Defoe and the Dutch

Defoe and the Dutch:

Places, Things, People

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For Manuella Jeanne-Marie Eden, 1929–2004

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Part II: Dutch Elements in Defoe's Novels

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ABBREVIATIONS

Within the text the novels of Defoe will be referred to in their commonly used short title forms: *Robinson Crusoe* for *The Life and Surprizing Adventures of Robinson Crusoe*, *Farther Adventures* for *The Farther Adventures of Robinson Crusoe*, and so on. Parenthetical citations to these novels and other frequently cited works of or about Defoe will take the form of the following abbreviations:

By or attributed to Defoe:

Atlas: *Atlas Maritimus & Commercialis; Or, a General View of the World*
CJ: *The History and Remarkable Life of the Truly Honourable Col. Jacque*
CS: *The Life, Adventures, and Pyracies, of the Famous Captain Singleton*
FA: *The Farther Adventures of Robinson Crusoe*
FM: *The Fortunate Mistress: Or, A History of the Life and Vast Variety of Fortunes of Mademoiselle de Beleau, Afterwards call'd the Countess de Wintselheim, in Germany.*
JPY: *A Journal of the Plague Year*
MC: *Memoirs of a Cavalier*
MCT: *Memoirs of Count Tariff*
MF: *The Fortunes and Misfortunes of the Famous Moll Flanders*
NV: *A New Voyage Round the World*
RC: *The Life and Strange Surprizing Adventures of Robinson Crusoe*
SR: *Serious Reflections During the Life and Surprizing Adventures of Robinson Crusoe: with his Vision of the Angelick World.*
TBE: *The True Born Englishman*
Tour: *A Tour Thro' the Whole Island of Great Britain*

Other abbreviations used in this book:

DD: *Daniel Defoe. His Life* by Paula R. Backscheider
LDD: *The Life of Daniel Defoe: A Critical Biography* by John J. Richetti
MoF: Daniel *Defoe: Master of Fictions* by Maximillian E. Novak
OED: *The Oxford English Dictionary Online*
PBDD: *A Political Biography of Daniel Defoe* by P. N. Furbank and W. R. Owens

INTRODUCTION: WHY THE DUTCH?

This volume presents multiple perspectives on one focus: how the Dutch Republic and its attributes are used and incorporated in the fiction of Daniel Defoe. It has recently been noted that "exploring the expansiveness and depth of 'Dutchness' in English culture requires more than tracing representations of the Dutch" for "ideas about Dutchness in the English cultural imagination far exceeded any real or imagined presence of Dutch people on the streets or characters on the stage" (Rubright, 19); what I explore here, then, is the Early Modern[1] extension into English novelistic writings of their "semiotics of Dutchness" (ibid.). The book is intended to examine a hitherto unexplored area of early eighteenth-century literary studies and of the novels attributed to Defoe, and to do it in such a way as to capture and discuss the most relevant reflexes of Dutchness in these works of fiction.

With this aim the investigation has used whichever interpretive tools are appropriate to the tasks at hand, and these come from a fairly wide range of approaches to textual and thematic criticism. The topic of Dutchness, just as much as the works attributed to Defoe, "call out to be placed in plural and interdisciplinary contexts" and can benefit from investigation using "eclectic critical methods" (Merrett, xiv, xvii). Thus, in Part I, descriptive narratives of history and biography (like those of Backscheider, Burn, Edmundson, Jardine, Macaulay, Novak and Richetti) are used to gather background information from a wide-angled perspective, together with more pointedly analysed data and details from historical studies such as those of Braudel, Ormrod and Wallerstein. Early Modern writings are used in the second chapter, with both literary and non-literary texts being surveyed for their descriptions and representations of the United Provinces and Dutchness.

In Part II, core ideas and analytic perspectives from a variety of theoretical areas are used separately and cumulatively to examine how this broad semiotic field is accessed, reflected and represented in the Defoe novels. The questions underlying the work include, what did the United Provinces and the Dutch mean to Defoe and his readers?, what did these novels make the United Provinces and the Dutch mean for their readers?,

how did these fictions use the images associated with a particular culture in the making of their own (cultural) meaning?, and how are images related to Dutch culture incorporated in literature, even when their identification with the Dutch is indirect? In seeking to answer these questions, this work investigates the interfaces between personal, political, social and cultural modes of representation. The multiple-perspectives technique of investigation together with the multivalent nature of the research field itself have resulted in a work that is initially a survey and exploration of a very wide area and then a series of analyses of elements that are shown to stand out as significant in their Dutchness within that exploration.

Three quotations from Katherine Clark introduce the three most important axes at which Defoe's personal interests most evidently intersect with United Province- and Dutch-related affairs: "[p]erhaps the most critical aspect of Defoe's identity was that he was a dissenter," she says; and "Defoe believed that commerce was the key to the divinely ordered moral and material advance of human society within the secular realm" (2); and finally, she argues that "William III naturally stepped into the role of a Biblical warrior king, one that perfectly fitted Defoe's conceptions about kingship itself and England's place in the world" (6). As a dissenter, a trader, a devoted servant of William III, and a man who, while supporting monarchy, was "Whiggish to the tips of his fingers" (Novak, 361), there would have been in his lifetime few foreign countries of greater pertinence to Defoe and others sharing his interests than the Dutch Republic. It is not surprising, then, to find in both his non-fiction and his fiction more frequent mention of Dutch elements than of elements from most other neighbouring countries, but it is perhaps surprising to find that these mentions are fewer in the majority of the novels. For although Dutch places or objects or characters are still to be found in the nine novels investigated in this book,[2] their roles are often minor or understated, being rare or incidental in five of them. Only in *The Farther Adventures, Captain Singleton*, *The Fortunate Mistress* and *A New Voyage* are there passages of significant length related to Dutch characters or Dutch actions.

