“Two nations…who are formed by a different breeding, are fed by a different food, are ordered by different manners, and are not governed by the same laws.”¹ Throughout the ages, the rich and the poor existed in two different worlds. In the summer of 1815, an English soldier embarks on a journey to London, where his experiences confirm the existing discrepancies between the privileged and the deprived in British society.

A knight by social rank and a colonel in Her Majesty’s Armies, the soldier is by no means ordinary. Two weeks ago, he received an invitation from the Duke of Wellington to attend a dinner party in London on the 22nd of July. The long and arduous battle campaigns during the Peninsular Wars produced many heroes in England, most famously, the Duke of Wellington. After the French surrendered in June of 1815, the Duke thought it would be appropriate to invite all the colonels to an elaborate dinner celebration, and afterwards, a dance. Although the party is not scheduled to begin until seven o’clock this evening, the Duke made a special request for the soldier from Suffolk to meet him at one o’clock at the Foreign Office.

The city is near. After an eight hour journey from his home county of Suffolk, the soldier could finally hear the heart beat of London. The noises at the docks on the east side of town could be heard a mile away. The curricle and the two hacks, as well as the coachmen, endured the trip through the countryside, traveling from hedgerow to hedgerow.² It has already been a long day for the soldier. The carriage departed from Suffolk at four in the morning, followed by eight hours of “clip-clopping” hooves exchanging beats with the coarse roads from home to London. The decision to not make the journey the day before lingers in the mind of the

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gentleman, and he includes it among his list of major regrets. In any event, the soldier tries his best to ignore the fatigue, and focus on the day at hand.

The fog of London is not a myth. During certain times of the year, the fog, mixed with the smoke of coal fires, inflicts many people with various symptoms, such as dizziness and lung pains.\(^3\) The coal fires, however, are not the only pollutants in the air of city. Horse manure also creates serious concern among the residents of London. Many of the citizens believe the streets of the city smell like stables. As the soldier’s carriage approaches Chapel Street, he sees a London resident paying a “crossing sweeper” to sweep the manure off the street before the resident crosses to the other side. The east side of London is full of lower class citizens who perform various sorts of odd jobs in order to obtain a small payment, ranging anywhere from a penny to a shilling, and sometimes more, depending on the trade. Rat-killers, for example, can be found all over Chapel Street.\(^4\) East London has been notorious for its problem of rat infestation, and consequently, these “rat-killers” have become a vital asset within the city. The East side of town also has its problems with the vagrants. Most of the homeless people in London “…consist of youths, prostitutes, Irish families, and a few professional beggars.”\(^5\)

After traveling through Chapel Street, the soldier continues his advancement towards the west side of London. The soldier, now traveling on Whitechapel Road, notices a new breed of professions. The street is full of street-artists, garret-masters, and street acrobats. The garret-masters are scrambling through town desperately trying to sell their handcrafted furniture, while the street acrobats are doing somersaults in the air, trying to impress their potential customers. Having less sympathy for the former two groups, the soldier puts his entire focus on one particular the street-artist. The artist is an old, worn-down lady, who looks like she has seen

\(^1\) Ibid., 30.
\(^3\) Ibid., 372.
better days. Her portraits, however, do not reflect her outer appearance. The paintings she constructs are magnificent. The soldier orders the coachman to stop the carriage, and he buys a painting from the lady for six pence. After the purchase of the portrait, the soldier orders the coachman to resume traveling, and to make no more stops.

