

Introduction
National Transitions, Literary Transitions
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Sculpted by Caius Gabriel Cibber, father of the dramatist Colley Cibber, a statue of Charles II in armor stands on a pedestal in Soho Square, known as King Charles II Square during the Restoration. Erected in 1681, the monument was the centerpiece of a fountain at whose four corners stood statues of river gods, representative of the national waterways of the Thames, Humber, Tyne, and Severn. The inspiration for the sculpture in the neoclassical, Augustan age was Italian, likely Gian Lorenzo Bernini's fountain in the Piazza Navona, Rome.¹ The Soho fountain withstood the elements for almost a century before its demolition, which the statue of the king survived, though barely. At best a mediocre rendering, it deteriorated, having lost its left arm and leg, and was locked away as an eyesore. Thanks to instructions left in a will by the spouse of the British poet and dramatist Sir William Schwenck Gilbert, the statue was recovered, restored, and returned to Soho Square in 1938. The restoration was by no means as stately and ceremonial as the king's nearly 400 years beforehand, a Restoration that "stood the test of time as a historical landmark," Blair Hoxby reports.² Generously supplied by one of the contributors to *Emergent Nation*, the photo of Soho – the inspiration for this vignette – exhibits the endurance, though tenuous, of Restoration ornamentation in a modern square.³ Like the regnal memorial, the monumental emergent British nation is an artistic construction with an

I am very grateful to Ray Ryan, Editor, Cambridge University Press, and Stephen B. Dobranski, General Editor of the Early Modern British Literature in Transition series, for entrusting me with the editorship of *Emergent Nation*. My exchanges with the distinguished contributors of this volume were likewise educative, inspirational, and personally and intellectually transformative. This book is dedicated to them.

¹ Margaret Whitney, *Sculpture in Britain, 1530–1830*, 2nd edn. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992), 113.

² Blair Hoxby, "Introduction: Why Milton in the Long Restoration," in *Milton in the Long Restoration*, ed. Blair Hoxby and Ann Baynes Coiro (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 1.

³ See figure 17.4. I extend my thanks to Kevin L. Cope for his sharing photographs from a 2017 visit to London and for his instructive, jovial correspondence during the period of producing this volume. The opening remarks in this Introduction are based on Cope's account in chapter 17.

irregular history. Subject to fragmentation, degeneration, and occasional restorations, it is a landmark already erected and a work perpetually subject to reconstruction – a composite, collective undertaking.

The product of collaboration and new alliances, *Emergent Nation* is intended to enrich the fields of Restoration and early eighteenth-century studies by integrating critical perspectives from recent decades and reframing the Restoration as a period of radical emergence and a potentially generative, yet always provisional, coherence.⁴ At the same time, the years from the reinstatement of the Stuart monarchy through the reign of Queen Anne, the last Stuart – too often rendered invisible in the sprawling “long” eighteenth century – merit examination as authoritative in their own right.⁵ Containing national and cultural narratives of disruption, restoration, and reconfiguration, *Emergent Nation* offers incisive approaches to contextualizing and analyzing the literature of 1660–1714. The volume’s contributors probe the conjunctions and disjunctions among national, local, and literary developments and dramatic upheavals in an era when the sociable, rivalrous, densely textual world of English letters explored and accelerated changes. In making a case for an early mimetically produced nation, this book, notably through its concentration on literary evidence and transitions, also seeks to contribute innovatively and creatively to the field of nationalism studies. In his contribution to *The Cambridge History of English Literature, 1660–1780*, Lawrence Lipking observes that, at the end of the eighteenth century, writers who established the English literary traditions performed “a major role in defining the nation.”⁶ A key premise of *Emergent Nation* is that the exercise of defining English nationhood was underway at the hands of literary practitioners well before 1800.

⁴ Canon-centered formalisms and historicisms kept their hold on eighteenth-century studies well into the “theory wars.” The turning point came in 1987 with *The New Eighteenth Century: Theory, Politics, English Literature*, ed. Felicity Nussbaum and Laura Brown (New York: Methuen), one of the field’s most authoritative and finest collections. *The Cambridge Companion to English Literature, 1650–1740*, ed. Steven N. Zwicker (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), and the distinguished *Cambridge History of English Literature, 1660–1780*, ed. John Richetti (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005) were not designed to treat the period of 1660–1714 specifically nor to reflect on emergent nationhood.

⁵ “Until the other day,” Pat Rogers reminds us at the end of *Emergent Nation*, “we did not have recourse to what is now an ever-present label, ‘the long eighteenth century’ . . . We need to decide whether the newer periodization makes any better literary sense than the old one.”

