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**British Mercantile Mysticism:**  
***The Shipwreck* by William Falconer (1762)**

by  
James Powers

A Thesis  
Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of  
St. Cloud State University  
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements  
for the Degree of  
Master of Arts in  
English Studies

May, 2018

Committee Members:  
Judith Dorn, Chairperson  
Sharon Cogdill  
Glenn Davis

### **Abstract**

The title of this thesis, *British Mercantile Mysticism*, explores the relationship between the rising mercantile outlook among the newly evolving middle and merchant classes in England during the seventeenth century into the later part of the eighteenth.

It examines the rise of the new science used in the navigation of the great fleet of the merchant marine. These ideas combined with British culture at the time and other influences such as religion, the world of letters, politics and aesthetics are depicted in William Falconer's poem *The Shipwreck* (1762). This simple poem can be seen as a microcosm or a reflection of the mindset, aspirations and inspirations that powered the modern and progressive thinking of the eighteenth century in Great Britain. These ideas have since spread to much of the English speaking world (particularly North America, Australia and New Zealand) even to this day.

### **Acknowledgments**

Many thanks to all who helped me with the work in this thesis and generously gave me their time. I am particularly indebted to the faculty of St Cloud State University especially those with the initials JD...Also, all the help and sympathy from members of my immediate family when they proved valuable. And not forgetting more distant people and friends who gave time and help in a multitude of ways.

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THE  
SHIPWRECK.  
A  
POEM.

IN THREE CANTOS.

BY A SAILOR.

—————*quaeq; ipse miserrima vidi,*  
*Et quorum pars magna fui.*—————



LONDON:

Printed for the AUTHOR; and sold by A. MILLAR, in the Strand.

MDCCLXII.

**Figure 1.** First Edition of "The Shipwreck" by William Falconer 1762



### **Introduction: British Mercantile Mysticism & *The Shipwreck***

*The Shipwreck* by a "Sailor," first published in 1762, once famous but now almost completely forgotten deserves a better fate. This poem written by William Falconer, one of three survivors of a shipwreck in the Aegean, is an iconic example illustrating what I term in this paper "British Mercantile Mysticism," –a reflective contemplative outlook or stance of the mind. This appears first in English literary culture during the eighteenth century and continues even to the present in Western English speaking cultures.

Falconer's poem was greatly influential throughout this era and beyond particularly in the works of the Romantics. It reflects his experience and went on to many editions throughout the next hundred years. Falconer's poem had untold influence on books to come. For example, the figure of the "Sailor" is perhaps the original *Ancient Mariner* of Coleridge. And more recently the Aubrey–Martin series by the novelist Patrick O'Brian acknowledges and praises this forgotten poet. Unfortunately Falconer encountered another and more deadly shipwreck eight years later and did not live to enjoy his fame.

*The Shipwreck* can be read on many levels and in its day had a practical application, expounding navigation and the general operation of a merchant sailing ship, but also an allegorical and philosophical dimension. For the historian it also is of importance and can be read with hindsight especially in relation to the economic and cultural implications specifically related to my themes of mercantilism and mysticism. This, in relation to "British", the geographic location, but also more importantly to the English Language and accompanying culture and its spread to its first primary locations, North America, Australia, and New Zealand.

*The Shipwreck* is not a Miltonic masterpiece or some informal work of genius by a Shakespeare. It is a small inspired piece, a product of the age, society and consciousness of the

time. It started as a pedantic and educational exercise but rose higher on revision as the author began to enter the realms of real poetry. This poem exhibits all facets of the culture and society out of which it sprung. Falconer wrote *The Shipwreck* to educate the public on the mechanics, workings and names of the parts of a merchant ship. The poem exhibits British consciousness (unintentionally) because part of it.

Mercantilism pervades the whole poem of *The Shipwreck* and the ship itself –designed for such an undertaking, and trading is the business of the ships. But the mercantilism is also imbued with mysticism...Mystic because of the science and navigation needed to pilot ships. Here also an element of motivation both spiritual and temporal (worldly) for profit — speculation. The ships were British and language English.

Behind this there is the pervasive culture of eighteenth century Britain with its concern and interest in the sublime, poetic in this instance, but also questioning the larger scheme of things philosophical and that which lies on the outer edge of Man's understanding. And finally, a great and important part of this culture and its mercantilism is the great, monumental Isaac Newton. The discoveries and higher theories of the Newtonian world have enabled and facilitated the navigations and technology of the merchant marine. It has accelerated it out of the more dark and medieval-like world of Marco Polo caravans and diminutive and plodding Spanish caravels. This is the early stage of the British "Empire", it was different from what it was to become in the nineteenth century. The colonies exist more for dumping dangerous excess population, but in this age of the eighteenth century it is the ports and shipping networks that are the key to prosperity in Mercantilism. The ports where the valuable commodities are loaded, often exist on landmasses and continents where the interiors are irrelevant, belonging to foreign and native peoples which except for their commodities, the British have little interest in, or

political power over. This is not to say that the trading and exporting effect from these ports can cause havoc and destruction inland. The effect of an influx of riches can hardly be insulated or just confined to the ports themselves.

British Mercantile Mysticism pervaded English thought and culture in the eighteenth century as the British Isles were sustained by commerce. This force existed from that time, perhaps peeking in the nineteenth century and continues up until the present in a very diminished capacity.

British Mercantile Mysticism exhibits and is based on the fact that Britain, as an “Isle”, was sustained by commerce directly tied to the sea and shipping. This prosperity, a vast prosperity at the time, was also built based on advanced scientific knowledge. This knowledge had been painstakingly acquired by an enquiring and enlightened outlook. This, cultivated by a sense and enthusiasm for the new directions unbiased and unprejudiced human thought had taken with the refutation of much erroneous and unproven knowledge from the ancient and medieval world.

The Isles were sustained by commerce through the force of British shipping and trade *directly tied to the sea and shipping* which reached and revealed every corner and outpost of the globe. Falconer's *Shipwreck* deals in a dramatic manner with the very method and engine which underwrites this universe of commerce and thought.

*The Shipwreck* enhances and strongly reflects in verse the position of Britain as a maritime isle, particularly subject to the forces and changing vicissitudes of Nature. A strong natural element is introduced. The weather, with storms, fogs, and winds introduces a note of uncertainty to be battled by “Reason”: the compass, the clock and sextant –the very tools of certainty.

### **The Method of this Thesis and Note on the Text of the Three Editions**

To trace the developments mentioned in this paper over time and space, I will examine where this phenomenon is most apparent in *The Shipwreck* and propose to examine Falconer's poem in some depth and also will reference some key texts that reflect and exhibit this trend in 17th and 18th century works.

This paper will be divided into two sections as follows:

(1) A definition of the terms used in this paper and how they are defined in the light of the theory and the text of the poem's three editions. These will be Mercantilism, Mysticism, and a word on how the term British or English will be used. The important figures behind the rise in the new sensibility about art and science, nature and the position of mankind, particularly Isaac Newton with science and mysticism and Edmond Burke with his take on the Sublime. There will be a specific examination of the differences of certain significant lines in the three editions edited, composed or "enlarged" in the author's lifetime: 1762, 1764, 1769. Recognizing differences among the three editions adds a third and powerful dimension to any analysis of this work.

(2) A general analysis of the poem's three cantos, approximately 2800 lines, in the light of its contemporary nautical significance. Also mention of important scientific developments (navigation) involving "unseen" or what might have been termed at the time "mystical" values not readily apparent to the uninitiated (uneducated). Also mention of the poem's literary and cultural impact and significance in relation to Mercantilism and accompanying spread of English language and culture. Here the "mystical" aspects will be further examined.

**Part I: Mercantilism—the Story of *The Shipwreck***

At the beginning of this poem by William Falconer we are informed of the advanced time in the year –after the equinox– and various weather events. These are warnings that the crew “fettered to the oar of gain” have chosen to ignore. The following lines encapsulates the situation where the reader joins the poet in this narrative:

A ship from Egypt, o’er the deep impell’d  
 By guiding winds, her course for Venice held:  
 Of fam’d Britannia were the gallant crew;  
 And, from the isle, her name the vessal drew.  
 The wayward steps of Fortune, that delude      125  
 Full oft to ruin, eager they pursu’d:  
 And, dazzled by her visionary glare,  
 Advanc’d incautious of each fatal snare,  
 Tho’ warn’d full oft the slippery track to shun,  
 Yet Hope, with flattering voice, betray’d them on.    130  
 Beguil’d to danger thus, they left behind  
 The scene of peace, and social joy resign’d  
 Long absent they, from friends and native home,  
 The cheerless ocean were inur’d to roam:  
 Yet heaven, in pity to severe distress,  
 Had crown’d each painful voyage with success:  
 .....

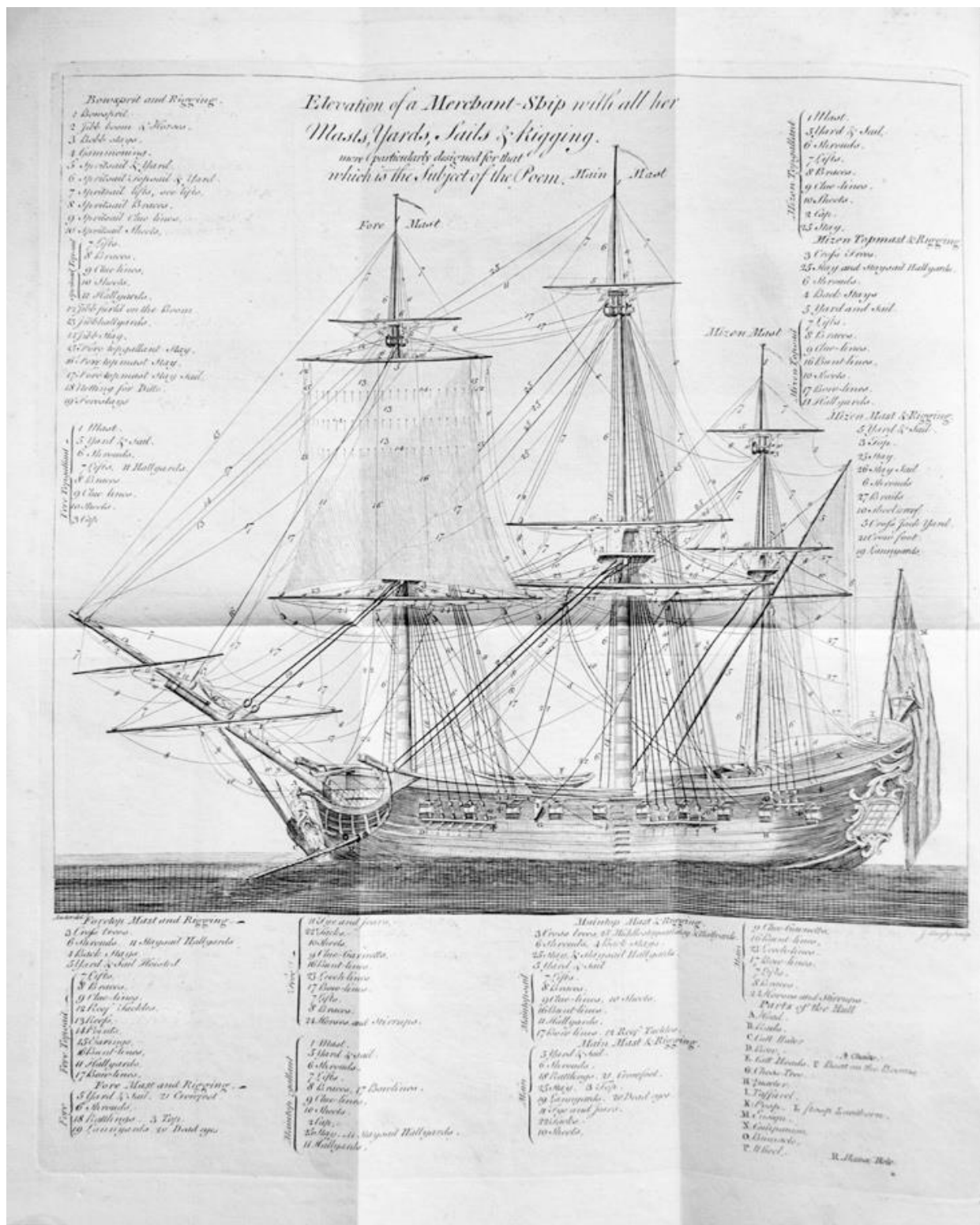


Figure 2. "Elevation of a Merchant Ship", copper plate engraving, early editions.

