

## ABSTRACT:

Title of Thesis: THE DRAMATURGY OF A MARITIME METAPHOR:  
MARCUS REDIKER'S INFLUENCE ON NAOMI WALLACE'S  
*ONE FLEA SPARE*

Andrew Neal Barker, Master's of Arts, 2013

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Within the dramaturgy of *One Flea Spare* by playwright Naomi Wallace, one historical source illuminates the story more than the others: *Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea* by Marcus Rediker. By tracing the parallels between Wallace's drama and Rediker's history, a historical paradigm surfaces in Wallace's work just as a dramatic paradigm surfaces in the work of Rediker. Accordingly, this thesis asks: how does the exploration of Rediker's maritime history of the early eighteenth-century Anglo-Atlantic world from a seaman's perspective suggest a dramatic paradigm for Wallace's play? After considering how Rediker centralizes conflict between the seaman and the captain, this study then focuses on the parallel situation found within *One Flea Spare* in order to provide a productive analysis of analogous scenarios. This thesis also argues that the class-conscious work of Naomi Wallace and Marcus Rediker uses history and metaphor to contribute to a common and shared dramaturgy.

THE DRAMATURGY OF A MARITIME METAPHOR: MARCUS REDIKER'S  
INFLUENCE ON NAOMI WALLACE'S *ONE FLEA SPARE*

By

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Dedicated to Dr. Faedra Carpenter:

A lighthouse and a mentor.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS:

I.	Introduction .....	1
II.	Ruminations on Metaphor and Dramaturgy .....	5
III.	Marcus Rediker: Dramaturgical Historian.....	9
IV.	Rediker’s Wooden World.....	12
V.	Naomi Wallace: Historical Dramatist.....	15
VI.	Play Summary: <i>One Flea Spare</i> .....	21
VII.	Dramatic Convergences: the Deep Blue Sea & the Great Black Plague.....	22
	A. Lines of Conflict .....	26
	B. Wallace’s Wooden World .....	32
	C. Characters & the Dramatic / Historical Record .....	37
	D. (Re)Scripting History .....	47
VIII.	Conclusion: Returning to Port .....	51
IV.	Addendums:	
	1. Dramaturgy as Production Concept.....	55
	2. Potential Student Projects.....	57
X.	Bibliography.....	61

# THE DRAMATURGY OF A MARITIME METAPHOR: MARCUS REDIKER'S INFLUENCE ON NAOMI WALLACE'S *ONE FLEA SPARE*

“speak to th’ mariners.”

—William Shakespeare<sup>1</sup>

## I. INTRODUCTION

Years ago, after I first read Naomi Wallace’s *One Flea Spare*, I was pleasantly surprised to see that Wallace included a select bibliography at the end of her play. I distinctly remember interpreting the inclusion of this bibliography as an *invitation* instead of a means of substantiation. Wallace’s bibliography seems to encourage readers to learn from her sources, rather than serving as an obligatory listing of scholarly material that verifies the depth and validity of her research. Since first reading *One Flea Spare*, I have continually returned to Wallace’s play and often considered taking up her implicit invitation by perusing her bibliographical materials. These research materials include:

Burg, Barry Richard. *Sodomy and the Pirate Tradition: English Sea Rovers in the Seventeenth Century Caribbean*. New York: New York University Press, 1995.

Defoe, Daniel. *A Journal of the Plague Year*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999.

Latham, Robert. *The Illustrated Pepys: Extracts from the Diary*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983.

Morton, A.L. *A Peoples’ History of England*. London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1992.

Rediker, Marcus. *Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea: Merchant Seaman, Pirates, and the Anglo-American Maritime World, 1700-1750*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1987.

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<sup>1</sup> William Shakespeare, *The Tempest*, Act I, sc. 1.

Underdown, David. *Revel, Riot, and Rebellion: Popular Politics and Culture in England, 1603-1660*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987.

When I finally took the initiative to investigate this bibliography in greater detail, one of the book titles stood out from the others. The title that immediately spoke to me and captivated my interest happened to contain a metaphor: Marcus Rediker's *Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea*. Upon reading Marcus Rediker's book, I was not only struck by the highly dramatic style of his historical accounts, but I also quickly discovered that Naomi Wallace had borrowed various names and episodes from *Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea*, and then adapted them for inclusion in her play, *One Flea Spare*. Thus, in mining the rich history provided by Rediker, Wallace's play evidences a fruitful engagement with an intertextual practice whereby she theatricalizes the history Rediker has artfully chronicled as metaphor. Wallace's play is notably bound by distinctly different historical circumstances than the maritime world of Rediker, yet also clearly shaped and influenced by that world. This observation prompted me to wonder: how does Wallace deploy the history and the metaphor of maritime struggle to help inspire both the world-view and the dramatic construction of her play?

Rediker's *Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea* tells the story of how eighteenth-century sailors transformed their social milieu through active resistance to authoritarian economic power—sometimes through the practice of piracy. *One Flea Spare* tells the story of how a small but discerning cast of characters transformed their seventeenth-century, plague-sequestered milieu through the eventual resistance to an oppressive patriarch. In both cases, portrayals of oppression and mutiny ensue, instigated by the oppressed. Rediker reads history from below, emphasizing how maritime workers caused changes and enacted resistance that shaped larger trends of socio-economic

resistance in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and beyond.<sup>2</sup> Wallace reads in Rediker a past that, despite its “passing,” represents more than an absolute and closed script. Instead, Wallace is inspired by Rediker’s history and, through her own dramaturgy, she uses maritime history to reveal possibilities for social change.

Wallace and Rediker’s shared interest in, and concern for, seamen as workers of the world invite an investigation of the shared themes, literary strategies, and critical motivations common to both writers. This project aims to explore how the “wooden worlds” of both the historian and playwright (the tangible and symbolic worlds of the wooden ship and the wooden house, respectively) reveal a number of common conditions and events that may occur under circumstances of isolated duress. As evidenced through the breadth of this thesis I am interested in exploring why the linkage between these two writers is so befitting and, in doing so, how the playwright and the historian share what I am referring to as a dramaturgy of social forces. Furthermore, I assert that the shared critical intentions and artistic impulses of Rediker and Wallace can be understood through and by a “maritime metaphor,” one that explicitly considers how the relationships between those with and without power can be strained and reversed under similar given circumstances.