Reference to or use of places, things and people that have indirect, emblematic or historical associations with the United Provinces show how images of and allusions to Dutchness of various kinds did, nevertheless, infiltrate Defoe's and others' writings as integral parts of urban, mercantile and early Industrial English life and culture. Some recent studies have contributed important insights into the mechanisms and signs of this infiltration. Dunthorne examines English responses to the Dutch Revolt from 1560,[3] for example, and the English people's awareness of the

similarities and the historical and continuing links between the two countries has been explored for the Jacobean period by Rubright. The extent of a long-established cultural sharing between both countries has been indicated by Jardine in *Going Dutch*, where she argues that the two places were, by 1688, "so closely intertwined" at the higher reaches of society (i.e., in politically, intellectually and culturally influential circles) "that the invasion was more like a merger" (349). Markley's discussion of the European place in Far Eastern trade (as relatively insignificant), and within that context the Dutch control of European trade in and across the high seas, provides a convincing theoretical explanation for some of the hostile images of the Dutch that can be found in seventeenth-century (pre- or post-Anglo-Dutch Wars) as well as early eighteenth-century English writings. It explains repeated references to Dutch control of many trading posts and islands in the East Indies and to a fear of Dutch reprisals in that part of the world. The discussions and analyses presented in this book will include demonstrations of how Dutch attributes and associations of this nature are explicitly and implicitly embedded in the Defoe novels.

Defoe's non-fiction writings frequently refer to the Dutch Republic and its history. This writer's extraordinary ability to see the global contexts of and effects on English trade and politics means that many countries are mentioned in these and his other writings. The Dutch Republic was both England's main trading competitor and her most important export market in the long seventeenth century, so it is not surprising to find it featuring significantly in his writings, especially in those related to trade, as, for instance, in *The Complete English Tradesman*. Defoe's attitudes towards the Dutch and their country are also documented in various comments about the man that can be found scattered throughout biographies and other secondary sources. As Sill says, he shows himself to have been "in general an admirer of the Dutch" ("Introduction" 17), while his written comments are consistently dichotomous—admiring many of the religious, social, political and cultural institutions of the United Provinces but critical of their actions where they impact upon British trade. They comprise one of the few areas in Defoe scholarship about which we may feel secure. Defoe's non-fiction most frequently refers to the Dutch in the context of trade, but in biographies most comments relating Defoe to the Dutch are confined to discussions of his great admiration for William III. Trade provides the dominant means by which to understand the attitudes towards Dutchness reflected in the novels, while William is only indirectly encountered. Instead of admiration of the person, it is the elements that William and the United Provinces stood for (Protestantism, Whig values,

military prowess, an elected governmental system) that are promoted in the novels.

Furbank and Owens claim that the Dutch king of England was "[h]ighest among [Defoe's] idols" (*PBDD,* 8), and Earle simply calls him Defoe's "hero" (12, 19). For Schonhorn, Defoe's adulation of William III, was due to his fervent belief in England as an elect nation of destiny and its need for a warrior king to provide "heavenly supported might, kingship and right rule" (56); Richetti, agreeing with Schonhorn, confirms that Defoe was "undeviating in his support to William" (*LDD,* 78), and that this support extended to comments made many years after William's death (*LDD,* 12). Backscheider promotes a vision of Defoe tied by an exceedingly strong sense of gratitude to both King William and the statesman Harley, and in this she follows Earle who reminds us that "to Defoe gratitude was the greatest of all virtues" (Earle, 14).[4]

While earlier biographers generally accepted Defoe's hint that he met William ("I have . . . in less than half a year tasted the difference between the closet of a king and the dungeon of Newgate"),[5] more recent commentators have cast doubt on this claim, and Furbank and Owens conclude that any such meeting is unlikely to have happened (*PBDD,* 30–31). None of his biographers can ignore the admiration that Defoe shows towards William in his journalism, nor can they dissociate it from his lifelong insistence upon the importance of a Protestant monarchy: Backscheider says of Defoe in 1716 that "[t]he young man who fought for Monmouth had never wavered in his energetic commitment to the Protestant succession. . . . He even revised *The True-Born Englishman*" (*DD,* 386–7); and Novak made the more general point that even towards the end of his life, at a period later than the writing of his novels, Defoe "tended to view society through the vision that he had formed in the 1690s" (*MoF,* 104). That is a vision of the period immediately following what Defoe undoubtedly saw as William's Glorious Revolution with its meritocratic ideals of "toleration for Dissenters, rights and liberties for every Englishman clearly stated and firmly established, [and] a Protestant succession for England forever" (*MoF,* 169)—a Protestant succession that the Dutch swore to protect (Furbank and Owens, *PBDD,* 137). A further explanation for the enduring admiration that Defoe expresses towards the Dutch king may be that in later times such praise could be used as encoded criticism of Toryism. Much as praise of the Swedish king and military hero Gustavus Adolphus could be "a good surrogate for any direct praise" of Cromwell's army (Novak, "Defoe and the Art of War," n.p.), so praise of William—especially after the accession of Anne—must have been a "good surrogate" for the promotion of old Whig values and policies.[6]

Given the above, and the accepted understanding that religion, trade and politics were the outstanding interests of Defoe's life as documented in all biographies of the man, it is perhaps surprising that direct references to the Dutch Republic are not included in his fiction to a greater extent than is the case. Although there are many encounters with the Dutch in the novels, this research has found that many of the Dutch allusions in Defoe's novels exist below the level of direct description or commentary; they are parts of the ideologies that inform the novels and/or the narratives, or they are elements of a foreign culture that have been adopted and shared so completely as to be engrained in the daily lives and thoughts on display in these stories. In other words, to Defoe and his readers, many of the Dutch-influenced aspects of their lives were, so to speak, unremarkably Dutch.

