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Rushing Into Floods

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

With 2 figures

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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" (1.123ff), 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 Fremdheit: Leitbegriffe und Problemfelder kulturwissenschaftlicher Fremdheitsforschung,* Beiträge zur Kulturthemenforschung interkultureller Germanistik. In Verbindung mit dem IIK Bayreuth, 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]

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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

Simms, Norman, "War and Peace in John Gay's *Polly:* Literal, Figurative and Cynical", *Centre D'Études du XVIIIe Siècle de L'Université de la Sorbonne: Guerres et Paix: La Grand Bretagne aux XVIIIe Siècle* 2 (1998): 281 – 291.

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