V&Runipress

Representations & Reflections
Studies in Anglophone Literatures and Cultures

Volume 7

Edited by
Uwe Baumann, Marion Gymnich
and Barbara Schmidt-Haberkamp

Gunda Windmüller

Rushing Into Floods

Staging the Sea in Restoration and
Early Eighteenth-Century English Drama

With 2 figures

V&R unipress

Bonn University Press

© V&R unipress GmbH, Göttingen

em Hätze – för Mariechen un Josef

Contents

Acknowledgments

List of Plays

John Dryden / William Davenant, *The Tempest, or The Enchanted Island* (1667)
William Wycherley, *The Plain Dealer* (1676)
Edward Ravenscroft, *King Edgar and Alfreda* (1677)
Thomas D'Urfey, *Sir Barnaby Whigg: or, No Wit like a Woman's* (1681)
Thomas D'Urfey, *A Common-Wealth of Women* (1685)
Nahum Tate, *Cuckolds-Haven: or, an Alderman no Conjurer* (1685)
Aphra Behn, *The Widdow Ranter* (1688 / 1689)
Edward Ravenscroft, *The Canterbury Guests* (1694)
William Congreve, *Love for Love* (1695)
Thomas Southerne, *Oroonoko* (1696)
Charles Gildon, *Love's Victim, or, the Queen of Wales* (1701)
George Farquhar, *Sir Harry Wildair* (1701)
John Dennis, *Gibraltar: or, The Spanish adventure* (1705)
Susanna Centlivre, *The Basset Table* (1705)
Susanna Centlivre, *A Bickerstaff's Burying; or, Work for the Upholders* (1710)
Charles Shadwell, *The Fair Quaker of Deal: or, the humours of the navy* (1710)
Charles Johnson, *The Successful Pyrate* (1712)
John Gay, *Polly* (1729)

1. Introduction

1.1 From "sceptred isle" to "rushing forests"

> This royal throne of kings, this sceptred isle […]
> This fortress built by Nature for herself […]
> This precious stone set in the silver sea
>
> (*King Richard II*, 2.1.40 – 46, c. 1595)

> Thy Trees, fair *Windsor!* now shall leave their Woods,
> And half thy Forests rush into my Floods,
> Bear *Britain*'s Thunder, and her Cross display,
> To the bright Regions of the rising Day;
> Tempt Icy Seas, where scarce the Waters roll,
> Where clearer Flames glow round the frozen Pole;
> Or under Southern Skies exalt their Sails,
> Led by new Stars, and borne by spicy Gales!
>
> (*Windsor Forest*, 385 – 392, 1713)

Moving from John of Gaunt's well-known invocation of England as "this sceptred isle"[1] in William Shakespeare's *King Richard II* to Alexander Pope's epic poem *Windsor Forest* and its image of forests "rushing into floods" one traces a remarkable shift with regard to England's representation. From a view of England as a "precious stone", "set" solitarily in the sea, the image has changed to an invocation of the expansive potential of England's insularity. The former image invokes the vision of a static "natural fortress" being secured by the "silver sea", whereas the latter trembles with anticipation of movement and foreign "bright

---

1 William SHAKESPEARE, *King Richard II*, ed. Andrew Gurr, The New Cambridge Shakespeare (Cambridge: CUP, 2003).

regions".[2] Here, the nation's forests transform into vessels that are set to carry a global vision across the Thames and into the seas that are no longer envisioned as unmoved "silver" waters, but as moving and a promise of curious variety. In both quotes the image of the sea is used to define England and it therefore comes as no surprise that in *Windsor Forest*, a panegyric commemorating the Treaty of Utrecht which helped to establish the nation as the pre-eminent naval force,[3] Britain is no longer envisaged in terms of a confined insularity,[4] but as an expansionist and committed maritime power.

In reading the literary history of British maritime self-fashioning as integral to the conception of Britain itself, the sea becomes a prime literary topos for analysing the emergence of the powerful self-fashioning of the British Empire as "Protestant, commercial, maritime and free".[5] The sea is thus understood as the actual space of British expansion as well as an imaginative space for negotiating national identity.[6]

By the time Pope published *Windsor Forest*, the sea had already advanced to a dominant cultural topic – *Kulturthema*[7] – in Great Britain. This study's title takes up the metaphor of "rushing into floods". The impact of the sea is expressed figuratively but also factually in that the occasion of the poem marks the sea as a patriotic and highly political space. Taking its cue from the "rushing forests" this study is concerned with the function of the Restoration and early eighteenth-century theatre in reflecting and rehearsing this development by "staging the sea". It analyses dramatic representations of maritime spaces, characters and

---

2 Alexander POPE, "Windsor Forest", *The Poems of Alexander Pope – A One Volume Edition of The Twickenham Pope*, ed. John Butt (London: Methuen, 1963) 195 – 210.

3 The Peace of Utrecht ended Great Britain's involvement in the War of the Spanish Succession and left the nation with the acquisition of Nova Scotia from the French and Minorca and Gibraltar as well as an "Asiento de Negros" from the Spanish – a contract providing Great Britain with 5,000 slaves per annum from West Africa. For a survey of the British acquisitions and the establishment of the nation's naval power in the wake of the Treaty of Utrecht, see Christopher LLOYD, *The Nation and the Navy: A History of Naval Life and Policy* (London: The Cresset Press, 1954) 88 – 89.

4 See also Ben Jonson's *The Masque of Blackness* (1608): "Britannia, this blest Isle / Hath won her ancient dignity and style, / A world divided from the world" (1.123 ff), a quote by a Shakespeare-contemporary also strongly emphasizing insularity.

5 David ARMITAGE, *The Ideological Origins of the British Empire* (Cambridge: CUP, 2000) 8.

6 Despite the fact that with the Union of England and Scotland in 1707 "Great Britain" was created, this study will henceforth refer to "England" even after that date, unless referring to "Great Britain" in a more political denomination.

7 Alois Wierlacher coined the term "Kulturthema", defining it as a topic that gains particular significance for public self-images and world views at a particular time: "ein Thema, das im öffentlichen Selbst- und Weltverständnis einer oder mehrerer Kulturen zu einem bestimmten Zeitpunkt besondere Bedeutung gewinnt", in: Alois WIERLACHER ed., *Kulturthema Fremd-heit: Leitbegriffe und Problemfelder kulturwissenschaftlicher Fremdheitsforschung,* Beiträge zur Kulturthemenforschung interkultureller Germanistik. In Verbindung mit dem IIK Bay-reuth, Vol. I (München: Iudicum, 2001) 33.

plots as cultural performances for disseminating and negotiating cultural identity and cultural difference. Staging the sea in the period under consideration is an important venture in popularising the maritime empire, developing a patriotic self-image and establishing the expansionist destiny of an empire of the sea. Moreover, this study shows how staging the sea can be read as a discursive negotiation of the colonial fears and fantasies, political power and knowledge of the Other ancillary to colonial expansion in the early eighteenth century.

1.2   A Nation "in an Island": England's Maritime Expansion

The rhetoric used in one of the central political debates in late seventeenth-century England, concerned with the nation's "blue-water" policy,[8] is illustrative of the extent to which England's origins and destiny were believed to be maritime: "England hath its root in the sea, and a deep root, too".[9] The influential politician George Savile, Marquis of Halifax, here evokes a historical, even quasi-mythical, idea that very openly advocates the nation's ancient "roots" as contemporary designation. In putting forward arguments in favour of a "blue-water" policy and claiming that England's greatness derives from her sea power Savile, in his *Rough Draft of a New Modell at Sea* (1694), thus relies on an image that not only reflects English self-fashioning but also expresses the increasing importance of the sea as England's medium of political and economic strength.