Thrice had the sun, to rule the varying year,  
 Across th' equator roll'd his flaming sphere,           140  
 Since last the vessel spread her ample sail  
 From Albion's coast, obsequious to the gale.  
 She o'er the spacious flood, from shore to shore,  
 Unwearying wafted her commercial store.  
 The richest ports of Afric she had view'd,  
 Thence to fair Italy her course pursu'd;  
 Had left behind Trinacria's burning isle,  
 And visited the margin of the Nile.  
 And now, that winter deepens round the pole,  
 The circling voyage hastens to its goal.           150

In these two very pertinent quotations we have a rundown of the situation. The ship is sailing from North Africa through the Aegean on its way to Venice. The "vessel" is named Britannia and from Britain. So far the voyage has been successful, but there is a suggestion that the crew is pushing their luck, gambling, "dazzled" by a "visionary glare" of coming riches. This state of mind, couched in puritanical language, is reinforced by their present success, but could quickly lead to a "fatal snare" on the "slippery track" of un-mercantile risk taking. Though there is this warning, so far "heaven" has taken pity in their risky work, roaming the "cheerless ocean".

In the second excerpt, we are told in Newtonian language that the ship has been three years away from Britain. It has visited the "richest ports of Afric", but now as winter approaches, it "hastens to its goal" which would be the return to "Albion's coast", that is Britain and the peace

and domestic world of home.

Mercantilism is a key factor and motive behind almost every facet of the poem *The Shipwreck*. This force of commerce, that is, the trading potential and profits accrued by such, was in this period rising to prominence in a manner unprecedented. Generally referred to as mercantilism, it was also the economic model used at this time –in so much as there was an economic model in the period from the early 17th century to the advent of free trade in the later 18th century and is controversial for this reason.

Most of this commerce, trading, importing and exporting and also manufacturing was being undertaken by the new rising middle class. The vast majority of this rapidly expanding class subscribed and was sympathetic to the newly emerging “lower church” forms of Protestantism. Often referred to as the “Puritans”, they created at this time a swiftly evolving ideology composed of three elements: the bible, commerce, and the nature of the state. The former two had multiple, perhaps almost infinite interactions, many of which are often referred to broadly as the Protestant (Work) ethic. But the latter, the nature of the state, became an element of this new social economic equation for a reason again unique to Britain. This was the fact that the King was made head of the Anglican “Established” church. This “mystique” tie or situation where politics and political economy was forcefully thrown in with religion was unique to Britain and created a “mystique” which leads onto the last part of my definition.

The economic ideas born of this era, the beginning of the first expansion of such, form the basis of what I term “British Mercantile Mysticism”. This was to developed over the next two centuries. An important idea from this early stage, the beginning of the 17th century, is “prophecy”, stemming from, but not confined to religious controversy often undertaken by the ordinary “inspired” individual and is a key factor of this phenomena. Much of this concept of



“prophecy” has morphed over time to the present day more scientific and statistical concept of “prediction” and the concept of “progress” evolving over a much longer timescale.

As previously stated, Mercantilism is a key factor and motive behind almost every facet of the poem *The Shipwreck*. In this there is a connection to “Prophecy” in its mystic sense but more especially as a more mundane entity in the form of prediction, this specifically manifest by the agency of marine insurance as first established by Lloyds. But also other methods of prediction, calculated guesses, were used in navigation such as “dead reckoning” and many more various attempts at accuracy in the plotting of a ships course such as tides, currents, winds and of course the weather. The sum total of all this “speculation” or guessing is bound to create a mindset that attempts to anticipate the future based on various data (of various weight) and is a form of practical “prophecy” when viewed philosophically or abstractly. The general high success rate of this method in guiding a ship to its port cannot have escaped the minds of those many souls involved and surely would show and encourage the possibilities of “prophecy” in other more traditional and spiritual areas –a sort of mystic possibility.

The moment of the “prophecy” in time to its final manifestation in future time forms a sort of mystical conduit tying the present to past, the prediction to the future event, perhaps over a hundred years or more, as in the concept of “progress” and the developing of “nations” and progressive social attitudes. Thus we have a communication of ideas through time from past to present –a ship coming in. This is similar to the modern idea of ‘Progress.’ This mystic and empowering event can have strong cultural significance. As most of culture during these years is tied very closely to the written and printed word, it is easy to trace and illustrate this force in its many facets, even to the present day where it has followed the spread of the English language.

Many examples of this thought process, tying the past to the present, are deeply

embedded in Anglo-American culture. The form of “precedents” is the basis of English Common Law (a Roman concept), and many examples of the force of “tradition”, both in legal and cultural scenarios can be cited. The pains and contortions undertaken to interpret the original American constitution in relation to present day events, is a good example which also displays a sacredness often attached to important historical texts.

Mercantilism is not an exact definition, and ranges along a narrow band of meaning. Etymology traces the word Mercantile back to “merchant” in French, Italian and Latin and the OED states its definition broadly as: “Of or relating to merchants or traders, or their trade; concerned with the exchange of merchandise. Also: of or relating to trade or commerce; commercial.”

On the word Mercantilism, the OED also states that it is a “Belief in the benefits of trading; the principles or activities characteristic of traders; commercialism. (Often with pejorative connotation.)

This is the basic meaning of the word as I would define it in my thesis. But it should be noted that the word first appeared in the English language long after the period to which it refers. The first use of it as an economic theory does not appear until 1881 and it was not widely used until the beginning of the 20th century. The dictionary defines its economic sense as:

The economic theory that a nation's wealth, esp. its ability to amass bullion, is increased by a favourable balance of trade, and that a government should encourage such a balance by promoting exports (esp. of manufactured goods) and restricting imports.

These are the ideas and theories that later writers in the 20th century applied to the trade practices ranging from circa 1620 to the end of the 18th century where it was superseded by the

more modern form of “free trade.”

This idea of the “pejorative” or negative effects of Mercantilism lies at the center of any discussion of such which is usually undertaken in the light of an assumed superiority of free trade. In my thesis the definition is more benign and I consider it a product of the age and a very necessary forerunner of more modern and progressive trade practices. This similar to the idea that we must invent the wheel before more advanced forms of transport like bicycles and cars. Mercantilism, with its tariffs and restrictions or regulations, can be seen as the opposite of free trade, but it is really a qualification or partial manifestation of free trade. The goal of international trade or merchandizing is the object of both.

As William D Grampp says in his paper *The Liberal Elements in English Mercantilism*:

...the reader...must be led to think that because the mercantilist states did not believe in the market as the mechanism for discharging the economic functions of society, the economists of the age held the same belief and were in favor of the intricate kind of regulation which was practiced. More indeed than this is implied. If the practitioners of mercantilism did not understand prices, money, foreign trade, and other matters, it follows that the economists also were wanting in a knowledge of these matters. Especially is it implied that the mercantilists did not understand the mechanism by which the economic problem is solved in a free society and that this knowledge was the signal discovery of classical economics. From this it must be concluded that the mercantilist writers were particularly deficient because they did not understand how the price system directs resources to particular employments and causes the product to be distributed in a certain way. None of these impressions about mercantilist doctrine, as distinct from

mercantilist practice, is correct. Yet they are unavoidable if the doctrine and the practice are thought to be parts of a unified system. (466)

Jonathan Barth states in his paper: *Reconstructing Mercantilism: Consensus and Conflict in British Imperial Economy in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries:*

Mercantilism ranks among the most controversial terms ever utilized by economic and political historians. Such was not always the case. Until the mid-twentieth century, relative unanimity prevailed among most scholars regarding the basic tenets of mercantilist ideology. Today, however, there is very little agreement on any precise definition for the word *mercantilism*, and an aura of ambiguity now surrounds it. Some have suggested that we drop the term altogether; others recommend that we define it to include only a loose and vaguely connected assortment of disparate ideas. (257)

In its earlier form it was tied to or involved with the idea of monopolies, granted by the crown or parliament or some part of the government. But this fell out of favor in the mid-17th century and what some describe as “Industrial-capitalist” mercantilism came to dominate the economic scene.

So this would be the world in which the “Shipwreck” came to print. Mercantilism had been around for more than a century and people were beginning to question or raise the idea of a more free trade, but as yet only in print and discussion. In this context the ascending value and recognition of the word “free” and all its implications might be noticed. At this time, 1776, Adam Smith published *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations*. This, ultimately became a very influential book, though these ideas were in the air, as C C Aldridge puts it from a nineteenth century aspect: “After Adam Smith’s denunciation of the ramshackle

and somewhat haphazardly applied series of commercial and navigation laws known as ‘mercantilism’, free-trade ideas gradually gained acceptance.”

In Falconer’s poem the mercantile theme is very strong by the very nature of this tale of merchant shipping. The whole piece is imbued with this idea as this is the very reason for the ship’s voyages. In this environment we are presented with the idea of risk –but beyond what is acceptable.

### **Mysticism**

Concerning Mysticism there are two important ideas I touch on extending from the early 17th century to the late 18th. The first is the concept, again, of “prophecy” in its very mystic sense. But, as stated previously, this idea morphs or changes over time to a more scientific (almost statistical) idea of prediction.

But there is also another less scientific dimension to this idea similar to “Manifest Destiny” or “Providence,” perhaps a form of “Progress” –survival of the most enlightened ideas. This more spiritual dimension, though unscientific and irrational is taken quite seriously, perhaps based on evidence –often without proof. In this context it should be noted that “prophecy” was taken very seriously in the 17th century and some thought that it could be a science, witness Isaac Newton’s lengthy and detailed work on the “Prophecies of Daniel.” Like alchemy (also a favorite subject of Newton) which morphed into chemistry and physics, eventually prophecy in its more practical form leads onto prediction.

