful

**Damask** a reversible figured fabric of silk, with a pattern formed by weaving

**Dimity** a fine cotton, usually white, with a raised woven design, also white

**Flower'd (Flowered)** was the generic term for a free pattern, since at this period such patterns were always composed from flowers. The weavers of 'flowered' silks formed a distinct branch of the industry. The same terminology was carried across to the newer calico-printing industry

**Holland** became the generic term for a fine linen cloth

**Lawn/Long lawn** a very fine linen. The term has not changed its meaning. 'Long' lawn may refer to the length of the piece in which it was woven

**Loretos** a silk material used for waistcoats

**Lustring** a soft silk which might be either plain or flowered

**Muslin** a general name for the most delicately woven cotton fabrics

**Paduasway (Paduasoy)** an expensive, heavy, strong silk, often patterned or figured, made from the best quality silk.

**Persian** a thin soft silk used most often for linings

**Sarsenet** a very fine and soft silk material made both plain and twilled in various colors and used especially for linings and ribbons.

**Sateen:** a cotton imitation of satin

**Satin** a silk fabric with a glossy surface

**Taffeties** a light thin silk of high luster used especially as a dress fabric

**Tambour** embroidery using a basic chain stitch on the top of the fabric, using a specially made tambour needle

**Throwster** a person involved in the process where silk that has been reeled into skeins, is cleaned, receives a twist and is wound onto bobbins.

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## **Introduction**

England experienced a major change, both economically and socially through the late seventeenth to eighteenth centuries. During this period, its cloth industries transformed the nation, generating for some, great wealth but for others, desperate bouts of poverty. In England, the rate of diffusion for new technologies in *all* industries had been slow, but the growth of foreign imports into England influenced great change. Fashion, interior decoration and consumer habits would all be affected by the impact of ‘foreignness’. This dissertation will look at the ways England’s government attempted to protect and reform its cloth industries from the damage caused by other countries which were eroding it, penetrating their home market with the influx of new and exotic cloth, which the people of England so eagerly desired. It is commonly acknowledged that the Huguenots played a vital role in the success of England’s silk industry, this dissertation argues that immigration made a difference to the subsequent development of England’s cloth and clothing markets, and how by embracing foreign influence to develop her own production technologies, they formed part of the solution to its problem.

Amongst the elements, which were perceived as a threat to England’s cloth industries, women were chief amongst them. Condemned, as principal consumers of printed calicoes, they fell victim to violent attacks, both physically and verbally through various printed publications. Ultimately, dress was, and remains today, a vital component in self-expression, assertion and distinction, I would argue that although many Acts of Parliament attempted to prevent the ruin of England’s cloth industry, they did so through restricting women’s ability to dress and adorn themselves as they wished. However, this might only confirm their fundamental role in society as chief

consumers, empowering and authorising their ability to choose, select and dismiss as they pleased.

The initial aim of this dissertation is to determine how effective the apparatus of protection was, constructed by the English government against the threat imposed by 'foreignness'. The first part of this paper will review how French Huguenots established themselves in England and how their skills transferred into society, it reveals how *some* foreign infusions created successful alliances, transforming England's, somewhat, restricted cloth industry (which had been almost entirely dependent on wool), into one of national interest, and which would develop into one of global importance.

The second part will focus on the persuasive forces which were employed to deal with the rise of printed calico consumption; predominately this was through printed texts such as in newspapers and pamphlets, which were also growing at phenomenal rates as the century progressed. Old Bailey records and personal diaries help to review how successful or unsuccessful these forces were in protecting the nation's industries. Other primary sources this dissertation will draw upon include, extant textiles within the archives at the London Metropolitan Archives, and Platt Hall Gallery of Costume, and written sources such as contemporary newspaper and journal articles, pamphlets and letters.

As well as a wealth of primary sources, a literature search revealed a rich body of work on the Huguenots, and indeed, on Europe's silk industry. Natalie Rothstein has utilised the Sun Insurance Policy registers and the Weavers' Company records, to



evaluate the number of Huguenots employed in England's silk industry, her work concludes that although they were outnumbered by the English, it was the Huguenots who set the standards.<sup>1</sup> The economic historian, Professor Warren Scoville's *The Persecution of Huguenots and French Economic Development* (1960), contains a comprehensive undertaking on foreign integration, and provides some thought provoking notions on immigration. I have found that little attention has been paid to the use of newspaper articles and their representation of gender issues during the first quarter of the eighteenth century; by combining these sources with material culture and relevant statistical analysis accumulated from Old Bailey records, this dissertation intends to contribute to a relatively undefined area.

This dissertation will focus on the years between 1685 and 1755, the highest number of Protestant refugees were recorded to have arrived from the earlier date and would influence England's industries significantly through to the mid eighteenth century. London will be the main focus, however, references will be made to other regions as and when necessary. Although this study is not concerned with trade directly, it is difficult to avoid the topic completely and so it will be addressed where relevant.

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<sup>1</sup> N. Rothstein, 'Huguenots in the English Silk Industry' in I. Scouloudi (ed) *Huguenots in Britain and their French Background 1550-1880* (London, 1987), pp. 125-40. p. 136.

## Chapter One: Integration

It is often assumed that all Huguenots left France immediately after the Revocation of Nantes in 1685, but the dragonnades, which began in 1681 forced many French Protestants, known as Huguenots, to convert to Catholicism, and the Massacre of St Bartholomew a century previous (1572) instigated many French Protestants to escape to England.<sup>2</sup> In 1681 the *True Protestant Mercury or Occurrences Foreign and Domestick* reported ‘here ye three ships ready, and a fourth sailed, wherein were 600 persons of the Reformed Religion, who have fled but of that Kingdom by reason of heavy persecution’.<sup>3</sup> But not all fled due to religious persecution; the years between 1690-1714 were particularly tough on France’s industries, undoubtedly linked with the increment of taxes to fuel Louis XIV’s wars, as well as decreases in national income, extensive government control and the competition of new fabrics which started to arrive from India, with which this dissertation is concerned.

The Weavers’ Company records corroborate to there being French refugee weavers in England in the 1660s and again in August and September 1681, when 632 Frenchmen were recorded to have arrived.<sup>4</sup> Further inspection of the records reveals that between 1610 and 1694, nearly 900 alien weavers were working in London, the highest influx being between 1667-1677.<sup>5</sup> Contemporaries and later academics have suggested that for the latter part of the seventeenth century, France’s silk industry was rapidly

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<sup>2</sup> Henry VI signed the Edict of Nantes in 1598, Louis XIV revoked the one issued in Nantes in October 18<sup>th</sup> 1685. The Government and clergy also initiated an intensive campaign to convert all Protestants. W. Scoville, ‘Huguenots and Diffusion of Technology’ *Journal of Political Economy*, Vol. 60, No. 4 (Aug., 1952), pp. 294-311, p. 295.

<sup>3</sup> *True Protestant Mercury or Occurrences Foreign and Domestick* Oct 1-5 1681, issue 78. National Library of Australia, 1885069.

<sup>4</sup> Court Minute Books, cited in P. K. Thornton and N. Rothstein ‘The Importance of Huguenots in the London silk industry’, *Proceedings of the Huguenot Society*, 20 (1958-64), pp. 60-94. p. 83.

<sup>5</sup> Guildhall Library, MS 4665, Weavers Court Minutes, Vols. 1-9. For further stats and figures see L. Luu, *Immigrants and the Industries of London 1500-1700* (Aldershot, 2005), p.197.

declining, an intendant at Tours wrote in 1699 that ‘silk production had been in dire straits throughout the last part of the seventeenth century, and that the blame rested in part upon Protestant employers and skilled workmen who had emigrated’.<sup>6</sup> A deputy on the Council of Trade reported in 1704 that the silk industry in France was ‘altogether ruined as a result of the flight of our Religionists, who have carried their skills into Holland, England and Germany, where they have initiated this manufacture and built such strong establishments...’<sup>7</sup> Furthermore, Natalie Rothstein suggests that most Huguenot weavers came from Picardy, Bas Poitou and Normandy, she notes that only a very few came from Lyon, as Protestants were not permitted to enter the silk industry there.<sup>8</sup> But Lyon’s silk industry suffered just as much as several other French regions, suggesting the departure of the Huguenots had a knock-on affect, instigating many others to relocate, seeking employment and better wages elsewhere. Chapter One will discuss the impact the Huguenots had on England’s cloth trades, and how they rejuvenated a declining silk industry in the area of Spitalfields, London.

### **1:1 Migration and Settlement**

England was at war with France for most of the eighteenth century. The Huguenots had endured years of religious discrimination for more than a century prior to the revocation, Jerry White suggests that these refugees were now only too eager to aid Britain against its old enemy; London proved an alluring draw to Frenchmen and women of talent.<sup>9</sup> Stuart Turner and Natalie Rothstein’s research using the Sun Insurance Policy Registers shows that the Huguenots gravitated to two textile centres,

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<sup>6</sup> Bibliothèque Nationale, *Fonds français*, MS 4283, fol. 23. in W. Scoville, *The Persecution of Huguenots and French Economic Development* (California, 1960), p. 214.

<sup>7</sup> Archives Nationales, G7 1688. Cited in *Ibid.*, p. 216 & 219.

<sup>8</sup> Rothstein, ‘Huguenots in the English Silk Industry’, pp. 129-130.

<sup>9</sup> J. White, *London in the Eighteenth Century* (London, 2012), p. 137-139.

Canterbury initially and then London.<sup>10</sup> Warren Scoville offers thought provoking ideas in regards to immigration, suggesting that it is an effective method of diffusion because of its selective nature. Scoville goes on to explain how ‘the hardship involved in uprooting from one’s homeland meant that only the most resourceful, energetic and courageous would move.’<sup>11</sup> He describes three types of migration: individual, group and minority; most Huguenots had been victims of forced migration due to religious persecution in their homeland, this initiated whole communities to relocate, and with little or no chance of ever returning, their efforts in making a new life elsewhere would have been extremely high. Because emigration was illegal under French Law, many fled with little or none of their personal belongings. Theya Molleson and Margaret Cox suggest that ‘Huguenot immigrants varied considerably, some brought all or part of their wealth from France...as well as skilled manpower and technical know-how’.<sup>12</sup> Samuel Smiles suggests that ‘though they were poor, they were not pauperised, but thrifty, and self-helping, and above all things eager in their desire to earn an honest living.’<sup>13</sup> Smiles further explains how had they been a weak person, they would have conformed like so many did, but the Huguenots who came to settle in England ‘were men with convictions, earnest for truth and ready to sacrifice their worldly goods and everything else to follow.’<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> The Sun Fire Office was founded in London in April 1710 and is the oldest existing insurance company in the world, records are now held at Bristol Record Office.

<sup>11</sup> W. Scoville, ‘Minority Migrations and the Diffusion of Technology’ in *The Journal of Economic History* vol. 11, issue 04, Fall 1951, pp. 347-360. p.353.

<sup>12</sup> T. Molleson and M. Cox, *The Spitalfields Project - Anthropology: The Middling Sort*. Vol. II (York, 1993), p. 160.

<sup>13</sup> Samuel Smiles, (23 December 1812 – 16 April 1904), was a Scottish author and government reformer. He is most known for writing *Self-Help* (1859), which elevated Smiles to celebrity status: almost overnight, he became a leading pundit and much-consulted guru.

<<http://infed.org/mobi/samuel-smiles-and-self-help/>> [Accessed 28/09/14].

S. Smiles, *The Huguenots: Their Settlements, Churches and Industries in England and Ireland* (London, 1884), p. 97.

<sup>14</sup> Molleson and Cox, *The Spitalfields Project*, p. 160. And S. Smiles, *The Huguenots*, p. 99.

Carolyn Lougee Chappell describes how it is possible that as many as 150,000 Huguenots left France during the 1680s, looking at the escape of one particular family, the Robillard de Champagné, and tracing their story through the memoirs written by the mother Marie, and her daughter Suzanne.<sup>15</sup> In 1687, six children (the mother and eldest son made their escape three months later) slipped among the wine casks aboard a ship bound for England.<sup>16</sup> Such remarkable sources give us insight into what the pain of exile was like for many families. Chappell suggests that ‘Huguenot refugees typically regrouped abroad in enclaves of kin and former neighbours...conserving amid foreign milieus their social networks, language, customs and religion.’<sup>17</sup> Marie speaks of the new Huguenot communities in which she later settled, she rarely mentions the name of anyone who is not a Huguenot. Clive Emsley asserts that the concentration of French speaking immigrants in well-defined communities ensured the survival of a distinctive culture and identity for several generations.<sup>18</sup>

During the late medieval period, London’s textile businesses, predominately wool at this point, were moving east to large open spaces, water access and their long standing association with the cloth trades. Daniel Defoe recalled how ‘the lanes were deep, dirty, and unfrequented; that Part now called Spitalfields-market was a Field of Grass, with Cows feeding on it, since the Year 1670.’<sup>19</sup> The transformation Defoe refers to was no doubt due to the influx of some 40,000-50,000 Huguenots who

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<sup>15</sup> C. Lougee Chappell, ‘The Pains I took to Save My/His Family’’: Escape Accounts by a Huguenot Mother and Daughter after the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes’ *French Historical studies*, Vol. 22, No. 1 (Winter, 1999), pp. 1-64. p. 8.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 9

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 7.

