INTRODUCTION

The process of commercialization of leisure was spread all over England in the eighteenth century (although started in the preceding centuries), following the continuous economic and commercial growth of the country and the entire Great-Britain. The development of a mercantile society in England permitted the integration of new social groups to the consumption of goods, previously restricted to the aristocracy and the great commercial bourgeoisie.

This wide process of leisure commercialization was mainly based on the expansion of social groups generally considered as the “middle classes”, but also included many sectors of the working class in the largest English cities. As a direct effect, new standards of consumption and production were established not only related to material wealth, but also to learned culture, arts and entertainment.

Obviously, the widening of leisure commercialization, during the eighteenth century, opened up new perspectives in the fields of culture and entertainment, leading to the multiplication of museums, art galleries, theatres, concert halls, bookshops, coffee-houses, public houses, beef-houses, hotels, balnearies, spas, parks, gardens, etc.

The new standards of leisure, entertainment and consumption of cultural goods were associated to the dissemination of an ideal of politeness, civility and social refinement that, since the very beginning of the eighteenth century, composed the foundations of the new
values of English Enlightenment which constituted a wide ideological, political and cultural movement related to the Whig establishment and its ideal of civil and constitutional liberties and political and religious tolerance.

In this context, the proliferation of leisure activities and establishments, as well as being a response to the perspectives opened up by a progressively wider commercialization environment, attended the demands of the Enlightenment’s emergent ideal of sociability, cultivated mainly by the “middle-classes”. Nevertheless, the main subject of this paper is the growth and dissemination of coffee-houses and public houses (taverns and alehouses) as privileged spaces for these commercial activities and the new ideal of sociability of English Enlightenment.

Since the beginning of the century, the coffee-houses and public houses were establishments of assiduous frequency by gentlemen who, not only wish to drink coffee, beer, wine and spirits, but also wanted to talk informally, deal with business or, even, participate in a more profound and learned discussion on Natural Philosophy, Sciences, Arts, Literature and Politics. Therefore, coffee-houses and public houses constituted an important microcosmos of economic, political, cultural and social life of eighteenth-century England, and its transformation from a rural and agrarian to an industrial and urban society at the end of that century.

MARKET EXPANSION AND COMMERCIALIZATION OF LEISURE

In eighteenth-century England, the development of a new form of society – based on the values of private property and material wealth accumulation as factors of human progress – took place. That is, the emergence of a capitalist society reinforced the strategic importance of private initiative, but at the same time considering the “market” (constituted by producers of a variety of goods, professionals who offered a wide range of services, and consumers of different kinds) from a new definition of “public sphere”. In fact, this change can be observed in the meaning of the expression “the market place”, whose public connotation, linguistically speaking, becomes more evident in eighteenth-century English.
In this new social order, private and public spheres were integrated and complementary in the construction of an ideology that would later be associated with the bourgeois democracy, in the nineteenth century.¹

Nonetheless, the development of a mercantile society in eighteenth-century England enabled the access of new social groups to the consumption of goods that until then had been restricted to the aristocracy and to the commercial bourgeoisie, which shared with the former the values of an essentially agrarian society based on land property. Initially referred to as “middling sort people” and, by the end of the century, as “middle classes” (as a way to distinguish them not only from aristocrats, but also from urban and rural working classes), these prominent groups (formed by manufacturers, merchants, bankers, liberal professionals, military officers, civil servants, clergymen, etc.)² established a new standard of consumption and production, which reflected not only on material goods, but also on learned culture, science, arts, and entertainment. On the other hand, some groups within


² The “middle classes” included different social groups, each one with different interests and perspectives: high ranked military officers, civil servants, liberal professionals (doctors, lawyers, professors), clergymen (Anglicans or not), small and medium farmers, merchants, bankers, and industrials. The denomination “middle classes” was due to the fact that these groups did not fit into the “aristocracy”, nor into the “working classes”, although some of them became nobles by receiving titles from the monarchs. In the nineteenth century, as a large number of merchants, bankers, and industrials accumulated considerable fortunes, the hierarchy based on blood heritage was substituted by another founded on the wealth and capital possessed by individuals. Although the expression “middle classes” continued in use in the nineteenth century, the French term “bourgeoisie” became more general for designating those who possessed the capital and means of production, which included not only merchants, bankers and industrials, but also the old aristocracy, now transformed into an agrarian capitalist group that was still able to invest its capital in other economic activities. For more on this subject, see: Paul LANGFORD – *A polite and commercial people: England, 1717-1783*. Oxford – New York, Oxford University Press, 1992, pp. 59-121. Roy PORTER – *Enlightenment: Britain and the creation of the modern world*. London, Allen Lane, The Penguin Book Press, 2000, pp. 258-275, 383-396 e 397-423; HOBSBAWM – *A era das revoluções: 1789-1848*. Op. cit., pp. 321-332; e *A era do capital: 1848-1875*. Translation of Luciano Costa Neto. Rio de Janeiro, Editora Paz e Terra, 1977, pp. 241-260. On the emergence of the “middle classes” in London, see also the important work of Peter EARLE – *The making of the English middle classes: business, society and family life in London*, 1660-1730. London, Methuen Publishing, 1989.
these “middle classes” supported new ideological values that stressed the importance of work for the creation of social wealth, but also acknowledged the necessity of rest and leisure for the recovery of “men’s physical and spiritual strength”.  