Another aspect of the “mysticism” here was its relation to science. The second important idea I touch on in the Mystic area is what I call “invisibles.” Again during this period (17th–18th century) we have the first appearance (!) of invisible forces and gradations mapped or fathomed from charts and tables. Taking, to all intents, invisible readings with graduated instruments in

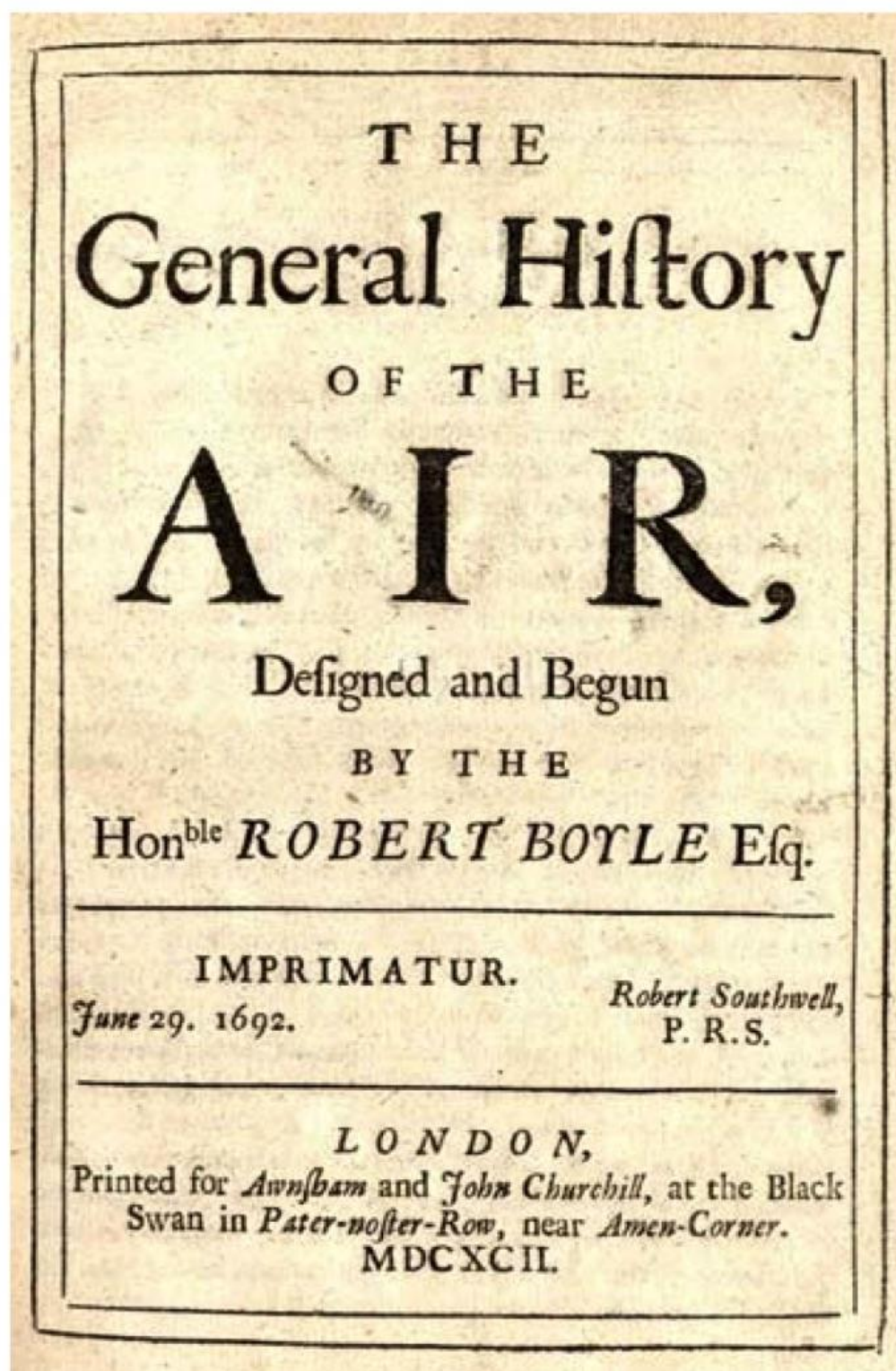


Figure 3. First Edition of "The General History of the Air" by Robert Boyle 1692

conjunction with written cyphers –charts– (tables and maps) to determine real world outcomes, such as navigations, location of ports, countries, continents.

Basically these are scientific readings only legible to those educated in these areas. This would be the mariner, navigator, the astronomer and mathematician. They are also apparent in the field of physics with Boyle’s experiments with the invisible air. The air-pump that he invented was to appear and figure in Joseph Wright’s famous painting almost a hundred years later. There was also Hooke with the microscope, which would have been closest to the layperson’s understanding of what is not visible to the naked eye. To those outside these professions, even the many educated, this was an invisible world.

This new ability to peer into the invisibles, the universe, apparent intangibles to the uneducated (and often educated as well), was developed almost overnight, the greatest strides made in the 18th century, but the theoretical groundwork was undertaken starting in the mid 17th. This new arising awareness of the practical power or application in “natural philosophy” or “science” as we term it now, led to their eventual split (philosophy and science) and present position in modern times.

Contrast this with Columbus or other early mariners who became aware of landfall by natural signs such as birds and cloud formations. Up until this period, roughly the beginning of the 17th century, this had never occurred, the use of “instruments” to take readings and measurements, except in the simplest of primeval forms, such as sundials, the ruins of Stonehenge, New Grange in Ireland, most likely ancient calendars probably related to crop management. The only exception to this was “the wondrous magnet” whose mystic properties were little understood and the stars at night which also until the advent of the astronomers in the seventeenth century who began to unlock their mysteries were little understood as well.

But these very real and invisible readings, a sort of mystic script, to the uninitiated, when considered at first appearance in history were obviously of extreme importance, the beginning of modern scientific inquiry which produced quantifiable physical results. Nowhere was this more apparent than in the vast global network of the merchant marine. Lives, cargos and ships, large investments and the price of commodities depended on the accurate reading (and prediction) of the mystic script.

In other words, ironically, with hindsight, the confusion between spiritual and scientific was never greater and many saw them as the same, in the same worlds. With the huge advances in the sciences, some thought we had actually broken into the spiritual world.

### **Isaac Newton**

Falconer's *Shipwreck* opens in an enlightened 18th century, a Newtonian world. The laws of natural physics and "modern" science dictate the passage of commerce along the links of communication across the seven seas of the globe.

The merchant sailing ships though still powered by and at the mercy of the winds are light years away from the old Shakespearian Drake and DeGama tubs, sailing a superstitious sea under the influence of "spheres" and fateful stars. In the new world the stars are put to reason, scientific navigation executed from pole to pole. This is the world and mindset that the inhabitants of the Isles have come to inherit at the time Falconer's *Shipwreck* went to press.

The position of Isaac Newton in the eighteenth century mind should not be underestimated. Newton was the eighteenth century technological wizard, a marvel, an internet unto himself. He had explained an invisible world, the world behind the workings and forces of the universe and everyday life. Surpassing the Continentals, and making some of their recent advances obsolete, he managed to reduce the whole universe to mathematical equations.



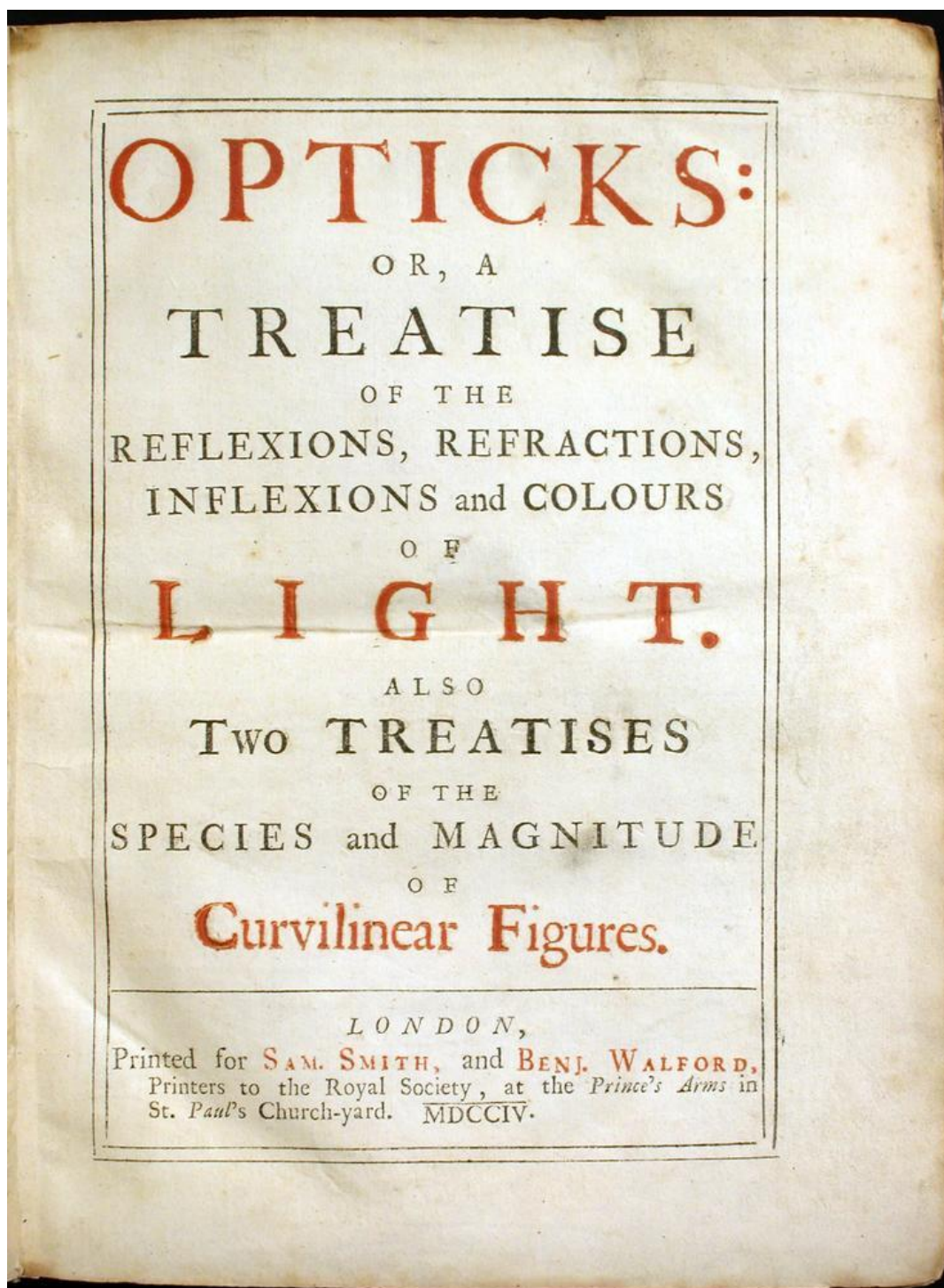


Figure 4. First Edition of Newton's "Opticks" 1704

This counter-intuitive achievement, as far as thought went at the time (or in the ideal world of philosophy) has rendered his position in history as the embodiment of reason. His exceedingly accurate calculations in the world of physics were unchallenged for three hundred years. Finally, when slightly augmented by the recent discoveries of the twentieth century they were found basically sound and true.

There was also a practical side to his discoveries which was also proof of their validity and Newton's veracity in research. He invented the reflecting telescope, ultimately used to peer into night skies hundreds of light years back in time through the galaxies and the universe as Herschel was to establish within fifty years of Newton's death. His calculations also sensed the presence of an undiscovered planet also established by Herschel.

The advanced position of British technology in the field of the laws of motion and universal gravitation rendered the Continentals, Descartes in particular, obsolete. But the usual academic position of Newton and Reason, popularised perhaps by William Blake is erroneous. He could also be seen in fact as a sort of Mystic and this can be seen when all his writings are taken into account, such as his work on alchemy and his "Prophecies of Danial" and other theological work.

We need to look at Newton and his seventeenth-century inheritance and grasp the idea of science and philosophy (also religion) not completely divorced. Which means the invisible forces and quantities (as only really just discovered) had not been (as at present in such matters) fully established. These breakthroughs in science of invisible calculations of the world of physics, contrary to what a modern might think were only encouragement to other, some dubious, breakthroughs (alchemy and philosophy) in many other areas.

Robert Boyle's experiments with the invisible air and others ideas were the legitimate

forerunners to Newton's we now see with 20/20 hindsight. But other, highly educated, members of the Royal Society such as Bishop Wilkins wrote of life on and journeys to the moon and "Mathematical Magick." In the perspective of those days, a very new world of ideas and concepts had been discovered, but the implications were not fully understood.

The important thing is that the world of Newton, or the Newtonian Universe can be seen reflected in the poetry of many writings in the 18th century. His plausible and overarching explanation of all fitted nicely and tidily into the quiet and restrained ideology of both the Anglican Church (Established Church) and the general British psyche with its emphasis on rationality and avoidance of extremism or sensationalism.