Concerning direct references to Dutch elements, in *Captain Singleton*, *The Fortunate Mistress* and *New Voyage*, Dutch characters are given significant speaking roles, and there are several encounters with Dutch ships and people in *The Farther Adventures*. In the *Journal of the Plague Year*, there are references to the plague in Holland,[7] starting in the very first sentence of the work ("the Plague was return'd again in Holland") (*JPY*, 25), and to trade and to war with that country, although the action of the narration is confined to London. There are far fewer allusions to the country in *Memoirs of a Cavalier*, where the narrator's stay of around nine months[8] in the United Provinces is covered in little more than one page relating an admiration for Dutch fortifications and presenting a few comments about fighting strategies *Robinson Crusoe*, *Moll Flanders* and *Col. Jacque* have only fleeting explicit references to the United Provinces or to Dutch things or people, although they contain references, ideas and emblems that are strongly associated with the United Provinces. Ideas and emblems with Dutch associations are also found in the other novels, although possibly fewer in *The Memoirs of a Cavalier* than elsewhere. That strange work the *Serious Reflections* is scarcely referred to at all in this book because it provides little material of direct relevance to the topic of images of Dutchness, while other works that are not novels but are not entirely non-fiction either, like the *General History of the Pyrates* and the *Memoirs of Count Tariff*, provide several references and comments supplementing data from the main novels and deepening the analyses.

In none of these works are the majority of characters interpreted by the narrators through detailed descriptions, nor do they describe most of their places or things in fulsome detail. The narrative tells us the narrator's thoughts and his or her actions, and anything else that is required to be known, with a focus on the themes in play; it gives us enough to construct scenes in our minds[9]—and very little more. Places, people and objects are

mentioned, but described only with what is directly relevant to the plot or overriding moral perspective, and even then details are few. That "delight in the concrete for which we value [Defoe] most" (Richetti, *Popular Fiction*, 33) is embodied in substantives not elaboration. As Wall noted, rather than providing the sort of descriptions that guide the reader towards specific evaluative insight into the particular thing, place or person being described, "Defoe and other early novelists are much more likely to fit self-consciously in the tradition that description is, in fact, designed to make the reader 'see' an object or a scene" (*Details of Space*, 395), but not to have a sense of its individuality or elaborated "particularity" (Wall, *Prose of Things*, 11–12).

The lack of what we might call supernumerary description is notable when these novels are contrasted to novels of the nineteenth century, for the reasons given above—and may be seen as part of the "direct and naturalistic style" that results in a "near perfection of mimetic techniques" that Richetti finds in Defoe's novels (*Popular Fiction*, 3): the narrative voice is convincing precisely because of its avoidance of literary (and descriptive) elaborations. Furthermore, in early fiction "*[t]hings stand in for descriptions*" (Wall, *Prose of Things*, 2, emphasis original), and readers of the Defoe novels should bear this and the writings' Baconian tendencies[10] in mind when encountering the lists of items that are characteristic of these and of other works by Defoe. The objects—or things, or people, or places—in Defoe's novels have meaning, just as the plots have meaning, and just as the Dutch landscapes, seascapes, portraits, "genre" paintings and still-lifes of the wider period have meaning (Novak, "Picturing the Thing Itself," 3, 15–16; Schama, 10–11). Their meanings are usually emblematic though the images, often stark and unelaborated, are realistic at the same time. As Wall explains, "[e]arly fiction tends to use the detail emblematically, but it frequently invests those emblems with a rich ordinariness, a telling local concreteness, that seems to bolt them more firmly to the here and now than the hereafter" (*Prose of Things*, 3). When elaboration is present, the narrator is taking pains to establish verisimilitude for an ulterior reason, not for its own sake—as will be further discussed in Chapter Three.

In these first-person narrated novels, the narrators' retrospective perspectives enable them to assess, comment upon and criticize their earlier actions and attitudes, and so it is the presentation of changing and even conflicting attitudes that is commonly found in these works. Marsh sees this characteristic dichotomy of Defoe's narration, with its "complexity of judgement and instability of circumstances" to be profoundly alienating, resulting in narrators who (as other scholars have

also noted) have unstable identities, are bereft of "significant selfhood" (Birdsall, in Marsh, 149) and struggle with the "kaleidoscopic effect of shifting perspectives" (Clark, in Marsh, 150). Merrett finds in it a case of "lonely, alienated creatures" (173), or "narrating selves," who are pulled "in contrary directions," "undermin[ing] their capacity to make judgments, [while] uphold[ing] judgments which they made as characters" (17). These conflicts, often related as tensions between the narrators' "displaced sel[ves]" (Homer O. Brown, 562 et passim), are themselves central to the novels' stated and unstated aims, which are outward-reaching; in publishing these texts, the so-called "Editors" and "Writer" of the prefaces,[11] and in the case of the three Crusoe books the narrators themselves, are presenting the reading public with *exempla*. The novels (*Memoirs* and *New Voyage* may be exceptions) are, present, include or claim to be sophisticated, extended and elaborated moral tales, most of them depicting wrong-doing, suffering, repentance, back-sliding, repeated repentance, and a degree of moral or spiritual growth.[12] As Crusoe the "Writer" of *Serious Reflections* put it in his Preface, "here is the just and only good end of all parable or allegoric history brought to pass, viz., for moral and religious improvement" (53). The variety of opinions presented in the critical literature surrounding the novels attest, however, to the presentation of the stories, as well as Defoe's relationship with fiction, being far more complex and sophisticated than this phrase implies.[13]

The narrators of the Defoe novels show changing attitudes towards earlier versions of their protagonist selves, and to their representations of places, people and things; they show differences between what these elements used to signify to them and what they now signify to the narratives. The narrators regularly make moral observations about their stories. In this way dual or even multiple perspectives on the characters' and protagonists' attitudes and behaviours force a degree of attention to be drawn to the reader's own moral standing too (Konigsberg, 6–7). This is a fairly conventional strategy of moral and religious confessionals,[14] a narrative form that owes much to the duality of puritan spiritual diaries or autobiographies,[15] and it is also characteristic of the first-person *bildungsroman* as it subsequently developed. Even ignoring for a moment the doubleness and the "double slipperiness" of the narrating voices (Starr, "Introduction" *SR*, 4), a moralising stance is fairly typical of eighteenth-century publications, even in scurrilous pamphleteering, and there is no doubting the moral elements of Defoe's rhetoric in most of his writings.

