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978-0-521-77350-8 - Empire on the English Stage 1660-1714

Bridget Orr

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EMPIRE ON THE ENGLISH STAGE 1660–1714

Contesting the current consensus that Restoration and early eighteenth-century drama referred almost exclusively to domestic social and political issues, *Empire on the English Stage, 1660–1714* shows that the theatre was a crucial location for debates over England's contemporaneous colonial expansion. The book provides a comprehensive account of colonialism, national identity and the representation of race and ethnicity on stage. Joining current historical discussions of the development of British imperial ideology, Bridget Orr argues that dramatic texts and production provide a rich and unexamined archive in which the issues attendant on the emergence of the First Empire figure largely. Her account not only sheds new light on plays by Dryden, Orrery, Behn, Wycherley and Southerne but redirects attention to popular but now marginal texts by Settle, Sedley, Dennis and Charles Shadwell. Attention to the imperial themes of these dramatists decisively redraws the map of Restoration and early eighteenth-century drama.

Bridget Orr is Assistant Professor at the Department of English, Fordham University. She has published numerous articles on Restoration, eighteenth-century and post-colonial literature and culture. She is the editor of a special Pacific issue of *The Eighteenth Century: Theory and Interpretation* (1997) and the co-editor, with Jonathan Lamb and Alex Calder, of *Voyages and Beaches: Pacific Encounters, 1760–1840* (1999).

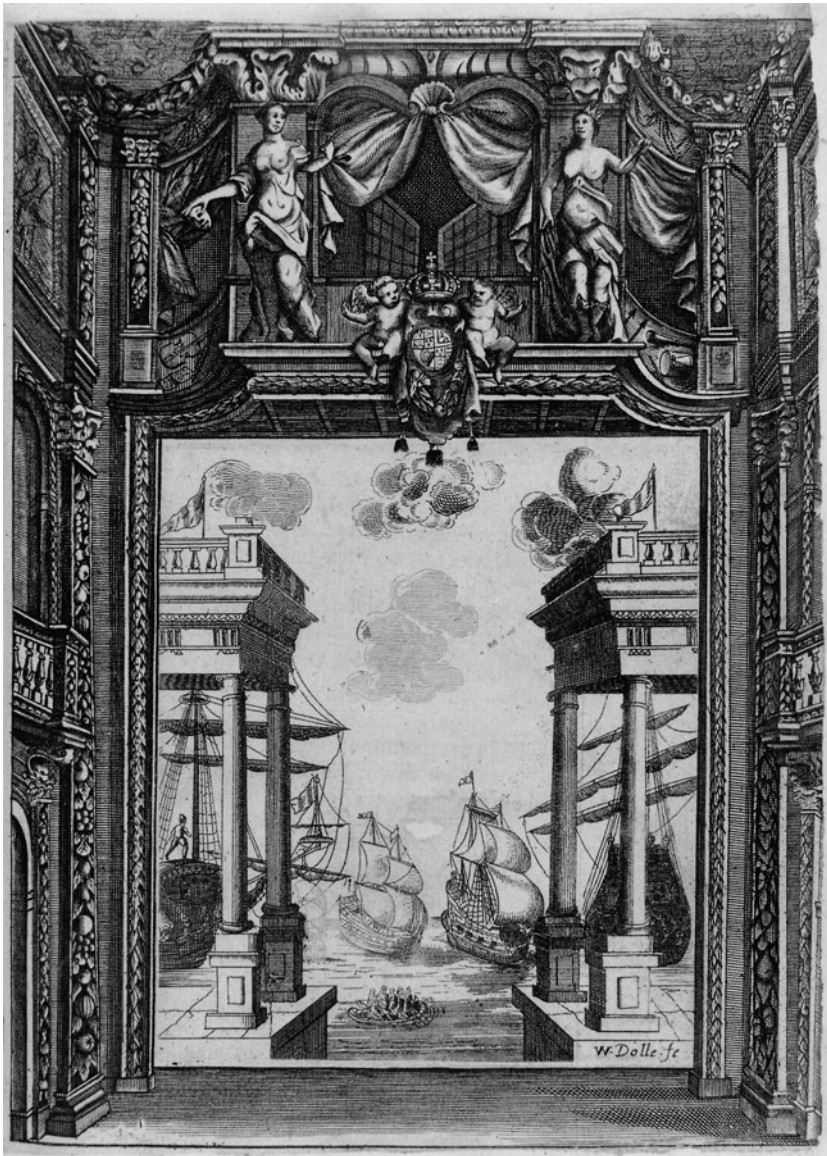
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To Elizabeth and Gordon

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This book is dedicated to my parents, Gordon and Elizabeth, whose joint passion for social justice and literature has, I hope, informed this work.

Note on the Text

In England until 1752 the legal year began on 25 March, so the year 1673 comprised what we would now call 25 March 1673 to 24 March 1674. In this volume, however, years are numbered according to the modern system.

The Gregorian calendar was introduced in 1582, but the Julian calendar remained in use in England until 1752. The Gregorian (New Style) calendar was eleven days ahead of the Julian (Old Style) calendar 1601 to 1699 and twelve days ahead from 1700 to 1752. In this volume, Old Style dates are used.