### **Edmond Burke & The Sublime**

With the Sublime, in pursuit of a definition, one can become lost in a morass of confusion and contradiction. The subject is too attractive for many to leave alone especially with the incentive that any writing in this area stands a good chance of at least a preliminary audience.

So in the face of this vast array of definitions and writings and notions, much of which is in the field of philosophy and literary studies, I will attempt a very sharp and limited definition. But without this original and first tight definition, which is just a simple analysis or more correctly, an account of a particular phenomenon that occurred, a common consensus of opinion, there would have been little or no controversy on the subject.

Firstly, for the eighteenth-century the Sublime was a visual construct or phenomenon from which all subsequent reference up to the early nineteenth harks back to. That is, the primary emotional effect of the Sublime is triggered by landscape and other visual happenings. The eye is the key and primary conduit of the eighteenth-century Sublime.

There is confusion over a supposed Longinus who wrote on it in the first century but in

another and different context. Other references and writings throughout history are a small footnote to this primary eighteenth century take which popularized the idea, and a sort of off-topic background chatter which viewed objectively only confirms the point.

With Longinus the Sublime was great or “lofty thought or language. particularly in the context of rhetoric.” This could inspire awe or veneration and thus more persuasive. So this has nothing to do with the Sublime of the eighteenth-century, and except for the “awe” and the word “Sublime” itself there is nothing in common between the two very different meanings.

One must start with Edmund Burke, but it should be noted that others like Walpole (*Castle of Otranto*) were searching and defining visual phenomena that could only be the Sublime. Subjects such as dreams, childlike perspectives and early ages of large or monstrous sizes of objects occur in this genre. In Walpole’s book, a huge oversized helmet from baronial days drops out of the sky into the castle courtyard. Others before this, including Shaftesbury and Addison had made directions towards this sublime, the key element being the “Grand Tour” and in particular the crossing of the Alps which gave a first solid real life definition of the sublime.

Much of what the Romantics were to say later had been done in the visual arts in the last decades of the eighteenth-century. Francis Towne and Cozens the Junior had painted important watercolors of Mt Blanc. Cozens went as Beckford’s personal artist to the continent. Francis Towne's (1740-1816) water colors of the Alps were discovered by Paul Oppé in the 1920s and these were seen as part of the Sublime and used as a standard in Art books even up to the present.

My point is that without Burke’s book there would be at present no discussion on the Sublime. And to repeat, Burke popularized the subject, popularized it in his form (terror etc.), the large theatrical form, and without Burke, if we were having any conversation at all in this area,

we would probably be talking about “Gorgeous” or something...rather mundane.

In Burke’s work we see him take on the Sublime and successfully hype it up to stage proportions at the risk of the ridiculous. This is achieved by his undaunted honesty and ability to enter a world of uncharted visual emotions. Burke’s book is an outcome or side effect of the new sensibility in discerning the qualities and power of artwork, particularly oil paintings. (The “picturesque” as introduced by William Gilpin in his many books examines this quality). But with the Sublime it is tied in with real world emotions.

On careful examination of Burke’s *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin and Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful* it is apparent that what is stated above holds true with this first detailed examination of the Sublime. That is, that virtually all elements that constitute the sublime (and raise subliminal feelings or emotions) are visual perceptions. There is mention of accompanying sound and also poetry with its power to produce pictures or scenes, and though these are abstract as occurrences in the mind, the object of the poetry is to produce visual phenomenon.

The first part starts with “Novelty” (curiosity) and then goes into “Pain and Pleasure” in various forms, an important ingredient when considering the Sublime. With Part II, we come to some inspired writing with strong definition. Here Burke starts out with “Of the Passion caused by the Sublime” Here we are informed of “astonishment”: “Hence arises the great power of the sublime, that, far from being produced by them, it anticipates our reasonings, and hurries us on by an irresistible force.” (96)

After this we move onto “terror.” This can be qualified or augmented by “Obscurity”. “Every one...who considers how greatly night adds to our dread...” (99) Milton is invoked with his “force of judicious obscurity” and lines quoted visually descriptive of shadowy substance.

Burke declares: “in this description all is dark, uncertain, confused, terrible, and sublime to the last degree.” (101)

After this we enter the world of “Clearness and Obscurity’ (Chiaroscuro) and visual impressions of such. Here he says that obscurity can be better created in words rather than on canvas. And finally it is onto “eternity” and “infinity:” “It is our ignorance of things that causes all our admiration, and chiefly excites our passions...It is thus with the vulgar; and all men are as the vulgar in what they do not understand. The ideas of eternity, and infinity, are among the most affecting we have; and perhaps there is nothing of which we really understand so little, as of infinity, and eternity. We do not any where meet a more sublime description....” (105)

Describing this, he quotes Milton on Satan, “...Stood like tower...horizontal misty air...stood behind the moon...in dim eclipse disastrous twilight sheds...” (105) Again all visual material. “There is a passage in the book of Job amazingly sublime, and this sublimity is principally due to the terrible uncertainty of the thing described...” continues Burke, a spirit of the night passes...”an image was before mine eyes...” (108)

Though as previously stated, all these ideas create incredibly fertile ground for speculation in many areas such as philosophy, aesthetics and art to name a few, the definition by Burke serves best to understand the Sublime in its eighteenth-century form as it appears in *The Shipwreck*. In the poem we deal with uncertainty as the force of the storm increases and visually obscurity becomes a threatening force with terror ever present in the background as the ship becomes overpowered by the elements in chaos.

### **“Britishness” in *The Shipwreck***

When using the term “British” it is meant geographically and not in a nationalistic sense. Thus, the time and ground from which it sprung should be seen as an incubator. Here, the

conjunction of forces and events led to revolutionary, enduring, powerful and timeless concepts as well as ideals still relevant today. One of the key elements unique to Britain at this time was the formation of what has come to be known as the Modern English language. Through the eventual spread and dissemination of the language, tenets or elements of this phenomenon (British Mercantile Mysticism) spread worldwide. Perhaps one of the earliest international departures being the Pilgrims and the Massachusetts Bay Colony. The English language eventually transcends geographical locations and thus the term “British” here refers to point of origin.

As previously stated “Britishness” is both contradictory and complex. In this a scale or spectrum of meaning is contained. This ranges, on one hand from outright and almost bigoted patriotism, to a more liberal and abstract inclusive [“Citizen of the World” (Goldsmith)] concept, which might appear to some as altruism. But this is only partially true and both ends of this spectrum have self interest at heart. There is an almost exact similar range of ideology at work today both in the United States and the European Union. Perhaps this take on both a countries’ sovereignty and general position in duties and responsibilities is a modern trend with liberal leanings (at present anyway).

C.C. Eldridge in *The Imperial Experience* speaks of the evolution of British imperialism and notes the many ways it changed in the nineteenth century:

The imperial idea was clearly present throughout the whole of the nineteenth century. However, the atmosphere of the early and mid-Victorian years, before the full panoply of imperial ideology came into existence, was very different from that of the age of the New Imperialism. International economic and political conditions were entirely different and British attention focused on evangelical and

humanitarian issues, the consolidation (rather than the extension) of the empire, on the colonies of British settlement rather than the tropics, and on the restructuring of the imperial relationship. Imperial ideology had yet to become embedded in British patriotism.

In a similar vein the patriotism of those in eighteenth century Britain might be seen as very different than that of today. The embarkation in *The Shipwreck* reveals much concerning the position of Britain as both a seafaring nation and empire. It is the only part of the poem which is strongly nationalistic and loses aesthetically somewhat in the bombastic pronouncements. It reveals perceived attitudes of both the British and those outside (the Greeks and Turks). It is at odds with the general progressiveness of sentiment in the poem and one is uncomfortable with the underlying aggressiveness.

But as well one can't ignore the advanced technological achievement in the context of the time that underwrote the trading and sailing abilities of the merchant sailing ship. How true or valid the reactions to the advanced technology of those ships is debatable. Some of the reports from Cook's voyages of exploration speak of the natives as being void of any impression concerning the ships in comparison, unlike their avid or irrepressible desire for nails and other workable metal fragments. They were found hopelessly unable to resist any metalwork in almost any situation. But maybe in a different world with the denizens of the Aegean the trading possibilities of these craft was all too obvious and thus their respect. Meaning the respect or awe of European technology was an ingredient of (in) the perceived superiority of such, and still forms a very debatable controversy when advanced civilizations meet and often destroy the more primitive –worlds clash.



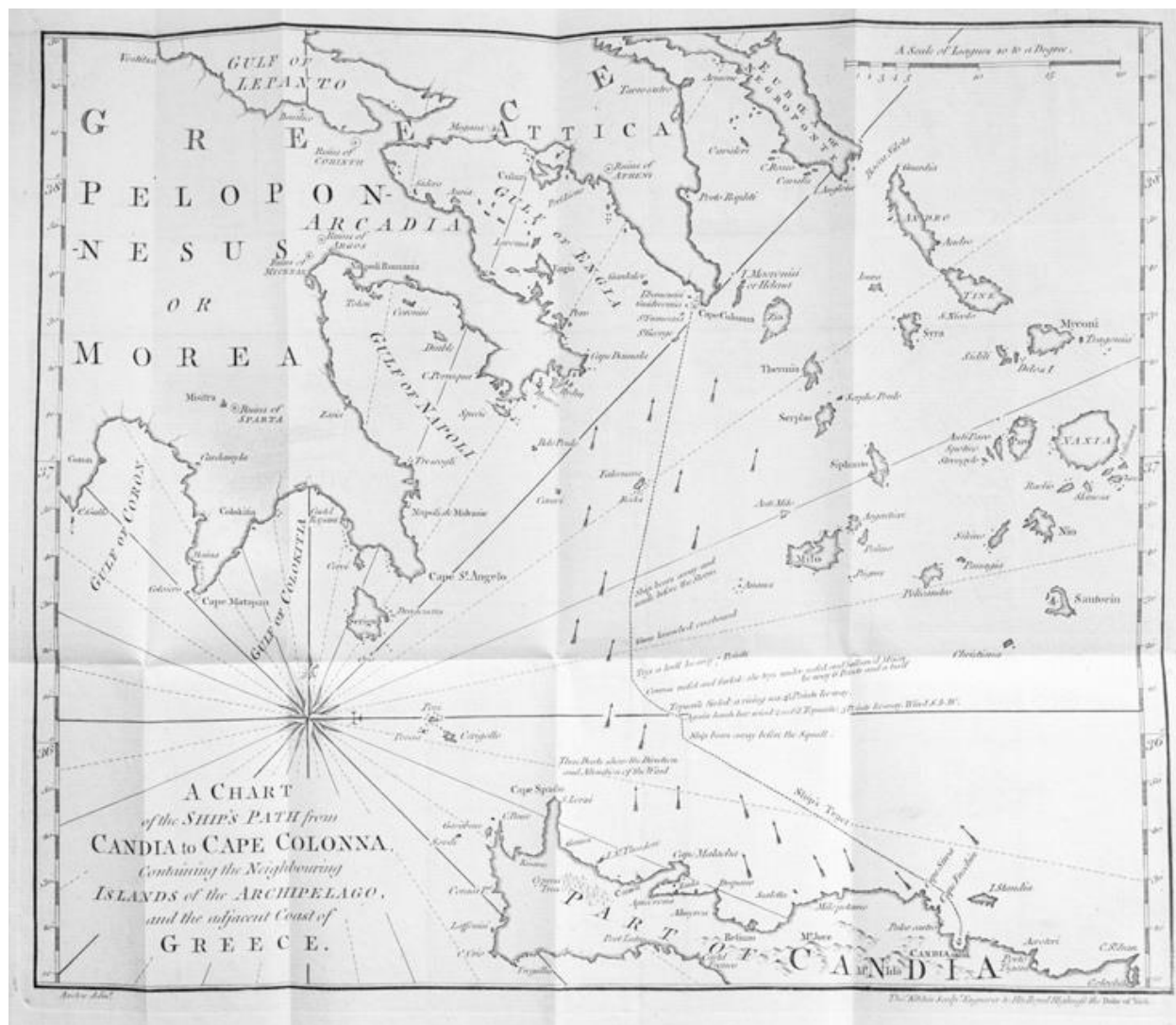


Figure 5. Map of the ship's tract, engraved plate bound with early editions.