⁶ Lawrence Lipking, “Literary Criticism and the Rise of National Literary History,” in *The Cambridge History of English Literature, 1660–1780*, ed. John Richetti (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 497.

I

National Transitions

Though they situate the phenomenon of emergent nationhood in later periods, most political scientists, philosophers, historians, and cultural theorists of the nation, beginning with Benedict Anderson in *Imagined Communities*, acknowledge the constructed nature of nationhood and thus downplay its natural or organic identity.⁷ Anderson highlighted the performance of printed literature, maps, and geographical surveys in generating a consciousness of a national community, which remained a work in progress. In conjunction with Anderson's hypothesis, cultural historians and theorists, from Linda Colley through to Krishan Kumar and John Kerrigan, among others, described the making of the imagined nation as an exercise in various kinds of communication, relations, and social, cultural, and literary exchanges. The constructivist, manufactured, and imagined nature of nationhood – that is, its status as artefact – is central to an understanding of early modern writings on the nation en masse.

While encouraging the reader to entertain earlier formulations of nationhood than those established by Anderson, *Emergent Nation* portrays the imagined national community as an intellectual and cultural creation, forged or invented largely in and through literary discourses. The nation acquired a corporate identity defined by the crown, church, or land, whose boundaries were constantly redrawn; its connotations also included empire, kingdom, commonwealth, and nation-state. Further, the history of the emergent nation was aligned with the development of a discursive space of civil community, theorized by Jürgen Habermas as a “public sphere.”⁸ Denise Gigante takes up this concept in her chapter on the popular literary periodical in “Generic Transitions,” Part I of this volume; she reveals that the new genre of writing represented by *The Spectator* offered a medium “for those who were to replace the divisive, carping critics in the public sphere of an emergent nation.” The influential Habermasian notion of the public sphere also features prominently in investigations of “ideological transitions” in literature. Suvir Kaul remarks that “quasi-democratic participation that

⁷ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, rev. edn. (London and New York: Verso, 1991); Linda Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation, 1707–1837* (1992; New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009); Krishan Kumar, *The Making of English National Identity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003); John Kerrigan, *Archipelagic English: Literature, History, and Politics 1603–1707* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008).

⁸ Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society*, trans. Thomas Burger (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1989).

defined the public sphere became one of the crucial features of British self-understanding,” and, by extension, of its identification as an imperial and commercial nation, as exhibited by authors ranging from William Davenant to Aphra Behn, John Dryden, Joseph Addison, and Richard Steele. Sean Silver, in Part III of this book, “Cultural Transitions,” references the public sphere as a cultural and institutional phenomenon, generating and generated by the print technologies in an information age that is “intimately bound up with the emergence of the nation-state.” *Emergent Nation* thus works with the various models of national communities and their coordinates and cognates, while always foregrounding the discursive and literary manifestations of nationhood.

As it lurched from an era of revolution to a counter-revolution to the self-named “Glorious Revolution” of 1688, the British nation experienced an oft-painful transition from a dynastic state to a national one. The 1660 Restoration of the monarchy is a starting point and turning point in the pages of this book, but it was a moment that looked back as much as ahead. Despite the attempt at legislating historical amnesia through the implementation of the Act of Indemnity and Oblivion, the Long Restoration failed to erase the tumult of the revolutionary era and the attendant political turmoil – the subject of volume 2 in this *Literature in Transition* series. A little less than a generation later, the Glorious Revolution would repeat some of the work undertaken by and during the English revolution/rebellion/civil wars/wars of religion.

In the interval between revolutions, a restoration. A yet-divided English people had to determine how to turn from an interregnum to a form of provisional monarchy that would remain unsettled through to the Stuarts’ last years. A still-emerging and tensely contested nation had to weave itself together, in other words. It needed to include those who had killed the king and those who hated regicides, those who championed greater religious toleration and those who believed in required membership in a state church, as well as those who celebrated inspiration and those who were committed to reason. These profound challenges were negotiated over the course of a half-century marked by a series of pivotal events. Although London had greeted Charles II with rejoicing in 1660, for example, unnerving disaster soon followed: the last devastating plague in 1665, the catastrophic fire that destroyed most of London in 1666, and the Dutch fleet’s incursion up the Thames to the river Medway, resulting in the English navy’s humiliating defeat in 1667. Nevertheless, London would rise again, the theaters would reopen, Britain would coalesce. Over the course of these eventful years a national vision of empire vastly expanded

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and was newly named “British” with the 1707 Act of Union. And as Dryden predicted earlier in *Annus Mirabilis* (1666), London emerged phoenix-like from an apocalyptic fire to become the model of the modern city.