As far as the production of material wealth is concerned, this significant widening of the market constituted one of the previous conditions that allowed the impressive technical-productive transformation represented by the Industrial Revolution. Nevertheless, in the cultural, scientific, artistic, and entertainment fields, it made possible the emergence of specialized professionals (who started to offer their services to a wider number of consumers) and specific public spaces for the performance of their activities. This “revolution of consumption” (quoting the expression created by Roy Porter) made an impact on the publicizing and consumption of culture, sciences, and arts, which left the exclusive environment of aristocratic properties, reaching a large audience in locations such as museums, art galleries, theatres, concert halls, bookstores, clubs, and philosophical, scientific, and literary associations. Those were the basic characteristics of a process of commercialization of leisure and of emergence of public spaces devoted to entertainment and acquisition of culture in a society with new social actors, who believed themselves to be “enlightened” and “polite”.

The emergence of new concepts of education and politeness in the early eighteenth century, in addition to the ideas of the English Enlightenment, stimulated the habit of reading and the interest for music, dance, theatre and specific public spaces for the performance of their activities, painting and other fine arts – the “pleasures of imagination”, to use the famous expression created by Joseph Addison in his column in The Spectator.

5 The Spectator was a newspaper published in London between 1711 and 1714. Its founders Joseph Addison and Richard Steele aimed at bringing philosophical discussions to a wider audience. Addison wrote a column called “The pleasures of imagination”, where he would discuss, in an accessible way, the so-called “superior pleasures”, which were connected to the imagination, to the sublime, to the artistic manifestations, thus differing from the “material pleasures”. For more information on Addison’s and Steele’s publication, see:
this sense, the urban areas (the capital, London, and many other cities across the country) saw the rise of a large group of people with high buying power and interested in consuming cultural goods, which was the base for the professionalization of intellectuals and artists.

In addition to museums, theatres, and concert, opera, and dance halls, one could not forget to mention the proliferation, in urban centres, of coffee-houses, public houses (taverns, alehouses, and also the “cursed” gin shops), and of beef-houses or chop-houses (the “ancestors” of modern restaurants). In different moments of the day, these establishments would be home to an audience formed chiefly by gentlemen interested in enjoying their services and in chatting about a wide range of subjects. Since the beginning of the eighteenth century, coffee-houses and public houses had also constituted meeting points for politicians, philosophers, and scholars who would stop by in order to engage in colloquies and informal debates on the most diverse topics. This fact was expressed in one of Joseph Addison’s statements in The Spectator, in which he clearly defended the project of uniting the “man of letters” to the “man of the world”. This project embodied the empiric and sensualist English philosophy of the eighteenth century, which should bring Philosophy “down from the havens” and make it “dwell in Clubs and Assemblies, at Tea Tables and in Coffee-houses”.

THE COFFEE-HOUSES: CHARACTERISTICS AND PATTERNS OF SOCIABILITY.

The emergence of coffee-houses was connected to the diffusion of the consumption of coffee (originally considered as a “Turkish drink”) in the European continent in the seventeenth century. The first coffee-houses appeared in Venice, proliferated throughout

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Western Europe in the first half of the century and arrived in London in the mid-century, during the Commonwealth. At that time, when Puritan moral predominated, coffee-houses were regarded as a “sober alternative to the taverns”, which sold alcoholic beverage. The first establishment of this kind opened in 1652, in St. Michael's Alley; a second one, two or three years later, in St. Michael's Churchyard; and a third one, called The Rainbow, in Fleet Street, around the same time. Shortly afterwards, many others appeared in the perimeter of the City of London, most of them around the Royal Exchange.7

Coffee-houses embraced the “egalitarian atmosphere” in vogue during the Commonwealth: in order to be admitted into them, any individual had to pay one penny. During the Restoration, this egalitarian environment remained the same. However, King Charles II and some conservative groups started to consider the coffee-houses as suspicious places, since they had become sites of open political debate, where many rumors about conspiracy and revolt circulated. In 1675, through a Royal Proclamation, Charles II commanded the closing of these establishments. Nevertheless, in face of the regular customers’ reaction and of the strong public protest that followed, he was forced to give up his decision shortly after.8

However, the resistance to coffee-houses was not only a political issue. In 1674, one year before the Royal Proclamation of Charles II, an unusual document, supposedly elaborated by some women (who intended to deliver it to the Parliament), was published under the name of The women’s petition against coffee, representing to public consideration of the grand inconveniences according to their sex from the excessive use of that drying enfeebling liquor. This pamphlet not only showed the concern of its authors over the long period men stayed away from their homes, hanging out at coffee-houses, but also pointed to the “danger” that the consumption of coffee could bring to the “deterioration of manhood”. One might suspect that, behind the claims of these women, lied the interests of beer producers and wine merchants, whose sales decreased after the dissemination of the consumption of coffee and the proliferation of coffee-houses. It is also very likely that the

interests of these merchants were behind the many rumors and accusations that led Charles II to issue, the following year, the Royal Proclamation against coffee-houses.⁹

After their reopening, coffee-houses proliferated all over the City of London (henceforth called as City) and toward the City of Westminster (henceforth called as Westminster), taking advantage of the individual and political freedom that characterized the country after 1689, with the triumph of the Glorious Revolution and the reign of William III and Mary. In accordance with their tradition, these establishments reinforced the idea that all customers were equal. In other words: any well-dressed and well-mannered individual, after paying one penny to la dame of comptoir, “could sit at the common table and drink a dish of coffee – at about one and half pence dish – and smoke his long, clay pipe”.¹⁰ Around the year of 1700, contemporary Englishman Thomas (“Tom”) Brown described a coffee-house as