**Part II: Examination of the text of *The Shipwreck* –  
Significant Events and Passages Introduction to the Three Editions**

On comparing the first three editions of Falconer's *Shipwreck* much is revealed. A greater dimension is added to this poem as we can see the author's method and aspirations while composing. Considering the poem as a whole, each edition has recommendations. The first edition contains all the main events, the germ of the ideas. The "Dolphins" appears much earlier in first edition (line 247), and some events and passages are moved into the second canto in the much expanded second and third editions. The love tale of Palemon is not included in the first edition, as well as some other passages.

The first edition is lean with little embroidery. It generally has a Newton like world outlook. The better parts are delicately penned in. A fresh, simple and decisive Newtonian voice with some scientific pedantry describes the workings and theory of the ship. One part goes to extraordinary length and detail when describing the rigging. There is more sea language in this edition (larboard quarter as opposed to "from the left"). Generally a puritanic simplicity pervades the verse, but the words themselves have a high resolution quality –accurately descriptive.

The first edition's preoccupation with the mechanics and parts of a merchant sailing ship is later tempered and augmented over the next two editions with an enlarged concern for the drama and allegory of the tragedy or disaster, but not always with such a happy result. The second edition is intermediate but greatly expanded and "improved" by the Author. The Monthly Review for 1764 states:

We are far from thinking, however, that our sea-faring Poet hath improved his piece in the same proportion as he hath lengthened it. There is frequently a copious simplicity in our first designs, that no after-thought or labour can amend; an irregular beauty that every alteration must deface.

The third edition has the best parts generally, but between some very bloated additions that are not fair to make a modern reader go through. Unfortunately perhaps, because of this, a great poem is lost.

The absence of any characterization of the crew in the first edition leaves the poet with just the times of day, the ever-increasing violence of the storm, and finally, most important to his didactic intentions, Falconer goes into great detail and attention and depth with the description of the ship's maneuvers, particularly the sails and the rigging. The intensity of this exercise is almost comic in its obsessive minute details. It is obvious why this was amended in the following editions. During this period, which unfortunately turned out to be the last ten years of Falconer's life, he authored "An Universal Dictionary of the Marine", a large illustrated 500-page tome, of which he says in his own words:

THE following work has engaged my utmost application for some years. Several performances on the same subject have already appeared...Far from exhibiting an enlarged and comprehensive view of naval affairs, these productions are extremely imperfect, according to the very circumscribed plan which their authors have adopted.... besides (other Dutch and French works)...These are indeed voluminous, but very deficient in the most necessary articles....Of the machinery of a ship ; the disposition of the rigging on her masts and yards; and the comparative force of her different mechanical powers, their accounts however are often vague, perplexed, and unintelligible.

Basically the poem pivots on the second canto which could be seen as an Anatomy of a Disaster. First I will examine this in some general detail (after introducing the characters in the poem) as it is the crux the matter and poem where man's reasoning comes asunder when risk taking meets the power of unleashed nature.



By earth attracted and by seas repel'd...

In other words, he was an accomplished Newtonian and understood all theories of navigation and the science of the sea.

Rodmond is a darker soul: "a hardy son of England's furthest shore, bleak Northumbria" where the coast with currants and sandbars ("fatal sands") and shallows are particularly treacherous. The "faithless deep is fearlessly" navigated by this master pilot. He has been present to scenes that "shame the conscious cheek of truth" and there are hints that he was perhaps involved with wreckers, that is, local and usually impoverished rogues, these gangs—"grim hell hounds... prowling..." attempt to wreck and rob stranded or endangered ships. So Rodmond trained by this "unhallowed crew" is a rather free and dangerous spirit "unskilled to argue...with out honors proud."

Later in poem, some decisions by Albert are to be countered by Rodmond. The nature of these decisions reveals their basic characters and aspirations when dealing with problems and crisis.

"Next in order of command succeeds the youngest of our naval band." He is "anxious to explore antique lands...more." This is Arion who has had much ill luck in life, a sort of unhappy "bard."

These were the pilots "tutor'd to divine the untravel'd course by geometric line", and charged with the commerce... To these is added Palemon, "a victim of unhappy love! His heart for Albert's beauteous daughter bled" because of the ambition of his stern father, a wealthy rich merchant, who disapproved of lowly marriages.

So "th'unhappy youth is doom'd to roam." Arion is his close friend "By kindred age and sympathy of soul." As for the others, the crew: "O'er all the rest...shade oblivion drew."

These characters are absent in first edition and the crew is anonymous.

### **Shipwreck: Anatomy of a Disaster**

In this poem the reader is exposed to the anatomy of a disaster, which is powered by both occult and portentous human error, and by lack of correct reasoning. This twin thread runs throughout the poem. The occult/portentous theme, like the *Ancient Mariner* is Coleridgean with a foundation in the tragedies of the classical world, the very sea the Britannia sails. In the first canto we had been informed of the advanced time in the year (after the equinox) and various weather events. These are warnings that the crew “fettered to the oar of gain” have chosen to ignore.

The Albert-Rodmond equation could be studied in this context. That is the enlightened Newtonian world view compared to the more intuitive but uninformed and superstitious traditional view of the surly Rodmond.

The canto opens and Rodmond, “by a mystic charm” confines the wind to propel the ship over “the faithless tides”. A Coleridgean event, the water-spout appears and is dispatched by manning the heavy artillery of the guns. As “th’increasing breezes veer”, another Coleridgean event: “a shoal of sportive dolphins they discern.” The men attempt to catch these with spears and Rodmond kills one, which is dragged on to the decks and his wonderful colors admired (precursor to the Albatross in *The Ancient Mariner*).

The gale is “freshening” and now the man at the helm needs not “with fixt attention” to keep an eye on the adjacent shore, but rather, “by the oracle of truth.” “The wondrous magnet” guides the ship onward. Soon:

The blackening ocean curls; the winds arise:

And the dark scud in swift succession flies.

Topsails are reduced. More “Still blacker clouds,” and a squall. Then: “The mainsail bursts with thundering force.”

Another omen, “porpoises from Afric’s burning shore.” We are now in open sea: “Sunk are the bulwarks of the Friendly Shore.” Suddenly, all hands on deck, four seamen lost!

The pilots cannot “determine on the next command.” Technology and reason are failing, being overpowered, and then break down. The captain, Albert: “In vain he spreads the graduated chart.”

“A giant surge down rushes from on high.” The ship is taking in water and the guns will have to be tossed. Rodmond is in charge of this extremely dangerous manoeuvre. “Thundering they plunge into the flashing tide.” Finally the ship is “half swallowed in the black profound!”

There is another consultation and as technology has completely failed, there are few choices. The danger of being washed onto the rocks of “Falconera” is imminent. They decide to scud before the wind. There is a brief mention of wreckers again, a possible nemesis in the poem, as the ship just passes Falconera in great distress (beginning of third canto). The canto ends with the mizen mast cut down to relieve the pressure on the leaking and in places gaping hull

### **The Opening Lines of *The Shipwreck***

While Neptune hears Britannia’s Thunders roll

In vengeance, o’er the deep, from pole to pole:

Declining martial strains and hostile rage,

An unknown Author treads th’ Aöonian stage: (*1st ed.*)

While Albion bids th’ avenging thunders roll

Along her vassal deep from pole to pole;

Declining strains that swell with martial rage,

An unknown Author treads th'Aöonian stage, (*2nd ed.*)

While Ocean hears vindictive thunders roll

Along his trembling wave from pole to pole:

Sick of the scene, where War, with ruthless hand,

Spreads desolation o'er the bleeding land; (*3rd ed.*)

Here I examine the opening stanzas, lines 3 to 6, and show the progression over the 1762, 1764 to the final 1769 edition, that Falconer worked on.

Starting with the first edition, he goes from bombastic nationalism to a more removed, contemplative poetic stance in the second. He finishes the lines in the third with all reference to Britain eliminated and moves onto a much more modern and abstract plain, slightly expressive of the world of Newton's physics. Through all three stages the diction, sound, and poetics improve.

This progression also illustrates the enlightened view of a sound knowledge of science, one of the chief underpinnings to commerce and mercantilism on the high seas.

Britain, with its nationalism, disappears reflecting the more progressive and benign view that an advanced country and its army is not for conquering. But rather like the later endeavours of the poet Lord Byron in Greece a generation later, the force of army should be benign and used to restore people to freedom, suppressed cultures to be reinstated, reestablished. The educated woman and man of "feeling" to strive for a free world, not the tawdry spoils of conquering war.

These lines reflect an evolving more modern and inclusive outlook on life and man's position there. This theme can be traced throughout the poem and relates to British Mercantile Mysticism especially.

It should be noted that these non-nationalistic strains in Modern thought date from this



era. Thus these new sensibilities are expressed in other mid and late 18th century works such as *Citizen of the World* (Goldsmith) and *Man of Feeling* (Mackenzie). Though expressed in English, and entering the culture in that language, they are not by nature “British” or nationality centric.

So the mother tongue in this instance is used in an international universal way. The destiny of all nations is considered and a fair outcome for all desired. Useless, destructive war to be avoided, as made clear by the very negative light it is shown in the final two lines.

Throughout this poem, which transpires in the Aegean, the Greeks are shown as an unfairly downtrodden and even enslaved, noble race. Their delivery from Tyranny, perhaps helped by this very popular piece and other similar sentiments, is just a matter of time.

Continuing with the analysis of these four lines, we go onto the last two where also a telling change which raise the standard of the poem occurs. In the first and second edition, the poet seems to mention himself when he speaks the lines:

Declining martial strains and hostile rage,

An unknown Author treads th’ Aonian stage; –1762

Declining strains that swell with martial rage,

An unknown Author treads th’ Aonian stage, –1764

This self-conscious naiveté is removed from the last 1769 edition, and replaced by the much more powerful protestations against the “desolation” of war “o’er” the “bleeding” land.

A similar maturing of the poetry and intellectual outlook occurs throughout the evolution of the three editions, as can be seen in other comparisons.

### **Lines (Egypt to Venice)**

After a somewhat tiresome invocation to the muses, a requirement in every eighteenth-

century poem, we come to a passage which shows great poetic development across the three editions. The reader is taken back to the ship and on with the tale. The author tells us that:

The Ship whose ruins lie dispers'd around,                   140

From Alexandria came, to Venice bound:

In the second edition these two lines are changed:

A ship from Egypt, o'er the watery plane                   96

Designed her course to Adria's rich domain:

And finally in the third and last edition:

A ship from Egypt, o'er the deep impell'd                   121

By guiding winds, her course for Venice held:

In the final version the poet has illogically, by drawing on the subliminal forces and iconic or legendary and mythological elements raised the level of the voyage to an idealized Homeric mystic vision.

The first logical version gives us the dry facts and the two cities travelled from and to.

The second version gains tremendously when Alexandria is replaced with Egypt, the country and all the mystery it conjures up –especially in that age of ignorance concerning the ancient history of the Egyptians. Then we are presented with a vision of the ship on its way or passage of arrival –“the watery plain.”

In the third version both lines are greatly improved, bringing the work to a much higher level. The ship from “Egypt” is “impell'd” suggesting an occult force or destiny, from out of Egypt. This force is held “by guiding winds” towards the city Venice (which it will never reach) and all that that suggests with deep and ancient trading connections to the orient.