This thesis is guided by a central question: how has Wallace adapted and transcribed the crux of Rediker’s maritime metaphor into her play, *One Flea Spare*? By exploring this question, I first examine definitions of dramaturgy and then attempt to illuminate the dramaturgical strategies used by playwright Naomi Wallace, while also highlighting the dramaturgical nature of historian Marcus Rediker. In order to best

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<sup>2</sup> See Jim Sharpe, “History from Below,” in *New Perspectives on Historical Writing*, ed. Peter Burke, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (University Park, PA: Polity Press, 2001), 25-39.



contextualize the parallels and intertextual dialogue between the work of Rediker and Wallace, this thesis builds on the following framework: 1) I focus on Rediker's biography and how his distinct interest in "history from below" lends itself to Wallace's themes, 2) Rediker's *Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea* is then positioned to provide a perspective of life at sea through the paradigm of a "wooden world" as constructed within his maritime context, 3) I then give a brief biography of Wallace noting her interest in the expression of social forces, and follow with a summary of her play to familiarize readers with the arc of the story in order to set up further analysis, 4) A detailed comparative study of select elements within Rediker's *Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea* and Wallace's *One Flea Spare* follows. This comparative analysis uses Rediker's work to illuminate the wooden world that Wallace creates by examining their similar lines of conflict, dramaturgical elements, and historical/dramatic transcriptions of characters, ending with an examination of how myth attempts to co-opt history. Considering these various elements will help shed light on why Wallace deploys certain historical aspects of *Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea* to include in *One Flea Spare*.

Notably, my interest in exploring the textual connections between Marcus Rediker and Naomi Wallace is further propelled by the under-examined fact that Wallace and Rediker have begun to actively converse with one another regarding the development of Wallace's dramatic work. Formalizing their literary relationship, Wallace and Rediker discussed the ideas and history found in Wallace's new play, *The Liquid Plain* (2013).<sup>3</sup> In light of the knowledge of this recent and impactful discourse, it behooves scholars to look back at *One Flea Spare* in order to help fathom how such a critical discourse

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<sup>3</sup> Naomi Wallace, e-mail message to the author, March 16, 2013.

inspires an acclaimed piece of theatre. Throughout this thesis, I will illustrate the ways in which the work of the playwright and historian complement one another, as well as reveal the exchange that materializes between their chosen modes of expression. This kind of intertextual examination—where one text relates and alludes to another—not only highlights the specific ways both texts dramatize resistance to oppressive social forces, but also the potential dialogue born from this critical juxtaposition offers both theatre artists and teachers material to ground their interpretations of how and why Wallace retells maritime history through her play.

## II. RUMINATIONS ON METAPHOR & DRAMATURGY

In the Pulitzer Prize-winning *The Transformation of Virginia, 1740-1790*, historian Rhys Isaac includes a section at the end of his book titled “Discourse on Method.” In that section, Isaac expounds upon the use of metaphor in historical research and presentation. In terms of interpreting expressive forms of action he declares,

Great metaphors of the culture enter into the creation and interpretation of settings; they are a major source of available roles; and they also govern the actors’ styles of presentation. Above all it is the great metaphors that control the very perception of what constitutes significant action, or drama.<sup>4</sup>

The theater model, he adds, “serves to emphasize the formalities that govern so much of social life.”<sup>5</sup> Can this approach reveal itself as a reflexive lens to view the interaction between Wallace and Rediker? The pairing and traceable parallels found in their interdisciplinary treatments of drama and history speak directly to the ways in which Isaac frames his own understanding of these fields.

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<sup>4</sup> Rhys Isaac, *The Transformation of Virginia, 1740-1790*, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1982), 351.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

Within his “Discourse on Method” essay, Isaac further asserts that the theater model provides a useful metaphor for historians and ethnographers to reconstruct lives of the past. Isaac’s ruminations continue to prove conceptually constructive in relation to this study, particularly when he elaborates on the analogous strategies of artists and historians:

The objective of the ethnographic historian’s enterprise—understanding and depicting life itself—is, however, very close to the aims of the artist. It should not be surprising, therefore, that devices developed in forms of art, and concepts arising in discourse concerning art, such as *metaphor*, *dramaturgy*, and *milieu*, have been found serviceable for incorporation in the models proposed for use in ethnographic analysis.<sup>6</sup>

As Isaac argues, there is value in using artistic metaphor for depicting life as it was, is—or could be. Rediker would likely concur given his similar approach while studying and documenting history. In his chapter, “The Seaman as Plain Dealer,” Rediker writes about how “maritime culture was forged from two related confrontations”: the conflict between man and nature, as well as “the showdown between man and man, the class confrontation over the issues of power, authority, work, and discipline.”<sup>7</sup> Rediker’s characterization of confrontation as a “showdown” emphasizes the dramatic conflict inherent in maritime history and will be explored more in depth later.

While Isaac’s ruminations on metaphor and art provide an illuminating point of entry for this thesis, equally inspiring are Isaac’s specific references to *dramaturgy*. Isaac characterizes dramaturgy as “the social-dramatic devices through which interaction communication—expression, direction, and ultimately coercion—may be ultimately

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid., 357.

<sup>7</sup> Rediker 154.

accomplished.”<sup>8</sup> Though Isaac speaks of dramaturgy in the context of eighteenth-century Virginia, his allusions to theatrical presentations and strategies easily transpose to the culture and sensibility evidenced in the human dramas aboard the eighteenth-century ships sailing the Atlantic as depicted in Rediker’s work. Building upon Isaac’s ruminations on metaphor and dramaturgy, this thesis explores how Wallace uses a similar metaphorical and historical method in the dramaturgy of her play. Under the maritime influence of Rediker’s study, Wallace’s conceptual framework builds a ship within a house, and a class-conscious history within a play.

Before proceeding further, however, the term “dramaturgy” demands careful parsing and a discussion of its application within the context of this particular project. Many definitions of dramaturgy exist, and they can be used in various and differing ways. Dramaturgy is a multi-faceted word and its etymology can be traced to the French language as derived from the Greek, essentially meaning: the composition of drama.<sup>9</sup> So, the question should then be asked: “what composes drama?”

Knowing what composes a play can lead to understanding how it works. Understanding how a play works leads to interpreting how the play creates meaning. The meaning of a play can take many forms, but what is central to most (although not all) theatrical presentations is the representation of conflict: its causes, its consequences, and/or its resolutions. The representation of conflict and how it is resolved often determines the meanings an audience or reader will take away from the work. Ideally,

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<sup>8</sup> Rhys Isaac, *The Transformation of Virginia, 1740-1790*, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1982), 350.