The enactment of the Navigation Ordinances[10] by the Rump Parliament and the subsequent outbreak of the First Dutch War in 1652 had heralded a "maritime" school of thought[11] in English foreign policy that saw the Navy as the prime source of defence for the realm, an outlook that continued after the return of Charles II. "The restoration of 1660 not only left blue-water policy in place but contributed to its enhancement",[12] naval historian Daniel A. Baugh writes in his

---

8   The term refers to the increasing maritime accent of English defence policy from the time of the English Civil War on, see. Daniel A. BAUGH, "Great Britain's 'Blue-Water' Policy, 1689 – 1815", *The International History Review* 10.1 (1988): 33 – 58.

9   George Savile HALIFAX, Marquis of, "A Rough Draft of a New Modell at Sea", *The Works of George Savile, Marquis of Halifax*, Vol. I, ed. Mark N. Brown (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989) 295.

10 The Navigation Ordinances were enacted in 1650 and 1651. The Navigation Ordinances and later Navigation Acts were a series of laws designed to restrict the use of foreign shipping for trade.

11 As opposed to a "continentalist" policy which advocated a stronger focus on land-based armed forces in order to counter the rising influence of French military power upon Western Europe after 1670.

12 Baugh 39.

article on Britain's "blue-water" policy in the long eighteenth century. The sea thus became – quite officially – the medium of the realm's defence as well as its economic drive.[13] N.A.M. Rodger emphasizes the economic dimension of "sea power", writing that commercial activities played a decisive part in promoting maritime policies: "True English sea-power was profitable; it was the means by which the English nation in general, English seamen and merchants in particular, made their fortunes".[14] In terms of the rhetorical character of English sea-power, however, Rodger also argues that not only political liberty, economic profit and Protestantism,[15] but also a certain nostalgia for past glorious victories[16] played a decisive role in publicly negotiating the concept, tying in to the quasi-mythical belief that England has a "deep root" in the sea.

The belief that the British Empire was an empire of the seas is conventionally said to have its origin in Elizabeth I's reign,[17] when the Queen was said "to have inherited from her sister a situation in which naval and maritime aggression were becoming identified with a heady combination of patriotism, Protestantism, and private profit",[18] thus laying the foundation for a more expansionist and ultimately profitable conception of the Isles. This conception is prominently captured in Sir Walter Raleigh's famous maxim: "Whosoever commands the sea

---

13 "The English grand strategy […] was essentially defensive in Europe (and European waters) and aggressive overseas. Overseas aggressiveness was aimed at enlarging the maritime and commercial base of England's naval power while at the same time reducing that of actual or potential enemies", ibid. 41.

14 N.A.M. RODGER, "Queen Elizabeth and the Myth of Sea-Power in English History", *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 14 (2004): 153 – 174, 158.

15 This aspect links political liberty and the maritime defence of the realm to the protection from Catholicism and so-called "popery".

16 The much celebrated victory over the Spanish Armada in 1588 provided a long-lasting touchstone for acclaiming English maritime superiority. However, as Ralph Davis points out in his study on the rise of the English shipping industry: "The story of the defeat of the Spanish Armada is gratifying not only to English patriotism but to all who welcome the humbling of the arrogant defiance of the oppressor, the defeat of the great menace by the small, brave victim. The story is a true one, but as its by-product it has produced a myth; the myth of a nation of seafaring Englishmen confronting a Spain of landlubbers, a Spanish fleet manned by soldiers and the conscripted occupants of the country's jails. […] However, the English so far from being at that time the heirs to generations of seagoers, were newcomers to ocean trade and shipping", Ralph DAVIS, *The Rise of the English Shipping Industry in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries* (London: Macmillan, 1962) 1. Daniel A. Baugh argues along the same lines: "[O]ne great event (the Armada campaign) and excessive enthusiasm on the part of some naval historians have combined to distort the historical picture", Baugh 39. See also Rodger, "Queen Elizabeth and the Myth of Sea-Power".

17 See Armitage, *The Ideological Origins*, Sebastian J. SOBECKI, *The Sea and Medieval English Literature* (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2008) and N.A.M. RODGER, *Essays in Naval History, from Medieval to Modern* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009).

18 Rodger, "Queen Elizabeth and the Myth of Sea-Power" 39. See also Chapter 3 "Protestantism and Empire: Hakluyt, Purchas and Property" in: Armitage, *The Ideological Origins* 61 – 99.

commands the trade; whosoever commands the trade of the world commands the riches of the world, and commands the world itself".[19] Raleigh's reasoning is particularly noteworthy as he draws a stringent relation between power over the sea and power over the world, a corollary directly tied together with the exploitation and commodification of accessible resources.

The particular maritime character of the empire's self-image, which is being referred to and fuelled by such conceptions, worked as a myth of origins, but indeed also proved persistent "not least because it enshrined an inescapable truth: the British Empire was an empire of the seas, and without the Royal Navy's mastery of the oceans, it could never have become the global empire upon which the sun never set".[20] This self-fashioning not only relied on an apparently natural disposition for maritime greatness but also helped to distinguish the British Empire from historical examples of ill-fated land-based empires, as Samuel Purchas relates in his continuation of Hakluyt's *Principal Navigations:* "Hence it is that barbarous Empires have never growne to such glory, though of more Giant-like stature, and large Land-extension, because Learning had not fitted them for sea attempts, nor wisdome furnished them with Navigation".[21] In this view, an empire based on navigation also emerges as a more "civil", that is learned, empire and thus promises to be longer lasting.

By the middle of the seventeenth century, and especially after the Restoration of the Stuart monarchy in England, aspirations to political power and economic expansion became ever more linked with England's performance as a budding empire of the seas. In fact, in looking again at Savile's invocation of the English as "Neptune's Chosen", one discovers a rhetorical strategy which neatly allies the island's "natural" disposition with an economic as well as political design:

---

19 Quoted from R.H. Tawney, *Business and Politics under James I* (Cambridge: CUP, 1958) 3.

20 Armitage, *The Ideological Origins* 100. Recently, the history of Britain has been recast as a "naval history", see N.A.M. Rodger, *The Safeguard of the Sea: A Naval History of Britain, Volume I: 1660 – 1649* (London: Harper Collins, 1997) and his *The Command of the Ocean: A Naval History of Britain, Volume II 1649 – 1815* (London: Allen Lane, 2006).

21 Samuel Purchas, *Hakluytus Posthumus or Purchas his pilgrimes. Contayning a history of the world, in sea voyages & lande-travells, by Englishmen & others. Wherein Gods wonders in nature & providence, the actes, arts, varieties, & vanities of men, with a world of the worlds rarities, are by a world of eywitnesse-authors, related to the world. Some left written by M. Hakluyt at his death. More since added. His also perused & perfected. All examined, abreviated with discourse. Adorned with pictues and expressed in mapps. In fower parts. Each containing five bookes*, Vol. I (London: by W. Stansby for H. Fetherstone, 1625) 5. Every effort has been made to use modern scholarly editions for dramatic texts and secondary sources, however, a considerable number of texts are only available in their first editions or other editions from the period. I have not modernized the spelling in quotations or corrected any printing mistakes and have not used "sic" to indicate any spelling or printing mistakes – the same applies for modern editions that have not modernized the texts.