That the novels present themselves as, or at least include, moral messages is generally accepted in current scholarship. Richetti identified in most early eighteenth-century narratives "dramatic confrontations"

between (roughly speaking) "secular" and "religious" "attitudes to experience" (*Popular Fiction*, 13), and McKeon assessed the Defoe novels (*Robinson Crusoe* in particular) as caught between and relying on, equally, historicity and spiritualization (319), or as he puts it "questions of truth" and "questions of virtue" (20). Starr aptly observed that Defoe's contributions to this discourse sometimes lapse into "self-conscious displays of pious ingenuity" ("Introduction" *SR*, 36), but the tones of an overall moral concern remain unaffected by these lapses. Richetti's biography reminds us that Defoe "is always the compulsive moralist" (*LDD*, 144), and Novak's concludes that "Defoe's novels were essentially aesthetic and moral texts" (*MoF*, 619). Meanwhile Merrett shows the semantic mechanisms underlying these sometimes merged dualities by claiming that Defoe's "fictions uncover in psychological states, seemingly remote from faith and theology, latent spiritual ideas. . . . [H]e seems to hold that no mental condition lacks spiritual potential" (37). Sill shows that Defoe developed the novel not so much as illustrating moral and political ideas, "but rather as the very form of those ideas," an integration that "was one of the chief accomplishments of his career and one of his most important contributions to the development of the novel." The result of this integration was a series of "symbolic novels" that "unite the emblematic tract with the historical biography" (24, 53). Discussion of descriptions in the Defoe novels will inevitably, therefore, turn to his emblematic methods, and the analyses of Dutch elements in the Defoe novels will prove to be inseparable from political, moral and spiritual signification and moral ascription.

Writers need also to pay attention to readers' attitudes for reasons that are, as we might say, mercenary: texts written for sale need to sell, and writers must therefore pay attention to what may or may not be acceptable to their readers. They should be wary of alienating them to the point of rejection. Although Defoe was not writing for a "captive market," as the absence of the author's name on the title pages of his novels indicates (Rogers, *Robinson Crusoe*, 103),[16] there is no doubt that he wrote his novels for money, and as a mature writer experienced in the ways of the print market, he knew—and his texts would be designed to manipulate and benefit from—the attitudes of his readership. Defoe, notes Backscheider (*DD*, 429), "[a]lways showed a keen understanding of the reading public," and his letters also show that he was careful in "judging the nature of the reader," altering his writing persona to suit his reader's character (Novak, *MoF*, 206). As a journalist he was, in fact, scandalously adept at changing his tune to suit his master, whoever that might be and however much inconsistency that might involve. It seems that "[t]here was hardly a cause

that Defoe espoused which he did not eventually attack" (Novak, *Economics*, 4). For his fiction, then, we may also expect that, at least in his most overt depictions of, for instance, foreign places, people and things, there will be an attempt to mould them towards his readers' desires and expectations.

The representation of the Dutch and their country in English writings of this era shows many writers relying on stereotypes[17] (prejudice and racism are everywhere) and entertaining their readers with exoticism and ridicule of both familiar and less familiar foreign elements. Admittedly, this is often due to the satirical nature of the writings and to the propagandist tone of many works that were written in, or make reference to, the times of the three seventeenth-century Anglo-Dutch Wars, which occurred within the space of twenty years. As late as 1713 (in tracts about the Utrecht Treaty, for instance), writers were still referring to a stock of grievances from the 1620s. In *The True-Born Englishman* of 1670, Defoe reproduced a fair number of regional stereotypes, and throughout his career he was ready to lash out against any foreign or domestic power or person in this conventional and satirical way, whenever and however it suited his polemic. Stereotypes and caricatures are distortions; they perpetuate old, established prejudices, and are often as out of date as they are inaccurate in other respects.

The novels, published after the major Anglo-Dutch trading conflicts were finished and English trade was evidently expanding rapidly (while Dutch trade was not), show a more mixed, often less bald stereotyping of foreign characters than may be found in the writings of Defoe's predecessors and contemporaries (or, indeed, his eighteenth-century successors). This reflects not so much an unprecedented and individual softening towards regional or racial otherness but, perhaps, a more exploratory representation of the complexities of human attitudes towards each other in a wide variety of situations; within the novels, individual and shared experiences accumulate and may display contradictions. They are made more complex with time. The Defoe novels' frequent avoidance of stereotypical nation-types is also related to the fact that their foreigners are figures in large, multitudinous casts that repeatedly include "unhomed"[18] protagonist-narrators and other exiles, refugees, traders, wanderers, pirates and prisoners, and often in countries not their own. Foreigners may still be viewed prejudicially in these works, but not all of them and not all of the time: they are just as likely to be victims of circumstance as are Englishmen or narrators, and they may even, sometimes, be better than Englishmen. In such an internationally populated oeuvre, some Africans

may be noble (*Captain Singleton*), some Spaniards may be kind (*New Voyage*), and some Catholics may be good (*Farther Adventures*).[19]

This study presents readings that ultimately investigate the literary expression of how elements from different cultures become embedded within the products (artwork) of a culture, perhaps even how they become embedded in that culture itself. It shows a play of attitudes towards another country—possibly but not necessarily an "othered" country—within fiction, attitudes that may be conscious or unconscious, intentionally placed in the text or unintentionally promoted by the text itself. The process of meaning-making is a focus, as is the uncovering of meanings: what did the Dutch mean to English readers of the early eighteenth century? How were these meanings embedded in or promoted by the fictions attributed to Defoe?