“(…) the place where several knights-errant come to seat themselves at the same table without knowing one another, and yet talk as familiarly together as if they had been of many years acquaintance. They have scarce looked about them, before being foppishly fumed into this noses, eyes and ears, has the virtue to make them talk and prattle together everything but what they should do”.¹¹

Between the late seventeenth century and the early eighteenth century, the increase in the number of coffee-houses in the City and Westminster led England to experience a phenomenon described by Roy Porter as an authentic “coffee-house craze”.¹² Some estimates showed that, at the time of Queen Anne (who died in 1714), there were about 450 coffee-houses in London (including the City and Westminster). In the year of 1739, estimates mention 551 of these establishments spread all over London’s urban area, 144 of them in the City and 407 in Westminster (which was already a densely populated area). In

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¹² PORTER – London: a social history. Op. cit., p. 206. It is likely that this historian adopted this term inspired by another phenomenon of the first half of the eighteenth century: the excessive consumption of gin, known as the “gin craze”, which will be focused in a near opportunity.
1748, the heart of the City caught on fire, resulting in the destruction of many buildings, including some traditional coffee-houses, which eventually reopened in other sites.\textsuperscript{13}

Since the mid-1600s, according to Jenny Uglow, coffee-houses (as well as taverns and alehouses) had been characterized by a “strongly gregarious (and very male) public culture” which “provided a kind of horizontal fellowship” for their regular customers. Moreover, many establishments (especially the most famous ones) assimilated certain characteristics and particularities in order to please the intellectual, artistic, and professional groups they attended.\textsuperscript{14} However, as stated by Peter Ackroyd, coffee-houses were “generally somewhat dingy places, reeking of tabacco”, in which “the wooden floor was often sanded with spittons liberally placed”. In some establishments, “the tables and chairs were stained and duty, while in others there were ‘boxes with upright backs and narrow seats’; the lamps smoked and the candles spluttered”.\textsuperscript{15}

In the 1690s and first decades of the eighteenth century, some of the most well-known coffee-houses in the City were: the Grecian, in Devereux Court, next to the Temple Bar, traditional meeting point for lawyers, jurists, and "learned fellows" from the Royal Society, such as the famous Sir Isaac Newton, astronomer Edmund Halley, and collector Sir Hans Sloane, among others; Nando's, in Fleet Street, was home to lawyers and jurists; Child's, in St. Paul's Churchyard, frequented by doctors and clergymen; Batson's, in Cornhill, also very popular amongst doctors, who used the establishment as an extension of their offices, seeing rich merchants and businessmen; the Virginia and Maryland, in Threadneedle Street, which attracted merchants connected to the commerce with Russia and other countries of the Baltic sea (because of that, the establishment later changed its name to Virginia and Baltic); the Jerusalem, in Cornhill, destroyed by the fire of 1748, was home to merchants involved with the commerce with the West Indies; the Jonathan's, in Exchange Alley, frequented by bankers or stock brokers who had been banished from the Royal Exchange; the Garraway's, in Exchange Alley, was also attended by merchants, bankers, and stockbrokers, and famous for its nightly auctions of pictures, books, furniture,

\textsuperscript{13} RUDÉ – \textit{Op. cit.}, p. 77; UGLOW – \textit{Op. cit.}, p. 21; and ROBERTS – \textit{Op. cit.}, p. 52. WALLER (\textit{Op. cit.}, p. 196) comes to the point of stating that, around the year of 1700, there were more than 2,000 coffee-houses in London. However, this number seems exaggerated; for that matter, one should consider the information above-mentioned, found in RUDÉ (\textit{Op. cit.}, p. 77).


wines, tea, etc.; the Amsterdam, in Temple Bar, also attracted merchants, bankers, and stockbrokers; the Lloyd's, in Lombard Street, on the corner with Abchurch Lane, was a meeting point for merchants involved with the maritime commerce and ship insurers.  

Garraway's and its more well-known customers were the center of attention when the great financial scandal of 1720 occurred. Known as the “South Sea Bubble”, it was caused by a speculation wave that led to the collapse of the South Sea Company and put an end in great fortunes. Writer Jonathan Swift (partisan of the Tories) described the merchants and brokers “on Garraway's cliffs” and also as a “savage race by shipwrecks fed”.  

An interesting contemporary report of the stockbrokers’ performance was written by John Houghton (eminent apothecary and statician, fellow of the Royal Society), in which he stresses the speculative game those men played in the financial market of the City:

“The manner of managing the trade is this: the monied man goes among the brokers (which are chiefly upon the Exchange, and at Jonathan’s coffee-house), sometimes at Garroway’s and at some other coffee-houses, and asks how stocks go? And upon information bids the broker buy or sell so many shares of such and such stocks if he can at such and such prices: Then he tries what he can do among those that have stock, or power to sell them; and if he can, makes a bargain.”