Religion served as a transitional ideological and political battleground from 1660 to 1714, as it had been since the emergence of Protestant nationhood. The Church of England was in contest with a wide variety of nonconformists, and the actual religious allegiance of the Stuarts was suspect. Despite the would-be king’s conciliatory promises before his Restoration, once the Anglican clergy returned to power they tolerated little dissent from nonconformists and brooked none at all from Catholics. The Test Act of 1673 required any potential officeholder – including the throne’s heir apparent, James, Duke of York – to pledge an oath of allegiance to the Anglican Church. In 1678 the alleged Popish Plot inspired prolonged anti-Catholic hysteria to the extent that those who wished to block Charles’s Catholic brother James’s succession to the throne instigated the near-civil war of 1679’s Exclusion Crisis. Charles II prevailed, in the short term. But after James acceded to the throne in 1685 and his Catholic wife Mary of Modena bore a son, who immediately took precedence over his Protestant half-sisters, Mary and Anne, Protestant England withdrew its support from Stuart primogeniture. The result was a transition so profound as to be called, again, a revolution – glorious or bloodless: the arrival of William of Orange and his wife Mary, the Protestant daughter of James II, as England’s new monarchs. Over the course of these fraught years of political calculation and change, England’s first political parties emerged, fanned by brilliant literary talent on both the Whig and Tory sides.

Anti-Catholicism in the Restoration era was a religious legacy of both the English Reformation and the subsequent religio-political battles over the nature of reform and its consequences for national identity. Because anti-Catholicism’s many manifestations were both ubiquitous and variable, distinguishing between heartfelt sentiments and versatile and effective polemical strategies proved challenging. Although the fierce persecution of Catholics that characterized the early Reformation had largely subsided by 1660, penal laws against Catholics remained on the books and could be enforced with brutality, especially during religio-political flashpoints, such as the fabricated Popish Plot. Mob actions, such as elaborate Pope-burning processions, also fueled a culture of anti-Catholicism. Among the various anti-Catholic campaigns at the time was that issued by the Anglican hierarchy. Keenly aware of the ease with which the national church had

been abolished during the Interregnum, Anglican bishops viewed with suspicion the crypto-Catholic king and openly Catholic heir. Once James Stuart compounded his avowed Catholicism by marrying a Catholic Italian princess, the Anglican bishops instructed clergy to preach anti-Catholicism, making it the defining issue of the 1670s. As a corollary to the pulpit campaign, Edward Stillingfleet and other Anglican clergy engaged Catholic controversialists in an extended print battle, hoping to discredit both Catholic theology and religious practice. As chapter 7 in this volume mentions, Protestant dissenters furious with the Anglican insistence on religious conformity waged ongoing anti-Catholic campaigns against the Anglican clergy. Dissenters promoted toleration for all but Catholics, as illustrated in Andrew Marvell's *The Rehearsal Transpros'd* (1672–73) and *An Account of the Growth of Popery* (1677), key works that codified anti-Catholic fear. Marvell accused the clergy of being insufficiently reformed and thus “papist” in temperament and theology. Evidenced in the work of Henry Care and in the Whig propaganda and poems of the Exclusion period, a third anti-Catholic campaign was conducted by Whig journalists and party writers, who eagerly took advantage of anti-Catholic rhetoric to advance parliamentary power. At the same time, royalist writers such as the journalist Roger L'Estrange and Poet Laureate Dryden worked to defuse anti-Catholicism with what Scott Sowerby calls “anti-anti-popery.”⁹ The Revolution of 1688 and the Act of Settlement, which barred any Catholic or anyone married to a Catholic from succeeding to the throne, would establish anti-Catholicism as a political and legal reality of British life from the Restoration era through until the Catholic Relief Act of 1829.

The second half of the restored Stuart reign was less overtly confrontational but no less turbulent. With fitting Restoration irony, religious debates became increasingly framed in secular terms and served as the petri dish for the growth of party and partisan politics, developments that have shaped British nationhood and empire ever since. In 1701, when it was clear that there would be no legitimate Stuart heir, the Act of Succession pronounced as next in line for Britain's throne the offspring of James I's daughter, Elizabeth of Bohemia, the Winter Queen (the first Hanover, George I, would be James I's great-grandson). Britain's role in the War of Spanish Succession (1701–14) laid the ground for further empire. Censorship lapsed in 1695; with the 1710 Statute of Anne, the beginnings of modern copyright emerged. The representatives of what Daniel Defoe

⁹ Scott Sowerby, *Making Toleration: The Repealers and the Glorious Revolution* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2013), 82.