The first Article of an Englishman's political creed must be, that he believeth in the Sea; […] We are in an Island, […] Our situation hath made greatness abroad by Land Conquests unnatural things to us. […] for we are to consider we are a very little spot in the map of the world, and made a great figure only by trade, which is the creature of liberty […] Our situation, our humour, our trade, do all concur to strenghten this argument; so that all other reasons must give a place to such a one as maketh it out that there is no mean between being a free nation and no nation.[22]

This extract is worth quoting at length as Savile here ostensibly yokes together key elements of the ideological pattern of the British Empire. He lists England's insularity, the population's "humour" and the nation's corresponding proclivity to trade as essential ingredients of a nation destined for imperial greatness. In appealing to his fellow Englishmen the reminder "We are in an Island" thus emerges as no mere geographical observation, but as patriotic assignment. To be "in an island" here transpires as fateful fortune to compensate for land-mass as trade and liberty – twin bearers of the "free nation" – patriotically teach the English to "believe[…] in the Sea".

The Stuarts indeed followed such views of maritime policy and the passing of additional Navigation Acts further enhanced the expansion of England's transoceanic trade. The dynamic of this maritime expansion was firmly felt within the realm in political, economic and cultural terms. The emergence of key areas of British social experience is essentially linked with the rise of Britain as a maritime – that is imperial and commercial – empire. Nuala Zahedieh notes that the "rapid expansion of England's transoceanic trade in the seventeenth century was undoubtedly one of the factors contributing to the series of changes in the financial world, culminating in what has been described as a 'revolution'".[23] James Walvin, writing about the changes in British domestic demand, further points out the scale and global impact of maritime trade: "As Europeans made maritime contact with distant regions and peoples, they set in train a fundamental recasting of the world itself".[24] These fundamental changes, as Walvin's study vividly shows, not only recast the world in impacting indigenous populations, flora and fauna, but also promoted the rise of a commercial society "at home" through the import of e. g. sugar, tea, tobacco and calicoes.

In his study on the English shipping industry Ralph Davis notes that the rapid

---

22 Halifax, "Rough Draft" in: Halifax 24.

23 Nuala ZAHEDIEH, "Overseas Expansion and Trade in the Seventeenth Century", *The Oxford History of the British Empire Volume I: The Origins of Empire: British Overseas Enterprise to the Close of the Seventeenth Century*, ed. Nicholas Canny (Oxford and New York: OUP, 1998) 398 – 422, 399. For the "financial revolution" Zahedieh mentions see P.G.M. DICKSON, *The Financial Revolution in England: A Study in the Development of Public Credit, 1688 – 1756* (London: Macmillan, 1967).

24 James WALVIN, *Fruits of Empire: Exotic Produce and British Taste, 1660 – 1800* (Houndmills and London: Macmillan, 1997) x.

growth of transoceanic trade, as well as shorter distance trading with Norway and the Baltic, was indeed the basis for the enormous rise in English shipping of the time, noting that at the beginning of the eighteenth century no less than a quarter of London's population was employed in trades related to the port and the business of shipping. Indeed, "victualling the ships for the long voyages was big business – in 1686 the 300 or so ships clearing London for the American plantations needed provision for over 9,000 men (larger than the population of all but six or seven towns in England) for two or three months".[25] Apart from the labour needed for ship-building and maintenance, the number of quays and wharves also increased by 30 per cent in the 1670s and 1680s.[26] This burgeoning trade was an "important stimulant to her [England's] domestic economy, encouraging export industries, such as sugar refineries, infrastructural developments, such as carriers, and financial services, such as marine insurance".[27]

The rise in the commercial sector due to colonial trading was hailed by many contemporary commentators, as William Wood in a reference to Hobbesian ideas of the body politic describes: "Our Foreign Trade is now become the Strength and Riches of the Kingdom […] and is the living Fountain from whence we draw all our Nourishment: It disperses that Blood and Spirits throughout all the Members, by which the Body Politick subsists".[28] Wood's assessment in several aspects conforms to Savile's invocation of a "nation *in* an island";[29] its metaphor of trade as nourishment of the "body politick" once more alludes to the "natural" requirement for transoceanic trade, and links it to political and patriotic features.[30] English sea power was thus mostly seen as inherently and necessarily prosperous,[31] as well as a staple for promoting national identity and the empire as bulwark and symbol of supremacy and benevolence.

---

25 Zahedieh in: Canny 408.

26 The total tonnage of English merchant shipping in 1629 came to 115,000, in 1689 it had risen to 340,000. For further statistics and figures see Davis, *The Rise of the English Shipping Industry*, as well as Zahedieh in: Canny 398 – 422. The building of vessels and of the associated infrastructure needed for sailors and workmen required shipwrights, carpenters, blacksmiths, glaziers, carvers, sail-, rope- and instrument-makers as well as pub-owners and storekeepers.

27 Julian Hoppit, *A Land of Liberty? England 1689 – 1727* (Oxford: OUP, 2000) 322.

28 William Wood, *A Survey of Trade. In four Parts* (London: printed by W. Wilkins, for W. Hinchliffe, at Dryden's Head under the Royal-Exchange, 1718) 4.

29 Emphasis GW.

30 As Joseph Addison writes in *The Freeholder:* "Trade is fitted to the Nature of our Country", *The Freeholder*, ed. James Leheny (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1980) 224, see also Daniel Defoe, *The Complete English Tradesman* (Gloucester: Allan Sutton, 1987) 375.

31 As naval historian Rodger sums up: "Pious, virtuous and blessed by God, English sea-power could not but be prosperous. It might cost money, but that money was in the nature of an investment which would yield a sure return", in: Rodger, "Queen Elizabeth and the Myth of English Sea-Power" 166.

Despite such overt patronage for maritime expansion, the promotion of transoceanic trade and related economic policies was, however, also contested, especially as England was still not politically stabilized after the Restoration. Julian Hoppit asserts that "contemporaries were struck by the equivocal nature of that empire to England" as "many inhabitants were not English by origin, and [that they] were prey to attack from European competitors, indigenous people, and the natural environment".[32] Furthermore, despite the widespread recognition of the benefits of economic growth, the imminent dangers of accelerated economic progress were also voiced, alongside criticism aiming at the problematic potential of increased consumption.[33] Yet it is important to note for the purpose of this study that in the second half of the seventeenth century the nation was well on its way to becoming an empire of the seas, with all its attendant commercial benefits, political crises, drawbacks and cultural challenges. In pinpointing England's move from a "sceptred isle" to a nation "rushing into floods" this study thus aims to encompass the diverse political and cultural challenges that such expansionist endeavours generate in order to contextualize the theatrical representations of the sea. The sea had both a material and imaginative influence on metropolitan life. As London and its nodal points were perceived as "World in Epitome",[34] staging the sea became not only a performance of an expanding empire, but a discursive negotiation of collective identity. Kathleen Wilson, in her seminal study *The Island Race: Englishness, Empire and Gender in the Eighteenth Century* (2003), emphasizes this pervading impact the empire of the sea had on the history of British self-fashioning, claiming that it generated "ideas about nationality, race, ethnicity and difference that impacted metropolitan culture and categories of knowledge in profound and quotidian ways".[35]

---

32 Hoppit 243.

33 This aspect becomes apparent in the period's critiques of consumption that quickly degenerated into disputes over colonial trade; on this aspect and on other aspects concerning controversies over luxury, see Part I "Debates", Maxine Berg and Elizabeth Eger ed., *Luxury in the Eighteenth Century: Debates, Desires and Delectable Goods* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2002).

34 As James Beeverell, a French visitor, described London, James Beeverell, *The Pleasures of London*, 1707, trans. W.H. Quarrell (London: Witherby, 1940) 12.