<sup>18</sup> C. Emsley, T. Hitchcock and R. Shoemaker, *Communities - Huguenot and French London*, Old Bailey Proceedings Online <[www.oldbaileyonline.org](http://www.oldbaileyonline.org)> [01 October 2014].

<sup>19</sup> Daniel Defoe, *A Tour Through the Whole Island of Great Britain: Volume II*, first published 1724-26, edited by Pat Rogers (London, 1971), p. 298.

arrived towards the later years of the seventeenth century.<sup>20</sup> Lucy Inglis describes how by 1700 ‘Spitalfields and Whitechapel to the east, was a mass of open spaces given over to brewing, cloth workers’ animals and illegal housing.’<sup>21</sup> As early as 1700 there were perhaps as many as 25,000 Huguenots settled in the city.<sup>22</sup> Arthur K. Sabin explains how ‘the open ground near Bishopsgate was covered by a network of streets and alleys, with houses built specially to meet the requirements of the weavers, embroiderers, silk dyers, throwsters and other craftsmen of immigration’.<sup>23</sup> A 1746 guide to London, called Spital Square the ‘great centre of the weaving trade in all its branches’.<sup>24</sup> The French Protestant community was one of the largest and most distinctive communities in the capital throughout the eighteenth century.<sup>25</sup> In one London district during the mid-eighteenth century, William Maitland described how ‘Many parts of this parish so greatly abound with French that it is an easy matter for a stranger to imagine himself in France’.<sup>26</sup> The French refugees settled primarily in two London districts, Soho, which was still under development, post the great fire, and had large numbers of empty properties; and the areas in and around Spitalfields and Bethnal Green, which crucially were classed outside of the city, thus exempt from the regulations many of London’s guilds enforced to protect their trade (Fig. 1:1). The Weavers’ Company was for weavers of all textiles, and according to its statutes, all those who practised weaving in the city of London had to be a member of the

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<sup>20</sup> L. Luu, *Immigrants and the Industries of London* (Aldershot, 2005), p. 4.

<sup>21</sup> L. Inglis, *Georgian London: Into the streets* (London, 2013), p. 285.

<sup>22</sup> R. Gwynn, *Huguenot Heritage: The History and Contribution of the Huguenots in Britain* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed., Brighton, 2000), cited in J. White, *London in the Eighteenth Century* (London, 2012), p. 138.

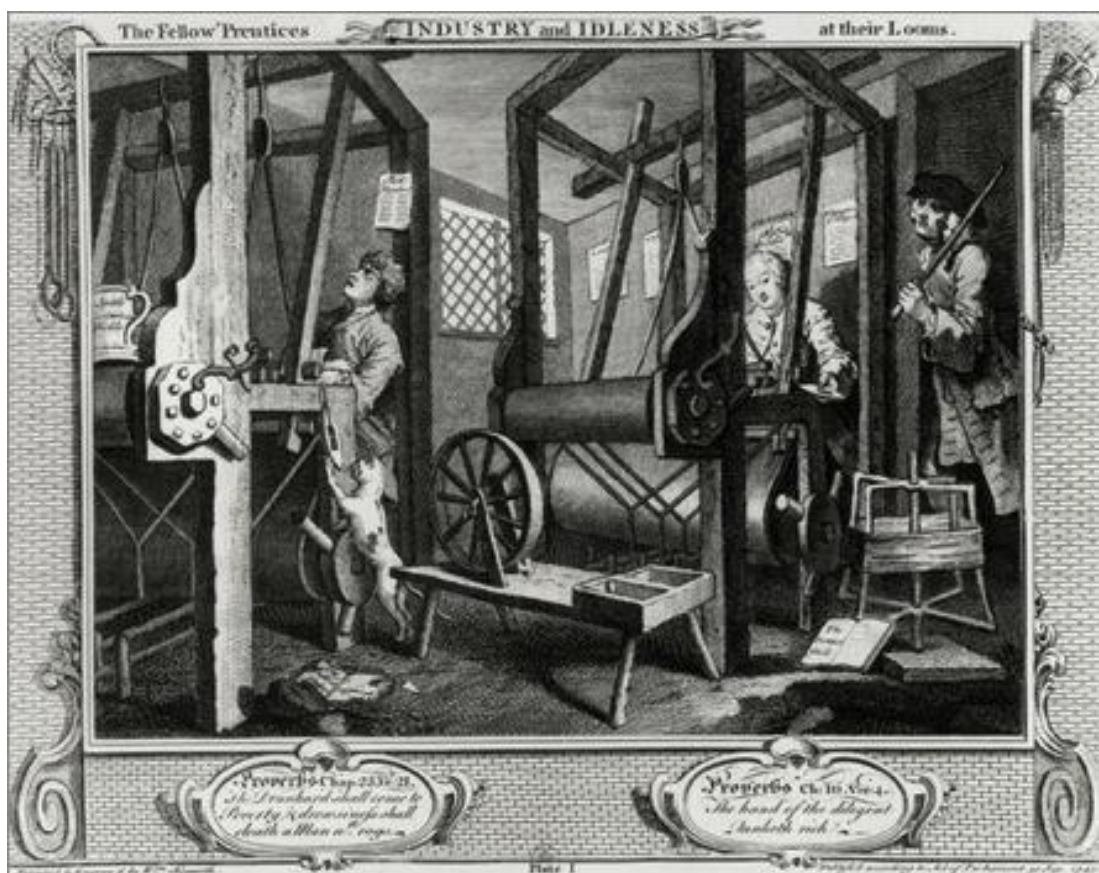
<sup>23</sup> A.K. Sabin, *Silk Weavers of Spitalfields and Bethnal Green* (London, 1931), p. 10-12.

<sup>24</sup> *A New and Accurate History and Survey of London, Westminster and Southwark*, Vol. VI, 1746, pp. 435-6 cited in A. Plummer *The London Weavers’ Company* (London, 1972) p. 178.

<sup>25</sup> See <<http://www.oldbaileyonline.org/static/Huguenot.jsp>> [Accessed 17/07/15].

<sup>26</sup> Lucy Inglis, *Georgian London* September 30, 2009 <<http://georgianlondon.com/page/21>> [Accessed 05/08/14].

company.<sup>27</sup> According to Rothstein it was only the ‘most prosperous weavers who lived in Spitalfields or in Bishopsgate without, the poorer weavers being in adjacent parishes like Bethnal Green.’<sup>28</sup> Mary D. George suggests that ‘the work was done in small, crowded rooms in horribly insanitary dwellings, and the air was carefully excluded by paper pasted over the cracks of the windows, to prevent the silk from losing weight and so making the weaver liable to deductions from his earnings’.<sup>29</sup>



**Figure 1:1 Industry and Idleness: plate 1. The Fellow ‘Prentices at their Looms**  
William Hogarth 30 September 1747

Source: <<http://www.tate.org.uk/whats-on/tate-britain/exhibition/hogarth/hogarth-hogarth-modern-moral-series/hogarth-hogarth-3>>

<sup>27</sup> A. Plummer *The London Weavers’ Company 1600-1970* (London, 1970), p.33.

<sup>28</sup> P. Thornton and N. Rothstein, ‘The Importance of Huguenots in the London Silk Industry’, *Proceedings of the Huguenot Society*, 20 (1958-64), pp. 60-94. p.78.

<sup>29</sup> M.D. George (1925), cited in P. Guillery, *The Small House in the Eighteenth Century* (New Haven, 2004), p.64.

## 1:2 Huguenot Influence

England had long been the leader in the production of wool; in 1565, cloth accounted for almost 80% of England's total exports.<sup>30</sup> Many, but not all, Huguenots who had fled to England were skilled artisans and craftsmen. Sabin suggests 'it was with these religious fugitives that silk weaving had its actual beginnings in the East London region, although the manufacture of silk stuffs had been practised in England on a small scale for the previous two hundred years.'<sup>31</sup> However, it is arguable that the Huguenots did not bring silk weaving to Spitalfields, but with their skills and knowledge they transformed it.

From an early period England turned to foreigners for their knowledge in silk manufacture; in 1331, Edward III issued letters of protection to Flemish weavers, to encourage them to come to England and develop their cloth industry.<sup>32</sup> In 1461, Lien Luu points out that 'during the reign of Edward VI, we find him granting a house in Westminster to an Italian named George Dominco', in return, Dominco was to weave damasks, velvets and cloths of gold and silver, passing his knowledge onto English weavers.<sup>33</sup> David Landes stresses that 'the greatest contribution of immigrant technicians and craftsmen for Britain was not what they did, but what they taught. By training a generation of skilled workers, these immigrants enabled an indigenous industry to be developed.'<sup>34</sup> Society at the time was so dependent on verbal means of communication that skills were acquired through means of demonstration and

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<sup>30</sup> Luu, *Immigrants and the Industries of London*, p. 1.

<sup>31</sup> A. K. Sabin, *Silk Weavers of Spitalfields and Bethnal Green* (London, 1931), p. 8.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.* p. 54.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.* p. 56 and A. Pettegree, 'Protestant Migration during the Early Modern Period', in *Le Migrazioni in Europa secc. XIII-XVIII*, Istituto Internazionale de Storia Econima, (Florence, 1994) pp. 441-458. p. 447.

<sup>34</sup> D.S. Landes, *The Unbound Prometheus: Technological change and industrial development in Western Europe from 1750 to the present* (Cambridge, 1969), pp.147-51.



practice. Jerry White claims that ‘foreigners brought talents that the British lacked until, in the second half of the century, the natives had learnt sufficient from the migrants to rival, rarely surpass, continental genius.’<sup>35</sup> But not only did the Huguenots impact on the England’s silk industry which will be discussed in greater detail later, White suggests that they ‘were inventive and hard-working at everything to which they turned their hands’ whether flower growing at Chelsea, calico printing in Wandsworth or silversmithing in Westminster, they also invigorated fine-linen works, passing on the knowledge of weaving batiste, as well as the manufacturing of the finest grades of woollens and velvets.<sup>36</sup> The French refugees brought technical know-how to the silk industry, which previously could only be procured from France.

England had been at a disadvantage due to her inability to cultivate silk, under James I’s instruction in 1607-1608, endeavours at growing mulberry plants in England were unfortunately squandered due to the poor climate which prevented the mulberry leaves from being ready to receive the silkworms when they hatched.<sup>37</sup> A century later, in 1718, John Apletree’s attempts also failed due to the climate.<sup>38</sup> But whilst some in England were looking at ways to encourage and develop their silk industry, wool manufacturers grew increasingly aware of the threat this could pose to an industry on which England’s economy so heavily relied. In addition, England was a major exporter of wool to the Low Countries, it was not only cheaper than their own native cloth but far superior in quality. The woven product was imported back into

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<sup>35</sup> White, *London in the Eighteenth Century*, p. 140.

<sup>36</sup> White, *London in the Eighteenth Century* p. 138.

<sup>37</sup> G.B. Hertz, ‘The Silk Industry in the Eighteenth Century’ in *The English Historical Review*, Vol. 24, No. 96 (Oct., 1909), pp.710-727. p. 710.

<sup>38</sup> ‘Industries: Silk-weaving’, *A History of the County of Middlesex: Volume 2: General; Ashford, East Bedfont with Hatton, Feltham, Hampton with Hampton Wick, Hanworth, Laleham, Littleton* (1911), pp. 132-137. < <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=22161> > [Accessed 02/09/14].

England, so effectively, Englishmen were wearing Flemish cloth woven from their own wool. Such a situation could not be sustained; governing bodies became aware of the fact that England needed to foster their wool industry, by reducing imports to generate employment for the British population. The most important branch of manufacture to which the refugees devoted themselves, and in which they achieved both fame and wealth, was silk (Fig 1:2). The Huguenots had greatest impact on the flowered branch and England's silk taffetas came to rival those of France, success depended upon reputation for quality and keeping up with fashion. England's Silk-Throwsters Guild was founded and incorporated in 1629, and by 1661 it had 40,000 members, and Gerald Hertz suggests 'chiefly under the inspiring influence of refugees.'<sup>39</sup> According to Smiles 'as much as 200,000 livres worth of black lustrings were annually bought by the English...they were made expressly for their market and known as "English taffeties"'. Amongst the Huguenot weavers, there were some individuals whose ingenious ideas earned them great success, the Huguenot pattern designer, Christopher Baudouin, 'who did so much to put the London silk weaving industry on its feet'.<sup>40</sup>

Various authorities stated that the figured silks which came out of the London manufactories at the end of the seventeenth century were due almost exclusively to three refugees, Lanson, Mariscot and Monceaux, thanks to the Huguenot father and son, by the name Mongeorge, who imparted to them the secret of adding a lustrous

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<sup>39</sup> Hertz, 'The Silk Industry in the Eighteenth Century', p. 710.