So illogically from a country to a city provides the correct mood or ambience for the start

of the basic underlying structure and sets the atmosphere with mystic and sublime forces and ancient places invested with powerful connotations. These “atmospherics” underwrite the nemesis quality of the crew, too assiduously pursuing worldly mercantile gain and ignoring the risk factor which is leading them unawares into gambling with their all –the ship, the cargo and their lives.

**Reason Eclipsed and Tragedy:**

**“A fetter’d Captive to the oar of Gain!”**

The year and season is advanced “th’ autumnal AEquinox is o’er,” we are told:

The cautious Mariner, whom sky informs,                   182 1<sup>st</sup> Ed

Oft deems the prelude of approaching storms,

No dread of storms the Master’s thoughts restrain,

A fetter’d Captive to the oar of Gain!

So profit and wealth have got the upper hand and are obscuring tragically the Newtonian’s better reason. Here is human frailty but also a second and more portentous warning spelled out scientifically in “rays” “Halo” “Sphere” “arch” “diameter” “semi-quadrant vertical”:

At midnight waking, he surveys the skies,                   186 1<sup>st</sup> Ed

When transient breezes from the East arise:

The silver Moon diffusing livid rays

Gleam’d o’er protracted clouds and ambient haze

A mighty Halo round the lucid Sphere

Cross’d and divided, did on high appear;

The arch its vast diameter subtends,

A semi-quadrant vertical descends:

This too a harbinger of furious gales

Is deemed, tho' here no dusky frown prevails.

With reason eclipsed, oblivious to the warning, they weigh anchor and “the canvas wings extend.”

So in this passage we see the equation of gain against risk which is mapped out in the skies in the geometric visual language of Newton and reason. Ironically it seems almost that that same reason has been eclipsed with this violent sky and weather event premonitory sign, an unheeded warning in a mystic script written across the firmament.

There is also a sublime element in the magnitude of this harbinger with its key elements consisting of basic primeval matter: “skies,” East,” “Moon,” and “clouds”. Also another sublime element, obscurity, is making itself felt present and will continue to envelop the poem as the winds rise.

After this we come to a Coleridgean and slightly sinister passage:

Now o'er the glassy plane, the Vessel glides, 200 1<sup>st</sup> Ed

While azure radiance gleams along the sides:

Egyptian, Thracian gales, alternate play,

And round the Orient gradually decay:

The very smooth and easily facilitated “glassy” and “glides” with the optical (Newton) “azure radiance” forms a counterpoint to the (subliminal) subconscious sinister evocations of (ancient) Egyptian and Thracian gales “round the Orient gradually decay”. The use of the last word is not incidental and adds to the portentousness and foreboding quality which is continued with the description of the dawn (from): “The hazy East with sullen beams o'erspread:”

The underlying tension of ill omens and bad signs, the crew's mental obliviousness and

other occult events are raising the pressure and force of coming disaster, the result of human frailty.

### **The Dolphin**

The morning continues in an unpropitious manner and the “Pilots now an Azimuth attend.” This navigational reading which determines the course of the ship is described in many lines and contains the geometrical language of Newton’s world: compass, octant, reflecting planes, incident, survey, arch, gradual index, vertic’ (vertical) circle, horizon, vibrant, tangent, polar, latitude, declination, triangle, magnetic variance, just angles and finally “polar truth” is restored.

After this, the incident of the Dolphin takes place in the first edition, though it is put into the second canto of the second and third editions. This ominous happening, a mystic harbinger, has strong parallels with the Albatross in Coleridge’s *Ancient Mariner*, though here in *The Shipwreck* it appears to be done completely unconsciously, and like much in this poem there is an unawareness on the part of the poet as though his hand is being led by the combined consciousness of the poetic intuition of the age in which he lived.

“A shoal of sportive dolphins” appears, and the crew engages in “the sport of death” and “One, unsuspecting” is stabbed with the “forky prongs” and becomes involved in this, the most brutal and barbarous passage in the work. As he dies “radiant changes strike th’astonish’d sight!” and when describing the appearance of his scales or skin, a litany of gem-like optical effects combined (suitably enough) with the colors of a sunset on a “dewy lawn” are described with Newtonian precision. Again the poet seems unaware of the sheer (moral) brutality of this scene, partially, probably, a product of the bloodsports of this era, a hangover from an earlier mediaeval age. But now a waterspout appears!

### **The Waterspout: A Sublime Event**

On observing “treacherous tides” later changed to “faithless tides”, a waterspout arises, a self contained Sublime effect which exhibits the strange forces of nature. In an odd turnabout or reversal of roles in this case, it is put to rest or subdued by technology. Perhaps this is to show, before the unravelling of marine order, the power and possibilities of modern science at the command of the merchant sailing ship.

The waterspout episode is curtailed and amended through the three editions, and reduced from 28 lines to 24 and finally 20 lines in the last edition. By the nature of this event the first is probably the most suitable and examines this Sublime phenomena in the correct scientific language. It is written in the precise descriptive verse of a Newtonian laboratory observer.

By the third it has been reduced to a more commonplace and mannered poetic effusion. Much of the scientific expression has been replaced by the voice of the bard and the lines lose originality accordingly as they approach a dull rhetoric. Falconer has unfortunately framed the verse in these lines too much in the conventions of the period, the crystal clear Newtonian voice is lost. But there are redeeming qualities in this the last he worked on.

The passage starts with the lines: “Propell’d by flatt’ring gales, the vessel glides:” Again with these words we have the easy deception with smooth facility the crew is laboring under, as if mesmerized by some occult spell.

As they pass landmarks and “Jove’s high hill” comes into sight, suddenly in navel terms (removed in later editions):

...on the larboard quarter\*, they descry 282 1<sup>st</sup> Ed

A liquid column, tow’ring, shoot on high;

Here we have observational laboratory language combine with picturesque sublime imagery.

Throughout these 28 lines we have this pattern of Newtonian descriptive prose with a counterpoint expressed in Sublime and nature centric worldview, aided by physically powerful imagery. Thus:

...foaming base...rolling billows...frighted deep...fluid vortex in rotation...briny vapours...the skies...This vast phaenomena...towing head...clouds...spiral wheels...raging whirlwind...swift volution... horrid apparition...the angry billows fly...fires...thundering sound...air convulsive...down the horrid figure came... white foam...recoiling...momentary mountains...hell's profound...transient undulation o'er...

Much can be said on this Sublime event which is really viewed from the two angles of the first and last edition. Such a comparison could be noted with an examination of differences. (In the 2nd edition there is a note to consult “Chambers Dictionary” for *Waterspout*). This would reveal the Newtonian discarded with an attempt to launch into “poetry”, and shows a strange battle of ideology across two not always conflicting disciplines.

### **Somber Ending to First Canto**

The canto finishes off with the foreboding nemesis theme accompanied by the approach of the storm in the form of rain and gales. A description of a grove and tomb of a famous tyrant continues the negative and ominous effect. This Tomb of the Tyrant conjures up shades of Ozymandius (Shelley) and confirms and emphasizes the bleakness.

After this porpoises appear like a cameo or vignette “from Afric’s burning shore”, a elegiac event but also a warning, a reminder of the danger of foreign parts devoid of any nostalgic or romantic tone.

The porpoises in the first edition is a different take than the later third. There are more details and information. The Scientific changes to mystic and mythological in later editions quite

effectively and it becomes more poetic and is probably an improvement.

Finally the canto closes with the ship (desperately –in the 1st edition) flying before the wind as they lessen and take in the sails, through the classic landscape and it speeds flying out of the canto. The canto finishes with a tomb-like theme and we are told of the “Vault” of the sky which is encircling the ship. This final scene is introduced with the lines:

Still deeper glooms th’ ethereal vault deface,

This tomb-like imagery –“vault”– seems to be a description of the grave. Also to be noticed is the word “ethereal” which was to become a great favorite with the Romantics. It describes accurately the feeling and mood of those coming times with its preoccupation with the “insubstantial” and physical manifestations of spiritual –mystic– properties, that which is hard to observe or quantify, otherworldly, from man’s imperfect perspective on earth.

-End of Canto 1st

### **Times of Day**

In a world with only feeble artificial illumination, the times of day take on a significance to be noted and appreciated by the modern reader. In Canto II as the storm begins to seriously take its toll, these pertinent hours of the day with their accompanying sketches of the mood and light level set an undertone, a background chord to the verse. These are the final communications with the outside world before we descend into the close and immediate environment of the distressed ship. They provide a last dramatic view of hope receding from this disaster. The ship has unfortunately diverged from the clear rational Newtonian path into a world of chaos and disorder.

We are told in the first edition:

Four hours elaps’d, the culminating ray,

1



The Sun t'Atlantic regions wheel'd away:

In the second edition the poet writes:

The sun, retreated from the line of noon,                    54  
Far distant in Atlantic regions shone.

Here he has described this Newtonian solar event or happening in more traditional poetic language. It is less calibrated than the first edition with its precise “Four hours” and less technical by replacing “culminating ray” with just “noon”. The dropping of the “wheel'd away”, a more old fashioned description is reminiscent of the older classical mechanical universe of Thomson's “Seasons” (1730) and though an early example of the Newtonian world view, it shows a more general and imperfect understanding as it mixes in classical allusions.

Finally in the third edition, Falconer returns to the “Four hours” precision though he also invokes classical imagery:

Four hours the sun his high meridian throne                    139  
Had left, and o'er Atlantic regions shone:

In the second description of the times of day, it is dusk descending into night and total blackness. This “sublime” passage is generally improved through the editions and seeks to impress the reader with the direness of the situation as we retreat into night. Falconer draws on the darkness sublime quality theme established by Milton and exploited by eighteenth-century poets such as Blair and Young in their poems “The Grave” and “Night Thoughts.”

There is a shuffling of words in this passage through the amended editions. The Newtonian “parting ray” of the sun, “his languid fires” is exchanged for “sickening fires” which has been swapped out two lines down from “languid orb”. The second edition tried the poetic “lamp” for sun, but went back to the Newtonian “orb” in the third as it was in the first. And the

final line of this passage where “the cheerless night...his reigns extends” goes to “The moon and stars in total shade are drown’d” in the second, and the third substitutes “hopeless” for “total”.

The point being here that Falconer pulls up the sublime while continuing to accent the Newtonian properties of the falling light and diurnal retreat of the solar “orb.”

### **Rigging and Sails Maneuvers**

In the first edition, the most startling or unique description in Canto II, which is again tempered through the editions, is the verse concerning the management of the rigging and sails and maneuvers under the very stressful conditions. This passage goes on to cover more pages, about ten (out of 60) and contains a multitude of footnotes of equal volume to the verse. Falconer gives us an obsessional rundown, a tempered poetic effusion. The second and third editions were amended and brought in line with more universal poetic conventions.

The rigging and sails consumes a large portion of the second canto in the first edition and Falconer has a field day. As the storm increases, a squall appears driving towards the ship. The attentive sailors are on deck after making some preparations for its onslaught. At the last minute, as the squall approaches “... foaming white, the whirling surges rage” and the captain give some last orders, but too late to save the mainsail:

“ Brail up the mizen quick!” the master cries: 26 1<sup>st</sup> Ed

“ Mann the clue-garnetts, let the main-sheet fly!”

In thousand shivering shreds it rends on high!

The main-sail, all in streaming ruins, tore,

After this, the ship starts “careening” and it is necessary to catch the wind again and with the helm avoid disaster. After gaining control again of the ship they remove the ruined mainsail:

The main-sail, by the squall so lately rent, 75 1<sup>st</sup> Ed

In streaming pendants flying, is unbent:

But more adjustments are needed as “Fierce and more fierce the gathering tempest grows.” Sails are furled and others strengthened and backed with ropes. In these lines (and a few more in this canto) Falconer the “sailor” and poet bursts into a frenzied outcry:

Around the sail, the gaskets are convey’d,

And rolling-tackles to the cap belay’d:                   95 1<sup>st</sup> Ed

The yards, to point the wind, by some, are brac’d;

Some, to send down top-gallant-yards, are plac’d:

Some, trav’lers up the weather-back-stays, send;

At each mast-head, the top ropes, others bend;

The parrels, lifts, and clue-lines soon are gone,

Topp’d, and unrigged, they down the back-stays run:

The flying rigging all aloft belay’d,

And yards secure, along the booms were laid.