In the Westminster area, some of the most famous coffee-houses were: the Will's, on the corner of Bow Street and Russel Street, in Covent Garden, frequented by "wits" - men of letters -, where poet John Dryden could often be seen, before his death in 1700, either in the balcony (in the hottest months) or on his favorite chair, near the fireplace (in the coldest months), also adopted by Joseph Addison and Richard Steele; the Button's, in Bow Street, home to theatre authors, actors, and Whig politicians; the Old Slaughters's, in St. Martin's Lane, next to Covent Garden, was a meeting point for theatre professionals and many artists, among which were William Hogarth, George Lambert, Jack Laguerre; the Tom's, in the neighborhoods of the Strand, opened by Thomas Twining (a rich merchant

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connected to the commerce of tea), adjacent to his main store; the Man's, next to Charing Cross, very popular among stockbrokers and young men from rich families, made restrictions to the habit of smoking, but established the fashion of consuming perfumed snuff; the Little Devil, in Goodman's Fields, where most of the regular customers were high-ranking military officers; the Ozinda's, in Pall Mall, home to aristocrats and “fops”; the St. James's and the Cocoa-Tree, both in James's Street, nearby the Parliament House, were respectively meeting points for members of the Whig and Tory parties. The Tories also frequented the White's, in St James's Street, a place very popular amongst those addicted to games of chance, such as dice and playing cards (a sort of “gambling club”). Some coffee-houses in the Covent Garden area, such as the King's, were notorious for allowing feminine prostitution in their interiors. There was even a floating coffee-house in the Thames, anchored by the staircases of Somerset House. Known as Folley, this establishment was initially very famous, but eventually became a den of drunkenness and prostitution, or a “floating brothel”.

In fact, the diverse clientele of coffee-houses would spend many hours inside these establishments, busy with a number of things: meeting friends; reading newspapers; discussing political, philosophical, and cultural subjects; having business meetings and closing deals; or, simply, chatting about all kinds of speculations and intrigues. In this sense, a person who wished to be well-informed could not consider the idea of not frequenting coffee-houses in London, especially those most fashionable at the time (the same phenomenon occurring in the provincial cities). In March 1711, Joseph Addison, in the first number of his new newspaper, showed, through the character Mr. Spectator (“the Real man about town”), not only his knowledge of metropolitan London, but also that this knowledge was a result of his attending coffee-houses:

“Sometimes I am seen thrusting my Head into a Round o Politics at Will’s, and listening with great Attention to the Narratives that are made in those little Circular Audiences. Sometimes I smoak a Pipe at Child’s; and whilst I seem attentive to nothing but the Post-Man, overhear the Conversation of every Table in the Room. I appear on Sunday Nights at St. James’s Coffee-House, and sometimes

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join the little Committee of Politicks in the Inner Room, as one who comes there to hear and to improve. My Face is likewise very well known at the Grecian, the Cocoa-Tree (...).".

Around the year of 1714, in other of John Macky’s reports – this author described in a book his trips across England –, coffee-houses were presented as “places of refreshment” and “fashionable sites for socializing”, in which one could learn the essence of “our manner of living”:

“About Twelve the Beau-Monde assembles in several Chocolate and Coffee-houses: The best of which are the Cocoa-Tree and White’s Chocolate Houses, St James’s, the Smyrna, and the British Coffee-houses; and all these so near one another, that in less than an Hour you see the company of them all. We are carried to these Places in Chairs (or Sedans) which are here very cheap, a Guinea a Week, or a Shilling per Hour, and your Chairmen serve you for Porters to run on Errands as your Gondoliers do at Venice.

If it be fine Weather, we take a Turn in the Park till two, when we go to Dinner; and if it be dirty, you are entertain’d at Picket or Basset at White’s, or you may talk Politicks at the Smyrna and St James’s”.

The majority of the most famous coffee-houses above mentioned had a long life throughout the eighteenth century. They continued to attract a diverse clientele and remained as spaces of sociability, where, according to Peter Ackroyd, “merchants and agents, clerks and brokers could engage in business”, “agents who sold estates or properties would meet their clients” and “the sale of other goods was also encouraged”. Until the mid-eighteenth century, the Old Slaughter's, in St. Martin's Lane, remained as the most popular establishment among theatre professionals and artists, playing, according to Jenny Uglow, a fundamental role in the renewal of English art, especially fine arts: “a key centre for men with new ideas and a strong reaction against traditional academic values”.

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24 UGLOW – Op. cit., p. 262. According to this historian, the Old Slaughter’s group, formed by William Hogarth and his friends who frequented that coffee-house, was not a mere group of artists, but also “held out against the ‘gentlemanly’ theories of art propounded by Pond’s Roman Club and the new Society of Diletanti.
In Covent Garden, on the east side of the main square, the Bedford Coffee-House attracted critics, theatre authors and actors, as well as philosophers and scientists who worked as independent lecturers of Natural and Experimental Philosophy, such as John Theophilus Desaguliers. In year 1730, this eminent philosopher, mathematician, and engineer chose that coffee-house to offer his many courses of lectures on Natural and Experimental Philosophy. The Bedford also became a meeting point for politicians and intellectuals connected to the Whigs in the Covent Garden area, substituted the Button's after the death of Joseph Addison, in 1719. Throughout the first half of the eighteenth century, the Bedford was attended by many celebrities of the literary and artistic world, such as Alexander Pope, Richard B. Sheridan, David Garrick, Henry Fielding, James Quin, Charles Churchill and others.\(^{25}\)

Another coffee-house that became a hit in London’s intellectual circles, from the mid-seventeenth century to the early eighteenth century, was the Chapter, in Paternoster Row, in the City, very popular amongst book publishers, authors, aspiring authors, and clergymen. Thomas Chatterton, one of its regular customers, referred to the establishment’s clientele as a meeting of “geniuses”. According to Peter Ackroyd, it was a “small club of publishers and writers who always sat in the Box in the north-east corner of the house and called themselves the ‘Wet Paper Club’”, in a reference to the habit of reading books and newspapers before they left the printers and hit the bookstores. The Chapter also became a meeting point for clergymen: many of them would go there in order to exercise the profitable activity of selling all kinds of sermons (for Sunday masses and other religious ceremonies) to their less inspired (or intellectually limited) colleagues. As stated by Ackroyd, in the end of the eighteenth century the Chapter established to its customers prices that were probably similar to those offered by other coffee-houses at the time: “cup of coffee was fivepence, while four ham sandwiches with glass of sherry cost twopence; pot of tea, serving three cups, together with six slices of bread and butter, muffin and two crumpets, cost tenpence - or, rather, shilling since twopence extra went to the head waiter, William (...).”\(^{26}\)