<sup>40</sup> J. Southernden Burn., *The History of the French, Walloon, Dutch and Other Foreign Protestant Refugees Settled in England* (London, 1846)  
<<https://archive.org/stream/historyoffrenchw00burn#page/n5/mode/2up>>[Accessed 04/09/14]. Thornton and Rothstein, *Huguenots in the London Silk Industry*, p. 66.

sheen to silk taffeta, ‘thenceforward Spitalfields enjoyed a large share of the trade for which Lyons had been so famous.’<sup>41</sup>



**Figure 1:2 Robe à la Française, brocaded lustring, England, c.1750**

Source: Arizona Costume Institute 1983.c.94.A-B

According to G. R. Porter, the persons engaged in this industry were, in 1692, incorporated by charter under the name of the Royal Lustring Company.<sup>42</sup> The company then procured the passing of an Act prohibiting ‘the importation of foreign lustrings and alamodes, alleging as a ground for passing such a restriction in their

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<sup>41</sup> S. Smiles, *Huguenots in England and Ireland* (London, 1884), p. 289.

<sup>42</sup> Peter Lekeux (1648-1723) born in Canterbury and moved to London in 1675. Lekeux was a founding member of the Lustring Company and also played a leading role in the Weavers’ Company, standing as spokesperson during the petitions to the House of Lords against the calico bill.

favour that the manufacture of such articles in England had now reached a greater degree of perfection than was achieved by foreigners.’<sup>43</sup>

In doing so, it instigated further decline of France’s cloth exports, because France had previously been the chief manufacturer of these goods, they were greatly affected when Frenchmen in England began to take over their production ‘which later threatened to send their products not only into foreign markets formerly served by French merchants but also into France itself.’<sup>44</sup> Many contemporaries believed that France’s religious troubles were to be blamed and that foreign countries were capitalising from it after ‘acquiring a great many of her workers are now in a position to compete with her’.<sup>45</sup> W. H. Manchèe states that it is difficult to imagine the condition of the silk industry after the revocation, but can we be certain of one thing ‘the trade of France was wrecked for a time by the flight of the Huguenot workmen’ and those who were left had to battle to maintain what was left.<sup>46</sup>

The Huguenots who had come to settle in England would no doubt have found it hard initially to set up connections. The French refugees were reliant on the English mercer to provide them with raw silk, who presumably at the beginning, would have favoured his own countrymen. According to Hertz, many English consumers were still intent on buying French goods and showed little patriotic sympathy by supporting their

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<sup>43</sup> The Company failed in 1720.

G. R. Porter, 'Treatise on the Silk Manufacture,' *Lardner's Cabinet Cyclopaedia* (1831), p. 60-1. <<http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=22161>> [Accessed on 22/08/14].

<sup>44</sup> Scoville., *The Persecution of Huguenots and French Economic Development* p. 219.

<sup>45</sup> Bibliothèque Nationale, *Fonds français*, MS21785, fol. 233. In Scoville., *The Persecution of Huguenots and French Economic Development* p. 222.

<sup>46</sup> W. H. Manchèe., ‘Some Huguenot Smugglers: The Impeachment of London Silk merchants 1698’ *Proceedings of the Huguenot Society of London* Vol. XV, No. 3. (London, 1937), p. 406.

home industries.<sup>47</sup> Two Old Jewry merchants, John Goudet and his partner David Barrau took advantage of such a situation, by employing refugee weavers and selling their cloths on the open market; it provided a way for the secret trade of smuggled goods from France to be sold as if made by the refugee weavers now in England.<sup>48</sup> But the weavers in France were concerned that eventually, consumers would become accustomed to the inferior quality and cheaper prices England was manufacturing and it would ruin their industry.<sup>49</sup> Smuggled silk was especially prized and makers at Spitalfields often tried to pass off their goods as being smuggled from France.



**Figure 1:3 Anna Maria Garthwaite, watercolour on paper design for silk, c. 1731**  
Source: V&A Collections Museum number: 5971:3

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<sup>47</sup> Hertz, 'The Silk Industry in the Eighteenth Century', p. 430.

<sup>48</sup> *Edinburgh Review*. XIII. (1826), p. 81. In Hertz, 'The Silk Industry in the Eighteenth Century', p. 720.

<sup>49</sup> Scoville, 'Huguenots and Diffusion of Technology', p. 301.

The most celebrated textile designer of the eighteenth century Anna Maria Garthwaite, who produced thousands of designs for flowered brocades and damasks; commissioned Huguenots to produce her designs, they are labeled with the names of the weavers to whom they were sold and annotated with precise instructions<sup>50</sup> (Fig 1:3).

### **1:3 English opinions**

A combination of the traditional anti-Catholicism Londoners, and propaganda depicting the brutalities Protestants in France had endured, helped develop a generally hospitable welcome towards the Huguenots. Contemporary sources reveal the various reactions natives had towards the arrival of Huguenots.<sup>51</sup> Daniel Defoe declared that ‘the master weavers in Spitalfields are men of exquisite art, clear heads and bright fancies in their business...’<sup>52</sup> The preacher Latimer, was equally as enthusiastic about the arrival of foreign blood, he stated ‘I wish that we could collect together such valuable persons in this Kingdom, as it would be the means of insuring its prosperity’.<sup>53</sup> William Hogarth depicted Huguenots in his 1738 engraving *Noon* (Fig 1:4). Along a crowded alley in London’s West End, Hogarth compares the respectable behavior and neat appearance of the French community, who display opulent French fashions and smart tailoring of expensive silks, with the disorderliness of the natives across the alley, where poorly dressed children scramble on the floor for scraps of food and a couple behind them engage in lewd behavior.

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<sup>50</sup> Thornton and Rothstein, *Huguenots in the London silk Industry*, p .73.

<sup>51</sup> White, *London in the Eighteenth Century*, p. 141.

<sup>52</sup> Defoe was employed to write on behalf of the Weavers’ Company, which will be discussed in chapter three, one should bear this in mind when reading his statement here.

D. Defoe, *The Complete English Tradesman 1731*, Vol. II, Part II, Chap. V, p. 154.

<sup>53</sup> Cited in Smiles, *The Huguenots in England and Ireland*, p.90.



**Figure 1:4 William Hogarth, 'Noon', 1738 engraving**

Source: <<http://www.vam.ac.uk/users/node/5590>>

Because of a growing belief that England was under populated in the second part of the seventeenth century, Professor E. Lipson suggested that Englishmen were less hostile towards immigrants than they had been during the sixteenth and early seventeenth century.<sup>54</sup> Lipson suggests that,

...the settlement of aliens must be assigned a prominent place among the factors which have helped to build up the industrial supremacy of

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<sup>54</sup> E. Lipson., *The Economic History of England: The Age of Mercantilism*, Vol. 3 (London 1934), pp. 57-59.

England. The infusion of new blood enriched and strengthened the national life, while the technical skill and knowledge of the industrial arts, possessed by the strangers within her gates, enabled this country to wrest from her rivals the secrets of important industries and become the workshop of the world.<sup>55</sup>

John Southerden Burn, who was on the Huguenot Society committee during the nineteenth century, recorded that ‘upon the settlement of these refugees in our towns, they appear soon to have obtained the goodwill of the Towns people...they employed many of the English poor...and always supporting their own poor.’<sup>56</sup> Huguenot loyalty to their adopted country was evident in the charities they supported, Rothstein explains how they did not support the more unorthodox charities however, such as the Foundling Hospital.<sup>57</sup> The diary written by a young boy of Huguenot descent, William Burgess, recorded that his father, Hugh Burgess, supported many charities and was a governor and committee member of the Bridewell and Bethlem Hospitals, and interestingly, the London Foundling Hospital for Abandoned and Deserted Children. Hugh Burgess was not a weaver but a successful businessman; nonetheless it reveals how keen many Huguenots were keen to integrate into English society.<sup>58</sup>

Smiles observed that initially most foreign immigrants were welcomed in England,

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<sup>55</sup> Ibid. pp. 60-61.

<sup>56</sup> J. Southerden Burn, *The History of the French, Walloon, Dutch and Other Foreign Protestant Refugees Settled in England from the Reign of Henry VIII to the revocation of the Edict of Nantes* (London, 1846) p. vi.

<<https://archive.org/stream/historyoffrenchw00burn#page/n5/mode/2up>> [Accessed 04/09/14].

<sup>57</sup> Rothstein, ‘Huguenots in the English Silk Industry’, p. 135.

<sup>58</sup> London Metropolitan Archives F/WHB AC/74/066

For further reading see Dianne Payne, ‘An Eighteenth-Century Gap Year’, published in *The Historian*, no. 107 (Autumn 2010).



regarded as valuable additions to the skilled working class of the country; their Protestantism no doubt helped Huguenots merge into society, where as other refugees met greater resistance. The Jewish communities in England for example, had taken advantage of the growing second-hand market and according to Lemire, ‘became front runners in the distribution of cast-off clothing’.<sup>59</sup> Unlike the Huguenots, the Jews could not claim the status of religious ally, nor were they acclaimed for contributing to England’s economy in the ways Huguenots had. England’s perception of this group was very different due to their religious heritage, as well as them being generally unskilled, their involvement with the second-hand clothing trade, which was linked with theft, tarnishing all those involved with the profession.<sup>60</sup>

Unsurprisingly, some native tradesmen were resistant towards the influx of skilled and industrious foreigners who threatened the well-being of their trade. At first, the Weavers’ Company gave foreigners a hostile welcome, in 1676 the Company laid down that ‘No alien or stranger born shall be admitted Master except it be debated and agreed at a full court...’<sup>61</sup> But by 1703 the Company relaxed their laws and a foreigner could now become a Master if they could prove they had served the mandatory seven years apprenticeship, by the beginning of the eighteenth century, Huguenots already made up seventeen per cent of all weavers in the company.<sup>62</sup> According to Rothstein, up until the 1740s the Huguenots played a relatively insignificant role in the Weavers’ Company, but when in the 1730s, the company dropped the distinction between ‘alien’ and ‘foreigners’ in official proceedings and

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<sup>59</sup> B. Lemire., *Dress, Culture & Commerce: The English Clothing Trade before the Factory 1660-1800* (London, 1997), p. 78.

<sup>60</sup> B. Williams *The Making of Manchester Jewry 1740-1875* (Manchester, 1985), p. 11

<sup>61</sup> Guildhall Library, Weavers’ Company, Ordinance and Record book 1577-1641 MS4647/f.248.

<sup>62</sup> Rothstein, ‘Huguenots in the English Silk Industry’, p. 139.

documents, the Company recruited as many French Weavers as possible, ‘it was a step of immense significance both for the future of the company and the industry.’<sup>63</sup>

The English government was also aware of the threat foreign skill could have on their native trade and so required the refugee tradesmen to employ at least two Englishmen in order to instruct them in new techniques.<sup>64</sup> Henry Saville, England’s Ambassador to France (1679-1682) realised that it would be beneficial to the nation if they not only let in the destitute, but also the prosperous, who would bring with them wealth and knowledge.<sup>65</sup> In 1681, Charles II issued a declaration whereby all Protestant refugees would be ‘welcomed and allowed to follow commerce, arts and trades as permitted by the laws of the realm...’<sup>66</sup>

Clive Emsley suggests that ‘there appears to have been little physical violence directed against the French refugees.’<sup>67</sup> However there were riots against French weavers in the East End in 1675, and again in 1681 and 1683 when attacks were taken out on the labour saving looms (often called Dutch looms). Officials at Tiverton reported ‘that the silk weavers and others have taken up against the French inhabitants in the city and suburbs, robbing them as they conceive of their trade and livelihood’, similar riots directed against foreigners were also reported in Exeter and Topsham.<sup>68</sup>

Scoville suggests how some Englishmen were jealous of foreigner’s financial success and favoured position, and complained that they engaged in unfair, competitive

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<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 127.

<sup>64</sup> Gwynn, *Huguenot Heritage*, p. 232.

<sup>65</sup> Cited in G. Lawless Lee, *The Huguenot Settlements in Ireland* (London, 1936), p. 17.

<sup>66</sup> Cited in Scoville, *The Persecution of Huguenots and French Economic Development*, p. 322.

<sup>67</sup> C. Emsley, T. Hitchcock and R. Shoemaker, *Communities - Huguenot and French London*, Old Bailey Proceedings Online <[www.oldbaileyonline.org](http://www.oldbaileyonline.org)> [Accessed 01/10/14].

<sup>68</sup> *HMC, Sixth Report of the Royal Commission on Historical Manuscripts No. 5*, (London, 1877), p. 372.cited in Gwynn, *Huguenot Heritage*, p. 245.

practices.<sup>69</sup> A Venetian Ambassador recorded that the English hatters ‘have also made a move against the French ones, as well as some other artisans in order to drive away from London all the workmen who are not natives or subjects of these realms...one day there was a rumour that they were going to massacre all the French, who have introduced various manufactures and who work for less than the English.’<sup>70</sup> In Norwich (1683), a ‘mob broke open one of their [Huguenot’s] Houses; misused a Women so, that she died in 2 or 3 Days after; the Pretence was, that these People would under-work them; however the French that dwelt there were forced to quit the Street that Night...’<sup>71</sup> Such reports show that many English artisans and tradesmen were concerned by the economic threat foreigners posed. But in the years to follow their feelings of resentment would be directed at another economical threat, foreign calico.