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would soon term a “middle station of life,” and what we might call a middle class, imitated but also in many ways rejected an aristocratic ethos in the process of shaping the culture and politics of a nation finding its identity and way.

Emerging contract theories of property and governance elided legal rights for women, even as several female authors rose to prominence in these years. The libertine permissiveness of the early Restoration years produced clever, witty literature and provoked philosophical thought, but it also shocked audiences and writers into modest sobriety, as Christopher Tilmouth discusses in chapter 13. These movements and countermovements are charted in *Emergent Nation*, which highlights the value and performances of literary works across a range of genres and media resisting, celebrating, and redefining transitions – or imagining wholly new possibilities.

II

Literary Transitions

A Literary History of England called the watershed year of 1660 the most “conspicuous landmark [year] in the history of England.”¹⁰ After the unsettling power vacuum in the wake of the death of Cromwell, Charles II returned to England on a wave of support. Yet 1660 does not represent a rigid partition. The re-establishment of the Stuart monarchy has a special significance in English history, but the degree to which it inaugurates a new era, different from the past, remains up for discussion. Does the designation of 1660 as the year of the Restoration “not run the risk of imposing a false sense of transition and of the orderliness of change onto the literary past and to veil the confusions and contradictions – even the indifference – that must also have marked that year of business?” asks Steven N. Zwicker.¹¹ Such critical questions animate this third volume in the Early Modern British Literature in Transition series. By tracking Restoration and early eighteenth-century literature in transition, the present volume interrogates the discipline and practice of periodization, and scrutinizes dominant periodization rubrics like early modern, Long Restoration, Augustan,

¹⁰ Bernard Groom, *A Literary History of England* (London: Longmans, 1929), 144.

¹¹ Steven N. Zwicker uses publication statistics from the Restoration era in determining whether the political landmark of the Restoration corresponds with developments in literary culture (“Is There Such a Thing as Restoration Literature?” *Huntington Library Quarterly* 69.3 [2006]: 425–50 [p. 446]).

Neoclassical, Enlightenment, long eighteenth century, and, as Pat Rogers proposes in chapter 20, “short eighteenth century.”

“The study of ‘transition’ is . . . not distinctive to any given historical moment, and the term threatens, in its expansiveness, to devolve into historiographical futility,” explain Kristen Poole and Lauren Shohet in volume 1 of *Literature in Transition*. Like *Gathering Force* and *Political Turmoil*, *Emergent Nation* is Janus-faced, looking back at the previous era’s literary culture, conventions, and innovations and identifying the emergences and flowerings of the new era’s literary genres, ideologies, cultures, and local transformations. The investigation of the emergent nation and its transitional literature offers alternatives to historicist approaches, which, as Rachel Trubowitz explains, draw “tight parameters . . . around historical periods to ensure that each period remains distinct and intact, unblemished by anachronism and presentism.”¹² It is worth repeating that this final volume in the *Literature in Transition* series is more concerned with progressions, mutations, and beginnings than with homecomings, restorations, or settlements.

Literature accomplishes an especially vital role in illustrating the complex interplay of sameness and change. Dryden (among many others) hailed the Restoration as significantly new, a post-Renaissance, rational and scientific moment that might surpass the previous greatness of early modern England. Cultural conservatives, on the other hand, clung to the example of the “ancients,” and just about everyone was leery of claiming as a model the fusty, intentionally complicated, and potentially superstitious (yet dauntingly impressive) legacy of the great writers of the earlier modern period. The rich tapestry of artistic production of 1660 to 1714 built upon England’s recent literary past. Shakespeare is a primary example thereof, serving trans-historically as a muse and model. In *Emergent Nation*, Margaret Kean showcases the different appropriations of the bard by Dryden and William Davenant, Henry Neville, and John Milton in *Paradise Lost* (1667, 1674).

Classified as a Renaissance epic, along with the great narrative poems of Ariosto, Tasso, and Spenser, *Paradise Lost* has often been separated out as the work of an earlier time. Arguably the most momentous literary achievement of the era and the key poem in the English literary canon

¹² Rachel Trubowitz, “Introduction,” *Milton and the Politics of Periodization*, in *Modern Language Quarterly* 78.3 (September 2017): 291–99 (p. 295). For a study of periodization in later periods, which also details the broader implications for defining literary periods, see Ted Underwood, *Why Literary Periods Mattered: Historical Contrast and the Prestige of English Studies* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2013).