These lines (the asterisks etc. have been removed) are backed by a heavy battery of detailed footnotes for the layman to peruse.

In perhaps the most significant passage in Canto II dealing with the sails, lines and tackle, we come across an unenlightened opinion and refutation of ignorance and prejudice. In the second edition Falconer writes: “The ship no longer can whole courses bear, to reef them now becomes the masters care:” Then we are told:

But here the doubtful officers dispute                   175 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed

Till skill and judgement prejudice confute.

For Rodmond\*, to new methods still a foe,

Would first, at all events, the sheet let go:

To long-try'd maxims obstinately warn,

Not even conviction his disputes unarm.

Fortunately his opinion is overruled: “Albert and Arion disapprove,” and this “fatal method” which risks splitting the mainsail again but in more serious circumstances is avoided.

but there is also a telling footnote to the asterisk against Rodmond's name, Falconer writes:

” \*This is particularly mentioned here, not because there was or could be any dispute at such a time between a master of a ship and his chief-mate, as the former can always command the latter; but to explore the obstinacy of a number of our veteran officers, who would rather risk every thing than forgo their ancient rules, altho many of them are in the highest degree equally absurd and dangerous. It is undoubtedly to the wonderful sagacity of these connoisseurs that we owe the truly English sea-maxims, of avoiding to whistle in a storm, because it will increase the wind; of whistling on the wind in a calm: of nailing horse-shoes on the mast, to prevent the power of witches: of nailing a fair wind to the starboard cat-head, that it may continue the whole voyage, &c. &c.”

This footnote elucidates the benighted position of Rodmond against the more advanced, scientific and modern point of view. This opinion difference, a contradiction, will be repeated later in a more serious life and death scenario concerning the navigation of the ship.

The final passage dealing with the rigging and sails is brought to a tragic end as four seamen are lost, thrown from the yards and “Prone on the midnight surge...”. After this, finally, to end the sail-work in this canto, the small stay-sails are hoisted and the first immediately splits and the mizen mast is cut away and they fly before the wind. The skill and agility of the helmsmen (Timoneers) now becomes of paramount importance combined with the observations

and orders of the pilots in their attempt to avoid the dangerous and life-threatening waves. This theme will continue in Canto III: “...For on your steerage all our lives depend!”

**The Falconera Incident: Newtonian Invisibles –  
The “graduated chart” and “instructive draught”**

Finally we come to the high drama of this poem with the weathering of “Falconera”, which the poet has adorned with a footnote relating to its position in his general trend for more accuracy. In this he notes: “...see any modern chart of the Archipelago, there [check] names are not mentioned in antient geography...”

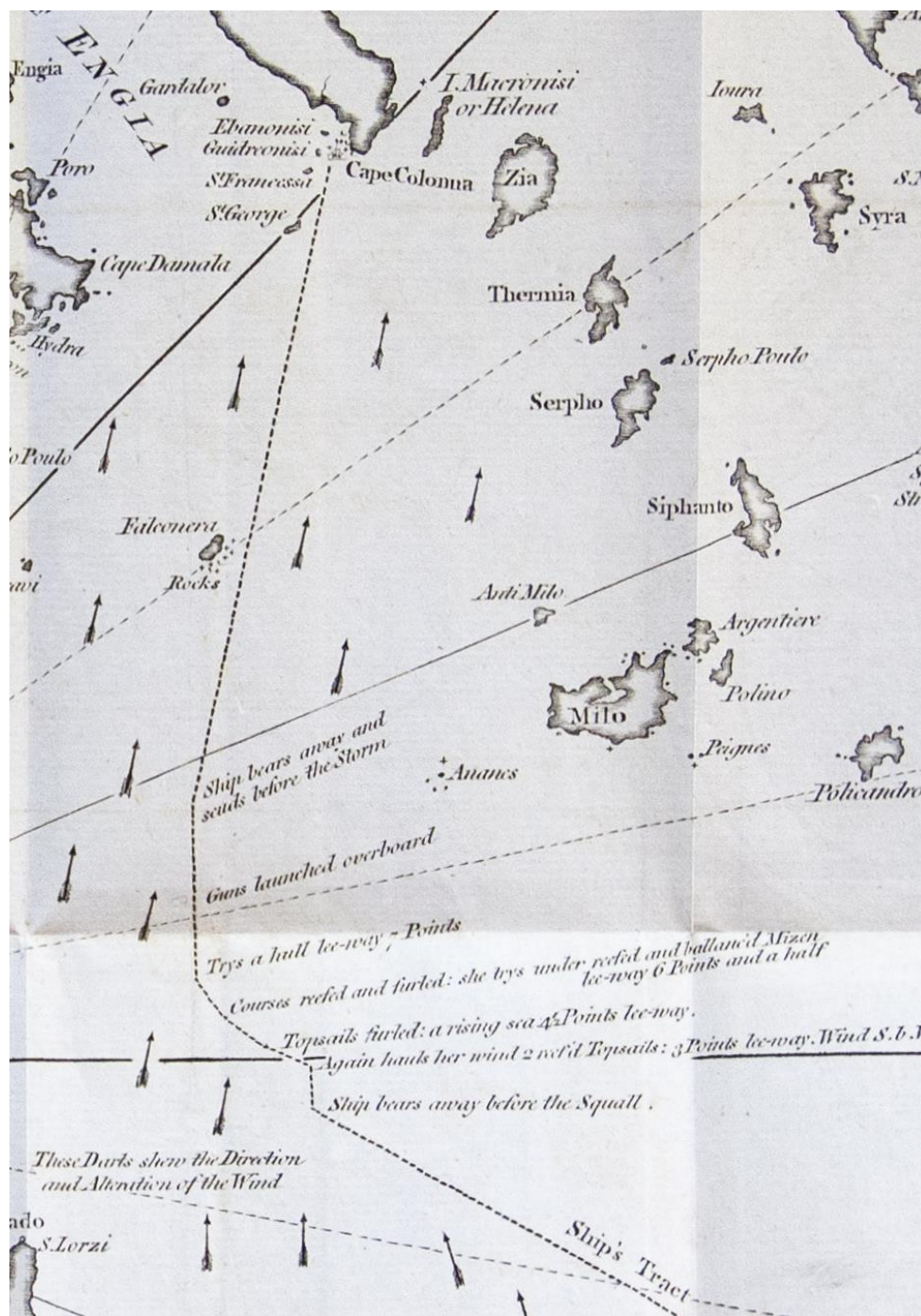
In this important passage there are two pertinent quotes which embody the essence of the ideology behind this work, and perfectly illustrate the elements of British Mercantile Mysticism. Here we see what I have termed “invisibles” in the Newtonian world of navigation, as Albert, the master, “spreads the graduated chart”:

And bounds the distance by the rules of art;                    320 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed

Across the geometric plane, expands

The compasses to circumjacent lands;

He will discover (echoes of prophecy and prediction) to his utmost horror that the island of Falconera lies directly in their path “10 leagues” away where “lurking shelves,” and “the dreadful breakers roar.” After this it is necessary to inform the trusty and trusting crew. The ship is prepared and in the third canto we come to the height-climax-closure of this drama as the



**Figure 6.** Detail from map plate showing “Falconera Rocks,” the name an unnerving coincidence with that of the author.

Britannia weathers the rocky shoals of Falconera with only the narrowest of sea-room to spare.

This Sublime, so narrow escape, is almost over before it begins. The forces of nature here are

depicted with a heightened stage-like presence.

In this, the centerpiece (of the action) of the poem, the Falconera incident is introduced in stages. This helps to raise the drama. These stages will reveal the diminishing choices and sea-room for the master and pilots which they discover by aid of the “invisibles” in their navigational procedures. These are the charts, maps and tables in combination with their other instruments, the compass (“The wondrous magnet”), sextant and more primitive methods such as the line, a knotted rope for reckoning the ship’s speed (in knots). Also factors such as the tides and currents would be taken into consideration. All this information, data, is processed, and with experience and enlightened caution, predictions (prophecies) can be made. By the rules of science and gauged probabilities, and finally with the help of (actual) geometric instruments to determine these by the “instructive draught”, that is, drawing out the coming, carefully estimated, ship’s course. By this method future events can be told with dead certainty. Due to lack of sea-room and the direction of the wind it appears the dangerous island and rocks of Falconera lie directly in their path. This certainty dawns on the pilots in fairly fast stages which I will detail.

After a preliminary general uneasiness as the storm’s force increases, we have the first stage. Albert, the master, “spreads the graduated chart” and discovers to his consternation there is no sea room. This due to the direction of the wind, the abilities of the ship to tack or sail in its present condition and circumstances so many degrees off the angle of the wind’s force, and most importantly, the position of the surrounding islands and land masses. At this stage he is the sole possessor of this knowledge and realizes the need to consult with his officers to deal with the approaching dire situation.

Far other cares the Master’s mind employ,                      225 1<sup>st</sup> Ed

Approaching perils all his hopes destroy;

In vain he spreads the graduated chart,  
 And bounds the distance by the rules of art:  
 Across the geometric plane, expands  
 The compasses to circumjacent lands;                    230  
 Ungrateful task! for nought he now explores  
 Beneath the lee, but death and fateful shores.  
 While musing thus, with horrid doubts dismay'd  
 The linear space, the anxious Chief survey'd;

The next stage is when it is discovered with horror, that the direction of the ship is leading straight for the dangerous rocks and island of Falconera. In this dire situation, if something is not done immediately to correct the angle of the ship's impetus, all will be lost, with very slim chance of even a single soul surviving. Perhaps the first edition describes the horrific realization best:

Again the Chief th' instrutive draught extends,  
 And, o'er the figur'd plane attentive, bends.  
 To him the motion of each orb was known,                    305 1<sup>st</sup> Ed  
 That, in its course, surrounds the solar throne:  
 But here, alas! his science nought avails,  
 Art droops unequal, and Experience fails.  
 The diff'rent traverses since twilight made,  
 Are on the hydrographic circle laid,                    310  
 Then, in the graduated arch contain'd,  
 The ample angle of lee-way remain'd,



Enormous chord! whose sweep is almost found  
 A quadrant of the horizontal round:  
 Her place explor'd with mathematic skill,                    315  
 His soul, Amaze, Suspence and Terror fill:  
 When, Falconera's\* Isle beneath the lee  
 Ten leagues alone, his eyes transfixing see;  
 Distracting thought! for on that cruel shore,  
 On lurking shelves, the dreadful breakers roar;            320  
 And, if on those destructive ledges tost,  
 At once the Ship and haples Crew are lost.

To avoid this ultimate disaster, a consultation is held between the four officers: Albert, Rodmond, Arion and Paleman. Here we see that Rodmond dissents, again the older unenlightened superstitious world, uninformed by modernity. In relation to this there was an allusion earlier in this canto to Rodmond's propensity for these "traditional" methods concerning a judgement on the disposition of the sails. Here this echo reflects these earlier lines. In the second edition: "Rodmond, active, strong and brave...dissenting, other counsel gave: In every peril of the ocean train'd, Courage and skill his mighty heart sustain'd....this furious unremitting gale...if before it she directly flies, New ills enclose us, and new dangers rise..."

In other words, he is for remaining where they are, continuing the dangerous battle of keeping afloat, and attempting with the sails to slow their progress and wait the storm out.

In the third edition, we have a more detailed view of Albert:

"Tis true, the vessel and her costly freight,                    635  
 To me consign'd, my orders only wait;

Yet, since the charge of every life is mine,  
 To equal votes our counsels I resign;  
 Forbid it heaven, that, in this dreadful hour,  
 I claim the dangerous reins of purblind power!