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<sup>69</sup> Smiles, *The Huguenots in England and Ireland*, p.90. and Scoville., ‘Huguenots and Diffusion of Technology’, p. 295&298.

<sup>70</sup> Calendar of State Papers, Venetian, 30 Aug 1675, (London, 1673-75), p. 449. Cited in B. Waddel *God, Duty and Community in English Life 1660-1720* (Woodbridge, 2012), p. 213.

<sup>71</sup> Francis Blomefield, *An Essay Towards a Topographical History of Norfolk* (5 Vols, Fersfields 1739-75) II, p. 294. Cited in B. Waddel *God, Duty and Community* p. 213.

## Chapter Two: The Fabrics of Fashion

According to Chinese records silk originated there around the year 2650 BC. In China, Canton was the starting point for the '*Maritime Silk Road*' that went to India, southeast Asia, the Middle East, and Africa; it moved through Italy around the twelfth century and slowly spread to other European countries.<sup>72</sup> Beverly Lemire and Giorgio Riello suggest that the 'silk industry first took root in Italy, where merchants had long participated in the trade of silken draperies from Byzantine and Islamic territories.'<sup>73</sup> By the sixteenth century silk cloth was being produced in *several* Italian and now Spanish cities, and developing trade networks enabled the establishment of a silk industry in France.

As highlighted in Chapter One, French refugees introduced new methods for throwing silk, new designs for damasks and other figured patterns as well as specialised knowledge of dyeing and finishing cloth. The acquirement of these skills would have undoubtedly taken far longer to establish without the influx of foreign immigrants.

### 2:1 Silk

Early modern England suffered two economic problems, Luu suggests that these were: 'the love of foreign luxuries, and the lack of skills to satisfy its own wants'.<sup>74</sup>

As early as 1615, Lord Carew commented that 'there is such a madness in England as that we cannot endure our home-made clothe, but must needs be clothed in silke'.<sup>75</sup>

In the 1500s, Europe's manufacturing skills were well behind those found in China,

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<sup>72</sup> Sabin, *Silk Weavers of Spitalfields and Bethnal Green*, p. 5.

<sup>73</sup> B. Lemire and G. Riello, *East & West: Textiles and Fashion in early Modern Europe* in *Journal of Social History*, Vol. 41, No. 4. (Summer, 2008), pp. 887-916. p. 889.

<sup>74</sup> Luu, *Immigrants and Industries.*, p.1.

<sup>75</sup> *Letters from George, Lord Carew to Sir Thomas Roe, Ambassador to the court of the Great Mogul 1615-1617*, ed. J. Maclean, (London, 1860), p. 77.

India and Persia, trade networks, too, were undeveloped making foreign commodities much desired amongst Europeans. The Levant Company, formed in 1581, was a crucial player in breaking through these restricted trade routes. John Hayne's *Great Britain's Glory* (1715) reveals that of the 4650 bales of raw silk, which entered England in 1715, 2500 of them came from Turkey and the Levant.<sup>76</sup> The exotic names given to the varying types of silk, such as bombazine, bizarre, sarsenet, loretos and alamode, emphasises how luxury foreign goods were aptly targeted at western consumers obsessed with the exotic, Sarah-Grace Heller suggests that it also reflects that 'the vernacular public of this time had some consciousness of shopping...an important clue for the presence of a fashion system'.<sup>77</sup>

Silk was a luxury product, the principal consumers of which were the middle-upper and upper classes; David MacPherson commented in 1805 upon the gowns of the early eighteenth century, 'the common use of silk, if it were only to be worn while it retains its lustre, is proper only for ladies of ample fortune'.<sup>78</sup> But Luu suggests that initially, although the wealthy classes may have been content with local-made silks to line their clothes, they were not yet prepared to relinquish their foreign cloths for the inferior substitute England was attempting to create.<sup>79</sup>

Silk brought vast amounts of new wealth to the mercantile classes, and wealth, as opposed to birth, now structured many of Europe's urban centres. In other words,

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<sup>76</sup> Cited in Hertz, 'The Silk Industry in the Eighteenth Century', p. 711.

<sup>77</sup> S. G. Heller, Fashion in French Crusade Literature: Desiring Infidel Textiles," in Désirée G. Koslin and Janet E. Snyder, eds., *Encountering Medieval Textiles and Dress* (New York, 2002), p. 109

<sup>78</sup> D. MacPherson, *Annal of Commerce, Manufactures, Fisheries and Navigation*, (Edinburgh, 1805), Vol. 4, p. 81. in J. Styles, *The Dress of the People* (Newhaven & London 2007), p. 110.

<sup>79</sup> Luu, *Immigration and the Industries of London*, p. 7

fashion was allowing those of low birth to exceed their social standing and emulate, through clothing, those of higher ranks. According to a 1503 Bern chronicler, silks could even be found on the backs of peasants.<sup>80</sup> In response, restrictions were legislated across Europe in an attempt to repress the lower classes. Lemire suggests that traditionalists accepted silk fabrics for adornments of the church, hung over altars or for cardinals' robes, but took offence to them being used to clothe the common person.<sup>81</sup> In 1621, an MP declared, 'God did not attire our first parents with excrements of worms.'<sup>82</sup> The English silk industry had been on a steady decline from 1680, therefore, there is a very strong argument that it was the Huguenots who gave stimulus to the development of a cloth (silk) produced in England that would meet these requirements and go on to contend with even those from Lyon. The significance of Asian imports into Europe instigated great change in consumer demands, and English silk and wool manufacturers sought assistance from the government. The early sumptuary laws' main objective was to preserve distinction between ranks, but this dissertation is concerned with the later Acts, which attempted to protect England's home-grown cloth industries against foreign imports.

## **2:2 Acts of Government**

A sumptuary law was laid down in 1363, whereby a person's salary determined how much one could spend on cloth, showing greater interest in defining ranks than protecting English trades. N. B. Harte explains how 'sumptuary legislation was repealed in 1604 for political and constitutional reasons rather than because of

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<sup>80</sup> J. M. Vincent, *Costume and conduct in the laws of Basel, Bern, and Zurich, 1370-1800*, (New York, 1969) p. 45.

<sup>81</sup> Lemire and Riello, *East & West*, p. 891.

<sup>82</sup> Anon., *England's Vanity or the Voice of God Against the Monstrous Sin of Pride in Dress and Apparel*, London, 1683, p. 132. In A. Ribeiro, *Dress and Morality*, (London, 2004), p. 94.

opposition to the principle of state control of dress.’<sup>83</sup> Post 1604, Bills tended to favour the English cloth industry, restricting imported luxury goods; the Bill of 1621 for example, proposed that ‘all prentices and servants male and female, except such as attend upon ambassadors and peers of the realm, should wear nothing but cloth or stuff made out of wool.’<sup>84</sup> Even the dead were not exempt, an Act passed in 1666 (reestablished in 1678) which continued until 1814 (although before then it was largely ignored), aimed at ‘lessening the importation of linen from beyond the seas, and the encouragement of the woollen and paper manufacturer of the kingdom.’ The Act required that

No corpse of any person (except those who shall die of the plague) shall be buried in any shift, sheet, or shroud, or anything whatsoever made or mingled with flax, hemp, silk, hair, gold, or silver, or in any stuff, or thing, other than what is made of sheep’s wool only...for the encouragement of the woollen manufactures of the Kingdom.<sup>85</sup>

A penalty fine of £5 was put upon those not adhering to the law. Despite the Weavers’ Company making petitions to parliament against the imports, they were at first, slow to react, passing a somewhat stunted law that allowed for only garments made of wool to be worn from All Saints Day to the Annunciation of Our Lady (1 Nov 1676-25 Mar 1677). During the last quarter of the seventeenth century, England’s weavers noticed the dramatic affect French imported silk was having on their trade; in 1678, a further

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<sup>83</sup> N.B. Harte, ‘State Control of Dress and Social Change in Pre-Industrial England’ in *Trade, Government and Economy in Pre-Industrial England*, D.C. Coleman and A.H. John, (London, 1976). p. 148.

<sup>84</sup> *Common Debates 1621*, III, p. 36 in Harte, ‘State Control of Dress and Social Change in Pre-Industrial England’, p. 150.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 152. People dying of the plague were allowed to be buried in the traditional linen.

law stated that no French silk or linen was to be imported from abroad. But English weavers received no respite as the people did not return to the home-spun woollens and silks, but turned instead to Indian fabrics, exotic and brightly coloured printed and painted calicoes. Alfred Plummer asserts that ‘English silk weavers had been menaced by competition from Indian textiles since 1621 when the powerful monopolistic East India Company first began seriously to consider marketing Bengal silks in England.’<sup>86</sup> Lemire suggests that these fabrics reflect the ‘insatiable appetite for Asian-style textiles which reshaped Europe.’<sup>87</sup> A ‘calico craze’ now consumed England’s people and ‘by 1687 calico and chintz had become the wear of fashion’.<sup>88</sup> A pamphleteer said ‘on a sudden, we saw all our women, rich and poor, cloath’d in calico, printed and painted; the gayer and the more tawdry the better.’<sup>89</sup> (Fig 2:2)



**Figure 2:2 Indian calico, painted and dyed c.1740. Platt Hall, No. 1938.443**  
Source: Author

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<sup>86</sup> Plummer, *The London Weavers Company*, p. 292.

<sup>87</sup> Lemire and Riello, *East & West*, p. 895.

<sup>88</sup> *The Manufacturer by Daniel Defoe together with Issues of the British Merchant and the Weaver*, Introduction by Robert N. Gosselink. (New York, 1978). p. vii.

<sup>89</sup> Cited in Plummer, *The London Weavers' Company*, p.292.



## 2:3 Calico

As men's and women's clothing changed in favour of lighter materials from the mid-seventeenth century, Indian wrought silks and printed and painted calicoes became increasingly desired, the manufacturers of English wool and silk continued to complain to parliament of the affect such fabrics were having on their industries. Although their petition in 1680 against wearing East India fabrics was rejected, additional duties of 10 per cent were imposed in 1685, which then doubled again in 1690. Plummer describes how during the 1690s 'the weavers' plight became even more desperate, for beside the competition from abroad, they also appeared to be suffering from serious overcrowding of their industry at home...all were at breaking point.'<sup>90</sup> Many weavers took on apprentices for the initial payment they received. An article in the *Weekly Journal or British Gazetteer*, June 1719, suggests the weavers are in such a state of unemployment primarily due to them 'taking so many Prentices for the sake of the Money they have with them; not considering whether they shall have Employment for them or not.'<sup>91</sup>

The trade in printed cotton had been occurring unbeknownst to England; according to Riello, cotton textiles in the fifteenth century were virtually unknown in most parts of Europe.<sup>92</sup> The arrival of the Portuguese in India, just after the turn of the sixteenth century, redirected trade routes and brought great volumes of exotic goods from the East to the West. In Maxine Berg's study of imported luxury items from India and China in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, Berg notes how the trade

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<sup>90</sup> Ibid., p.293.

<sup>91</sup> *Weekly Journal or British Gazetteer*, Saturday June 27<sup>th</sup>, 1719. Gale Doc No. Z2091804674.

<sup>92</sup> Carbon dating on textiles from Old Cairo date them from the tenth to fifteenth centuries. Lemire and Riello., *East & West*, p. 892. And R. Barnes, "Indian Trade Cloth in Egypt: the Newbury Collection" in *Textiles in Trade* (Washington, 1990), pp.178-191.

‘stimulated a programme of product innovation in Europe in attempts to ‘imitate’ and make indigenous those products which were at that time manufactured in the advanced consumer societies’.<sup>93</sup> Until the last quarter of the seventeenth century, as far as technique was considered, much of Europe, especially England, still lacked behind the Far East. But England needed to learn fast, if for nothing but economic reasons, the possible revenue was all too apparent. England was long accustomed to mixing dyed yarns and creating patterns on the loom, not in fastening and applying several colours directly onto cotton. Europe developed its own methods for emulating foreign goods. Influenced by exotic flora and fauna found on imported Indian chintzes (and calicoes), Crewelwork embroidery became increasingly popular for decorating dress and interior furnishing (Fig 2:2).



**Figure 2:2 Crewel work curtain**

Source: <<http://www.tennants.co.uk/Catalogue/Lots/84726.aspx#image>>

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<sup>93</sup> M. Berg ‘In Pursuit of Luxury: Global History and British Consumer Goods in the Eighteenth Century’ *Past and Present* 182 (2004) pp. 85-142. p.86

These cotton fabrics represented a new form of modesty. According to Georg Simmel, the economy of fashion is made by unsettled affects, he suggests that fashion could only occur in 'higher civilisations' whereby the 'foreignness' of an object only increased the desirability: the movement towards the unknown was only for the sake of change itself.<sup>94</sup> Although we might perceive them today as a considerable downgrade from the lustrous silks so often associated with eighteenth century dress, for the contemporary, they represented status, an awareness of worldly goods and the very pinnacle of prestige. They went far beyond the notion of conspicuous consumption.