One meaning or idea explored here is the possibility that Defoe and many of his generation of English readers[20] would have found some aspects of Dutchness to be (still) worthy of emulation, and other aspects to be already familiar and established within images of Englishness. So much is implied, also, in comments such as Braudel's that up to the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, "London looked long and enviously at Amsterdam, copied it, and quite soon became the scene for the same activities" (II, 106), and in Charles Henry Wilson's view of "England's 'apprenticeship' to the Dutch Republic in the seventeenth century" (in Ormrod, 337). Many English men and women would have considered the outstanding features of the Dutch Republic[21] in the Golden Age[22] as still worthy of emulation in their increasingly urban and commercialized society (Ormrod, 33), while some of them might have been aware that England was progressing beyond the United Provinces in both of these areas even while they continued to profess a fervently "nationalist" English stance (I here use the word nationalist as Parrinder does when he says that "[f]ew writers have been as insistent about their nationality as Daniel Defoe," and "it is Englishness, not Britishness, that is stressed in Defoe's works" (63)).

In addition to the financial successes of a society that had, until very recently, encouraged and rewarded its merchants and traders so much better than England,[23] the United Provinces also offered a "counter-model" to "the dominant absolute monarchies epitomised by Bourbon France" (Davids and Lucassen, 18; Speck, 173). This Dutch model seemed to incorporate all the elements that a dissenting merchant royalist like Defoe

would have found desirable in the structure of a state: royalty, aristocrats, patronage and wealthy merchant families with a say in government existed within a negotiated and mutually advantageous grouping of states, side by side with elected councils, policies that prioritized trading and helped the needy (including those in debt, a cause close to Defoe's heart and pocket), and an unprecedented degree of religious and civic freedom. Indeed, the Defoe novels would experiment with these elements in the miniature societies presented within their fictional worlds—although the attitudes that such paper experiments imply must be seen as ambivalent for many of those societies were made up of criminals. The way that Dutch elements are reflected and integrated in these novels, as in other artworks of the long seventeenth century, may show "the importance of admiration, emulation and subtle rivalry in the making of national identity" (Ormrod, 1–2).

Only a very small corner of the huge field of the interactions between fiction and its cultural contexts is being examined in this book; here we have just one set of novels and representations of a single foreign country to investigate. Furthermore it is a country that is not always directly represented in the works under scrutiny. Making sense of the scattered references and allusions to Dutch elements in the Defoe novels could be done in several different ways, and an attempt has been made in the following pages to try approaches that are directly related to the particular manifestations of the Dutch Republic or Dutchness found in the novels. The Dutch Republic appears in these texts as places or place names, as geographical images or emblematic references, and as an alternative social and political system to be explored through fiction; it appears as Dutch objects or objects associated historically or—again—emblematically with the country, and as characters, with their actions, attributes and languages. This explains the choices of theoretical frames and analytical tools selected for the present study.

The novels of Defoe[24] are of particular relevance to those interested in how fiction presents other countries for three main reasons. Firstly, they are recognised as products of a time that was, according to most accounts, very early in the supposed creation of nationalist identities in Europe. Then, they have been characteristically defined as among the earliest works of formal realism and as (therefore) having a particular relationship with material settings and moveable objects that is not expected in other types of fiction such as the prose romance (Watt, *Rise of the Novel*, 26).

Finally, these novels have also been cited as among the earliest examples of a distinctly imperialist literature.[25]

That the United Provinces and their attributes held a particular though often unacknowledged importance for Defoe's works is likely to be uncontroversial, and it is hoped that the subsequent chapters will confirm and deepen our understandings of this importance. A fairly detailed explanation of the personal, political, social and cultural settings of Anglo-Dutch cultural relations is evidently necessary to a work that aims to examine closely how fictional works present and reflect images of and attitudes towards the United Provinces in the context of the readers' existing images and attitudes. Information concerning what literate Englishmen knew about the Dutch and their country at the time of publication of these novels is provided in the two chapters of Part I. Chapter One gives a background to the representation of the United Provinces and the Dutch in English writings through a study of the direct and indirect contact that English and Dutch people had with each other up to the time of the novels, concentrating on what the English would have learned about the Dutch from these contacts. Chapter Two provides a description and discussion of the most frequently found images of Dutchness in English writings from the late sixteenth century until the first decades of the eighteenth century.

The materials and information referred to in Part I thus extend backwards in time to the late sixteenth century and the formation of the United Provinces, and continue up to the 1720s during which most of the Defoe novels were written. The contextual information given in this part, and especially its survey of areas of contact between Dutch and English people, concentrates on those events and elements that were most frequently represented in sixteenth- to early eighteenth-century English writings. It finds that the same core selection of historical, political and cultural characterisations of the Dutch and their country is referred to throughout this period, although some features are added and some perspectives are shifted over time. In observing these repetitions of and modifications to the same set of images and evaluations, we are witnessing the formation of stereotypes for an imagined foreign community or nation. We are also seeing the development of a more subtle and sometimes contradictory web of English understandings about the Dutch people that underpins these images and stereotypes.

Although it refers to some contemporary writings, Chapter One tries to focus on and explain the English population's direct experiences of the Dutch Republic and its people, as reported in later works of historical scholarship. Chapter Two, which includes further details of interactions

between the Dutch and English, mostly shows how Early Modern English writings represented the United Provinces and Dutch people at that time. It looks at non-fictional writings and then at fictional writings. Part I is provided not only to ensure that the analyses and interpretations of Dutch elements in the subsequent chapters will show sensitivity to lived experience and early eighteenth-century insights, but also to provide the context for identification of Dutch attributes that may not be specifically named as such; indirect or emblematic references, for example.