35 Kathleen Wilson, *The Island Race: Englishness, Empire and Gender in the Eighteenth Century* (London and New York: Routledge, 2003) 15.

1.3   Coming to Terms with the Sea: From Sea Literature to New Imperial Histories

The intimate bond between England and the sea so memorably evoked by Savile is pervasive at all levels of English cultural production. In fact, as a literary trope, the union of England and the sea does not seem in need of much annotation: it appears to be the unavoidable destiny of an island-nation. Notwithstanding the historically changing conceptions of the sea – in the contexts of colonisation, modernisation and trade – the sea endurably epitomizes a location and trope for a vast array of literary artefacts. Jonathan Raban opens his anthology, *The Oxford Book of the Sea*, with the assertion that "The sea is one of the most universal symbols in literature".[36] Yet even this extensive claim still seems to almost belittle the vicissitude and pervasiveness of the sea not only as symbol, but as agent, medium and paradigm in literary discourses. This ubiquity becomes apparent when trying to categorize "sea literature", as Robert Foulke reminds us: "To describe sea literature as a field of study seems a peculiarly inappropriate application of the dead metaphor that separates academic territories".[37] Indeed, the assortment he describes is so varied that trying to categorize sea literature seems an endeavour in vain when one considers the wealth of texts at hand, such as "voyage narratives, tales about sailors afloat and ashore, poems reflecting the impact of the sea on human imagination, […] autobiographies of captains, journals kept by their wives at sea, […] accounts of shipwrecks and disasters, […] chanteys and ballads, and more".[38]

Traditionally, most critics concerned with representations of the sea have thus begun their accounts with statements referring to the sea's apparent characteristics; its "timeless qualities", its unpredictable nature combined with the hope of mastering the elements, which seems to suggest the sea's metaphorical and symbolic value for deliberations on human fate and fortune. Blaise Pascal's "vous êtes embarqué"[39] here provides an emblematic image for comprehending human life as a sea-journey,[40] an observation that Hans Blumenberg summarized in the paradox that "landlubbers" prefer to imaginatively represent their

---

36 Jonathan RABAN ed., *The Oxford Book of the Sea* (Oxford: OUP, 1992) 1. For a similar anthology see also Tony TANNER ed., *The Oxford Book of Sea Stories* (Oxford: OUP, 1994).
37 Robert FOULKE, *The Sea Voyage Narrative* (London, Routledge, 1997) xii.
38 Ibid. xii.
39 Blaise PASCAL, *Pensées*, 1669, ed. Charles Louandre, Édition Variorum d'Après le Texte du Manuscrit Autographe (Paris: Charpentier, 1854) 230.
40 Whether or not this emblem extends to the suspicion that, as Friedrich Nietzsche suggests in *Die fröhliche Wissenschaft* (1882), we are always already wrecked, see NIETZSCHE, *Das Hauptwerk Band 2* (München: Nymphenburger Verlag, 1990) 559.

overall condition in the world in terms of a sea voyage.[41] The sea, as an element apparently inherently alien and even hostile to human approaches, thus provides a space and medium for imaginative transgressions, be they existential experiences on a more spiritual level or more tangible like military operations, economic endeavours or the "discovery" of unknown lands and peoples. Images of the sea or, relatedly, images of ships and sailors, feature prominently in literature of any kind. Descriptions of storms were basic exercises in the schools of rhetoric in antiquity[42] and also feature significantly in biblical passages.[43] Images of the ship of state, ship of fools and ship of the church are stock allegories of literature to this day and, as John Peck reminds us, the Odyssey itself was the story of a sailor.[44] This insistent preoccupation with the sea, especially in anglophone literature,[45] becomes apparent considering the many volumes of British sea fiction and gives an impression of the eclectic variety the literary concern with the sea has produced. Consequently, many literary critics have taken an analytical approach focusing on the symbolic and metaphorical use[46] of

---

41 Hans Blumenberg, *Schiffbruch mit Zuschauer: Paradigma einer Daseinsmetapher* (Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp, 1979) 10: "[D]aß der Mensch als Festlandlebewesen dennoch das Ganze seines Weltzustandes bevorzugt in den Imaginationen der Seefahrt sich darstellt". Hartmut Böhme, in his introduction to *Kulturgeschichte des Wassers,* additionally suggests that the ubiquity of symbols of water and the sea can be understood as analogous to the functionality of language, dream and imagination itself: "Die Sprache, der Traum, die Imagination sind nicht autonom menschliche Produktionsmedien, in welchen der stumme Stoff durch bedeutungsverleihende Akte erst kulturelle Signifikanz erhält. Sondern es scheint vielmehr so, daß die Funktionsweisen von Sprache, Traum und Imagination selbst in Analogie zum Wasser begriffen werden können", Hartmut Böhme ed., *Kulturgeschichte des Wassers* (Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp, 1988), "Umriß einer Kulturgeschichte des Wassers: Eine Einleitung", 7 – 42, 11 f. For this aspect, see also Gaston Bachelard, *L'Eau et les Rêves, Essai sur L'Imagination de la Matière* (Paris: Librairie José Corti, 1942).

42 The classical tradition abounds with descriptions of storm and shipwreck, e.g. writings by Homer, Virgil, Ovid and Seneca, to name but a few. See also Albin Lesky, *Thalahatta: Der Weg der Griechen zum Meer* (Wien: Roher, 1947) and Titus Heydenreich, *Tadel und Lob der Seefahrt: Das Nachleben eines antiken Themas in der romanischen Literatur* (Heidelberg: Carl Winter, 1970).

43 Maybe most prominently the stilling of the storm in Matthew 8:23 – 27 and Jesus walking on water in Matthew 14: 22 – 33.

44 John Peck, *Maritime Fiction: Sailors and the Sea in British and American Novels, 1719 – 1917* (Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave, 2001) 3.

45 Raban cites as examples Geoffrey Chaucer's fourteenth-century *The Canterbury Tales*, John Milton's *Paradise Lost* (1667), Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* (1719), Samuel Taylor Coleridge's, *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* (1789) and William Cowper's, *The Castway* (1799) amongst others.

46 See W.H. Auden, *The Enchafèd Flood: or The Romantic Iconography of the Sea* (London: Faber and Faber, 1951) and Howard Isham, *Image of the Sea: Oceanic Consciousness in the Romantic Century* (New York et.al.: Peter Lang, 2004), for studies of sea-myths and imagery in Victorian literature see Cynthia Fansler Berhman, *Victorian Myths of the Sea* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1986) and Iris Lochbaum, *Fathoming Metaphors: Meeresbilder in vikto-*

the sea in literary texts or indeed tracing the development of a particular genre in relation to its thematic focus on the sea.[47] Along with studies concerned with the literary treatment of the sea and the development of a national literature[48] there has also been considerable scholarly attention to the role of the sea in specific works of literature, most notably in the tradition of Shakespeare's *The Tempest*.[49]

However, shifts in research paradigms and the rise of postcolonial studies have, in the past decades, moved the analytical focus to more historical and political aspects. These shifts have also resulted in a categorical re-conceptualization of the sea itself. The analytical challenge of singling out a "field of study" for sea literature can thus be re-framed as a challenge that also asks: what is the sea? A host of studies published in the last ten years have thus been concerned with a critical re-definition of the sea and the British literary tradition[50] as well as with a re-conceptualization of critical boundaries between

---

rianischer Lyrik (Trier: WVT, 2001). With regards to the eighteenth century, see Michael McKeon's reading of images of the sea in John Dryden's *Annus Mirabilis* in: Michael McKeon, *Politics and Poetry in Restoration England: The Case of Dryden's 'Annus Mirabilis'* (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1975) especially Chapter 3 "Naval War and Trade" 99–131, and also Philip Edwards, *The Story of the Voyage: Sea-Narratives in Eighteenth-Century England* (Cambridge: CUP, 1994) as well as the chapter on "Imperial Fate: The Fable of Torrents and Oceans" in: Laura Brown, *Fables of Modernity: Literature and Culture in the English Eighteenth Century* (Ithaca and London: Cornell UP, 2001) 53–94, where Brown discusses the development of the sea as a national rhetorical topos in eighteenth-century poetry.