According to Plummer, English calico printing was probably founded in 1676 by a William Sherwin of West Ham near London, but we should approach this source with scepticism.<sup>95</sup> Earlier attempts at printing onto a linen ground were recorded in 1619, when George Wood was granted a twenty-one year patent for printing on linen cloth in England and Wales.<sup>96</sup> It is far more likely, suggests Stuart Robinson, that the 'industry developed thanks to the expertise and knowledge of those who had worked in similar undertakings in the Netherlands, especially French Huguenots...'<sup>97</sup> It was estimated in 1711 that the English calico printers were printing around one million

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<sup>94</sup> G. Simmel, 'Fashion', *The American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 62, No. 6, (May, 1957), pp. 541-558. p. 136-7. For further reading on this subject see *Simmel's Theory of Fashion as a Hypothesis of Affective Capitalism* by Juhana Venäläinen <[http://www.academia.edu/4440689/Simmels\\_Theory\\_of\\_Fashion\\_as\\_a\\_Hypothesis\\_of\\_Affective\\_Capitalism](http://www.academia.edu/4440689/Simmels_Theory_of_Fashion_as_a_Hypothesis_of_Affective_Capitalism)> [Accessed 04/09/14].

<sup>95</sup> Plummer, *The London Weavers' Company*, p.294. See A.P. Wandsworth and J. de Lacy Mann, *The cotton Trade and Industrial Lancashire, 1600-1780* (Manchester, 1931) Chapter VII, pp. 129-144.

<sup>96</sup> G. Turnbull, *A History of the Calico Printing Industry of Great Britain* (Altrincham, 1947) p. 18.

<sup>97</sup> S. Robinson, *History of Printed Textiles* (London, 1969), p. 15. As cited in Lemire and Riello., *East & West*, p. 898.

yards of calico annually.<sup>98</sup> Alfred Wandsworth and Julia Mann point out that ‘by the early years of the eighteenth century the East India Trade Company was complaining that printing could be done in England at half the price charged for India goods and in better colours and patterns.’<sup>99</sup> But until the 1730s, England still produced cloth of far inferior quality to the complex Indian designs, they relied heavily on printing rather than painting; the Basel calico printer Jean Ryhiner commented in 1766 that ‘because the use of painting instead of printing demands a greater degree of skill and is much slower...we could never adopt their methods, for we lack skilled craftsmen’.<sup>100</sup>

As we approach the start of the eighteenth century, new legislations focused on the restriction of silks and printed calicoes from abroad. In 1701, for example, it was prohibited not only to import but also to wear such fabrics from Persia, China and India. For a time, women were cautious of wearing their inhibited clothing, but as this dissertation will later discuss, this did not last. The Act did not extend to calicoes printed in England, and with such a strong consumer demand, England was provided with the perfect opportunity to develop their calico-printing skills. A commentator for the House of Lords stated in 1702;

Though it was hoped that this prohibition would have discouraged the consumption of those goods, we find that allowing calicoes unstained to be brought in, has occasioned such an increase of the printing and staining calicoes here, and the printers and painters have brought that art to such

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<sup>98</sup> Wandsworth and de Lacy Mann, *The cotton Trade and Industrial Lancashire*, p. 133.

<sup>99</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 133.

<sup>100</sup> Cited in Berg ‘In Pursuit of Luxury’ p. 115.

perfection, that it is more prejudicial to us than it was before the passing of that Act.<sup>101</sup>

## **2:4 Fashioning Society**

Apart from bringing great wealth to many European merchants, silk allowed the upper classes to adorn themselves and express their status and monetary wealth; and partially enlightened the dress of even the lower classes, due to the availability of silk garments increasing through the developing second hand trade. But where silk had failed in reaching the wider market, cotton succeeded. Realistically, silk had many impediments that made it a cumbersome commodity for the lower classes, a simple yet crucial element being its inability to keep clean. According to Aileen Ribeiro ‘for the majority of the population, reliance had to be placed on the locally produced stuffs for clothing, for imported materials were prohibitive in price given average wage.’<sup>102</sup> Thus, the cheaper, unrestricted printed cottons and linens being produced in England enabled many of England’s poor to engage with fashion; the scraps of fabric left with children at the Foundling Hospital testify to this (Fig 2:3).

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<sup>101</sup> Commissioners for Trade and Plantations, ‘Account of the Trade of the Kingdom’, in Historical Manuscripts Commission, *The Manuscripts of the House of Lords, 1702-1704* (London, 1910 ed).

<sup>102</sup> A. Ribeiro, *Dress in Eighteenth-Century Europe* (New Haven & London, 2002), p. 82.



**Figure 2:3 Flowered chintz**

Clerk's description: '1 gown striped cotten cuffed with chins'

London Metropolitan Archives, A/FH/A/9/1/149. Foundling no. 13414.

Source: Author

Silk and cotton are much alike, both helped generate great wealth for the mercantile classes and determined fashion history as we know it today, but printed and painted cottons went beyond; they managed to redefine the consumer habits of people across the classes, and 'contributed to a collective phenomenon historians and theoreticians have called fashion.'<sup>103</sup> Woollen fabrics were for many people a clothing staple, and a reliable trade commodity for the nation. Amongst those criticised for the downfall of England's wool and silk industries, servants and the working classes were the most often cited. Lemire suggests 'enormous public volatility was unleashed when non-elite women defied traditions in apparel.'<sup>104</sup> The exaggerated descriptions by the elite classes on the dress of the lower orders, suggests their apprehension towards the way

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<sup>103</sup> Lemire and Riello., *East & West*, p. 888.

<sup>104</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 118.

middling folk were adorning their persons became a popular topic within newspapers, periodicals and pamphlets. The lower classes were slandered for dressing above their stations, but as the eighteenth century progressed the upper classes' dress relaxed, and so each end of the spectrum collided. A Frenchman Abbé Le Blanc commented in 1747 how ridiculous it was that the upper classes were inclined to emulate their inferiors '...at London masters dress like their valets, and duchesses copy after chambermaids.'<sup>105</sup>

The pro-wool pamphlets which will be discussed in Chapter Three, were aimed strongly towards working class women and which mocked their inability to refrain from buying calico, but in doing so they credited women of lower ranks with consumption power. Slandered for dressing above their station, no other group of working class people blurred the divisions of rank so much as servants. Lemire states that 'material choices mattered, for it was the everyday decisions of the common folk, their desires and capacity to choose and reject that redirected patterns of trade, patterns of industry and patterns of society'.<sup>106</sup> In the 1720s, Voltaire on visiting London noted how 'commerce which has enriched the citizens of England has helped to make them free, and that liberty in turn has expanded commerce. This is the foundation of the greatness of state.'<sup>107</sup> The inspiration for changes in dress stem from personal, local and regional influences, according to Lemire, as a society moved from an economy of scarcity to one with growing abundance, the lower classes became able to engage with material expression.<sup>108</sup> It gave them choice. Despite

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<sup>105</sup> Le Blanc, I p.19:II, p. 90. Cited in E. J. Hobsbawm, *Industry and Empire*, p. 4.

<sup>106</sup> Common Debates 1621, IV, p.59; p497; III, p. 449. In B. Lemire, *The British Cotton trade 1690-1815: International Trade and the Politics of Consumption* Vol. 2 (London, 2010)

<sup>107</sup> Voltaire, *Letters Philosophiques* Letter X in E. J. Hobsbawm, *Industry and Empire: The Birth of the Industrial Revolution* ( London, 1999 ed.), p. 4.

<sup>108</sup> Lemire, 'The Business or Everyday life' p. 111.

sumptuary laws coming to an end under the reign of James I, governments still maintained a restraint on the material expressions of the lower classes, the ‘calico crisis’ reflects these attempts.

In the years leading up to the Calico Bill of 1721, contemporary newspapers reported weavers attacking women found wearing calico gowns; these sources reveal the reality and severity of a situation imposed on society. Chapter Three will address the methods which were employed to help govern foreign imports in a bid to protect national industries.



### Chapter Three: Printed Persuasion

The Weavers' Company commanded some authority, both within and outside the silk industry. They were instrumental in the lobbying of Parliament for legislation to protect the industry from foreign competition. It would seem that the weavers' riotous actions were at first directed at the Honourable East India Trade Company, as reports from 1697 uncover how many weavers acted out their frustrations; on 22 March 1697 a number of weavers attacked the house of Mr Bohmer in Spitalfields, a member of parliament and Deputy Governor of the East India Trade Company.<sup>109</sup> In desperate attempts to destroy the trade of foreign cloth and to have their convictions noticed, the weavers took it into their own hands, they entered shops and tore up calicoes and imported silks; usually journeymen but sometimes women and children, insulted and harassed calico wearing women in the street. The *Weekly Journal* reported in July 1720 that 'the Weavers' wives continue to vent their Anger upon all the Callicoe Cloathes that fell in their way...'<sup>110</sup> The Weavers' Company tried to minimise disturbances and endeavoured to prevent them, as early as 1701, the Weavers' Company had to issue a disavowal of their journeymen who abused Gentlewomen and others that wore East India Company silks.<sup>111</sup> The waves of legislation were demanded by journeymen weavers in their vigorous demonstrations and petitioning of the company, Parliament and the Royal family, but this Chapter will look at how the Weavers' Company employed the press to voice their opinions, and examines how printed publications became the violence of persuasion.

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<sup>109</sup> Cited in Plummer *The London Weavers' Company 1600-1970*, p.294.

<sup>110</sup> *Weekly Journal* Saturday July 2<sup>nd</sup> 1720. Issue 83. Gale Doc No. Z2614253665.

<sup>111</sup> *Post Man & The Historical Account*. 4 October 1701. Issue 883.

### 3:1 Daniel Defoe and the Weavers

When the Printing Act lapsed in 1695, it enabled printers to publish newspapers and other forms of printed material with greater freedom.<sup>112</sup> The Stamp Act duties suggest annual circulations of 2.4 million in 1713 to 7.3 million in 1750, Jeremy Black points out that this figure indicates that papers were in the reach of almost everyone.<sup>113</sup> Even the poor could borrow papers from hawkers for a third of the price, which would then be returned to the publishers unsold.<sup>114</sup> Printed handbills, pamphlets, books and newspaper articles from writers like Henry Elking, Richard Steel (*The Spinster*, 1719) and Claudius Rey (*The Weavers True Case*, 1719), were frequently used to recruit support; but the weavers turned to Daniel Defoe to persuade parliament in banning the importing, manufacturing and wearing of printed calicoes. Believing that he would convey them in a sympathetic light, their reputation was by this point, perhaps irrevocably ruined due to the brutal attacks on calico-wearing women. Owing to this, Defoe began at a great disadvantage. The journalist was at the height of his career; approaching the age of sixty, he had just published *Robinson Crusoe* in April 1719. Defoe had a longstanding sympathetic interest in England's textiles, and had been writing about their troubled times in *The Weekly Journal* or *The Saturday's Evening Post*.

The twice-weekly paper was titled *The Manufacturer: OR The British Trade truly Stated Wherein The Case of the Weavers, and the Wearing of Calicoes, are*

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<sup>112</sup> The Licensing of the Press Act 1662 or An Act for preventing 'the frequent Abuses in printing seditious treasonable and unlicensed Books and Pamphlets and for regulating of Printing and Printing Presses.' The Printing Act was a comprehensive measure for the control of the press. <http://library.oxfordjournals.org/content/s5-XXXIII/4/296.extract> [Accessed 06/09/14]. Also see H. Barker *Newspapers, Politics and English Society 1695-1855* (Essex, 2000)

<sup>113</sup> J. Black., *The English Press in the Eighteenth Century* (Aldershot, 1991), p. 105.

<sup>114</sup> Barker, *Newspapers, Politics and English Society*, p. 60.

*Consider'd* and was aimed at parliament to convince them to pass an Act which favoured the weavers and would stamp out the wearing of imported calico. According to Christian Huck, the paper was priced at three half pennies, but was apparently given free to MPs.<sup>115</sup> Defoe's first issue was published on 30 Oct 1719, in which, he reached out to the female consumers, warning women, especially those who had children, of the disastrous implications the calico industry was having on the weavers' families. In this first issue, he does not mention its effects upon the economy but highlights the innocent families who were being punished as a result of their careless consumer habits. Intent on generating shame amongst them, he addressed the fairer sex, attempting to persuade women emotionally, taking advantage of their assumed maternal instincts.