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In reality, coffee-houses led to a popularization of other habits among their customers, such as using tobacco and reading newspapers. Many regular customers of these establishments would smoke their long clay pipes along with a cup of coffee, chocolate, or tea, or even a dose of brandy or sherry, while chatting with acquaintances or friends. Others would turn their visits to coffee-houses into an opportunity to be well-informed about local and national events through the reading of newspapers. Assuming that, as George Rudé affirms, coffee-houses were a “product of the City and of the commercial and middle class, rather than of an aristocratic way of life”, or a reply “to the City’s political and commercial needs”, many newspapers appeared due to the same reason, as a product of the new habits developed inside these establishments.27

By the early eighteenth century, the habit of reading newspapers at coffee-houses had consolidated these establishments as the most important places for men to discuss and spread the news. As a matter of fact, many newspapers were created in order to accommodate the demands of those literate “middle-class” men who were regular customers of coffee-houses. On the other hand, we could not forget to mention the abolition, in 1695, of the Licensing Act – which, in concrete terms, determined the end of censorship, assuring freedom of speech and press – as a factor that enabled the dissemination of newspapers and other types of publications in London and other cities of England, in the beginning of the eighteenth century. According to Maureen Waller, around the year of 1700, a large number of newspapers were published in the English capital, among which one could highlight “the London Gazette, Post Man, Post Boy and Flying Post, published three times a week and distributed chiefly in the coffee-houses”.28 In 1702, London’s first daily newspaper, the Daily Courant, hit the streets, being distributed in coffee-houses as well. For that matter, George Rudé observes that France had no daily newspaper until 1777, when the Journal de Paris was created. In addition to the Daily Courant, other 25 newspapers circulated in the English capital.29 Since the beginning of the eighteenth century, newspapers had turned, according to Roy Porter, into a “daily mirror of London life, and, since early provincial papers mostly reprinted London copy, the capital’s

virtual monopoly of the news media reinforced metropolitan dominance over the regions”.  

The Swiss traveler, César de Saussure, who visited England in the late 1720s, wrote about his fascination with the atmosphere of freedom of speech, inexistent in other European countries, he perceived in the newspapers’ activity and in the heated debates in which those men (of several social classes) who frequented coffee-houses were engaged:

“What attracts enormously in these coffee-houses are the gazettes and other public papers. All Englishmen are great newsmongers. Workmen habitually begin the day by going to coffee-rooms in order to read the latest new. I have often seen shoeblacks and other persons of that class club together to purchase a farthing paper. Nothing is more entertaining than hearing men of this class discussing politics and topics of interest concerning royalty. You often see an Englishman taking a treaty of peace more to heart than he does his own affairs”.

Throughout the eighteenth century, other important newspapers were founded. Although devoted to an increasingly wider public, these publications would not forget their old bonds to the coffee-houses. Some of the most important newspapers of London were the Evening Post (founded in 1706), the weeklies The Tatler and The Spectator (founded by Richard Steele and Joseph Addison, respectively, in 1709 and 1711), the London Journal (launched in 1725), the Craftsman (launched in 1727), the Daily Advertiser (created in 1730), the Westminster Journal (in 1741), the Lloyd's Evening Post (connected to the Lloyd's coffee-house and founded in 1757), the St. James's Chronicle (in 1761), the Middlesex Journal (1769), the Morning Chronicle (also in 1769), the Morning Post (in 1780), The Times (in 1785) and the Sunday Observer (in 1791). According to George Rudé, by the end of the eighteenth century, London alone had more than 278 newspapers of all kinds.

Auctions, "penny-post house" services, courses on Natural and Experimental Philosophy, language classes, and literary and musical gatherings were just a few of the activities one could find at a coffee-house. In addition to coffee and other drinks, to the

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atmosphere of colloquies and debates, and to the reading of newspapers, these activities also operated as a powerful way of turning new clients into regular customers. Auctions were very popular, attracting a large number of people interested in buying, at low prices, a variety of products (pictures, books, furniture, wood, ivories, wines, teas, and even African slaves). The newspapers announced these auctions in advance, listing several items on sale for the occasion. As "penny-post houses", coffee-houses operated along with other types of commercial establishments in the postal service business, i.e., receiving and delivering letters and small packages in a reasonable frequency. For the price of just one penny, paid by the sender, any correspondence could be delivered to the coffee-houses and then sent to a receiver within the metropolitan area (the City and Westminster) through "sorting offices" dispersed over a number of districts. Outside the metropolitan area (that is, in districts situated up to 15 miles from the City and Westminster), both the sender and the receiver had to pay one penny each for this postal service.\(^{33}\)

As mentioned above, the Bedford’s Coffee-House, in Covent Garden, operated as some sort of “lecture theatre” for courses on Natural and Newtonian Experimental Philosophy taught by John Theophilus Desaguliers in the 1730s; nonetheless, he was not the only independent lecturer to make use of a coffee-house for his activities. There are evidences that throughout the eighteenth century many other independent lecturers ( eminent or not) offered courses on Natural and Experimental Philosophy at coffee-houses, taverns, and other public places for audiences increasingly eager to learn the “mechanics of nature”, its “laws”, and the possibility of “reproduction” of natural phenomena through “experimentation”.\(^{34}\)