<sup>9</sup> Dramaturgy: “composition and production of plays,” 1801, from French dramaturgie, from Greek dramaturgia, from drama (genitive dramatos) + ergos “worker”, *Online Etymology Dictionary*, <http://www.etymonline.com/index.php?term=dramaturgy>, (accessed January 10, 2013).

this conflict should be set where the characters have a vested interest in remaining until the conflict is resolved, or where characters cannot move on (physically, emotionally, or psychologically) until the conflict has resolved. The machinations that surround conflict are at the heart of a writer's dramaturgical narrative.

Dramaturgical composition also considers the given circumstances of a play, that is, it addresses questions such as: Who, What, Where, When, Why, and How. Aristotle wrote of these elements as inherent in dramatic composition. Plot (What happens? When and where?) Character (Who is involved?), Thought (What is the idea/theme?), Language (What words do they use?), Music (What does it sound accompany the embodied performance?), and Spectacle (What are the visual/special effects?).<sup>10</sup> Once the answers to these questions are identified—and identifiable—one beholds the basic composition of a play and, and in this traditional construction, a story surfaces from these fundamental elements. In the end, all of the elements should coalesce into what can be called the world of the play.

Beyond referencing a play's structure or composition, "dramaturgy" can also be used as a noun or a verb. In this sense of the word, dramaturgy becomes active: it questions, tests, extrapolates. Thus, the dramaturgy of a play also describes how all its moving parts work together—like a diagnostic analysis given to a play to ensure it is running properly. When considering these aspects of construction and efficacy a number of queries may arise: How does a given play set the scene and introduce its characters? How do the ideas of the play become more prominent or less so through its duration? Which words and characters become more prominent or less so through its duration? How does the conflict between characters contribute to the overall theme? How are

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<sup>10</sup> Aristotle, *Poetics*, trans. Francis Ferguson (New York: Hill and Wang, 1961), 46.

design elements related to the staging and the dialogue? In general, dramaturging a play engages with its mechanics, and conceptualizes its conflict.

And finally, within the confines of this project, dramaturgy can also be thought of as an application. As Isaac illustrates with his appropriation of dramaturgy in relation to historical documentation and ethnography, the methods and components of “dramaturgy” can be applied to almost any dynamic entity: an institution, a person, or a moment in time. Understood this way, dramaturgical analysis of a subject involves mapping and decoding a story. If a subject has been dramaturged successfully, its history, its purpose, and its struggle can be explicated for others. Employing a dramaturgical lens can help uncover a story’s various meanings and intentions. If, for example, the elements shared between Wallace’s play and Rediker’s book speak to the same struggle, using similar methods and analogous circumstances, then their common dramaturgy invites a complementary reading. Dramaturgy should help tell the story and enable the story to be told. With *One Flea Spare*, analysis of its elements and its metaphorical applications provides a map from which to explore Rediker’s *Between the Devil in the Deep Blue Sea*, which can be seen to have similar elements that make up a dramatic world of its own.

### **III. MARCUS REDIKER: DRAMATURGICAL HISTORIAN**

As a historian, Marcus Rediker largely concerns himself with people who struggled under a capitalistic maritime regime. Like playwright Naomi Wallace, Rediker is also from the South, and unabashedly hails from the political left. Rediker also emphasizes that he comes “from a working-class family, with roots in the mines and factories of Kentucky, Tennessee, and Virginia; I grew up in Nashville and Richmond. I

attended Vanderbilt University, dropped out of school and worked in a factory for three years.”<sup>11</sup> Eventually returning to school, Rediker graduated from Virginia Commonwealth University. He received his Master’s and Doctorate degree in history from the University of Pennsylvania and is currently the Distinguished Professor of Atlantic History at the University of Pittsburgh. Throughout his career, Rediker’s working class background has informed his work and his social activism. In regard to his personal approach to history, he has said: “To retrieve the bottom-up perspective is, in my eye, itself an act of justice. It is an expression of solidarity with exploited and oppressed people past and present.”<sup>12</sup> *Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea* represents a prime example of Rediker’s historical analysis of the maritime working class. Rediker has authored, co-authored, or edited seven books all dealing in with the maritime world. Rediker could be described as historicizing specifically and factually—but he also historicizes assertively.

As a champion of the history from below movement, Rediker strives to tell stories of people who were not presidents or admirals, but rather those who were slaves or sailors working for others even as they fought for their freedom or a fair wage. Rediker specializes in chronicling those persons who often manifested their struggle through mutiny. These manifestations of resistance resulted from the common sailor’s “Spirit of Rebellion”—a chapter title in Rediker’s *Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea*. Rediker argues that this “spirit of rebellion” is also a condition embodied by many who belonged to the class of workers that sailed the sea in the early seventeenth century.

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<sup>11</sup> Marcus Rediker, [www.marcusrediker.com](http://www.marcusrediker.com), (accessed January 8, 2013).

<sup>12</sup> Mark Thwaite, “Interview with Marcus Rediker,” *Ready, Steady, Book... for Literature*, <http://www.readysteadybook.com/Article.aspx?page=marcusrediker>, (accessed February 13, 2013.)

In *Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea*, Rediker characterizes his book's title as the seaman's disposition:

On one side stood his captain, who was backed by the merchant and royal official, and who held near-dictatorial powers that served a capitalist system rapidly covering the globe; on the other side stood the relentlessly dangerous natural world.<sup>13</sup>

And so the “tar” (the term used for the common sailor) had to negotiate a creative survival between the two forces: one of man-made origins and the other of natural forces. Throughout his work, Rediker uses conflict to dramatize maritime history, and he uses dramatic metaphor in many of his books.

For example, Rediker spoke in such terms in 2010 during a lecture at Cornell University on the subject of his one of his recent books, *The Slave Ship: A Human History*. After describing the slave trade, in the words of W.E.B DuBois, as “the most magnificent human drama in the last thousand years of human history,” Rediker then focused on drama as a supreme interpretative device: “What I’ve tried to do in my book is talk about the decks of the slave ship as a place where human dramas were enacted.”<sup>14</sup> Whether or not Rediker was aware of his theatrical pun by using the word “decks” as a place of drama—just as theatre practitioners do when they refer to a stage floor as a “deck”—the dramatic analogy rings true. Through his historical accounts, Rediker allows and desires readers to witness to the drama that unfolded on those ships. The obvious difference here, which must be mentioned, concerns slave labor and the (mostly) free wage labor he writes of in *Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea*—but,

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<sup>13</sup> Marcus Rediker, *Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea: Merchant Seamen, Pirates, and the Anglo-American Maritime Tradition, 1700-1750*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 5.