And let the Wives...especially such as are Mothers of Children and are yet Wearers of Callicoës...let them consider how many Families of Mothers and Children they help to starve, by gratifying their Callico-Fancy, at the Expence of the Poor, and encouraging that Trade. It can Scarce be imagin'd that any Woman that has the Bowels of a Mother, could bear so much as the Thoughts...of being in any Degree, an Instrument of bringing such a Calamity upon others.<sup>116</sup>

This first issue is of extreme importance, it comes four months after the riots and attacks on calico wearers began, Defoe is not justifying the weavers' actions, but

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<sup>115</sup> C. Huck, 'Calico Bill and the Calico Madams: Fashion, Print and the Public' in *Proceedings of the Conference of the German Association of University Teachers of English* Vol. XXVIII (Germany, 2007), pp. 53-63. p. 53.

<sup>116</sup> R. Gosselink, *The Manufacturer by Daniel Defoe together with Issues of the British Merchant and the Weaver*, Issue number 1. (New York, 1978).

subtly stating to the nation that the desperate acts of violence demonstrated by the weavers are merely an expression of concern they have for their families, and hopes that his paper will bring awareness to those ignorant of the damage wearing Indian calico has. Also, the fact that these concerns are mentioned in the first issue implies that female consumers were viewed as the chief concern. As the paper evolves, we see the development of Defoe's underlying objective, continually seeking to persuade the Lords to approve a Bill prohibiting all calico.

Defoe's primary action was to redefine the weaver. By suggesting that all tradesmen, manufacturers, landlords, tenants, gentry and commonality were included in the dispute, he projected an ideology whereby the poor supported the rich, arguably, this strategy aimed to get the support of all classes. The drapers, who sold calico were not prepared to see their businesses fail, and attempted to refute Defoe by enlisting the lawyer, and politician John Asgill to respond to him. Asgill wrote in the *British Merchant: OR A Review of the Trade of Great Britain, So far as it is Falsly stated by The Manufacturer*, he declared; 'And to throw stones against the printed callicoës and linens as the cause why the silkthrowers and weavers want work, is an oblique calumny...so the prohibiting of them would be no remedy'.<sup>117</sup> Debates were common, the audience, in wanting information, also sought to be entertained through the reading about opposing views.<sup>118</sup> For a while, Defoe answered him and addressed some of Asgill's points (see Issues 8, 10-13, 17), however by Issue 23, Defoe explains how he is tired of it and will say no more to him.

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<sup>117</sup> John Asgill 'A brief answer to a brief state of the question' (London, 1719) Issue 15, p. 12-13. British Library ref: W. P. 9530/331.

<sup>118</sup> Huck 'Calico Bill and the Calico Madams'. p. 56.

The first thirty-one issues of *The Manufacturer* form an apologetic undertone on behalf of the weavers, the tactic no doubt worked as by late December 1719, the case was taken before the House of Commons for discussion. The *Weekly Journal* recorded that ‘a great many People this week laid Wagers about the Callicoe and Insolvent Bills’.<sup>119</sup> By January 1720, Defoe is again warning the Commons that if they do not act fast, the riotous acts will only resume. Such a statement was no likely intended to enthuse the deflated weavers, who despite great efforts had still not achieved the desired result. The weavers continued to petition to parliament throughout this time, the *Original Weekly Journal* from February 1720 records ‘On Monday, when the House of Commons were upon the Callicoe Bill, a Quaker from Norwich made such a florid and eloquent speech at the Bar for its passing as surpriz’d most of the Members of that Honourable Society’.<sup>120</sup> By March 1721, the Act was recited in *Applebee’s Original Weekly Journal* and stated;

Both the Lords and Commons have now pass’d the callicoe bill, entituled, An Act to preserve and encourage the woolen and silk manufactures of the Kingdom, and for the more effectual employing the poor, prohibiting the use and wear of All printed, painted, stained and dyed callicoes in Apparel, Householdstuff, furniture and otherwise after the twenty fifth day of December 1722 (except as is therein excepted).<sup>121</sup>

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<sup>119</sup> *Weekly Journal* Saturday February 6<sup>th</sup> 1720. Gale Doc No. Z26245112865.

<sup>120</sup> *Ibid.*, Saturday February 6<sup>th</sup> 1720.

<sup>121</sup> *Applebee’s Original Weekly Journal*, Saturday March 18<sup>th</sup>, 1721.

A fine of twenty pounds was incurred to anyone found to ‘sell, utter or expose to sale any printed, painted, stained or dyed callicoe.’<sup>122</sup> These results no doubt gave a great deal of much needed motivation to the weavers cause, Defoe uses a rhetorical strategy to address the subject of smuggling, he cannot directly accuse the powerful East India Company of smuggling and so uses the device of an interview (to a fictional gentleman) to initiate the idea. Between 1689 and 1759, France banned not only the import, but also the manufacture of printed cottons, although a few small regions were exempt, Rouen, Nantes and Marseille amongst them.<sup>123</sup> It has already been suggested that smuggled goods were highly sought after, and due to the calico Acts (1701 and 1721), this illegal trading would only increase. Defoe’s more rational arguments are abandoned in later issues, he now takes great advantage of the outbreak of plague in Marseille, assuming the threat of plague and possible death might radicalise calico consumers (see Issue 66). Defoe’s strategies are devious, he does not declare statements but rather suggests theories, in another issue he writes passively, ‘Ware Callicoes then! Says The Manufacturer; Ladies have a care’, note the spelling of ‘Ware’.<sup>124</sup> Defoe continues to link calico with plague infested places, ‘What Frenzy must Possess our people, that we should be so fond of wearing Callicoes, that we will venture upon them, bet them come from what Part of the World they will, without Examining whether they, come from Marseille or any other infected Places.’<sup>125</sup>

Amongst the various pro-wool pamphlets that were written at the time, Defoe’s paper is intriguing, he employs a range of techniques, manipulating, influencing, shaming,

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<sup>122</sup> *Ibid.*, Saturday March 18<sup>th</sup>, 1721.

<sup>123</sup> Lemire and Riello, *East & West*, p. 898.

<sup>124</sup> Gosselink, *The Manufacturer by Daniel Defoe together with Issues of the British Merchant and the Weaver*, Issue number 67.

<sup>125</sup> *Ibid.*, Issue number 69.

enforcing, and suggesting. Defoe carried his argument out to a successful conclusion. By 1721 a total ban on all painted or printed calicoes, Indian and English, was enforced upon the people of England; a measure already implemented in France (1689) and Spain (1713), Holland being the only nation to avoid such regulations and which would become an integral player in the illegal supply of contraband textiles into England and much of Europe.<sup>126</sup>

### **3:2 Newspapers**

Newspapers too, disseminated pro-wool and anti-wool propaganda, an article published in the *Weekly Journal or Saturday's Post* dated Saturday 15 August 1719, and is addressed to the publisher Nathaniel Mist, to whom they refer to as '...a Party-writer, a good for little Journeyman Scribbler .... And shalt never have a good word from the Women again as long as thou livest...'<sup>127</sup> Within the article, the authors, disguised under the names of 'Callicoe Sally, Callicoe Betty and Callicoe Doll, And many more' defend calico-wearing women, asking why they have become the victims of vicious attacks 'we are oppressed and insulted here in the open streets, we are abused, frightened, stript our cloathes torn off our Backs every Day by Rabbles, under the pretence of not wearing such cloaths as the weavers please to have us wear.' The author(s) seems exhausted by the argument that printed and painted calicoes are the cause of the weavers issues, 'we are caress'd with a long whining story of ruining the English woollen manufactures, and starving the poor weavers', but why, they ask 'if calicoes were not to be worn, what do they bring them to show us, to see if we will put them on that they may have the opportunity to bully and hector us in the streets?'

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<sup>126</sup> The ban was not enforced fully until the 25<sup>th</sup> December 1722.

<sup>127</sup> *Weekly Journal or Saturday's Post*, dated Saturday August 15th 1719. (Letter dated August 10, 1719). Gale Doc No. Z45812235633.

They propose their innocence, and ask what of the ‘smirking draper’ who sells them such, and of those responsible for getting the calico here, ‘what have we women to do with their long discourses about running them on shore?’ Before the close of the letter, the author(s) declare how they shall seek revenge on those weavers who attack them, ‘we will never wear anything that they weave, that shall be our general rule...nothing that is woven in Spittle-fields’ instead they suggest they will wear only ‘Dimities, a Linen sprigge’d and work’d with Flowers and Figures, as pretty and as pleasant as Callicoes...but we will be revenged of those Weavers’. John Styles suggests that ‘as the plain Indian cottons initially used for printing in Britain were subjected to increased taxation, printers began to employ linens as an alternative, sourced in continental Europe or the British Isles.’<sup>128</sup> This letter holds great significance; the final statement would have resonated amongst those affected by the weavers’ riots, just as Defoe’s *The Manufacturer* had attempted to enthuse the deflated weavers, subliminally this article possibly inspired women to retaliate. However, before any presumptions can be made, we should consider the possible identity of the author, which may also query to whom it was directed.

The Jacobite journalist, Nathaniel Mist (publisher of the *Weekly Journal*), was according to Paul Chapman, ‘subject to constant investigation by government officials anxious to prevent the circulation of seditious views’.<sup>129</sup> Interestingly, Defoe wrote for Mist’s newspaper from August 1717 until 24 October 1724, although Hannah Barker suggests that Defoe was very secretive about it and ‘apparently left his copy in

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<sup>128</sup> J. Styles, *The Dress of the People* (New Haven & London, 2007), p. 112.

<sup>129</sup> P. Chapman, Oxford Dictionary of National Biography <http://www.oxforddnb.com.ezproxy.londonlibrary.co.uk/view/printable/18822> [Accessed 23/09/14].



a hole in Mist's back-shop.'<sup>130</sup> The relationship between these two journalists is intriguing, Chapman explains how Defoe was paid by the government to moderate the anti-Hanoverian and anti-Whig tone of the of Mist's paper and under false pretences of friendship, even persuaded Mist to refrain from publishing objectionable articles.<sup>131</sup> Defoe claimed he had influence over the material Mist published and, for a time, it is likely that he had some control over the paper's direction. But by 1724 it appears Defoe wanted no further connection with Mist and his treasonable articles (Mist was in trouble with the authorities on at least fourteen occasions) and thus ceased to have any involvement with Mist's work thenceforward.

A week after the previously discussed article was issued, on August 22<sup>nd</sup> 1719, a response was published in the *Weekly Journal* addressed to Mist and signed 'Callicoe-Haters', it is entirely conceivable that the articles were influenced, if not, written by Defoe. The contradiction between the two articles in the *Weekly Journal* does make them challenging to evaluate, the newspapers of the eighteenth century did not speak with just one coherent voice. If we suppose Defoe is the author, then we might also consider that the article may have been intended as a warning to parliament; by suggesting that women would not give up their calico gowns easily, and furthermore, would do everything in their power to restrict the weavers from prospering again; it signalled to the governing forces to act swiftly, if they were to save the nations wool and silk trades.

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<sup>130</sup> Barker, *Newspapers, Politics and English Society 1695-1855*, p. 100

<sup>131</sup> P. Chapman, Oxford Dictionary of National Biography  
<http://www.oxforddnb.com.ezproxy.londonlibrary.co.uk/view/printable/18822> [23/09/14].

Information had long been carried through the streets by song and the use of print was becoming ever more employed, Robert Shoemaker points out that ‘virtually all Londoners born after the restoration could read or knew someone who could.’<sup>132</sup> The Stamp Act (1720) regulating the publication of newspapers proves an important step parliament took to control the information dispersed to the literate population. Shoemaker suggests that written libel could ‘inflict more widespread and lasting damage on reputations than an oral insult, and it was thus more likely to provoke a breach of the peace.’<sup>133</sup> Edward Reyner in 1656 wrote in his *Rules for the Government of the Tongue* that ‘a man may do more good or more hurt by writing than speaking, because what is spoken is transient, and passeth away, but what is written is permanent, and spreads itself further by far for time, place and persons, than the voice can reach.’<sup>134</sup> The idea that identical information could reach vast numbers of people, generating parallel ideas and opinions, was something that could threaten government’s control over its nation. It was becoming possible for printed information to reach all classes, just as printed calico had. These two Acts, (the Stamp Act and the Calico Act) which came about around the same time, is perhaps no coincidence. Fabric had previously been embroidered or woven to create pattern, stories had been communicated verbally, thus taking a unique form, each different to the next; but now, printing was permitting the production of duplicated consumer goods and which could be manufactured on a mass scale. These two printed *things* were incredibly powerful components; they helped develop and transform eighteenth century England.

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<sup>132</sup> R. Shoemaker, *The London Mob: Violence and Disorder in Eighteenth Century England* (London & New York , 2004) p. 242.

<sup>133</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 242.

<sup>134</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 244.