Ten minutes to the hour of the appointed meeting, the soldier and his carriage arrive at west end of town, which was once known as the city of Westminster. This section of town includes all of England’s high-prized buildings, such as the palaces of St. James and Whitehall, the Westminster Abbey, and the Houses of Parliament. The Foreign Office is also in Westminster, located on Parliament Street. As the soldier steps into the Foreign Office, he walks towards the conference room. As he approaches the entrance, he sees a group of Parliament officials discussing the terms of the Congress of Vienna with a group of British officers, including Duke Wellington. The Congress of Vienna was adopted by the Allied armies in the previous month, at the close of the Peninsular Wars. The treaty forced the French to concede the territories gained during the early part of the century. Territory throughout Europe was restructured and divided among Prussia, Austria, Holland, and Belgium. The British, despite not receiving large amounts of territory, are completely satisfied with the treaty. Great Britain gained acquisition of various strategically significant islands, including Malta, the Ionian Islands, Heligoland, St. Lucia, and Tobago. The British believe these acquisitions will guarantee their sea-power throughout the world. After the meeting is adjourned, the Duke of Wellington approaches the gentleman of Suffolk County. The soldier acknowledges the Duke’s presence by addressing him as “Duke Wellington,” and the Duke recognizes the gentleman as “Sir.” This has

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6 Poole, 28.
been the custom of English tradition for centuries. When one approaches a person of a higher
social status, he must address his superior with the proper title.

After exchanging greetings, the two men depart from the Foreign Office, and head
towards the Houses of Parliament. The two houses, the House of Lords and the House of
Commons, have been debating for quite some time on the issue of reform. Radicals within the
House of Commons are demanding a reformation in the British political system. Their platform
consists of five main objectives: 1) universal manhood suffrage, 2) equal constituencies, 3) annual
general elections, 4) secret ballot, and 5) Abolition of property qualifications for parliamentary
candidates. Women have also been pushing for reform within society. The leader of the
women’s movement for education, Mary Wollstonecraft, published a book a few years ago
entitled A Vindication of the Rights of a Woman. The book calls for an elimination of double
sexual standards in the British world. Societal reform, however, is not likely to occur this year,
or as long as the Tories are in power. Despite the fact that reform would threaten the upper-class
position in society, the House of Lords is more concerned with the economic situation of the
British economy, rather than appeasing the reformists.

The conversation within Parliament eventually shifts to the topic of Britain’s post-war
economy. As of the moment, the British economy is falling into a recession. The effects of the
French and American wars are creating inflation and financial instability throughout England.
During the first seven years of the nineteenth century, employment was good, as well as trade,
but starting in 1808 on towards the end of the war, “…war with the United States still further
dislocated trade; while in Great Britain itself several bad harvests caused the price of wheat to
fluctuate violently.” The war with France is resulting in increased prices of most agricultural

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products, partly a consequence of the Corn Laws. The Corn Laws basically “…cut-off [Great Britain] from the corn markets in Europe…” Due to all these problems, an astounding number of British citizens are beginning to form Friendly Societies, which are “basically trade unions masqueraded as Benefit Societies.” The primary benefit of joining a Friendly Society is the insurance it provides in case of an economic disaster.

Despite these problems, there are members of Parliament who believe the economy is getting stronger. During the past twenty years, Great Britain has seen a dramatic increase in population, which in effect has strengthened the nation’s economy. Regardless of the extended war with France, Great Britain’s population has increased from 14,000,000 in 1793 to 19,000,000 as of this moment. “This phenomenal increase in population is due to the coincidence of prolonged war with France and economic revolution.” The war with France, in essence, “…was likely to have been conducive, perhaps fundamentally, to British economic growth in the period 1793 to 1815.” Those of Parliament who deny the weakening of the British economy use the comparison of export statistics between the year of 1792 and that of present day. In 1792, the total value of exported goods in Great Britain was 18,336,851 pounds, and today the total value of exported goods is believed to be around 58,624,550 pounds.

As the debate in Parliament continues, the gentleman from Suffolk begins to wonder why the Duke would request the soldier’s company six hours prior to the dinner party. Did the Duke want to bore the soldier to tears by means of a parliamentary debate? Although the soldier has the utmost respect for the Duke, he wonders how much longer he can withstand the ambiguity of the present situation. Parliament eventually takes a recess, and the Duke is now ready to leave.