<sup>14</sup> Marcus Rediker, “The Slave Ship/Ghost Ship: A Human History,” YouTube, [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=83V\\_JhINw5M](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=83V_JhINw5M), accessed December 15, 2012.



nevertheless, the dramatic paradigm travels through time in a significant fashion.

Rediker, like Isaac, creatively relies on the metaphor of drama in order to write history.

#### IV. REDIKER'S WOODEN WORLD

In the very first pages of *Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea*, Rediker strategically delivers a first-hand account of a storm at sea. The violent elements made the sea crackle, wind blew fiercely, water foamed over the deck, cargo tumbled below deck, and with the ship on its side, two seamen attacked the top mast with axes so that ship righted. But as the storm continued, other drastic measures made by the seamen either carried them overboard or so severely injured them that they had to be carried below deck. To round out the story, Rediker quotes a passenger named John Fontaine who was one of the lucky survivors: “We were surrounded by nothing but death and horror within and without.”<sup>15</sup> Rediker uses his first three paragraphs to establish a spectacular backdrop, but then brings his readers inside the ship. The spectacular opening sequence partly serves to satisfy what readers have been primed to expect from books about the maritime world—the romantic notion of man at sea against the elements. Though danger and death were very real at sea, one of Rediker’s first arguments addresses how “the romantic image of seafaring has tended to obscure important features of life at sea in the eighteenth century.”<sup>16</sup> Although seamen were consistently threatened by “death and horror within and without” the ships upon which they sailed, why does Rediker primarily focus on what happens *within* that wooden world?

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<sup>15</sup> *The Journal of John Fontaine: An Irish Huguenot Son in Spain and Virginia, 1710-1719*, ed. Edward Porter Alexander (Charlottesville, Va., 1972), 49-50, qtd. in Rediker, *Between the Devil*, 2.

<sup>16</sup> Rediker, *Between the Devil*, 4.

Many readers are likely familiar with stories about shipwrecks, but Rediker includes in his introductory story the gruesome nature of what it meant to combat such elements and survive the storm. In the chapters following the introduction for *Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea*, Rediker continues to describe similar instances of injury and death suffered by sailors while aboard ships at sea; however, the perpetrators are not the natural elements, but rather the captains of those same ships. From the very beginning Rediker plays against the romantic notions of the maritime world to reframe the story of Anglo-American sailors in the eighteenth century Atlantic. Although his introduction may initially be seen as adventurous, heroic, or even cinematic, Rediker quickly brings the story down to the deck of the ship where the elements were not the only thing sailors had to contend with in terms of survival. Rediker's dramaturgy exposes various dramatic conflicts revealing how readers should understand the full breadth of sailors' struggles. Indeed, sailors battled against the violent demands of the sea captain just as much, if not more so, than against the sea itself.

What does Rediker attempt to recover by writing about the Anglo-American maritime world in the early eighteenth century? Rediker wishes to reclaim (and reframe) the maritime history of the Atlantic so as to centralize the common sailor. Thus, he concentrates on the experience of the sailor as worker.<sup>17</sup> Rediker readily admits, "the life-and-death drama of seafaring has given rise to a 'romance of the sea' that has long, and in many ways rightly, dominated maritime history."<sup>18</sup> While the early eighteenth-century period of which Rediker writes was admittedly pre-romantic, precursors of the

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<sup>17</sup>It should be noted that although the typical "tar" I refer to throughout this thesis is male, there were female sailors, but they were also very rare. See Daniel Defoe, "The Life of Mary Read and Anne Bonny," in *A General History of the Pyrates*, ed. Manuel Schonhorn (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1972), 153-165.

<sup>18</sup>Rediker, *Between the Devil*, 3.

romantic ideal were already cropping up in popular culture in books such as Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*, which was first published in 1719 (three years before Defoe published *A Journal of the Plague Year*).<sup>19</sup> Most of the maritime mystique comes from adventurous aspects of boldly exploring the unknown frontier, and certainly nineteenth-century novels such as *Moby-Dick* (1851) led to the perpetuation of those romantic ideas of man and the sea. The mystery of the sea still inspires explorers today because of its vastness and unknowable depths. Typically, however, the story has been portrayed as one man's obsession with treasure, a whale, or a "new world." Historical precedent fed the dreams of discovery, riches, and fame. The standard set by those, like privateer/explorer Sir Francis Drake in the sixteenth century, carried on through a nautical pantheon of explorers, colonists, and circumnavigators.<sup>20</sup> This type of narrative tradition focuses mainly on the captains or admirals who represented a state power and rarely, if ever, focused on the common sailor.

Rediker's intervention reveals how the popular, romantic notions of life at sea held little relevance for many sailors of the time. Many sailors, in fact, did not have much choice in the matter and were not drawn to maritime life out of desire, but rather out of necessity. And whether aboard a merchant vessel or a navy vessel, seamen frequently suffered the dangerous vagaries of nature and the ship's captain. Once a ship left London and passed Gravesend (the last town on the Thames on the way to the Atlantic Ocean), a captain "held near-dictatorial powers" over his ship.<sup>21</sup> And indeed, a grave was what many sailors had to look forward to as many "seamen had entered the navy like men 'dragged to execution,'" because during wartime "almost half of all those

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<sup>19</sup> Daniel DeFoe, *Robinson Crusoe* (London: W. Taylor, 1719).

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 57.