In the early eighteenth century, Latin courses were offered at the Hogarths's Coffee-House, an establishment that did not figure among the most fashionable ones of the time, located in St. John's Gate, between Smithfield Bars and Clerkenwel. Conversation and grammar classes were held on a daily basis for an audience of young lawyers, doctors, merchants, and clerks who needed a better knowledge of the language for their careers. In January 1704, the coffee-house owner, Mr. Richard Hogarth (William Hogarth’s father)


\(^{34}\) For more on the activities of these independent lecturers of Mechanical and Experimental Philosophy, see: Margaret C. JACOB – Scientific culture and the making of the industrial West. Oxford – New York, Oxford University Press, 1997.
announced on the *Post-Man* that he himself taught classes for "learned gentlemen, who [spoke] Latin readily, where any Gentleman that [was] either skilled in that Language, or desirous to perfect himself in speaking thereof [would] be welcome". In July 1707, another advertisement, published on the *Daily Courant*, informed that a certain "Mr. George Daggastaff" was organizing literary and musical happenings at the Hogarth's and calling "Any gentleman or Lady that [was] desirous of having any Short Poem, Epigram, Satyre, &c. (...) or if they [had] any Song or Poem of their own that [was] New and Entertaining", to contact him, so that he could put together these events that “[would] be continued Monthly”.  

Coffee-houses remained as communal and cultural centers, places where merchants would contract their business, until the first half of the nineteenth century, when many started to develop new characteristics, becoming “specialized exchanges”, “clubs”, “private hotels”, or sophisticated “dining-houses”. A new genre of coffee-house emerged, inexistent in the previous century, focused on serving breakfast to workmen on their way to their jobs. Yet those were new times: as the Industrial Revolution brought about an increase in the working-class population in major urban centers, coffee-houses assimilated new characteristics and functions, different from those that originated them and allowed their dissemination in London and other important cities across England.  

THE PUBLIC HOUSES: TAVERNS AND ALEHOUSES.  

According to Maureen Waller, the term “public house” is a short term for “public alehouse” that became popular around the year of 1700. Originally, this term referred exclusively to “alehouses” or “beerhouses”, but later it took on a wider meaning, being also used to refer to “the smaller inns and taverns (which differed from alehouses only in that they serve an ‘ordinary’ meal), signaling a convergence of their fortunes”. Brewers from London and other cities would deliver all kinds of beer to the public houses, being

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36 For more on these new characteristics of the coffee-houses in the nineteenth century, see: ACKROYD – *Op. cit.*, pp. 323-324.
prohibited by the authorities ("justices and excise officials") from supplying their products to “unlicensed or disorderly alehouse-keepers and those who did not pay their duty on time".\footnote{WALLER – Op. cit., pp. 209-210.}

Nevertheless, it is important to remark that taverns offered a much wider variety of drinks – wines, beer, etc. –, whereas alehouses specialized in beers: the "regular ale" (common beer); "brown ale" (a sweeter, very popular beer whose consumption decreased due to a raise in the taxes on malt); the "bitter beer" (with a large quantity of hops, created in order to replace the sweeter one); the “pale ale” (a blend of the common and bitter beers); the "porter" (a mellow beer, fermented for until five months, very popular among manual and carrying workers – “porters” –, hence its name); and, finally, the “stout” (a stronger beer, offered in a variety of flavors: “Brown stout, double stout, Irish, entire, or heavy wet, or particular London”).\footnote{ACKROYD – Op. cit., p. 350.}

In the eighteenth century, taverns and alehouses also became communal and cultural centers, as well as business places. Drinking was not the only reason why people would frequent these establishments; some were also used for dinners, concerts, literary sessions, and meetings (of clubs, societies, political groups, etc.). Following the coffee-houses’ example, taverns and alehouses also sold the tobacco used to the customers in common clay pipes. As stated by Maureen Waller, the character of sociability developed in taverns and alehouses shows that these establishments were much more than “a mere kitchen, where customers might congregate around the fire, to a series of rooms which could be used for private functions”, including “business meetings and amorous intrigue”. Evidently, these other activities came hand in hand with the consumption of good wines from France, Portugal, and other countries, as well as of a wide variety of beers available at these establishments.\footnote{WALLER – Op. cit., pp. 214 and 216.}

Although drinking has been a very popular habit among the English population as a whole since the seventeenth century, in the 1700s it reaches unprecedented levels in the country’s history, to the point of becoming a serious social problem, growing to “massive, even crisis, proportions”, according to Peter Ackroyd.\footnote{ACKROYD – Op. cit., p. 349.}
social dimension of drinking problems in England: “It is not the lower populace alone that is addicted to drunkenness; numbers of persons of high rank and even of distinction are over fond of liquor”.\textsuperscript{41} In the mid-eighteenth century, Dr. Samuel Johnson, a famous man of letters, summed up in one of his well-known phrases a sentiment shared by a significant part of the English population: “a man is never happy in the present unless he is drunk”. This feeling could also be found on the walls of a tavern in Bow Street, where a sign proclaimed: “Here you may get drunk for a penny, dead drunk for two pence, and get straw for nothing”.\textsuperscript{42}