## Chapter Four: Calico Madams

By the start of July 1719, Londoners found that ‘the Gibbet on Stonebridge was hung from top to bottom with fragments of Callicoe, stuff torn or rather stolen from Women by Journey Men Weavers’.<sup>135</sup> The weavers began rioting on 10 June 1719, and contemporary newspapers and the Old Bailey records reveal that the brutal attacks upon the wearers of calico continued in great numbers until 1721. Moralists accused consumers of economic treason and betrayal to the wool trade, some proposed for a total stop put to the cotton commodities of India.<sup>136</sup> Attention focused on the behaviour of female consumers. Daniel Defoe declared the female in a calico gown is ‘an Enemy to her county’.<sup>137</sup> Lemire describes how ‘from Court to courtyard women’s consumer violation sparked charges of disorder, of defiance, of traditional discipline.’<sup>138</sup> Chloe Wigston-Smith states that ‘the “calico crisis” of 1719-1721, depicts Indian textiles as a national threat to English trade and gender roles.’<sup>139</sup> It is arguable that not only did the Indian calicoes pose a threat, but those of English manufacture, too; recorded in the *Weekly Journal* of June 1719, it is described how many weavers took to the streets and ‘tore the English and foreign calicoes from the backs of all the women they met.’<sup>140</sup> Importation and wearing of foreign printed calicoes had been banned since 1701, which, as suggested previously, only stimulated the English manufacturing process of printing on to calico. This Chapter will look at how the “calico crisis” was reflected in newspapers, it will discuss the distribution of punishment, and reveal if women wearing calico during the years of prohibition were

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<sup>135</sup> *Weekly Journal or British Gazetteer* July 4th 1719.

<sup>136</sup> Mus Rusticus, (London, 1717) in Lemire ‘The Business or Everyday, p. 117.

<sup>137</sup> Quoted in C.W. Smith ‘Callico Madams’, p. 33.

<sup>138</sup> Lemire., *The Business of Everyday Life*, p. 117.

<sup>139</sup> Wigston-Smith, ‘Calico Madams’ p. 29.

<sup>140</sup> *Weekly Journal or Saturday’s Post*, Saturday June 13th, 1719.

reprimanded, and finally, it will address how successful the Acts were in achieving their intentions.

#### **4:1 The ‘Callicoe Bitch’**

Women wearing calico garments were accosted in the streets, the Old Bailey Proceedings recorded on 8<sup>th</sup> July 1719,

John Larmony and Mary Mattoon; were indicted for Assaulting Elizabeth Price on the High Way, putting her into Bodily Fear, and feloniously taking from her a Callicoe Gown,... seeing her Gown, cry'd out, Callicoe, Callicoe; Weavers, Weavers, Whereupon a great Number came down and tore her Gown off all but the Sleeve, her Pocket, the Head of her Riding Hood, and abus'd her very much...And Martoon call'd her a Callicoe Bitch.<sup>141</sup>

Lemire suggests that most of these assaults were ‘inflicted on working or middle-ranked women, most noticeable on their daily rounds, running their households or managing small businesses and without the means to travel privately through city streets.’<sup>142</sup> However, one newspaper recorded how ‘a Gentleman’s Daughter...her gown and petticoat being pull’d off her back, and left almost naked.’<sup>143</sup> Contemporary newspapers articles reveal how desperate many attacks were; they were acted out with conviction and the weavers were prepared to risk their lives in their campaign. A

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<sup>141</sup> Old Bailey Proceedings, LL ref: t17190708-57  
<<http://www.londonlives.org/browse.jsp?id=t17190708-57-victim297&div=t17190708-57#highlight>> [Accessed on 5/8/14]

<sup>142</sup> B. Lemire, *The British Cotton Trade 1690-1815: International Trade and the Politics of Consumption* (2010), p. xiv.

<sup>143</sup> *Applebee’s Original Weekly Journal*, Saturday July 16<sup>th</sup> 1720.

newspaper report from June 1719 describes how one weaver ‘was killed by a Butcher with his cleaver, in Defence of his wife’s Callicoe Gown.’<sup>144</sup> Riots were not restricted to London; reports from Norwich, Bristol and Coventry are also mentioned, ‘They write from Bristol...an Officer of the Excise and his wife going along the street, was set upon by four weavers, who us’d the woman very uncivily, by tearing her callicoe gown off her back’. The weavers showed no mercy, continuing the attack despite the woman being with child, the Officer was so ‘enrag’d...that he stabb’d one of them, of which wound he dy’d from soon after.’<sup>145</sup> The attacks were very often severely brutal and involved a great number of weavers, a report from June 1719 recorded up to 4,000 Spitalfields weavers assembled in a riotous and disorderly manner.<sup>146</sup> Another weaver, upon visiting the White Lion Alehouse in White Chapel drew his knife on ‘the woman of the house wearing a callicoe gown...and swore he would either cut the callicoe or stab her to the heart’ he was seized and taken to Newgate prison.<sup>147</sup> These records depict a social group who were so passionate for their cause that they acted with contempt, so strong did they believe that women wearing calico were to blame for the collapse of their wool and silk industries.

But these crimes did not go unpunished, the *Weekly Journal* in May 1720, commented that for the ‘better transportation of felons, to make it felony to such as shall be convicted of cutting womens callicoe gowns and petticoats in the streets.’<sup>148</sup> But a report from June 1720 suggests that first time offenders may have been treated with some leniency, these particular weavers were reprimanded and then discharged by the

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<sup>144</sup> *Weekly Journal or Saturdays Post*, Saturday June 13<sup>th</sup>, 1719.

<sup>145</sup> *Applebee’s Original Weekly Journal*, Saturday July 16<sup>th</sup>, 1720.

<sup>146</sup> *Weekly Journal or Saturdays Post*, Saturday June 13<sup>th</sup>, 1719

<sup>147</sup> *Ibid.*, Saturday June 27<sup>th</sup>, 1719.

<sup>148</sup> *Ibid.*, Saturday May 21st 1720, issue 77.

Old Bailey but warned by their local magistrate ‘that for the future they must expect no mercy, if any of them are found guilty of the like practices.’<sup>149</sup> However, the *Weekly Packet* of July 1720 offers evidence which might suggest that from this date onwards, harsher punishments were inflicted as a means of deterring others; it reads: ‘the court very much referencing the ill use that hath been made of the clemency of the Government in that particular, seems resolved to act with severity against such offenders from this time.’<sup>150</sup> Further reports reveal how many more weavers guilty of such crimes were being transported, in July 1720, ‘A Weaver was convicted of tearing a woman’s Callicoe Gown off her back, and using her very barbarously in the fields near Hoxton. He is the first within the late Act of Parliament; transportation for 7 years.’<sup>151</sup>

#### **4:2 The Effectiveness of the Calico Acts**

Examination of newspapers and Old Bailey records has surprisingly uncovered only a handful of accounts where women were prosecuted for wearing calico. Until the beginning of 1723, my research has found no records that indict the wearers of printed calico gowns; presumably it would have been a difficult task differentiating Indian calico from English, and printed calico from printed linen. One record confirms just that; in May 1723, a gentlewoman was accosted and brought before the Lord Mayor by a fellow citizen, on grounds of her wearing a calico gown. However, it later appeared that the gown was only printed linen (which was exempt from the Act). Interestingly, it was the man whose false assumption had prompted the attack, who was sent to the workhouse ‘thereby to deter others from such unjustifiable Acts of

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<sup>149</sup> *Original Weekly Journal*, Saturday June 11th 1720.

<sup>150</sup> *Ibid.*, June 1720.

<sup>151</sup> *Applebee’s Original Weekly Journal*, Saturday July 16th 1720.

violence.’<sup>152</sup> Post December 25<sup>th</sup> 1722, a handful of reports, prosecuting those ignoring the new Act are mentioned in newspapers. In January 1723 ‘a woman was seiz’d near London Wall for wearing a gown fac’d with callicoe, and being carried before a magistrate and refusing to pay the penalty inflicted by the statue, she was committed to the compter.’<sup>153</sup> It has previously been noted that printed calico was worn by women of various classes, and so we might assume that she was unable to pay the fine, it seems implausible that a woman would succumb to such a punishment for the sake of principal. Also in January 1723, the magistrates convicted several women for wearing calico borders around their petticoats ‘which many ignorant people thought were exempted by the statue.’<sup>154</sup> Their punishments go unmentioned; presumably they paid the fine, or were treated with some leniency if they were first time offenders. A further incident, describes a bitter footman, who upon being dismissed by his employer for misbehavior, sought revenge by going ‘immediately to a Magistrate and gave information of the Ladyship’s wearing a callicoe petticoat’, but upon her being informed of the Calico Bill, ‘her Ladyship made no scruple of paying the penalty.’<sup>155</sup> From these sources we can infer that some women were perhaps insouciant towards the Act, the priority of their social standing taking precedence, especially amongst the wealthy who might have perceived the fine as an inconvenience as opposed to a constraint. Above all, Indian printed calico, now more than ever, was a conspicuous form of status, wealth and engagement with exotic goods.

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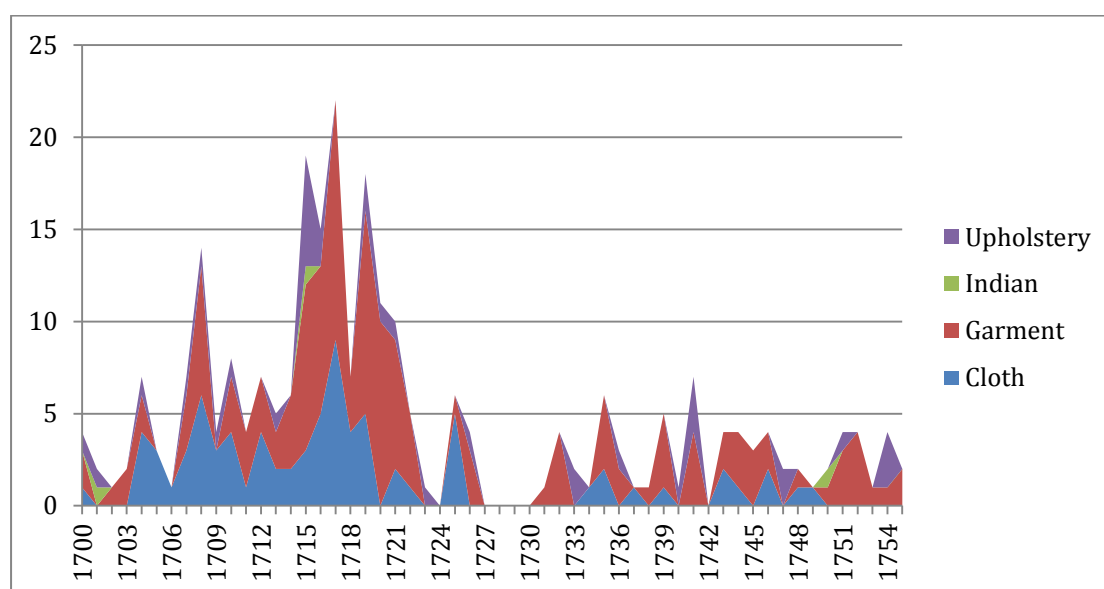
<sup>152</sup> *British Journal*, Saturday May 18<sup>th</sup> 1723, Issue XXXV.

<sup>153</sup> *Daily Journal* Tuesday January 1<sup>st</sup> 1723, Issue CCCCCVI.

<sup>154</sup> *Daily Journal* Thursday January 3<sup>rd</sup> 1723 issue 608.

<sup>155</sup> *Ibid.*, Thursday January 24<sup>th</sup> 1723, Issue 626.

The Old Bailey records reveal that between the years of 1700-1755, calico (including variants of the word, ‘callico’, ‘calicoe’ and ‘callicoe’) is mentioned 262 times amongst the stolen items listed (Table 4:1). Of these, 144 were garments, that included gowns (which make up the chief number), shirts, aprons and handkerchiefs, 35 refer to items used in the home for interior decoration (curtains, bed-spreads etc), whilst 80 of them refer to yards of fabric being stolen from shops and a small number from houses. These records indicate that calico was still available to purchase in shops, although we cannot ascertain if they were of English or Indian manufacture.