<sup>21</sup> Rediker, *Between the Devil*, 5.

pressed in the seventeenth and eighteenth century died at sea.”<sup>22</sup> Moreover, war was a relative constant for the English after their civil war ended in 1652: first with the Dutch (1652-1654), then with the Spanish (1654-1660).<sup>23</sup>

Rediker also asserts that romantic historians and storytellers have “tended to see the seamen’s quest, like Ishmael’s, largely in individual and nationalistic terms. Yet the struggles against nature, like the many conflicts among men, were, at bottom, cooperative and collective undertakings.”<sup>24</sup> Consequently, in *Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea*, Rediker revises persistent romantic images of sailors’ lives. As sailors’ lives and labor were bound by the burgeoning international marketplace, they also found themselves pitted against a bourgeoisie, personified by a captain, willing to exploit their lives and labor. Throughout his study, Rediker emphasizes the social relations of workers in that wooden world and their “creative survival.”<sup>25</sup>

## V. NAOMI WALLACE: HISTORICAL DRAMATIST

While dealing with the plague in London in the late seventeenth century in her play *One Flea Spare*, Wallace also pushes the issue of class to the foreground. The chaotic and dangerous summer of 1665 in London not only allowed class tensions to boil to the surface, but it also allowed for the collapse of societal norms. As Laurie Stone states, “Wallace, by setting her play in a plague-ridden London, 1665, has conceived a brilliant situation to level the classes, so that a pound of rich flesh is in just as much peril as a pound of poor flesh.”<sup>26</sup> Though a well-to-do couple are forced to live in their home

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<sup>22</sup> Rediker, *Between the Devil*, 33.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 20.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 9.

<sup>26</sup> Laurie Stone, “Pox, Socks, and Crocs,” *The Nation*, May 19, 1997, 34-35.

with intruders from a lower socio-economic class, an attempt to enforce their society's typical norms dissolves due to the abnormal situation. As in many of her other plays, Wallace deploys a specific historical background to emphasize the class conflict within the particular historical moment.

In carefully selecting the time, place, and circumstance to best explore the issue of class, Wallace's dramaturgical strategy conjures a method made famous by one of the forefather's of modern dramaturgy: Bertolt Brecht.<sup>27</sup> Brecht, a German playwright and dramaturg, believed that making things strange on stage heightens awareness of how the real world operates. Brecht introduced the idea of "Verfremdungseffekt" (or, "the alienation effect") by emphasizing action:

The 'historical conditions' must of course not be imagined (nor will they be so constructed) as mysterious Powers in the background; on the contrary, they are created and maintained by men (and will in due course be altered by them): it is the actions taking place before us that allow us to see what they are.<sup>28</sup>

Following this premise, Wallace initially gives the audience a distant world with a familiar power structure, however, as characters interact in new circumstances, the modes of operating are made strange. As *One Flea Spare* unfolds the microcosm of the house—the social structure within—falters and cannot stand. This then provides an opportunity for new action in a new kind of world.

Growing up on the family farm, Wallace recounts that, "[u]nlike most Kentuckians, I grew up with privilege."<sup>29</sup> She became aware of the pervasive issue of class as teenager when observing her friends and their families. Most of them were poor

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<sup>27</sup> Michael Chemers, *Ghost Light: An Introductory Handbook for Dramaturgy* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 2010), 99-101.

<sup>28</sup> Bertolt Brecht, *Brecht on Theatre*, trans. John Willet (London: Methuen, 1964), 190.

<sup>29</sup> Naomi Wallace, "Let the Right One In," *American Theatre*, January 2013, 91.

and working class, and she witnessed their struggle with work and pursuits of happiness. Since then, Wallace's artistic concerns never stray far from her class-conscious upbringing: "We live in a culture where social forces are so present. They make us what we are," she says and then goes further, "As an artist, how can I ignore what has created us?"<sup>30</sup> For this reason, Wallace continually explores class in plays such as *The Trestle at Pope Lick Creek* (1999), *Slaughter City* (1996), or *Things of Dry Hours* (2007). Whether her plays take place on a trestle, in a slaughterhouse, the backwoods of Alabama, or centuries ago in England, they all circulate around of class, sparking to life when issues related to social and political hierarchies aggravate characters' lives. "Politics is history," Wallace states, and "For me, politics and art can never be divided. Once you see that politics affects our daily lives—our loves, our desires, our needs—that's terribly exciting."<sup>31</sup> With these thoughts, one can easily deduce that Wallace extends her notion of "politics" to "history," therefore, implicitly asserting that history and art cannot be divided either—a belief demonstrated through her plays.

Wallace's playwriting has received international accolades and attention. For example, in the spring of 2012, the three hundred year-old Comédie-Française produced *One Flea Spare* by Naomi Wallace—a piece that had just previously been accepted into the company's permanent repertoire of plays in 2009. Only one other American playwright has been so honored to be accepted into their permanent repertoire, albeit posthumously—Tennessee Williams. On this side of the Atlantic in 1997, *One Flea Spare* won an Obie Award for Best Play after its New York debut at the Public Theater.

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<sup>30</sup> Vivian Gornick, "An American Exile in America," *The New York Times*, <http://www.nytimes.com/1997/03/02/magazine/an-american-exile-in-america.html?scp=1&sq=naomi+wallace+and+vivian+gornick&st=nyt>, (accessed November 5, 2012).

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

Two years later, Wallace was awarded the prestigious MacArthur Fellowship. As of 2013, she has published fourteen plays, winning the Susan Blackburn Prize twice, as well as the Joseph Kesselring Prize. Wallace's plays have been performed in North America, Europe, and the Middle East. Her 1997 screenplay, *Lawndogs* starring Misha Barton and Sam Rockwell, has also captured the imagination of many.<sup>32</sup>

Wallace resides in both the United States and England, and she is known for her poetic and class-conscious work on both sides of the Atlantic. Though many of her plays have debuted in England, regional and university theaters in the city of Atlanta held a month-long festival of Wallace's plays in 2001, which included full productions and readings of her work. More recently, Wallace earned the Horton Foote Prize for her new play, *The Liquid Plain*, which will debut in the summer of 2013 at the Oregon Shakespeare Festival. If one were to include *One Flea Spare* (1995) and *The Inland Sea* (2002), *The Liquid Plain* will count as her third play that incorporates a sailor into her dramatic action. It can then be argued that Wallace finds something theatrically resonant and aesthetically useful in the character of a sailor, and contemporary critics and scholars could undoubtedly benefit from exploring her maritime dramaturgy to better understand this award-winning playwright.

The assertion that Wallace takes particular inspiration from Rediker in the creation of *her* world in *One Flea Spare* is not only a substantiated fact, but it also makes dramaturgical sense. Wallace's creative inspiration is two-fold because she not only borrows from Rediker's historical record, but she also shares his ideological motives.

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<sup>32</sup> "Lawn Dogs won awards at a number of international film festivals in 1997, including the Stockholm Film Festival, the Montreal World Film Festival, and the Catalonian International Film Festival." <http://movies.nytimes.com/movie/158652/Lawn-Dogs/overview> (accessed November 22, 2012).