However, not all individuals would drink the same beverages, nor in the same way. In the eighteenth century, the habit of drinking changed due to class and buying power differences. In the early 1700s, it was common for aristocrats and other wealthy groups to consume (in their residences) French and Portuguese wines; “middle-class” individuals would buy different types of beer; and the poor population (workers) would drink impressive amounts of gin or cheap brandy. Nonetheless, throughout the century, wines from a number of countries became available in "middle class" taverns, whereas working-class men started to consume beer – by that time, many alehouses opened in London’s poorest neighborhoods, where working classes had their homes. According to George Rudé, those establishments became “a favorite resort of journey men and apprentices from an early age”.\textsuperscript{43}

Some of London’s most famous taverns in the eighteenth century, in whose clientele predominated members of the "middle classes", were the Turk's Head, in Gerrard Street; the Mitre, in Fleet Street; the Crown and Anchor, in the Strand; the Bedford Arms, in Covent Garden, the Shakespeare's Head, also in Covent Garden; and the Devil (or Old Devil) at Temple Bar. Dr. Johnson was a regular customer of the Turk's Head, home to the activities of “The Club”, which he founded in 1764 with Joshua Reynolds and other friends, who would congregate in dinners and conversation. The famous linguist also frequented the Mitre, the Devil, and the Crown and Anchor, where he often had dinner with his friend James Boswell.\textsuperscript{44}

Around the year of 1730, public houses were so numerous that famous landlord Thomas ("Tom") Brown, a contemporary Englishman, affirmed that the existence of such a large “Number of Taverns, Alehouses, etc.” in London could lead one to imagine “Baccus the only God that [was] worshipp’d there”. In addition to legally-produced (beers) or imported (wines and spirits) drinks, many public houses (taverns in special), ignoring the severities of law, had connections to a net of smugglers that illegally brought into England (without paying import taxes) a great amount of French wines and brandies. Another popular practice among tavern owners who did not want to get involved in contraband was the falsification ("doctoring") of wines and spirits, by adding other ingredients to these drinks, with the purpose of obtaining higher profits.

In the late 1720s, traveler Cesar de Saussure wrote about the falsification of imported drinks, especially wines, by unscrupulous landlords:

“Though no wine is made in England, yet I am persuaded that three times more is drunk than is imported into the country, and I will solve this problem by telling you that most wine merchants, and specially tavern proprietor, possess the art and address of doubling their wine and even making it threefold the original quantity, for with one cask they have purchased they will fill two or three others, by addition of water and spirits (...) and this so skillfully that good judges of wines and even epicures do not immediately perceive it; but if they have a drinking bout they will soon find out, and to their cost, that the wine has been tampered with”.

However, these taverns and alehouses were not only the ideal locus for what many Englishmen considered as an “exclusive privilege” of their nationality: “to get drunk”. They were also associative places where customers could engage in conversations about business, the events of the day and the news, and also, according to contemporary Englishman Francis Place, where someone could join “chair clubs, chanting clubs, lottery clubs” and play the most different kinds of “games of chance or dexterity, skittles, dutch pins, bumble-puppy, drafts, dominoes, etc., all provided by the publicans".

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In working-class neighborhoods or next to their jobs, alehouses became “natural meeting-places” for workers, who organized “box clubs”, “benefit societies”, and “houses of cal”. These later establishments functioned as “employment agencies” for many professionals – bakers, hatters, tailors, carpenters, plumbers, bookbinders, etc. –, who would gather in a specific public house, waiting for the masters in search of new workers. Consequently, alehouses played a relevant role in the formation of specialized workers associations, created with the purpose of defending their wage standards and rights, which became the basis for the future organization of trade unions, in the nineteenth century.⁴⁹

However, some taverns and alehouses had connections with crime, prostitution, and certain activities discriminated by religious and moralist groups, such as the games of chance. Thomas Brown described a particular type of public house as a kind of "little Sodom", which concentrated all sorts of illicit activities:

“(…) where as many vices are daily practiced as ever were known in the great one. Thither libertines repair to drink away their brains, and piss away their estates; aldermen to talk treason, and bewail the loss of trade (…) gamesters to shake their elbows, and pick the pockets of cullies who have no more wit than to play with them. Rakes with their whores, that by the help of wine they may (…) do those things in their cups that would be a scandal to sobriety”⁵⁰

In the 1750s, Sir John Fielding, a contemporary Englishman specialized in the matters of public security, portrayed the problematic situation found in public houses, which was very similar to the above presented:

“At the Ale-House the Idle meet to game and quarrel; here the Gamblers form their Stratagems; here the Pick-pockets hide themselves till Dusk, and Gangs of Thieves form their Plots and Routs; here Conspirators contrive their hellish Devices; and here the Combinations of Journeymen are made to execute their silly Schemes”.⁵¹

Some taverns and alehouses, due to their own landlords’ initiative, became sites for the receiving of stolen goods, regardless the fact that those imprisoned for receiving or re-

passing such objects would certainly have their licenses to operate public houses revoked. Fights and civil disturbances were another serious problem for these establishments, often resulting in people seriously injured or killed, what demanded police intervention. As a consequence, since the beginning of the eighteenth century, police authorities had been trying to restrict the working hours of public houses, given that, according to them, these establishments “(...) often harbored house-breakers, robbers, lewd and debauch'd men and women, by reason whereof the many thefts, robberies and other misdemeanors are frequently done and committed, to the great disturbance of peace”.  