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10 Oman, 57.
12 Marriott, 18.
13 Marriott, 19.
The time is three o’clock in the afternoon, giving the two men four hours until the dinner party. As they exit the building, the Duke proposes that the two men go to the Whitehall Club just down the street. The entrance fee to the club is twenty-one pounds for visitors, but for country members, such as the Duke, it is only seven pounds and seven shillings.\textsuperscript{15} While in the club, the Duke and the soldier begin discussing the different aspects of the Peninsular Wars. The roots of the war link directly to the British fears of the French Revolution spreading into Great Britain.\textsuperscript{16} The main opponents of the revolution, the Tories, pushed for a society based on tradition, rather than reason. Great Britain could not afford to risk the destruction of its old institutions, and therefore chose to defend their tradition from potential threats, such as the revolution. Wellington, a high ranking Tory, uses these key concepts to convey to the soldier the basis for the war. The soldier, however, already understands the principles by which the Tories operate, but rather than interrupt the Duke, he listens as if he is oblivious.

The Duke then commences to discuss the changes in warfare that occurred during the war with France. In the eighteenth century, wars between nations were fought by professionals, mainly those of the aristocratic tier. “After 1792 what had been the wars of the professionals’ began to be transmuted into the ‘wars of the nations’ as states came to depend on mass armies for their security.”\textsuperscript{17} The war with France in 1808 transformed the outlook of common British citizens concerning warfare. The “…population was powerfully moved by a feeling that Britain’s independence, and a whole set of associated values and relationships, was at stake.”\textsuperscript{8} Although taxation continued to increase heavily during the war, “…anti-war activity continued to be very subdued.”\textsuperscript{9}

\textsuperscript{18} Ibid., 197.
\textsuperscript{19} Ibid., 196.
Eventually the conversation shifts towards the key specifics of the Peninsular Wars, and the Battle of Waterloo. Wellington claims “[he] can hardly conceive anything greater than Napoleon at the head of an army—especially a French army.” The Duke believes Napoleon possessed many more advantages on the battlefield than the British commanders. The French leader had a monopoly in power over the entire government. While the Duke would have to answer to the House of Commons, Napoleon could afford to lose as many men as he desired, without answering to a higher authority. This particular advantage allowed the Corsican to be more daring on the battlefield. Napoleon’s daring tactics, however, eventually led to his downfall. Wellington believes Napoleon’s ultimate weakness was his deficiency in patience, which is why the Corsican was reluctant to utilize defensive warfare when needed. Wellington also believes Napoleon’s army was better disciplined than the Allies. The Duke tells the soldier, “The French soldiers are more under control than ours. It was quite shocking what excesses ours committed when once let loose.” Besides the British soldiers, Wellington’s army consisted of Belgians, Germans, and Dutchmen. The Duke, as well as the British troops, did not trust their ally troops because many of them were spies. British infantry often felt reluctant to fight seeing as foreign regiments stood on each side of them. Out of the 67,000 men at Waterloo, only 27,000 were British and most of them were not veteran soldiers. Napoleon, on the other hand, used 74,000 veteran French soldiers. Despite these disadvantages, the Duke believes the influence of the gentlemen on the battlefield created a sense of cohesiveness that ultimately led to the French defeat at Waterloo.

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21 Ibid., 9.
22 Ibid., 7.
24 Ibid., 43.
The soldier from Suffolk, however, holds a different opinion. He does not illustrate his contradicting opinion, knowing that such an action would most definitely scar his societal reputation, as well as his military rank. The soldier believes the British military needs revision, primarily in the merit and rank system. Purchasing ranks is a common occurrence in Great Britain, which is motivated by the opportunity of joining the gentry and the aristocracy. The second and third born sons of aristocratic families are often the main customers. Since they cannot inherit the property of their fathers, these men purchase ranks in the anticipation of receiving land for astounding military achievement. As a result, many officers are ill-qualified and the title of “gentleman” has changed meanings. A “gentleman” is now just a person with rank in the military and a proprietor of property.26 The soldier, in spite of his opinion, knows he is no exception to the standard, for he also purchased his rank. The main difference, however, is the gentleman’s family has a long standing military background, in which his father served as a colonel during the French and Indian Wars.