**Figure 4:1 Graph showing number of calico items stolen, 1700-1755**

Source: Old Bailey Records online data

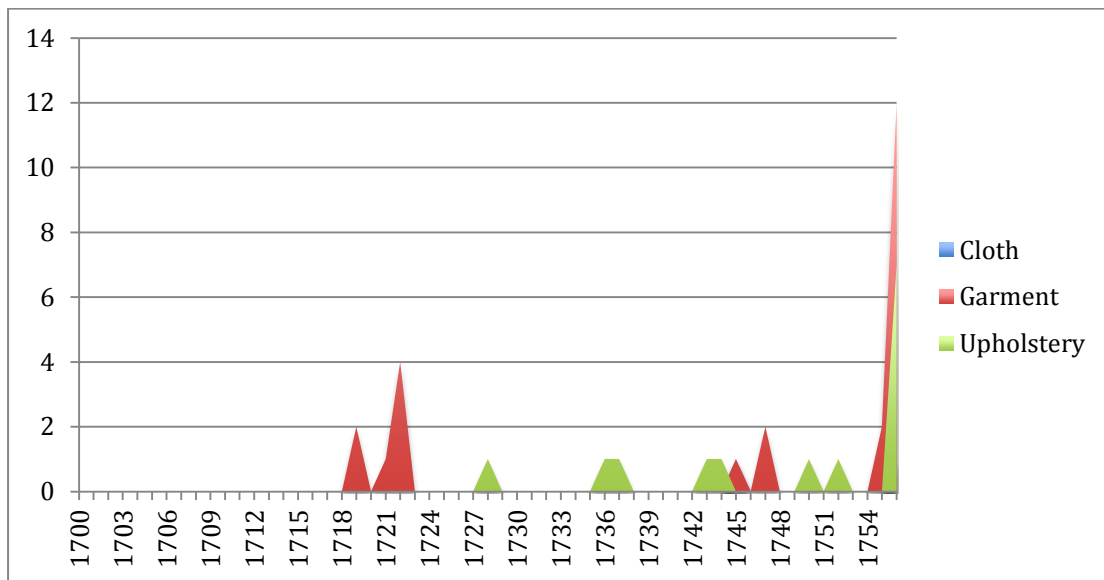
The descriptions of these fabrics are seldom mentioned, but the reference to ‘printed’ calico does appear fourteen times, furthermore, terms such as ‘Indian’ (cited only three times, 1701, 1715 and 1750), ‘painted’ and ‘flowered’ are less frequently mentioned.<sup>156</sup> The peak of calico items stolen was between 1715-1721, this is of vital

<sup>156</sup><<http://www.londonlives.org/browse.jsp?div=t1710120661&terms=indian|callicoe#highlight>> and <http://www.londonlives.org/browse.jsp?div=t17121210->



importance, it could suggest that calico garments were being stolen in an attempt to diminish their numbers, just as the riots had indented. We cannot be certain of this, and no records reveal the thieves to have been weavers. It is surprising that there should be so many accounts of theft for printed calicoes, as one would assume their second-hand retail value to be considerably low during the years building up to, and after, the Act was passed. After 1722, we do see the numbers decline, and in the years between 1727-1730, calico is not referred to at all.

From these accounts we can infer that despite the Acts many people still possessed calico, and what is more, they confessed to owning them. Chintz (or ‘chints’) features in the records far less than one might imagine, with no mention between 1701 and 1718, and even between 1719 and 1755, only 20 cases involving the theft of chintz are recorded (Table 4:2).

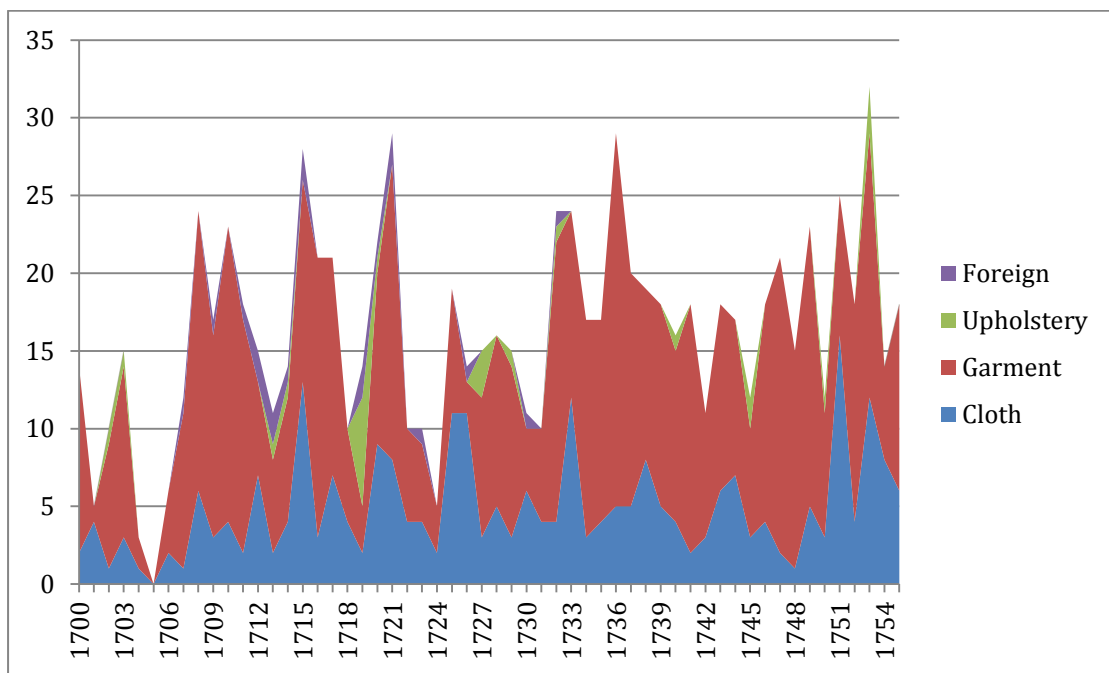


**Figure 4:2 Graph showing number of Chintz items stolen, 1700-1755**

Source: Old Bailey Records online data

[7&terms=indian|callicoe#highlight](#) Data collected from Old Bailey online [Accessed 08/08/14].

But with silk goods, we see a far more constant correlation (Table 4:3). I recorded 913 references to silk being stolen (or ‘silke’, excluding raw silk and handkerchiefs, which would have doubled this figure). A small percentage, just 24, of the silks had descriptions such as ‘Bologna’, ‘Bengal’, ‘India’, ‘China’, ‘Persian’, ‘Venetian’, ‘Turkey’ and ‘Holland’; indicating that foreign silk was still owned; in the absence of precise descriptions, we might assume that many more were of foreign origin too.



**Figure 4:3 Graph showing number of silk items stolen, 1700-1755**

Source: Old Bailey Records online data

Post the 1721 Act, the profit margin on Indian goods grew so large that smuggling became widespread. The weavers were perhaps hoping for a period of relief, but now, faced two further problems which impeded their trade; the first being that the calicoes printed in England were done so with ever increasing skill, and the second was the widespread activities of ‘Clandestine Traders’ who not only imported Indian fabrics into England from Holland, but also smuggled English wool to the continent.<sup>157</sup> The Netherlands retained its trade of Indian textiles, and smuggling flourished in the

<sup>157</sup> Plummer, *The London Weavers’ Company* p. 295.

coastal waters of Europe.<sup>158</sup> Due to the many countries in Europe having banned the trade of cotton much earlier, Peter Fisher supposes that those involved in the industry emigrated to England.<sup>159</sup>

Newspaper reports have indicated that some women, and men, still wore calico despite the Acts. Diaries and letters belonging to upper class society members offer further suggestion that despite the prohibition, some continued to buy and wear printed calico. Lady Mary Coke reported in her diary on Friday 17 June 1768:

After breakfast Lady Holderness and I walked to deal where she carried me to three of the houses that smuggle Indian goods. I saw several pieces of very pretty silks; I shall certainly buy one before I go. Tea and muslin is extremely cheap...<sup>160</sup>

Men also wore calico garments, but usually in a private domestic setting. In the letters written by Henry Purefoy to his tailor in 1749, for example, he requests a brown cotton with coloured flowers for a morning gown; many men wore vibrant printed dressing gowns at home or plain calico shirts underneath their coats.<sup>161</sup> Women's calico, however, tended to be worn as outer garments, being viewed openly and publicly. The letters of Henry Purefoy, and his mother Elizabeth Purefoy who both lived in Shalstone Buckinghamshire, frequently requested fabrics and clothing items 'of the newest style' to be sent from London. The two had decided tastes, and took

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<sup>158</sup> P. Hudson, 'Proto-Industrialisation: The case of the West Riding wool textile industry in the eighteenth and nineteenth century' in *History Workshop Journal*, 12 (1981), pp. 34-61 on pp. 39-40.

<sup>159</sup> P. Fisher, 'The Calico Acts' (Unpublished dissertation), p. 9.

<sup>160</sup> Diary of Lady Mary Coke <[http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/publications/deal-smugglers-trail/Character\\_cards\\_DST.pdf](http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/publications/deal-smugglers-trail/Character_cards_DST.pdf)> [Accessed on 10/08/14].

<sup>161</sup> G. Eland, *The Purefoy Letters 1735-1753* (London, 1931) Letter No. 543, March 1749.

great care in the ordering of their clothes, they also ordered clothes for one another. In 1739 Henry Purefoy ordered from London ‘a fine thick printed cotton enough to make two wrappers for my mother, they must be of 2 different handsome patterns’, and also a ‘neat white quilted calico petticoat’.<sup>162</sup> In 1736 he wrote that his ‘mother desired if you have any of the white Indian peeling which she had a piece of from you...’<sup>163</sup> In the 1740s Henry and his mother both write letters requesting printed flowered cottons and chintzes, ‘And of you have any such thing as a chintz with a brown ground or anything that is very fine that imitates it...it is for a wrapper for my mother’ wrote Henry in 1746.<sup>164</sup> There are two further mentions of flowered cottons, both, which should have a brown or cinnamon coloured ground, and another one in white. Henry requested such a fabric for his own morning gown and Elizabeth requested in 1753, ‘a fine cotton for a gown...flowered very handsomely with shades of colors & enough for another gown of fashionable cotton with a white ground flowered with colours’.<sup>165</sup> The Purefoy’s desires for prohibited fabric were not unique. Margaret Cavendishe and Mrs Delany are actively still purchasing calico in the 1730s. The inventory of Margaret Cavendishe Duchess of Portland’s wedding clothes in 1734 list amongst them many cotton items, ‘2 Fine calico quilted bed gowns, 3 white fine calico quilted petticoats to ware over the Hoop, 3 white dimity under petticoats, 1 spotted lawn apron, 1 flowered lawn apron, 1 fine calico apron, workt round in a border in the Indian way, 6 fine Holland aprons, 4 pairs of dimity pockets’.<sup>166</sup> Despite many of these being white calico or some variation of cotton, the most interesting are the

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<sup>162</sup> Eland, *The Purefoy Letters*, Letter No. 447, July 15<sup>th</sup> 1739, p. 303.

<sup>163</sup> Peeling (Pealong) a thin skin of fabric used as dress material.

<<http://www.18cnewenglandlife.org/18cnel/ofsilks.htm>> [Accessed on 25/08/14].

Eland. *The Purefoy Letters*, Letter No. 435, May 5<sup>th</sup> 1736. p. 295. And May 11<sup>th</sup> 1736, Letter No. 437, p. 296.

<sup>164</sup> *Ibid.*, Letter No. 481, Oct 29<sup>th</sup> 1749, p. 322. And Letter No. 484 Sept 2<sup>nd</sup> 1753, p. 324.

<sup>165</sup> *Ibid.*, Letter No. 435, May 5<sup>th</sup> 1736, p. 295.

<sup>166</sup> See online manuscript <<https://archive.org/details/catalogueofportl00portrich>> [Accessed 15/08/14].

spotted and flowered aprons, along with the fine calico apron worked in the Indian way. Although the term ‘worked’ referred to embroidery, the reference to Indian, presumably meaning tambour embroidery, shows a desire for foreign, or replicated foreign goods. The other aprons are likely to have been decorated with embroidery too, as most were at this time, opposed to being printed. Margaret Cavendish also owned a great deal of silk garments; the names featured includes lustering, satten, pudusoy, bombazine and damask, it is probable that these may have originated from Spitalfields, where at this point, were producing some of the most fashionable and advanced designs which could rival those of Lyon.

## **Conclusion**

Although it remains incredibly difficult to ascertain the exact impact the Huguenots had on England’s economy, they were undoubtedly influential on the cloth industries. Huguenots may not have invented new industries for England but they certainly developed those which already existed, improving quality and implementing more efficient production methods. Because England was not lacking too far behind the French (unlike Germany and Switzerland for example) it made the diffusion of skills rapid, and concentrated on the ever increasing importance of luxury items. Charles Weiss suggests that merchants sometimes complained that they could sell nothing unless they hired a Frenchman to sell it for them.<sup>167</sup> Sir Francis Brewster (a writer on trade, and a citizen and alderman of Dublin, Ireland) commented in 1702 that ‘the

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<sup>167</sup> C. Weiss, *Histoire des réfugiés*, cited in Turnbull, *A History of the Calico Printing Industry of Great Britain*, p. 22

English now have so great esteem for the workmanship of the French refugees, that hardly anything vends without a Gallic name.<sup>168</sup>

The silk industry in London was revolutionised by expanding the number of sub branches, diversifying its products and encouraging specialisation. The Weavers' Company endeavoured to protect their trade, they helped foreigners with new skills integrate into their industry and sought to control rival products from impending on their own. It would appear that the Acts parliament put into place, were not as effectual as the government, or the weavers, might have hoped. The sources discussed here have shown how the punishment for wearing calico was a heavy fine, deterrent enough for the poor, who would turn to linen and linen/cotton mixes, but only a mere inconvenience for the wealthier classes. England's success in neutering foreign skill and developing new techniques would see their industries prosper even further over the course of the century, and flourish during the Industrial Revolution.

Word Count: 15998

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<sup>168</sup> Sir Francis Brewster, *New Essays on Trade; Wherein the Present State of Our Trade...Is Considered...* (London, 1702), p. 177. Quoted by C. Weiss, 'Mémoire sur les protestants,' XXI 81, n. 1.

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