Just as Rediker chooses the decks of ships to chronicle the historical struggle of social and economic power, Wallace chooses the character of the sailor as a prime agent to explore the struggle of power in the crucible of history. As Wallace says:

Issues of power—who has it, how power is negotiated and what that does to us—have always fascinated me... I think it's through engaging with the struggles of power that suddenly there comes a moment where there's a possibility of transformation. With *One Flea Spare* I tried to highlight those moments of possibility, not to give a happy ending and say we've changed these structures of power, which are very difficult to change and sometimes change for a short period of time, but instead to show the possibility of changing or disturbing them.<sup>33</sup>

Of equal note is that Wallace writes of the possibility of change onstage (thereby offering the possibility of change beyond the stage) just as Rediker writes of how that change did, and can, actually occur.

Wallace's work appeals to scholars for a variety of reasons. The themes of Wallace's plays often rests on characters overcoming the system they are in, transgressing sexual boundaries, reimagining the space they occupy, and/or engaging their historical situation. Strikingly, although scholars often mention the research materials that Wallace includes at the end of her plays, I have yet to encounter critical analyses that focus on excavating these bibliographic references. By concentrating on one of these sources (Rediker's *Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea*), this thesis aims to complement previous scholarship while offering a new approach to more fully understand Wallace's work.

Among the insightful scholarly works addressing Naomi Wallace's *One Flea Spare* are two published theses. The first, *Eroticizing the Body-in-Crisis: Liminalities in One Flea Spare* (DePaul University, 1998) written by Barry Brunetti, focuses on the

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<sup>33</sup> Heidi Stephen and Natasha Langridge, *Rage and Reason: Women Playwrights on Playwriting* (London: Methuen, 1997), 168-169.



production of the play that Brunetti he directed. Another thesis by L. Buell Wisner “*Flesh Turned the Wrong Way*”: *Naomi Wallace’s Drama of Radical Sexuality* (Georgia Southern University, 2001), analyzes several of Wallace’s plays by through the theories of Karl Marx and Bertolt Brecht, and concludes by focusing on how Wallace centers gender in her works to create a socialistic feminism. A dissertation, James Dickert’s *Space, place, and identity politics: The drama of Naomi Wallace* (University of Oregon, 2004) focuses on close readings from Wallace’s plays (*The Trestle at Pope Lick Creek, In the Fields of Acedama, One Flea Spare, The Inland Sea, In the Heart of America, War Boys, and Slaughter City*) along with a theoretical analysis of space and place.

In addition to theses and dissertations that focus on Naomi Wallace’s plays in their entirety, there are several graduate students and scholars that include Wallace’s plays in their larger discussions. *Towards a Gestic Feminist Dramaturgy* by Shannon Kay Baley (University of Texas at Austin), and *Performing history: History and politics in the works of Suzan-Lori Parks, Anna Deavere Smith, Naomi Wallace, and Charles Mee*, (Harvard, 2007) by Talaya Adrienne Delaney are two such dissertations. In addition, the acclaimed theatre scholar Claudia Barnett devoted a chapter to Wallace in her work, *Southern Women Playwrights: New Essays in Literary History and Criticism* (2002) within which Barnett writes of the gestus and dialectic contained within select Wallace plays. Together, these works offer a valuable foundation upon which further research will undoubtedly be built.

While the aforementioned treatments focused on feminist, sexual, or spatial aspects within *One Flea Spare*, my thesis delves into how Wallace uses Rediker’s history as dramaturgical inspiration. Because *One Flea Spare* contains so many allusions to

Rediker's *Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea*, I wish to explore how that historical connection translates reciprocally and metaphorically into a dramatic reading of Rediker's history with hopes that my dramaturgically-minded approach and analysis will, in turn, prove useful in further illuminating the other critical work that precedes and follows my own.

## VI. PLAY SUMMARY: *ONE FLEA SPARE*

Set in 1665 London, England during the time of the plague, *One Flea Spare* begins with a description voiced by a girl in a world turned upside down, where

[T]he fish were burning in the channels. Whole schools of them on fire.  
And the ships sailing and their hulls plowing the dead up out the water...  
A summer so hot vegetables stewed in their crates. The old and the sick  
melted like snow in the streets... And it had finally come. The  
Visitation... Sparrows fell dead from the sky into the hands of beggars.  
Dogs walked in the robes of dying men into the beds of the dead masters'  
wives. Children were born with the beards of old men.<sup>34</sup>

The young girl, Morse (a servant's daughter posing as rich neighbor's daughter) and a starving sailor named Bunce both sneak into what they believe to be an empty house. Unbeknownst to them, the upper-class owners of the home, William and Darcy Snelgrave have been quarantined in the house because their servants died of the plague within its walls. Because the watchman, Kabe, has seen the girl and the sailor sneak in, he declares that all four must all now stay in the house for another month.

The idea of imprisonment is made visceral through the circumstances of the characters; however, Wallace underscores this dramaturgically by limiting the settings of the play's action. According to the rules inherent in the world of the play, Wallace's

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<sup>34</sup> Naomi Wallace, *One Flea Spare* in *In the Heart of America and Other Plays* (New York: Theatre Communications Group, 2001), 8.

characters are forced to live and sleep in the only two rooms where no one has died in the house. Since one of these rooms is ostensibly “off-stage,” all of the play’s action occurs in a single room.

As the play unfolds, Snelgrave trades a strained paternalism for bald antagonism as he sees the rules of his hierarchical society waste away. Almost all of the characters (save the guard, Kabe) are attracted to the sailor, and Bunce finds various ways to placate or relate to those around him, whether it is through his knot-tying skills, or his willingness to reach out to those who have not been touched in years. By the end of the play, however, the Snelgraves are dead, Kabe seems to be going mad, and Morse may have narrated the entire story from the threshold of a tortured death. The one person who seems like a truly free agent at the end of the play is Bunce—for it is he who escapes, promising Morse that he will head north to find work, but never sail for the navy again.