Here we see the importance of enlightened democratic reasoning and also an ethical fairness in difficulties where human life is at risk.

Also in this edition, we get a better focused and more poetic Rodmond:

Of long experience in the naval art,                    657  
 Blunt with his speech and naked with his heart;  
 Alike to him each climate and each blast;  
 The first in danger, in retreat the last:

So it should be noted that Rodmond's brave but slightly boorish qualities, though celebrated, are valued less than the other more advanced officers. His brave but outdated and out-voted advice is overruled by the superior Newtonian and Mercantile attempt at avoidance of unnecessary risk. Arion and Paleman agree with Albert's more cautious solution, scudding before the wind, to eliminate unnecessary risk taking and make an attempt to postpone the ultimate disaster.

When this is settled the crew is informed of the current position and a possible method of evacuation, a method on how to escape the ship when she eventually runs aground on Attica delivered by the master or captain, Albert. These preparations for disaster are quite detailed and also touch on the nemesis theme of the notorious wreckers on the British coast. (Only the 2nd and 3rd editions with their characterization of the crew mention wreckers and contain this passage.) This disgraceful behaviour on British shores is contrasted to the civil and enlightened behaviour of the Grecians.

Albert exclaims, "...among you some have oft beheld a blood-hound train, by rapine's  
lust impel'd, On England's cruel coast...to rob the wanderers wreckt..."

Of the native Greeks he says:

"But dread not here such sacrilegious hands,

"For gentler are the natives of these lands;

"Who, tho more wretched, yet are more humane,                      595 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed

"And shed the social tear at mortal pain.

The third edition adds another few (astonishing) lines describing the crew overcome with  
anti-British sentiment:

With conscious horror struck, the naval band,                      871

Detested for awhile their native land.

They curs'd the sleeping vengeance of the laws,

That thus forgot her guardian-sailors' cause.

Again, the Noble Savage theme is attached to the Grecians, the indigenous population. This idea  
of innocence as championed by Lord Monbodo and other enthusiasts, a sort of primitive  
universal enlightened behavior ("Citizen of the World") is a popular idea and theme in the  
educated culture at the time. It anticipates the more modern view of considering civilizations  
objectively not just from the Western perspective and promotes respect for the customs and  
ideology of "naturally" occurring indigenous peoples.

Finally just before the end of the canto we return to the sails and the problem of keeping  
the ship afloat and not floundering. To do this they need some traction from the wind so set a  
very small sail at the front which immediately bursts and tears to shreds. Albert resourcefully  
hides his fear and despair at which the crew is inspired and they will scud or run under "bare

poles” before the wind. But it is necessary to have some push on the front of the craft or else it will swing sideways which would be disastrous as open to the danger of being swamped by a wave and also the helmsman at the wheel would have no ability to control the direction of the ship, which will be hard enough anyway. So they reduce all drag on the mizen mast (the one nearest the stern), but it still won’t answer, so again the brave and resourceful Albert determines to chop it down which is done enthusiastically by the tired but determined faithful crew (salt of the earth). With this the canto closes.

### **Canto III**

The last stage in this drama is when they actually pass the island and occurs in Canto III. First, as we approach the island, there is a description of the ship’s passage and how it is managed in its crippled condition “under bare poles”. The helmsmen (timoneers) must respond immediately to the pilot’s directions who are stationed at various critical points on the ship. They judge and watch the oncoming waves and try to meet the dangerous ones by turning the prow or front of the ship into the oncoming and breaking waves. So the ship needs to respond with some immediate agility in order to avoid being broached:

Square all the yards! th’attentive master calls—

You timoneers her motion still attend!

65

So stiddy! meet her, watch the blast behind,

And steer her right before the seas and wind!

Starboard again! the watchful pilot cries;

Starboard, th’obedient timoneer replies.

Then to the left the ruling helm returns;

The wheel revolves; the ringing axle burns!

The ship no longer, foundering by the lee,  
 Bears on her side the' invasions of the sea;  
 All lonely o'er the desert waste she flies, 75  
 Scourg'd on by the surges, storm and bursting skies.

Finally, as we approach the island and rocks of Falconera:

To guide the wayward course amid the gloom,  
 The watchful pilots different posts assume. 110  
 ALBERT and RODMOND, station'd on the rear,  
 With warning voice direct each timoneer.  
 High on the prow the guard ARION keeps,  
 To shun the cruisers wandering o'er the deeps:

On the final approach to Falconera there is an echo quality of a disaster that just about happened, but just didn't quite... We hear the breakers with their horrid noise and through the sublime obscurity see the rocks and shore:

Four hours thus scudding on the tide she flew,  
 When Falconera's rocky height they view, 120 3<sup>rd</sup> Ed  
 High o'er it's summit, thro' the gloom of night,  
 The glimmering watch-tower cast a mournful light.  
 In dire amazement riveted they stand,

And hear the breakers lash the rugged strand:

Thus o'er the flood four hours she scudding flew, 101 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed  
 When Falconera's rugged cliffs they view, (20 1<sup>st</sup> Ed)  
 Faintly along the larboard bow descry'd,

As o'er it's mountain tops the lightnings glide.

In dire amazement riveted they stand,

And hear the surges beat the rocky strand;

But scarce perceiv'd, when past the beam it flies,

Though there is ultimate failure at end of the poem, due to un-mercantile like risk taking, when the ship finally breaks up on the shore of Attica, in this, the climax of the poem, we see the triumph of navigation due to the harnessing of “invisibles” and application of the advanced mathematics of the day.

Going on forward with this the third and last canto, the greatest portion, particularly in the first edition, is devoted to a roll call of the “Ancients”, a rundown of all the Classical world and happenings in this region, thick with history. This must have been a strong incentive when Falconer contemplated writing this poem, though the result is easily predictable in the outcome and the reader is left with a considerable amount of dull verse. But it does show a growing 18th century preoccupation with the Grecian world and there are glimpses, as this generation begins to grapple with, by means of archeology, in a more scientific manner than previously, the anthropological aspect and questions of these ancient civilizations.

A new accuracy is being demanded, as for example, the outstanding collection of “Etruscan” urns of Hamilton in Naples, thought at first have been all crafted locally, are discovered in many cases, to have been directly imported from the islands and mainland of the Aegean. Elements of this anticipate the “Elgin Marbles”, filched from Athens in the very first years of the 19th century and celebrated by Keats, all part of a new interest in the classic world as it is attempted to be reconstructed in an accurate and authentic manner. There are, perhaps, examples of this new interest in the artefacts of Greece...

By the second edition we are still given the rundown of the classical world, but after this in the final disaster, there is more attention to detail and a general attempt to raise the drama level, painting a highly charged picture of the final wreck. This can be seen in the “Argument” titles at the beginning of the canto.

After the not too brief intrusion of the surrounding ancient world, the ship is fast approaching its final destination and the pilots continue with their struggle avoiding the waves:

Now, borne impetuous o’er the boiling deeps;                    386

Her course to Attic shores the vessel keeps:

The pilots, as the waves behind her swell,

Still with the wheeling stern their force repel...

The steersmen every bidden turn apply;                    392

To right and left the spokes alternate fly.

For the final disaster the poet returns to the weather and general sublime chaos in the cosmos:

High in the masts, with pale and livid rays,                    422

Amid the gloom portentous meteors blaze.

Blinding lightening and thunder “rends th’eatherial frame.” Soon:

The hills of Greece, emerging on the lee...                    461

While shoreward now the bounding vessel flies,                    476

After missing, passing by many dangerous rocks and shoals, they come to the final destination:

Foams the wild beach below with mad’ning rage,                    532

Where waves and rocks a dreadful combat wage.

The ship prepares to land, to be beached:

The steersmen now receiv'd their last command                    572  
 To wheel the vessel sidelong to the strand.

The ship breaks in two:

In vain the cords and axes were prepar'd

It is unable to reach the land in one piece as hoped by the crew. Clinging to the rigging and mast and other floating debris is the only hope to reach the strand, but for most —“a watery grave.”

With this final breaking up of vessel, Albert, desperately clinging to the mast, goes down attached, pulled by Rodmond in a drowning death grip. The symbolism here, whether intentional or not, is very telling. Nemesis and association with the outlaw and rebel-like qualities of Rodmond have proved fatal to the Master or Captain of this merchant ship.

763 –A ‘troop of Grecians’ are watching from nearby heights down on the scene at the beach. 775 Only three men reach the shore... Finally —“Grecians on the beach arriv'd” 909. And the three survivors are helped by noble Grecians.

## **Conclusion**

So ends *The Shipwreck*. Only to say that the author himself came to the same end, with unnecessary risk taking off the coast of Africa. M.K. Joseph writes:

On 27 December 1769 the *Aurora* left Cape Town and sailed beyond any further human knowledge...Owing to the slowness of communication between England and India, the non-arrival of the *Aurora* aroused no anxiety for some time.... By 1771, the disappearance of the *Aurora* had become common knowledge...In April, the Gentleman's Magazine stating that ‘the loss of the *Aurora* Frigate is too much to be feared.’ ...A month later, the same magazine printed the fullest and most reasonable



conjectures ever published on the fate of the ship:–

The Aurora frigate is supposed to have been lost or foundered in the Gulph of Sofala, or channel of Mosambique...a channel dangerous at all seasons, even to those who are acquainted with it...but which Capt. Lee, tho' a stranger to it, could not be dissuaded from attempting in the midst of winter, instead of stretching, as usual, into the Great Indian Ocean, south of Madagascar. Mr. Vansittart, it is said, was so averse to this navigation that if an outward-bound East Indiaman had been at the Cape, he would have quited the Aurora...The captain's intention was to have take in provisions at the Island of Johanna, one of the Comorro Islands.

Another commentator in Joseph's article mentions the poem, which: "...work appears in its catastrophe prophetic..."

So to conclude, in this mercantile drama of Falconer's poem there is a tragic end even though the book is celebrating the mystic qualities of the science and mathematics used to see and comprehend the very real life effects of the "invisibles."

So why does the book not have a happy ending? This is because Falconer has encased the book in a tragic mould in order to tell a parable or "similitude". This is: unnecessary risk-taking leads to tragedy, and so caution is to rule the day, and guaranties safer tho' slower returns (on commodities and trading).

There is much observational naturalism in *The Shipwreck*, the weather, the force of the gasses and fluids of Robert Boyle, the gravitational laws of Newton manifest, made evident and Sublime by the power of Opticks, through the eye of the poet.

The moral of *The Shipwreck* returns to its seventeenth century middle and merchant class puritanic origins. No gambling, fair and equitable merchandising.

Thus the concept of British Mercantile Mysticism is explained and set forth, demonstrated. . . . Perhaps the lines which say it best occur at the end of Canto II, where the captain, Albert, prepares the crew for the final effort, safely bypassing the rocks of Falconera and preparing to beach the ship on the shores of “Attica”. This, an attempt to foretell and control the future:

His intellectual eye, serenely bright!                      891 3<sup>rd</sup> Ed  
Saw distant objects with prophetic light.

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Appendix: Possible Title Page for Published Edition



# British Mercantile Mysticism

*The Shipwreck* by William Falconer

(1762)

*Note on previous illustration:*

*Anglo Norman design and technology, Elgin Cathedral and Concord.*

*Here the Mystic Mercantile quality and capability of being present at 10 in both London and New York in the same morning and also to be able to go home later the same day.*

*The Mercantile advantage did not go unnoticed by many in the sphere of commerce.*

*Interestingly, the same Gothic shapes prevail in both structures.*

*Faster than a rifle bullet and twice as fast as most military jets, the Concord was designed on a slide rule and drawing board with instruments similar to those used in the eighteenth century for the navigation of ships such as Falconer's poetry celebrates.*