47 For instance Ernest C. Ross traces the development of the novel in relation to its seabound-narratives, writing that the "recognition of the novel as a definitive literary form and the introduction of the seamen […] were simultaneous developments" in: Ernest C. Ross, *The Development of the English Sea Novel: From Defoe to Conrad* (Ann Arbor: Edwards Brothers, 1977) 1, and Margaret Cohen in a very recent study traces the specific impact of maritime history on the novel, focusing on the traditions of Great Britain, France and the United States, see Margaret Cohen, *The Novel and the Sea* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton UP, 2010).

48 For example Anne Treneer, *The Sea in English Literature: From Beowulf to Donne* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1926), and Lena Beatrice Morton, *The Influence of the Sea upon English Poetry: From the Anglo-Saxon Period to the Victorian Period* (New York: Revisionist Press, 1976). For recent studies concerning the sea and American literary development, see Patricia Ann Carlson ed., *Literature and the Lore of the Sea* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1986) and also Klaus Benesch, Jan-K. Adams and Kerstin Schmidt eds., *The Sea and the American Imagination* (Tübingen: Stauffenburg, 2004) and Hester Blum, *The View from the Masthead: Maritime Imaginations and Antebellum American Sea Narratives* (Chapel Hill: U of North Carolina P, 2008). For studies on the English tradition before the Renaissance, see Sobecki.

49 For an exemplary publication on *The Tempest*'s literary tradition, see Peter Hulme and William H. Sherman eds., *'The Tempest' and its Travels* (London: Reaktion Books, 2000).

50 Bernhard Klein ed., *Fictions of the Sea: Critical Perspectives on the Ocean in British Literature and Culture* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2002), Jonathan Lamb, *Preserving the Self in the South Seas, 1680–1840* (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 2001), Cesare Casarino, *Modernity at Sea: Melville, Marx, Conrad in Crisis* (Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 2002) and Anna Neill, *British Discovery Literature and the Rise of Global Commerce* (Houndmills, Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2002).

history and literature.[51] The emerging broad and political understanding of the sea, the "circum-Atlantic" as described by Joseph Roach, results from an awareness that the sea, or, more precisely, the Atlantic Ocean, has "given way to a network of discrete but related, and inherently polymorphous, socio-political contact zones".[52] The concept of a circum-Atlantic world replaces the notion of a "transatlantic" world as it regards the historical results of "Eurocolonial" initiatives as "insufficiently acknowledged cocreations of an oceanic interculture"[53] and thus insists on the centrality of diasporic movements in the histories of the Americas and Africa.

The network-character of transatlantic phenomena such as slavery and African diaspora had already been debated in the first half of the twentieth century by critics such as W.E.B. Du Bois, C.L.R. James and Frantz Fanon.[54] For a scholarly re-conceptualization of the Atlantic as a contact zone that offers a counter-history to nation-based approaches, however, Paul Gilroy's seminal study *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness* (1993) has been pivotal. Gilroy proposes to take the figure of the ship as a reference point and semiotic agent that produces the various interfaces of the Black Atlantic:

> ships were the living means by which the points within that Atlantic world were joined. They were mobile elements that stood for the shifting spaces in between the fixed places that they connected. Accordingly they need to be thought of as cultural and political units rather than abstract embodiments of the triangular trade.[55]

This suggestion thus offers a new way of conceiving the networks created by the ships' movements, namely to take "the Atlantic as one single, complex unit of analysis in [their] discussions of the modern world and use it to produce an explicitly transnational and intercultural perspective".[56]

---

51 Margaret S. Creighton and Lisa Norling eds., *Iron Men, Wooden Women: Gender and Seafaring in the Atlantic World, 1700–1920* (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins UP, 1996), Bernhard Klein and Gesa Mackenthun eds., *Das Meer als kulturelle Kontaktzone: Räume, Reisende, Repräsentationen* (Konstanz: UVK, 2003), Colin Howell and Richard J. Twomey eds., *Jack Tar in History: Essays in the History of Maritime Life and Labour* (Fredericton: Acadiensis Press, 1991), Carmen Birkle and Nicole Waller eds., *'The Sea is History': Exploring the Atlantic* (Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag Winter, 2009).
52 Annalisa Oboe and Anna Scacchi eds., *Recharting the Black Atlantic: Modern Cultures, Local Communities, Global Connections* (New York and London: Routledge, 2008) 2.
53 Joseph Roach, *Cities of the Dead: Circum-Atlantic Performance* (New York: Columbia UP, 1996) 5.
54 W.E.B. DuBois, *The Suppression of the African Slave-Trade to the United States of America, 1638–1879* (New York: Longmans, 1904), C.L.R. James, *The Black Jacobins*, 1938 (London: Allison and Busby, 1980) and Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, 1961, trans. Richard Philcox (New York: Grove Press, 2004).
55 Paul Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness* (Cambridge / Mass.: Harvard UP 1993) 16 f.
56 Gilroy 15. See also William Boelhower for a discussion of the rise of the circum-Atlantic world as

This novel perspective indeed re-focuses on the Atlantic as an intercultural, in-between space which can thus be analysed on the basis of relationships and connections that did not come into focus before as the new perspective "allows one to identify commonalities of experience in diverse circumstances; it isolates unique characteristics that became visible only in comparisons and contrasts; and it provides the outlines of a vast culture area distinctive in world history".[57] Thus, assuming a circum-Atlantic perspective and a corresponding understanding of the sea as not only an imaginative but also a deeply historical and hybrid space further helps to broaden an understanding of sea literature as the object of analysis can be read as a global paradigm.[58]

To rethink the history of modernity in terms of subaltern identities,[59] as was done by Gilroy, also draws attention to how modernity is materially and discursively constituted throughout the long eighteenth century. On the one hand, "modernity" refers to a range of historical transformations connected with the rise of capitalism, like commercialization, expansion, bureaucratic developments, urbanization, the nation state, the rise of the middle-class and demographic changes. On the other hand, as Rita Felski notes, modernity refers "above all to particular (though often contradictory) experiences of temporality and historical consciousness".[60] A reconceptualization of the sea in terms of the

---

a critical space, William BOELHOWER, "'I'll teach you how to flow': On Figuring out Atlantic Studies", *Atlantic Studies: Literary, Cultural and Historical Perspectives* 1.1 (2004): 28–48.

57 David ARMITAGE and Michael J. BRADDICK eds., *The British Atlantic World, 1500–1800* (Houndmills, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002) xix.