That there is both attributive and generic ambiguity in the vast collection of works that have been called Defoe's is well known: there have long been differences of opinion about the Defoe canon, and drawing a clear distinction between the factual and the fictional is not always appropriate to Defoe's productions for in many of his texts "he himself is unaware of such a division" (I. Vickers, 3) and anyway it is something that he many times took care to confound. As for the long-running discussions of attribution and de-attribution, it is here acknowledged that definitive proof of Defoe's authorship of most of these novels is unattainable; a work such as this must recognize that the texts it studies are grouped together by a canon and a convention, as well as a certain shared discursive characteristics, that tie them to a "paper author" (Barthes, 161). That is, they have appeared to many generations of readers to be the products of one pen[26] and to what Foucault (125) further elaborated as an "author-function," and the literary world has produced a large amount of critical scholarship treating them as if they were by one pen, thus reifying the sometimes tenuously-based attributions. This study considers the novels as justifiably grouped together through a long-established methodological construct named "Defoe" rather than through firm belief that all were written by the Defoe of historical records. It is easier for researchers to collapse the two concepts into one (by accepting all attributions as if equally proven), but the thorny issue of most of these novels lacking incontrovertible evidence of authorship means that this should not be done unthinkingly. Having made that caveat, some comments concerning this study's stance towards the attributional status of the major novels it analyses follow.

These novels form a group above all through being generally accepted as belonging to the Defoe, or "Defoe" canon. The current (but not universally accepted) form of the canon is suggested by the Pickering & Chatto series of publications under the title *Works of Daniel Defoe,* and the *Critical Bibliography* that supports it. This list brings together the titles that have been assumed to be written (or likely to have been written) by Defoe, and most recent disagreements over attribution now focus on the

labelling of these works as "certainly" or "probably" attributed to Defoe. Of the major fiction appearing in the *Works*, only one (*Memoirs of a Cavalier*) has been assigned the status of "probable" by Furbank and Owens in their *Critical Bibliography*, the others all presenting, in their estimation, sufficient external and internal evidence to be categorized as "certain" attributions."[27] The particularly tricky cases of *Moll Flanders* and *The Fortunate Mistress* as outlined by Marshall, and the historically unsure cases of all the other novels with the exception of the three Crusoe books, are somewhat simplified if one is prepared to grant more weight to internal evidence[28] than (for sound methodological reasons) are the foremost scholars concerned with attribution.

While internal evidence may not be reliable enough to be used as a rule in the definitive identification of authorship, for attribution to the more timid construction that is the Defoe "author-function," I find them sufficiently convincing, as do the editors of the texts themselves. Mullan's introduction to his 1991 edition of *Memoirs of a Cavalier*, for example, presents both evident and subtle points of extraordinary similarity between his text and texts known to be authored by Defoe; Keeble's introduction to the 2008 edition of the same work adds further evidence from a perceived working style. Many such points could be used to describe similarities between other works whose more certain attribution to Defoe rest on external as well as internal evidence. The novels exhibit numerous close similarities, and although we may never know for sure whether or not they were all written by the historical Daniel Defoe, they belong to the same mindset and exhibit enough of the same writing habits to be grouped together as (at least) hypothetically Defoean. This is not just a matter of language style; these texts share a particular stance towards knowledge (including the Baconian tendencies that I. Vickers discusses), recourse to the same authorities, repetitions of the same unusual expressions, and a particular stance towards authorship and the borders between fact and fiction. The "absence of a plausible alternative" author (Keeble, "Introduction" *MC*, 7) for all of the anonymous novels is also a weightier argument than is sometimes acknowledged.

Ashley Marshall has stated that valid literary studies of these novels can be made regardless of their attributional status, so long as critics do not base their arguments on the assumption that all of them are by the same biographical person or that this person is Daniel Defoe. In the current work, I am taking the modified risk of treating the group of novels as written by the same constructed *persona*, a persona that coincides with that of the biographical Defoe and his firmly attributed works. That is, whoever penned each novel, they or he demonstrated political and

economic viewpoints that are consistent within the novels as a group, and that share other repeated concerns and stylistic traits. It is possible that other writers were imitating these aspects of Defoe's writing, and there are other possibilities concerning the plagiaristic tendencies found everywhere in the Early Modern publishing world. Unfounded speculations will only lead us astray, however, and it is with relief that we return to the concrete textual presence of this group of nine novels, where it is found that their coincidences of message, mindset, style and sources are greater than any to be found between these and other eighteenth-century works of similar length. Nevertheless, in order to keep in mind that there is no certainty of authorship and that the "Defoe" of the novels is a construct, in this book I will use the phrases "the Defoe novels" and "the writer" in preference to "Defoe's novels" and "Defoe" when discussing the six novels that are not directly and uncontrovertibly attributable to Defoe (that is, all of them with the exception of the three Crusoe novels).