Aiming at avoiding criminal action and illicit activities inside public houses, the Proclamation of the London’s authorities for the year 1700 stated:

“(...) That all vintners, coffee-sellers, alehouse-keepers, victuallers and all others keeping publick houses within this city and the liberties thereof, do not from henceforth permit or suffer any person or persons to be or continue in their respective house or houses gaming, tippling or drinking after the hour of ten of the clock in the night-time between Michaelmas and Lady-day; Nor after the hour of eleven of the clock in the night-time between Lady-day and Michaelmas; Nor on any part of the Lord’s Day”.  

In a certain way, these restrictions in public houses’ working hours were also connected to the fact that in many taverns feminine prostitution proliferated. Indeed, many brothels’ owners would register their establishments as “taverns”, or even “coffee-houses” or “bagnios”, with the sole purpose of hiding or dissimulating their real activity. Areas such as Covent Garden and Strand were notorious for hosting brothels that operated under the respectable label of “tavern”. Among the most famous brothels were The Rose, in Drury Lane, Tom and Moll King’s, and Mother Douglas's (previously known as Betty Careless's), in the Covent Garden square. There is strong indication that some taverns in the area also sheltered the so-called “Mollie Houses”, places frequented especially by “sodomites” – the way masculine homosexuals were called in the eighteenth century (and even in the


53 Ibidem. “Michaelmas” corresponded to September 29, St. Michael’s day; “Lady Day”, to March 25, Annunciation’s day; and “Lord’s Day” was Sunday.
following century). In the second half of the century, there are evidences that two of the most popular establishments were the Canon Tavern and the Star Tavern, where Giacomo Casanova used to go during his London stay. In his memoirs, the Italian traveler remembered this fact and also mentioned that he contracted a terrible gonorrhea from one of the prostitutes he slept with at the Canon Tavern.  

Betty Careless was London’s most famous procuress in the first decades of the eighteenth century. She inspired the character Mrs. Cole, in John Cleland’s play “Memoirs of Funny Hill”, and was mentioned in other two plays of the time. Also, Mother Douglas’s, the tavern-brothel which substituted Betty Careless’s old establishment, enjoyed such a popularity that William Hogarth portrayed it in two of his most important works, "Industry and Idleness" and "The March to the Finchley". Another legendary character of the first decades of the century was Tom King. Former student of the prestigious Eton College, home to some of the richest and more aristocratic youngsters in England, he tried to take advantage of his privileged social background. Although his clientele was mixed, it included many noblemen who would come straight from the Court, richly dressed with their swords on the waist.

Taverns and alehouses continued to exist until the nineteenth century, maintaining their legal and illegal activities. However, throughout that century, other types of establishments substituted these public houses. The most respectable taverns became fine restaurants devoted to a clientele of aristocrats and the richest and most affluent segments of “middle classes”, whereas many other taverns and alehouses developed into Victorian public bars (pubs), which are still common in English cities nowadays.

CONCLUSION: COFFEE-HOUSES, PUBLIC HOUSES AND CLUBS.

As a final point, it is essential to mention an important cultural phenomenon that also resulted from the coffee-houses’ culture: the emergence and proliferation of clubs.

Considering that since the mid-seventeenth century, coffee-houses had been the ideal masculine environment for meeting friends, playing games of chance, and discussing Politics, Philosophy, Science, Arts, etc., it is natural that their customers organized regular (generally weekly) meetings, according to their preferences, affinities, pleasures, or specific activities. “Such gatherings”, observes Roy Porter, “consolidated friendships, supported professional ambitions, and became important patronage sources”.

Thus, the constitution and proliferation of clubs, which started in the early eighteenth century, bear a close connection to the new forms of sociability developed in the coffee-houses and later also in the public houses (taverns and alehouses). According to Roy Porter, the clubs, “probably child of the coffee-house, defined an all-male encrage”, that is to say, they were all-men’s associations, not only in their infancy, but also throughout most of the eighteenth century.

In the beginning of the eighteenth century, after the dissemination of coffee-houses, taverns, and alehouses, clubs also proliferated in London and other larger English cities. Many clubs had been organized as associations of politicians, professionals, art enthusiasts, compulsive gamesters, and hedonists in general. In the political sense, coffee-houses and public houses had great importance, not only for the arduous debates held there, but also due to the fact that many petitions and demands sent to Parliament and more turbulent and radical movements were generated in their interiors.

There were even some clubs – real and imaginary ones – devoted to acts of mockery, debauchery, and obscenity, as well as to unconventional and bizarre activities. Inspired by the history and characteristics of these clubs, a contemporary Englishman, Edward ("Ned") Wards, wrote some books approaching, in a humorous way, their peculiar habits. Wards’ most important works were The secret history of clubs: particularly Kit-Cat, Beef-Stake, Vertuosos, etc., released in 1709, and Compleat and humorous account of all the remarkable clubs and societies in the cities of London and Westminster, etc., published only in 1745.

59 ROBERTS – Op. cit., pp. 57-59. For other Edward WARD’s works on clubs, see: The secret history of clubs: particularly Kit-Cat, Beef-Stake, Vertuosos, etc. London, 1709; and Compleat and humorous account of all the remarkable clubs and societies in the cities of London and Westminster, etc. London, 1745. In the first half of the eighteenth century, WARD published another book where this subject is approached: The
Clubs were not a mere continuation of those patterns of sociability developed in coffee-houses and, later, in public houses: they also became microcosms of a rich cultural experience that, apart from obscene excesses, reflected some of the main characteristics of the English Enlightenment, especially those connected to the dissemination of an ideal of freedom, tolerance, politeness, civility, and social refinement.