58 See Klein/Mackenthun 5: "Als Forschungsgegenstand ist das Meer *per se* ein globales Paradigma". Gilroy's study has not only been influential in cultural studies, but his figurative use of the ship has also helped to foster turns within nautical archaeology, see Fred L. McGHEE, "Towards a Postcolonial Nautical Archaeology", *Assemblage* 3 (1998): http://www.assemblage.group.shef.ac.uk/3/3mcghee.htm (date of access: 20th of April 2012). Additionally, in the wake of the "Black Atlantic", Atlantic-history has undergone more "colourful" developments, with critics analysing the "Green Atlantic" of Irish dispersal, the "White Atlantic" as a self-reflective area of study and the "Red Atlantic" of capitalism and maritime labour, see Peter LINEBAUGH and Marcus REDIKER, *The Many-Headed Hydra: Sailors, Slaves, Commoners, and the Hidden History of the Revolutionary Atlantic* (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins UP, 2000).

59 In respect to gender, see also Rita FELSKI, *The Gender of Modernity* (Cambridge/Mass.: Harvard UP, 1995) and Claudia HONEGGER, *Die Ordnung der Geschlechter: Die Wissenschaften vom Menschen und das Weib 1750–1850* (Frankfurt a.M.: Campus Verlag, 1991).

60 Felski 9. The development of modernity in the long eighteenth century has been described and analysed by a host of writers concerned with a range of different aspects of material, social and economic history. For a few exemplary studies, see John BREWER, *The Sinews of Power: War, Money and the English State, 1688–1783* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1989), David Brion DAVIS, *The Problem of Slavery in Western Culture* (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1966) P.J. MARSHALL ed., *The Eighteenth Century, The Oxford History of the British Empire Vol. II* (Oxford: OUP, 1998), Kathleen WILSON, *The Sense of the People: Politics, Culture and Imperialism in England, 1715–1785* (Cambridge: CUP, 1998), Maxine BERG, *The Age of Manufactures: Industry, Innovation, and Work in Britain, 1700–1820* (New York: OUP, 1985)

circum-Atlantic thus also incorporates modern experiences of temporality as well as experiences connected to modern conditions of space, as Anthony Giddens writes:

> Modernity increasingly tears space away from place by fostering relations between 'absent' others, locationally distant from any given situation of face-to-face interaction. In conditions of modernity […] locales are thoroughly penetrated by and shaped in terms of social influences quite distant from them.[61]

This re-conceptualized understanding of the sea has consequently also highlighted political aspects of the sea's representations in literature. In this respect the long eighteenth century in particular has attracted scholarly attention as Britain's rise to an empire of the sea and the prevalence of the sea as a "Kulturthema" during that period generated an array of literary texts evoking a strong connection between the nation and the sea. As *Windsor Forest* suggests, the nation's "character" is imaginatively tied to the surrounding sea, and a literary appreciation of the sea therefore emerges as a patriotic endeavour. Indeed, patriotism has also come into view as a prime "Kulturthema" of the British long eighteenth century,[62] and literary representations of the sea have become increasingly analysed in terms of their function for patriotic negotiations in light of this.

Bernhard Klein describes the sea as the "national dream factory",[63] while Laura Brown also claims that in the decade of the 1660s "the sea becomes the national rhetorical element".[64] In analysing poetry by John Dryden, Edward Young and Pope – with its recurrent images of the Thames as bearer of English glory, as in *Windsor Forest* for example – Brown links maritime poetic imagery with the overarching project of empire-building: "The expansiveness of this image of the Thames projects the promise of a new style of mercantile imperialism: the world-benevolent mode of English commerce, in which exchange brings prosperity, wealth and civilization wherever it goes".[65]

---

and *Luxury and Pleasure in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (Oxford: OUP, 2005), John BREWER and Roy PORTER eds., *Consumption and the World of Goods* (London: Routledge, 1993), Jürgen HABERMAS, *Strukturwandel der Öffentlichkeit: Untersuchungen zu einer Kategorie der bürgerlichen Gesellschaft*, 1962 (Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp, 1990), Paul LANGFORD, *A Polite and Commercial People: England 1727–1783* (Oxford: OUP, 1989), Linda COLLEY, *Britons: Forging the Nation 1707–1873* (New Haven: Yale UP, 1992) as well as Walvin and Dickson.

61 Anthony GIDDENS, *The Consequences of Modernity* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1990) 18.

62 See for example Colley, *Britons*, Langford, *A Polite and Commercial People* and Birgit NEUMANN, *Die Rhetorik der Nation in britischer Literatur und anderen Medien des 18. Jahrhunderts*, Studies in English Literary and Cultural History 39 (Trier: WVT, 2009).

63 Klein 2.

64 Laura BROWN, "Oceans and Floods: Fables of Global Perspective", *Global Eighteenth Century*, 107–122, 110.

65 Nussbaum, *Global Eighteenth Century* 110. Earl Miner, in a discussion of Dryden's *Annus*

This emphasis on empire is yet another aspect of the ever-increasing "culturalisation" of historical and literary inquiry, notably amongst eighteenth-century scholars, as the field has in recent decades been enlivened by more theoretically oriented approaches as well as more inclusive conceptions of culture, prominently advocated by Laura Brown and Felicity Nussbaum in their now seminal collection of articles for a "new eighteenth century".[66] Their introduction promotes new critical practices and critical pluralism within eighteenth-century studies, a field, they claim, that has relied heavily on appreciative formalist readings and subsequently not only dismissed "specifically historical models of contemporary theory – Marxist, Foucauldian, new historical, or feminist",[67] but also served to reject particular areas of study, such as the history of women, popular culture and sexuality. Thus, the authors take on a revisionist role, arguing for a problematization and revision of period, tradition, canon and genre in eighteenth-century literary studies. In the wake of this theoretical reorientation, the field has indeed experienced something a reviewer of Brown's *Fables of Modernity* (2001) has compared with being "hit [with] a giant billiard ball" as Brown's and Nussbaum's "stroke of genius was to combine the best of what formalism had to offer – close reading and rhetorical analysis – with energetic Marxist, feminist, and materialist theory to show how poetic rhetoric reflected large-scale ideological formations".[68] However, this account does not encompass the entirety of the changes, as "new" eighteenth-century critics such

---

Mirabilis, also argues that the rhetorical "use" of the sea supports a strong link between the sea and empire-building: "Such a faith in knowledge and trade, combined with a vision of progress for the human race, gave England a rationale that was to prove more suitable to the next two centuries than did the union of the cross and sword for Spain", Earl MINER, "The Wild Man Through the Looking Glass", in: *The Wild Man Within: an Image in Western Thought from the Renaissance to Romanticism*, ed. Edward Dudley and Maximillian E. Novak (London: U of Pittsburgh Press, 1972) 87–114, 93. For the discourses of empire, merging myths of the "New Rome" and the empire of the seas, see also David S. Shields: "Just as the old Roman imperium justified world dominion by promoting the benefits of the Pax Romana, the New Rome rationalized its empire of the seas by declaring benefits of 'the Arts of Peace' resulting from British superintendence of world trade", David S. SHIELDS, *Oracles of Empire: Poetry, Politics, and Commerce in British America, 1690–1750* (Chicago and London: U of Chicago P, 1990) 16. Or indeed, as Howard D. WEINBROT writes: "By about midway through *Windsor Forest*, then, the poet apparently convinces the ancient deities themselves that they have nothing nobler (lines 33, 234) than the seat of the British crown and the poetry that records its triumphs", *Britannia's Issue: The Rise of British Literature from Dryden to Ossian* (Cambridge: CUP, 1993) 286.

66 Felicity NUSSBAUM and Laura BROWN, eds. *The New Eighteenth Century: Theory, Politics, English Literature* (New York: Methuen, 1987), see also Barbara SCHMIDT-HABERKAMP, "Das neue 18. Jahrhundert – ein Forschungsbericht", *Das achtzehnte Jahrhundert* 22.2 (1998): 195–206.