## **VII. DRAMATIC CONVERGENCES: THE DEEP BLUE SEA & THE GREAT BLACK PLAGUE**

A deeper examination *One Flea Spare* illustrates how Wallace’s play actually serves as a dramatic transcription of Rediker’s metaphor. With the sailor character of Bunce trapped in the house of Snelgrave—a man who happens to work for the Naval Board—a new wooden world is created with an extant power structure. Threatened by the plague outside, the Snelgrave house is surrounded by foreboding death—just as sailors’ lives were constantly beset by life-threatening elements at sea. So, instead of living between the devil and the deep blue sea, Wallace creates a sailor character that lives between the devil and the great black plague. With this parallel established, how

does Wallace craft various lines of conflict, all of which utilize similar terms and motivations as witnessed in Rediker's similarly structured "wooden world"?

The wooden world of a seaman aboard a merchant or naval ship adhered to a strict, cultural hierarchy as soon as it left port. The quarantined Snelgrave house becomes a wooden world in analogous fashion due to its own hierarchy and isolation. In Act One, Scene 2, once the Snelgraves accept they will be quarantined four more weeks with their intruders, the couple immediately creates class distinctions. After Mr. Snelgrave learns of how she entered their house, he beckons Morse to approach him and slaps her for not properly behaving like a gentleman's daughter (which she has falsely led them to believe she is) and he asks for her hand. The following exchange then occurs:

SNELGRAVE: ... In the Snelgrave house, we behave like Christians.

Therefore, we will love you as one of our own.

MORSE: Why?

*(Darcy takes the girl's other hand and the three of them stand together. Bunce stands alone.)*

DARCY: Because you're one of us.<sup>35</sup>

The Snelgraves immediately establish a sense of authority and hierarchy by using discipline to include the young Morse in their family, and place distance between themselves and Bunce. Moreover, while the others sleep in the kitchen offstage, Bunce is locked in the main room and relegated to scrubbing the floors and walls with vinegar. Roles and behavior are established in the play based on the roles of the established social hierarchy of the day.

Because the subsequent scene reveals Snelgrave's occupation as a controller of the Royal Dockyards, it makes his house the worst possible pick for a starving sailor wanting to escape dangers while on land. Ironically, Bunce trades the wooden world of a

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<sup>35</sup> Naomi Wallace, *One Flea Spare in In the Heart of America and Other Plays* (New York: Theatre Communications Group, 2001), 13.

ship commanded by a merchant captain for a wooden world of a house inhabited by a captain of industry. The character of Snelgrave is modeled after Samuel Pepys, an actual officer of administration to the Royal Navy who kept a diary during the 1660s that recorded personal, historic, and literary perspective of the time. Wallace even sets her play at Pepys' address: "A comfortable house in Axe Yard, off King Street, Westminster, London."<sup>36</sup>

To extend the maritime metaphor: "the ship" leaves port for a four-week voyage (or quarantine) with a captain (William Snelgrave), his chief mate (Darcy Snelgrave), a sailor (Bunce), and a stowaway turned passenger (Morse). In maritime culture, once a ship left port it became difficult to control the master's actions because, as Rediker writes, "the power relation between captain and seaman, set apart from most agencies of social regulation and control, was stripped to its essentials and depended as much on coercion as on persuasion."<sup>37</sup> In the world of the play, the captain-like figure of Snelgrave plies persuasion first, but as the play progresses and his power begins to slip, he begins to steer towards coercion as he desperately attempts to defend his position, and his "historical precedent," of accumulated wealth and power. In terms of coercion, Karl Marx describes how "[i]n actual history it is notorious that conquest, enslavement, robbery, murder, briefly force, play the great part."<sup>38</sup> Toward the end of the play, Bunce instigates a mutiny against Snelgrave as the coercion becomes unbearable.

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<sup>36</sup> Ibid., 4; Robert Latham writes, "Shortly afterward [Pepys] moved to a house in Axe Yard, off King Street, near the palace of Whitehall. It is that house that the opening scene of the diary is set." See Robert Latham, *The Illustrated Pepys: Extracts from the Diary* (London: Unwin Hyman, 1978), 10.

<sup>37</sup> Rediker, *Between the Devil*, 211.

<sup>38</sup> Karl Marx, *The Marx-Engels Reader*, second edition, ed. Robert C. Tucker (New York: W.W. Norton, 1978), 432.

Rediker centralizes this kind of class conflict and power struggle as the main theme in his book *Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea*. Rediker's purpose in writing an Atlantic maritime history of the early eighteenth century takes into account not the romantic representations of men's struggle against the natural elements at sea, but rather focuses on the social conditions of those men. By examining how and why sailors went to sea—or were forced to go to sea—Rediker takes a broader social approach to include aspects of the seaman's experience that encompass “the efforts made by seafaring workers to free themselves from harsh conditions and exploitation.”<sup>39</sup> Rediker also claims that seamen were “one of the earliest and most numerous groups of free wage laborers in the British and American economies. Their experiences pointed in many ways toward the Industrial Revolution.”<sup>40</sup> By considering both the number of seamen employed and the number unwilling to be subjugated, the concern Rediker has for the seaman as “worker of the world” is clearly illustrated through his historical exegesis.

Wallace, too, shares this concern for workers. Not only through writing about sailors in *One Flea Spare* and other plays, but also by consistently including many workers in her plays who collectively, actively, and vociferously, fight for fair working conditions, all of which contributes to a marxist dramaturgy that Wallace continues to cultivate. Rediker phrases his purpose by writing, “In reconstructing the social and cultural life of the early-eighteenth-century common seaman, I have sought both to tell a story and to write a history.”<sup>41</sup> By contrast, Wallace could be described as writing a story and telling a history. The corresponding motivations of playwright and historian invite a further investigation as to how their parallels produce multiple lines of congruent conflict.

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<sup>39</sup> Rediker, *Between the Devil*, 7.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, 8.

<sup>41</sup> Rediker, *Between the Devil*, 9.

## A. LINES OF CONFLICT

Marcus Rediker and Naomi Wallace set the scene of their respective works with the classic conflict of man against elements. In short order, however, both the historian and playwright also introduce two other kinds of conflict that are less recognizable at first, and certainly not “classic” in the traditional sense. Theatre scholar and dramaturg, Michael Chemers, delineates seven different possible lines of dramatic conflict in his book, *Ghost Light: An Introductory Handbook for Dramaturgy*. These seven lines of conflict help to elucidate awareness and understanding of a playwright’s craft and purpose in storytelling. Chemers lists these “lines” as follows, moving from the internal to the external: line of psychic conflict, line of personal conflict, line of individual conflict, line of social conflict, line of natural conflict, line of supernatural conflict, and line of supertextual conflict.<sup>42</sup>

If the purpose of a play can be discovered through the types of conflict it dramatizes, then a clarification of the play’s meaning and themes should also follow. *One Flea Spare*’s themes of creative and collective survival gives meaning to the watching, listening, and reading of the play. Wallace can be seen to incorporate many “lines of conflict” in her play, ranging from the tensions that arise among individuals, in their social milieu, or in the forces of nature a character confronts. As the remainder of this thesis will argue, the lines of conflict in *One Flea Spare* parallel those found within *Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea*, and those lines of natural, individual, and social conflict can be traced through the authors’ use of history and metaphor.