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that was unofficially in the making at this time, *Paradise Lost* is intentionally and brilliantly a Restoration work and post-Restoration triumph. Its complex meditations on kingship, the revolution, and the role of the individual, and its inventions in the debate between the ancients and moderns resonate across the centuries. Its author was one of the period's most popular and influential writers, an architect of the nation, whose legacy again takes us into the long eighteenth century. Mark Blackwell observes in chapter 2 that the poem “rejects the cultural work traditionally performed by epic poetry by refusing to articulate a national myth and by parodying crucial components of the epic heritage.” Milton's poem is also a spur to major literary works of the Restoration period (including the explosion of mock epics and Dryden's great translation of Virgil). John Bunyan's long-form Restoration narrative *Pilgrim's Progress* (1678) is a product of a different literary culture.¹³ Yet both Milton and Bunyan are nonconformists and their major works resist their moment and remain passionately committed to the spiritual callings that motivated many in the years before the Restoration. In ordinary prose and based in the vernacular Bible and culture, *Pilgrim's Progress* has been, like *Paradise Lost*, astonishingly influential since its first publication.

Another way in which the late seventeenth century built upon recent generations is evidenced in the continued emergence of women writers in numbers and prominence. Playwright, poet, essayist, scientist, and philosopher, Margaret Cavendish, Duchess of Newcastle – the first female to attend a meeting of the Royal Society (1667) – fits in various narratives of literature in transition, including Clement Hawes's chapter on generic transitions and Helen Thompson's contribution to Part III on cultural transitions. Making multiple appearances throughout the volume, Aphra Behn is one of the Restoration's most innovative and talented playwrights and the author of the disturbing narrative of slavery *Oroonoko* (1688). As Bridget Orr explains in chapter 11, female wits like Behn exercise and stage “symbolic power as bearers of the national culture.” In the same period, Tory intellectual, philosopher, and rhetorician Mary Astell becomes an advocate for women's education and a cultural critic of subjects ranging from the politics of marriage to Lockean epistemology. Anne Finch's Restoration poems probe the natural world, bridging Milton's influence and the Romantic poetic tradition that would claim her work as formative.

¹³ See Michael McKeon, “*Paradise Lost*, Poem of the Restoration Period,” *Eighteenth-Century Life* 41.2 (April 2017): 9–27.

The transitional period mapped in the volume witnessed its own particular innovations. One of the most important literary developments was a general vantage point expressed across genres: satire, mock imitation, irony. As David Rosen and Aaron Santesso explain, satire experienced its most “rapid transformation” immediately following 1660. An especially gifted lyricist of the revolutionary and Commonwealth periods, the key transitional figure Marvell went on to be a great Restoration satirist. In the period of 1660–1714, figures like Dryden, the Earl of Rochester, Alexander Pope, Jonathan Swift, and Daniel Defoe – whose careers would likewise continue to advance and shift over the course of the Long Restoration – worked in the disparate fields of irony or mockery. Dryden’s career is illustrative: from his emergence in the 1650s until his death in 1700, he wrote innovatively and voluminously, engaging with almost every political and cultural transition of his age and in the process perfecting his own complex ironic attitude and mastery of irony’s great poetic meter, the heroic couplet. Another pivotal innovation is the literary essay, brilliantly realized by Addison and Steele. Addressed to both men and women, playful and sophisticated, instructive and blithe, densely social and individual, the literary essay may be a precursor of the novel, but it is also a realization of the early modern essay. It is with studies on the periodical essay that *Emergent Nation* begins and concludes.

III

Generic, Ideological, Cultural, Local Transitions

Each of the twenty chapters in *Emergent Nation* fully represents the present state of the field but also makes original and often revisionary arguments. Contributors to the volume use its beginning and ending dates to focus their analyses but also discover ways – in keeping with the spirit of the series as a whole – that the period’s transitions regularly transcended such temporal divisions. The four Parts of *Emergent Nation* study literary changes throughout the period of 1660–1714 in relation to generic, ideological, cultural, or local transitions, which frequently and constructively intersect to produce rich readings of the literary landscape.

Part I, “Generic Transitions,” highlights the genres – the old, the new, the reinvented, and the emergent – that shaped the literary production in 1660–1714. Though indebted to Michel de Montaigne and Francis Bacon, the essay form became what Dryden would call “modern” during these years, rooted in a new coffeehouse culture and in a new literary journalism.