67 Nussbaum / Brown 2.

68 Blakey VERMEULE, "*Fables of Modernity* review", *Modern Language Quarterly* 64.4 (2003): 501–505, 501 f.

as Brown are not merely concerned with literature as reflecting ideological formations, but indeed with how literature anticipates and propagates empire. This re-discovery of the significance of empire for the British eighteenth century alongside a new interest in previously neglected texts such as pamphlets, diaries, chapbooks and occasional poetry as well as caricatures, has sparked an array of studies that have, methodologically as well as with regards to content, thoroughly enlivened the field.[69] In these approaches empire and its transatlantic networks are not just perceived in political and economic structures, but as a cultural project with practices and representations that facilitate and negotiate colonialism and empire-building. At the core of projects writing a "new imperial history" lies the assumption that an analysis of the "archives" of empire should centre on the production of cultural difference and colonial knowledge.[70]

This new analytical focus reflects not only the broader "turn"[71] towards a culturalization in historical and literary studies in general, but is essentially also influenced by the impact of postcolonial theory. On the one hand, postcolonial theory has inspired eighteenth-century studies in its focus on the representations of cultural difference and the relations of power and knowledge. On the other hand, the period has reversely become a focal area for scholars of postcolonial provenance. This development has since given rise to engaged re-readings of eighteenth-century classics such as Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*, Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels*, Pope's *Rape of the Lock*, as well as writings by Thomas Hobbes and John Locke, shifting the analytical focus on literary texts as well as revising the focus on genres and on the canon more generally.[72] This study

---

69 See for example Colley, *Britons*, Roach, *Cities of the Dead*, Neil Rennie, *Far-Fetched Facts: The Literature of Travel and the Idea of the South Seas* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), Clare Midgley ed., *Gender and Imperialism* (Manchester and New York: Manchester UP, 1998), Srinivas Aravamudan, *Tropicopolitans: Colonialism and Agency, 1688–1804* (Durham and London: Duke UP, 1999), Martin Daunton and Rick Halpern eds., *Empire and Others: British Encounters with Indigenous Peoples, 1600–1850* (London: University College London P, 1999), Eliga H. Gould, *The Persistence of Empire: British Political Culture in the Age of the American Revolution* (Chapel Hill and London: U of North Carolina P, 2000), Linda Colley, *Captives: Britain, Empire and the World, 1600–1850* (London: Jonathan Cape, 2002) and Wilson, *The Island Race.*

70 For this notion, see especially the articles by Tony Ballantyne and Catherine Hall in *The British Empire: Themes and Perspectives*, ed. Sarah Stockwell (Oxford: Blackwell, 2008). These critics have put forward a "new imperial history", centring on the assumptions mentioned above. The approach remains contested, but has undoubtedly influenced the field substantially, see also Kathleen Wilson ed., *A New Imperial History: Culture, Identity and Modernity in Britain and the Empire 1660–1840* (Cambridge: CUP, 2004).

71 See Doris Bachmann-Medick, *Cultural Turns: Neuorientierungen in den Kulturwissenschaften* (Rowohlt: Reinbek bei Hamburg, 2006).

72 For the postcolonial eighteenth century, refer to Daniel Carey and Lynn Festa eds., *The Postcolonial Enlightenment: Eighteenth-Century Colonialism and Postcolonial Theory* (Ox-

will thus draw on these developments in literary studies in order to analyse the literary representations of the sea as a profoundly discursive and political space in Restoration and early eighteenth-century dramatic texts.

1.4   The Theatre

The focus on empire and its representation in less prominent genres of the eighteenth-century canon has also rekindled interest in the Restoration and eighteenth-century theatre since "plays enabled the idea, crucial to the formation of Great Britain, that the state of the nation was now contingent upon the state of the empire".[73] With the English nation increasingly coming into contact with new worlds and defining itself in relation to transoceanic networks, the London playhouses offered texts and performances that were contingent upon these changes, as theatres now offered new means of conveying such new worlds: "The London theatre after 1660 was indeed a new world. […] The introduction of actresses, changeable scenery, and increasingly doses of music, dance, and spectacle quickly made a sharp differentiation from the Caroline theatre closed by the Puritans in 1642".[74] This "new world" of London theatres offered by the two patented King's and Duke's Companies respectively, who were granted the exclusive commercial rights to stage plays, thus constitutes the exclusive focus for this study.

Traditionally, drama has not been served too well by eighteenth-century critics and can be said to have been treated as a "foster child"[75] of the field. This critical disregard might be due to the genre's alleged lack of quality. In 1953 James Lynch described the drama as "almost without exception, […] no more than mediocre […] it succeeds neither in fully capturing the spirit of its time nor in generating the power that would make it timeless".[76] Whereas Lynch aimed this criticism chiefly at mid-century theatre, theatre critic Robert D. Hume comes to a similar verdict with regard to Restoration comedies: "We must face the unpalatable fact bluntly […] Most of the comedies need no explication".[77]

---

ford: OUP, 2009) and Suvir KAUL, *Eighteenth-Century British Literature and Postcolonial Studies* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP, 2009).

73 Kaul, *Eighteenth-Century British Literature* 57.

74 Robert D. HUME ed., *The London Theatre World, 1660 – 1800* (Carbondale and Edwardsville: Southern Illinois UP, 1980) xi.

75 J. Douglas CANFIELD and Deborah C. PAYNE eds., *Cultural Readings of Restoration and Eighteenth-Century English Theater* (Athens and London: U of Georgia P, 1995) 11.

76 James J. LYNCH, *Box, Pit and Gallery: Stage and Society in Johnson's London* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: U of California P, 1953) vii.

77 Robert D. HUME, "The Multifarious Forms of Eighteenth-Century Comedy", in: George Winchester Stone, *The Stage and the Page: London's 'Whole Show' in the Eighteenth-Century Theatre* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: U of California P, 1981) 3 – 32, 26.

According to Hume, the disappointing quantity of modern criticism can be attributed to the poor quality of the plays: "For the most part, these plays are highly effective theatrical vehicles, but they tend to possess little literary depth […] these plays are usually unproblematical".[78] Tied in with this disparaging evaluation is the question of canon formation. Brian Corman ascribes the cumbersome canonization of Restoration or early eighteenth-century dramatists both to the change in theatrical taste on the post-Garrick London stage and to the rise of "English literary history", which in the nineteenth century established the marginal status of playwrights due to changed literary and moral standards.[79]

A more differentiated scholarship of Restoration and early eighteenth-century theatre was initiated by Montague Summers and Allardyce Nicoll in the early decades of the twentieth century.[80] This initial attention, however, did not gain in strength until the 1950s,[81] and was sustained by the publication of the five parts of *The London Stage*[82] in the 1960s, which precipitated research on the stage history of plays and the material circumstances of the period's playhouses and productions. Mostly, however, critical analysis was devoted to the contribution of single authors such as George Etherege, William Wycherley and William Congreve,[83] or it was, as Lisa A. Freeman asserts, supported by a "taxonomic

---

78 "Theatre History, 1660–1800: Aims, Materials, Methodology", in: *Players, Playwrights, Playhouses: Investigating Performance, 1660–1800,* ed. Michael Cordner and Peter Holland (Houndmills, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007) 9–44, 16.

79 Brian CORMAN, "What is the Canon of English Drama, 1660–1737?", *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 26.2 (1992/1993): 307–321, 310.