Generic slipperiness and overlap in late seventeenth- and early eighteenth-century writings exists in addition to the "queasy making" (Marshall, n.p) uncertainties surrounding exact authorship of these works. The distinction between fiction and non-fiction is not always a clear one; it is often unclear in the Defoe canon, where so much of the journalism contains satire and parody, where his moral works contain fictional scenarios, where his novels contain factual information and paragraphs imported from other non-fiction works (for example, in *Memoirs of a Cavalier* and *A Journal of the Plague Year*), and where these works are part of a publishing world in which travel accounts and prison/gallows/pirate confessions and adventures regularly present no clear boundaries between the two.[29] To oversimplify, the longer works of Defoe, even where not classified as novels (for instance, the *Essay Upon Projects*) usually contain passages of fictional dialogue or made-up situations, and the fictional works include much that is (or appears to be) factual. The writer(s) of the novels in "the very insecure canon of Defoe's works" (Keeble, "Introduction" *MC*, 7) is or are adept at aping the markers of authenticity conventionally associated with works of factual reporting, resulting in early readers reportedly believing or wishing to believe in a "real" Robinson Crusoe,[30] and in the *Journal of the Plague Year* and the *Memoirs of a Cavalier* being received as genuine, first-hand reports. It is for reasons of practicability, then, that the works known as Defoe's novels have been separated from the rest of his writings for analysis in this book; because in selecting texts for this book it was not as important to separate factual from fictional (something that even his contemporary readership would have found hard to do (Downie, "Making of the English Novel,"

260)), or "certainly" from "probably" (or even "dubiously") attributed novels, as to identify a group of historically and typologically comparable texts that might show significant consistency in their images of the United Provinces and its attributes. Only these works are analysed in depth in this book, although references to other "Defoe" productions are made in the first part of the study.[31] I will henceforth omit the inverted commas around this name, which is treated as a signal of an author-function, variably and indeterminately associated with the man Daniel Defoe, as discussed above.

It is the fictional representations, we could even call them the characterizations, of the United Provinces and the Dutch that are subjected to scrutiny here, not assessments of their historical accuracy. Attention is paid to the messages about Dutchness that are transmitted directly through comments and indirectly through such means as literary tropes, speech patterns, association of place or people with elements of plot or with themes and motifs that are invested with particular meanings in the stories. The elements and attributes of Dutchness analysed in Part II were selected because they were found in the novels rather than because they were sought, and particular attention has been paid to motifs, images or emblems that are found across the novels. Such consistency as is reported was found in the texts. It has not been imposed upon them through any preconceived notion of single authorship; it is, most probably, part of the same underlying set of similarities between these novels that has enabled them to be (however uneasily) attributed to the same writing persona in the first place.

Some references to the Dutch in the other writings attributed to Defoe are occasionally treated in much the same way as are such references in the novels. This is in keeping with the overall lack of genre-boundaries and the perhaps surprising consistency of moral and economic messages that have been found in the *oeuvre*; scholars have discovered that Defoe "was nearly always consistent at the level of generalization of ideas," and that "[h]is real ideas are almost always discernible beneath the sophisms of his personae" (Earle, 24; Novak, *Economics*, 4). Furthermore, when it comes to hermeneutic approaches to texts, it can be argued that there is rarely a clearly discernible line between fact and fiction anyway, or we could say that while such a line may sometimes be evident and important, it can be, in effect, non-existent at other times, depending also on the writer's choices and the nature of the object under scrutiny. The distinction between the two is undetectable in many early eighteenth-century narratives, as Richetti (*Popular Fiction*, 7) points out, and in many of the works attributed to Defoe, the issue is very complex indeed. Identifying a text, or parts of a text, as fact or fiction is only important if the research

questions and methodology depend upon such identification however, and this is not the case here. Like Richetti, this work accepts as fiction (here, as "novels") all extended prose narratives that have "become 'fictions' during the process of consumption" (ibid., 7). As Hunter somewhat wryly commented, "eighteenth-century prose fiction bewilders our notions about what a novel is" (*The Reluctant Pilgrim*, viii).

Methodological Issues

In recent years literary scholars have written much about nationhood, colonialism, post-colonialism, exile, diasporas and similar related matters. Theoretical and analytical studies have greatly enhanced our understanding of these subjects, the impacts they have had on literature and the ways in which literature examines them. In the last thirty years or so, examinations of the representations of foreign places in English literature have been from the standpoint of how a national (or nation-based) literature deals with the foreign "other" and they have nearly always concentrated on relations affected by colonialism (either as the literature of the colonizer or as that of the colonized). Based upon the critical readings that have come out of these efforts, a relatively homogeneous and still-developing set of ideas came to dominate the field, led by the writings of Said and later theorists who, like him, were deeply influenced by the historical understandings of Adorno and other Frankfurt school and neo-Marxist thinkers. Fundamental to these ideas is the "unholy alliance between the enlightenment and colonialism"[32] and more generally the power-play of colonialism and its continuing effects, even when overt geopolitical colonialism has been removed. The approaches used in mainstream current research into the representation of any foreign places in English literature methodologically-speaking fall under the umbrella term of postcolonial studies, even when the other place was not a colony. Said's powerful exposition of Orientalist "othering" and his promotion of reading against the grain have been extended both in theories and in critical readings to texts that treat many different (non-Orientalist) types of otherness.

Reading against the grain has fitted almost seamlessly into the dialectic view of history and its material products, thus combining investigations of colonialism with powerful explanations of the deterministic march of capitalism through the world, as through history. As such, the reading and interpretive strategies of currently dominant critical and postmodern approaches to literary texts have become modern practices of exegesis, with both the strengths and the weaknesses of presupposition that accompany such practices. Postcolonial studies of early modern (and later)

literature are still dominated by a perspective that discerns linear and frankly teleological developments of Western Enlightenment thought and economics towards fully-fledged colonialism, even though convincing revisionist voices are increasingly being heard.[33]

New Historicism and cultural materialism present fields that display similar strengths and presuppositions. They position the political state firmly within a framework of thought that is still predominated by historical determinism, seeing (for instance) the political and philosophical writings about the state structure of the Enlightenment as being the products of, and displaying, a particular stage in the growth of capitalism and its bourgeoisie. From these perspectives, colonialism and the novel genre have been brought together as equally representing and being results and enablers of this growth—although expressions of dissent about the place of the novel in this scheme have existed from the start and continue to be printed. When individual writers and documents from the period are studied, somewhat different, far less schematized, messages emerge. They show writers and thinkers who were well aware of, for instance, the economics underpinning political and cultural events and the implications of these economics, but within explanatory frameworks that were sometimes different from those later imposed upon them.[34] Paying attention to such voices must at least refine our understanding of early discourses concerning colonialism in development, and sometimes challenge even compelling and accepted models. Attempts to broaden the debate in this way are more commonly found in historically-based literary studies than in other types.