Both the Duke and the soldier decide it is time to make their departure for the Kensington Palace, where the party is to take place. As they exit the club, the Duke informs the gentleman from Suffolk that he intends on making a request to the king, prince regent George IV, to grant the soldier from Suffolk the title of Grand Commander of the Order of Bath, “a high distinction of knighthood often conferred for distinguished military service.”27 Wellington says his decision is based on the performance of the colonel during the battles at Salamanca and Vittoria, both of which were key turning points in the Peninsular War.28 The soldier now realizes the Duke’s
purpose for requesting a meeting prior to the dinner party. Wellington accepts the gentleman’s humble gratitude, and they both head off for the Kensington Palace.

The Kensington Palace is a spectacular piece of architecture. “It is a heavy brick building in the comfortable commonplace style of Queen Anne, chiefly noteworthy as having been the birthplace of her present most gracious majesty.”29 Normally, a formal dinner party requires a gentleman to dress in the traditional black dress coat with “white tie and tails,”30 but on this occasion, all the colonels are required to wear their red-coats. A gentleman, however, must never forget to shave. Among other things he must not forget is his white gloves, and his doppelganger, also known as an umbrella.31

It is now seven o’clock, and the guests have all arrived. The gentleman from Suffolk makes polite conversation with the other colonels in the drawing room, while the women exchanging greetings in the opposite corner. The Duke and his wife greet all of the invited guests while trying to pair up gentlemen “…with ladies of appropriate status and then arrange in order of precedence for purposes of the formal promenade in to dinner.”32 Shortly afterwards, the dinner servant announces the meal is ready. The couples then proceed towards the dinner table, in order of social precedence. Soup is the first course of the dinner, and to accompany the soup, the servant offers each guest “…a portion of red mullet with Cardinal sauce.”33 Several different courses are presented before the evening ends, including lamb cutlets with asparagus and peas, venison with a choice of salad or other vegetable, green goose with plover’s eggs, and for desert, meringues a la crème. Two servants attend to the refreshments, one with the Madeira and one with sherry.

29 Dickens, 143.
30 Poole, 216.
31 Ibid., 217.
32 Ibid., 73.
33 Ibid., 75.
After dinner, the women go to the drawing room for tea and coffee, while the men “circulate the port clockwise”\textsuperscript{34} and smoke. As the time approaches eleven o’clock, the women rejoin the men, and they decide to dance. The style of dancing is a manner “…in which three or more couples, the men and women in separate lines some four feet apart, face one another, and dance their way through a series of figures.”\textsuperscript{35} The figures, or sequence of movements, resemble square dances. While the evening progresses, the gentleman from Suffolk County begins to develop a liking for his female counterpart. The dancing becomes tiresome to the gentleman, so he decides to ask the lady to join him for a walk in the Kensington Gardens. Although it is not considered gentleman-etiquette to ask a lady, to whom he is not married, for a walk alone in the park, the soldier from Suffolk believes his peers will overlook the incident. The couple exit the palace, and begin their walk through the gardens. As for details concerning their stroll in the park, the writer is not at liberty to disclose, for a gentleman must never kiss and tell.

The luxurious life of the rich, as one can see, is by no means comparable to the life of the poor. In 1815, the aristocrats of London spend the majority of their time attending dinner parties and ball-room dances, while the poor suffer in the streets, trying to make ends-meet. The lower classes of London live a life of subsistence, while the rich eat ten course meals. London is truly a place where there are “Two nations…who are formed by a different breeding, are fed by a different food, are ordered by different manners, and are not governed by the same laws.”

\textbf{Work on word choice and condensing your sentences. If you bring up a topic, make sure that it is integrated into your thesis, and that you do not leave your reader hanging.}

\textbf{Your thesis is sound, but it needs to be developed more. Weave it into your paper. Only a few sentences here and there to accentuate the contrasts would drive home the point. The}

\textsuperscript{34} Ibid., 77.
\textsuperscript{35} Ibid., 59.
thesis should be there at every turn. The reason for 2\textsuperscript{nd} & 3\textsuperscript{rd} drafts is to be able to add in those important connections which in fact make the paper complete.