80 For the period under consideration, see especially Montague SUMMERS, *Restoration Comedies* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1921) and *The Restoration Theatre* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1934), Bonamy DOBRÉE, *Restoration Comedy 1660–1720* (Oxford: OUP, 1924) and two parts of Allardyce NICOLL's six-volume *History of English Drama, 1660–1900, Volume I: Restoration Drama 1660–1700* and *Volume II: Early Eighteenth-Century Drama*, published as separate volumes from 1923 on and reissued from 1952–1959.

81 Most notably with the following publications: Thomas H. FUJIMURA, *The Restoration Comedy of Wit* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1952), Dale UNDERWOOD, *Etherege and the Seventeenth-Century Comedy of Manners* (New Haven: Yale UP, 1957) and Norman N. HOLLAND, *The First Modern Comedies: The Significance of Etherege, Wycherley and Congreve* (Cambridge/Mass.: Harvard UP, 1959).

82 The first two parts, covering the period under consideration in this study are: William VAN LENNEP ed., *The London Stage 1660–1800: A Calendar of Plays, Entertainments and Afterpieces together with Casts, Box-Receipts and Contemporary Comment. Compiled from the Playbills, Newspapers and Theatrical Diaries of the Period*, Part I: 1660–1700 (Carbondale: Southern Illinois UP, 1965) and Emmett L. AVERY ed., *The London Stage 1660–1800: A Calendar of Plays, Entertainments and Afterpieces together with casts, Box-Receipts and Contemporary Comment. Compiled from the Playbills, Newspapers and Theatrical Diaries of the Period*, Part 2: 1700–1729 (Carbondale: Southern Illinois UP, 1960).

83 With plays by Dryden, Aphra Behn and George Farquhar also moving into focus, see Robert D. HUME, "Theatre History, 1660–1800" in: Cordner/Holland. However, as Hume further

impulse, a sustained effort to divide, subdivide and divide yet again the genres of dramatic production".[84]

As Hume's quote about the meagre literary quality of the drama suggests, critical analysis thus focused more on the alleged "literary" elements of play-texts, neglecting or at least largely overlooking issues of material culture, race,[85] class, gender and other identity markers such as age or religion.[86] However, as Deborah Payne Fisk asserts:

> Over the last two decades our notion of Restoration theatre has broadened consid-erably […] scholars have realized the heterogeneity of Restoration theatre: its rich variety of dramatic forms, its innovation in staging and architecture, its complex representations of political and social events, its appeal to people from all walks of life.[87]

In the wake of this recovery there have been several publications making a significant contribution to the revision of the period's theatre, focusing on the diverse cultural work theatres performed.[88] The reinvigorated interest in the theatre attests to more general shifts in cultural studies as mentioned above, but is also closely connected to the emerging interest in colonial discourses of the eighteenth century. Criticism has thus shifted to a focus on the national, often patriotic and colonial dimension of drama, increasingly also taking the meshing of colonial imaginings and theatrical representations into account, as Mita Choudhury writes with regard to Samuel Pepys: "his leisure activities and sur-reptitious dalliances in the theatre allow us to reflect upon the ways in which the imperial consciousness coexists with a desire for the collective experience of the

---

writes: "Of these hundreds of plays [published in the time] only about twenty-five received more than cursory critical analysis" 15.

84 Lisa A. FREEMAN, *Character's Theater: Genre and Identity on the Eighteenth-Century English Stage* (Philadelphia: U of Pennsylvannia P, 2002) 2.

85 In its use of the term "race" this study adapts the usage of the term as employed in standard studies in the field, such as Felicity Nussbaum's *The Limits of the Human: Fictions of Anomaly, Race, and Gender in the Long Eighteenth Century* (2003) or Wilson's *The Island Race* (2003).

86 This dismissal of plays due to their "quality" can be countered by theatre historian John L. Styan's useful advice: "the true student of drama will find a bad play to be as exciting as a good one", John L. STYAN, *The English Stage: A History of Drama and Performance* (Cambridge: CUP, 1996) 6.

87 Deborah PAYNE FISK ed., *The Cambridge Companion to English Restoration Theatre* (Cambridge: CUP, 2000) 15.

88 See J. Douglas CANFIELD, *Tricksters and Estates: On the Ideology of Restoration Comedy* (Lexington: U of Kentucky P, 1997) and *Heroes and States: On the Ideology of Restoration Tragedy* (Lexington: U of Kentucky P, 2000), Bridget ORR, *Empire on the English Stage 1660 – 1714* (Cambridge: CUP, 2001) Misty G. ANDERSON, *Female Playwrights and Eighteenth-Century Comedy: Negotiating Marriage on the London Stage* (New York: Palgrave, 2002), FREEMAN, *Character's Theater*, and Matthew J. KINSERVIK, *Disciplining Satire: The Cen-sorship of Satiric Comedy on the Eighteenth-Century Stage* (Lewisburg: Bucknell UP, 2002).

theatre and its self-indulgent and self-validating mechanisms".[89] That is, theatre is understood as a crucial cultural site within an emerging empire: "Especially as the theatres expanded outside London and into the colonies, drama was a central cultural event that did not just passively reflect but actively shaped consciousness as England moved from a late feudal to an emergent, nay, a dominant bourgeois imperial power".[90]

Images of the Other almost obsessively pervade Restoration and early eighteenth-century drama and, as Bridget Orr in her study on *Empire on the English Stage 1660 – 1714* (2001) writes: "This pervasive concern with the staging of cultural contact and conflict is unsurprising given the huge expansion of colonial activity in this period".[91] The colonial dimension of the theatre is also manifested in the plays' plots, as many serious plays contained episodes from imperial history[92] and were staged with exotic settings, such as Dryden's *The Indian Emperour* (1665) or *Aureng-zebe* (1675), Elkanah Settle's *The Empress of Morocco* (1673), Aphra Behn's *Abdelazer* (1676), Mary Pix's *Ibrahim, the Thirteenth Emperor of the Turks* (1696) or Delarivier Manley's *The Royal Mischief* (1696), to name but a few. Comic plots, while in general more focused on metropolitan life, are also increasingly being noticed for their colonial dimension, as became apparent in plays featuring merchants, colonial officials, but also French and Spanish characters, such as Dryden's *An Evening's Love* (1668), John Caryll's *Sir Samolon: or, the Cautious Coxcomb* (1671), James Howard's *The English Monsieur* (1674) or Nicholas Rowe's *The Biter* (1704). As Kaul sums up the situation:

> they [Restoration comedies of manner, traditionally the genre of Restoration drama favoured by scholars, GW] now share critical attention with other comedies from this period like *The Rover* and *The Widow Ranter* […] which define Englishness in juxtaposition with non-English peoples and places, rather than via the more insular, London-centric practices featured in the more domestic comedy of manners.[93]

Together with a focus on empire, national identity and colonial aspects, it has been the pervasive impact of the Restoration and early eighteenth-century playhouses as public institutions that has been prominently re-covered in recent decades. "Restoration theater was analogous not to our theater but to our movie houses in its cultural impact",[94] eighteenth-century theatre historian J. Douglas Canfield writes. This assessment draws on the fact that theatre performances

---

89 Mita CHOUDHURY, "Race, Performance and the Silenced 'Prince of Angola'", *A Companion to Restoration Drama*, ed. Susan J. Owen (Oxford: Blackwell, 2001) 161 – 176, 165 f.
90 Canfield / Payne 11.
91 Orr 3.
92 See Orr, especially 28 – 60.
93 Kaul, *Eighteenth-Century British Literature* 55.
94 Canfield, *Heroes and States* ix.