Studies like this one, which look at how foreign cultures (and the ideas associated with them) are represented in English fiction from the early colonial period and are not primarily concerned with either supporting or refuting grand explicatory theories or even with the dynamics or theories of colonialism and post-colonialism, are not fashionable. In literary studies, compared to the flourishing research into the literatures of (post)colonialism, there is simply less work currently being published on the literary representation of cultures from foreign countries that were, like the seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Dutch Republic, more coloniser than colonised, or even both,[35] or from historical periods prior to fully developed European colonialism.[36] Even post-colonialism's foundational text starts its historical survey post-Defoe—Said openly designates the late eighteenth century as "a very roughly defined starting point" for the practice of Orientalism (*Orientalism,* 3). While it is possible to find some scholarly works relating to the literature of early and pre-colonial overseas activities, again the current tendency is for the postcolonial mindset and its

terminology to be used as the explicatory base, even though this might initially be considered methodologically questionable.

The careful application of some postcolonial perspectives to pre-colonial texts is useful in the practice of critical analysis, and it is often justified by its results, but attempts should be made to use other perspectives too. While "historians always see the past from a perspective the past could never have had" (Dening, 58)[37] and, thus, "to read a text from the past [is] always to make an interpretation which is in a sense an anachronism" (Belsey, 2),[38] it remains good practice to allow our (inevitably anachronistic) interpretations to be counterbalanced by the consideration of more than one perspective.

In addition to these methodological considerations, for works written at the dawn of English colonial expansion and, furthermore, at a time that has been considered the very start of nation-statehood, the particular preconceptions of postcolonial theories (their "progressivist" and "Eurocentric" biases (Markley, 11)) may not always be appropriate or sufficient. There is no single understanding of nation or nationalism (in either their general or their more specific and theorized senses) that satisfies all cases, and thus scholars do not agree when a sense of nationhood (whatever that may be) can be said to have fully developed in England. With postcolonial theories and writings relying heavily on concepts of nation and otherness, the lack of an elaborated understanding and awareness of national identity (rather than, say, of national feeling or national character)[39] in the early eighteenth-century makes the unquestioned use of these ideas hard to justify. As has been noted, at that time (and most probably at all times) "English people defined themselves in different and often conflicting ways" (Corens, "Catholic Nuns," 445); I have certainly found that attitudes of English writers towards the United Provinces demonstrate this ability to see themselves as fellow communities just as often as rejecting fellowship and emphasizing the differentness of the Dutch Republic, and any of the attitudes towards the "other" place reflects a different perspective on their own complex identities as English. It is therefore, and most particularly for these earlier times, sensible to avoid the terms "English/Dutch nation" and replace them with looser expressions such as "Englishness" and "Dutchness."[40] The word "nation" has been avoided as much as possible in this book, and where the Dutch or English people or geopolitical units need to be referred to as entities, the less theorised word "country" or the general term "the Dutch" are preferred. Both as a presupposition and as a lesson learned from the material it surveys, the study understands that regional identities are multi-level, constructed and contingent "imagined identities" (Paasi,

477), and that regional identities are not always based on differences because sometimes and in some cases "it may be strategically beneficial to stress similarities" (ibid., 475).

The expressions of interest in English affairs in the writings attributed to Defoe were predominantly mercantile and economic, and one does not find any expression of sentimental attachment to the country for its own disinterested (historical, mythic or community's) sake. In the fiction characters do not find their lives in England to be any more pleasant than could be found elsewhere (Bob Singleton for many years shows a preference for Madagascar, as he reminds William when the latter starts to talk of going "Home" (*CS* 209)), and the protagonists of the bluewater (Furbank, "Introduction" *CS*, 8)[41] novels spend far more time in their narratives, and many more pages, in travelling and staying away than in coming back to or living in England. Interpretations of their homecomings are troubling. With the exception of the two novels in which the characters do not gain wealth (*Memoirs of a Cavalier* and *Journal of the Plague Year*), the protagonists' prosperity always comes from abroad.

In much of his journalistic writing, a more directly expressed and straightforward form of commercial regional interest is displayed for it is evident that "Defoe's plan for his country was nothing less than world domination. Trade, not military might, would make this conquest" (Backscheider, *DD*, 511). Echoing Raleigh, he wrote in 1729 that "If any one Nation could govern Trade, that Nation would govern the World" (*The Advantages of Peace and Commerce*, 6, in Backscheider ibid.). For Defoe, as evidenced time and again in these non-fiction writings, the important dynamic of international affairs lay in the European countries' balance of power (Richetti, *LDD*, 77; Roosen, 41ff)[42]—a term he used several times—and scarcely if at all in relations between colonisers and the colonised. The focus of his interest in other countries lay firmly and almost solely in the powers of Western Europe and in their wider trading interests, not even extending to the Italian states towards the East or the Scandinavian countries in the North; "[t]he most important part of Defoe's diplomatic world was made up of Britain, the Netherlands, France, and the Iberian peninsula. Italy, Scandinavia, Switzerland, and the territories of the Holy Roman Empire were important only insofar as their actions were related to, or were influential in, the affairs of the Maritime Powers and France" (Roosen, 35–36).[43]

The present work aims to be data-driven and exploratory. It proposes no single thesis or theory although it discusses, refers to and uses the insights of many theorists in its attempt to examine a complex area of study. The work scrutinizes internal evidence of how the attitudes of one