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<sup>42</sup> Michael Chemers, *Ghost Light: An Introductory Handbook of Dramaturgy* (Carbondale: University of Southern Illinois, 2010), 80-82.

Expressions of *natural conflict* are arguably the most present and evident types of conflict in both *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* and *Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea*. There are many situational parallels between the suffering and hardships experienced by seamen and the suffering and hardships experienced by Londoners during the plague in late seventeenth century. For example, the Snelgrave house is literally and figuratively isolated, surrounded by the plague just as a ship is surrounded by water. The characters are under guarded quarantine and if they are caught escaping it means almost certain death. Staying in the house, however, could also prove lethal: those quarantined still face the possibility of the plague creeping in, and they are also vulnerable to the threat of violence from Snelgrave. And while sailors had opportunities to desert at ports just as there were opportunities for escape from the Snelgrave house, risk accompanied both types of desertion.

Rediker attests to the ubiquitous possibility of death at sea by describing how “the life cycle of seafaring employment ended, often suddenly and prematurely, with death, which at sea was visible, poignant, commonplace, and never impersonal.”<sup>43</sup> The latter qualification of “never impersonal” suggests that the various causes of death would not have been unfamiliar to its victim. Sailors looked out on their potential grave everyday while at sea.

Similarly, in 1665 London the plague was everywhere. Criers reported deaths during the plague with announcements for the Bills of Mortality heard by those unlucky enough to have stayed in London. According to Daniel Defoe, author of *A Journal of the Plague Year* (also cited among Wallace’s sources), at least 100,000 Londoners perished

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<sup>43</sup> Rediker, *Between the Devil*, 193.



in 1665.<sup>44</sup> That estimate is corroborated by the Museum of London, which adds that close to 20% of London's population succumbed to the plague during that time.<sup>45</sup>

By comparison, Rediker recounts that “almost half of all [sailors] pressed in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries died at sea.”<sup>46</sup> Due to “the manifold vulnerabilities of life at sea” which created a “community of suffering,” Rediker believes “the very omnipresence of death acted in certain ways as a leveler.”<sup>47</sup> Rediker's leveling notion parallels Wallace's dramatic leveling of class in the play as the plague creates a similar situation where everyone is vulnerable. Another arguable parallel mentioned in the play concerns the sequestering of ships. Knowing that ships during that time could be carrying more than just cargo—they just as well could be carrying the plague—the Royal Dockyards were frequently closed or restricted in times of plague.

In London, the plague moved over the town like a tsunami; and the weekly Bills of Mortality increased as the death rate grew higher and higher during the hot summer months (when the action of *One Flea Spare* occurs). Kabe, the Snelgraves' guard, cries out the Bills every week, prompting Snelgrave remark to Bunce, “The Bills have almost doubled this week. Mostly the Out-Parishes of the poor. But it's moving this way... Are you afraid Bunce?”<sup>48</sup> With death surrounding the Snelgraves' house, with death thought to be lingering in vacated rooms, and with the threat of death rising around them, the inhabitants of the house were keenly aware of their own mortality. Just as a storm could

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<sup>44</sup> Daniel Defoe, *A Journal of the Plague Year*, ed. Louis Landa (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 212.

<sup>45</sup> “The Great Plague of 1665,” Museum of London, <http://www.museumoflondon.org.uk/Explore-online/Pocket-histories/plagues/page5.htm>, (accessed November 12, 2012).

<sup>46</sup> Rediker, *Between the Devil*, 33.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, 248.

<sup>48</sup> Wallace, *One Flea Spare*, 25.

appear without warning while at sea, the plague swept over London with inexplicable force that caused devastation on a massive scale.

Yet another line of conflict found in both Wallace and Rediker's work is a *social line of conflict* as expressed through the antagonism between seamen and the merchant marine and navy. For example, in 1648 Parliament approved the practice of impressment, which allowed agents of the state to physically force, or press, into service for the merchant marine and the navy any person deemed fit for sailing.<sup>49</sup> This practice ensured that England's navy would be supplied with men to fight, and that merchant ships would continue to trade. When Darcy inquires about Bunce's sailing experience, he replies that when he sailed it would typically be: "Merchant by choice. Navy by force."<sup>50</sup> Even on the merchant ships, however, conflicts frequently arose. Merchant ships from England moved goods from shore to shore in the Atlantic and beyond, driving the accumulation of capital and the desire for wealth. The logic of an unregulated market follows "the merchant's ideal of increased work and productivity," which in turn "usually meant increased exploitation of seamen," thus resulting in an exploitation of sailors' own labor and/or lower wages.<sup>51</sup> Rediker writes extensively about the collective efforts of seamen to counteract the exploitation and oppressiveness of their employers. The conflict resulted in the creation of various methods of resistance that would include strategies such as work stoppage, desertion, or strikes. Indeed, Rediker attests that "the very term

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<sup>49</sup> Peter Linebaugh and Marcus Rediker, *The Many-Headed Hydra: Sailors, Slaves, Commoners, and the Hidden History of the Revolutionary Atlantic* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2000), 157, 160-161.

<sup>50</sup> Wallace, *One Flea Spare*, 30.

<sup>51</sup> Rediker, *Between the Devil*, 75.

‘strike’ evolved from the decision of British seamen in 1768 to ‘strike’ the sails of their vessels and thereby to cripple the commerce of the empire’s capital city.”<sup>52</sup>

Though one could argue that maritime piracy sustained itself based on the same aforementioned desire for wealth, the difference between these behaviors lies in the balance of power on board a merchant or naval vessel versus the power structure on a pirate ship. Once a captain’s power was usurped, responsibility became more egalitarian because a crew then saw their mates as struggling equally for survival—either economic or physical. Work stoppage as a collective form of civil disobedience, however, “often shaded into the more ominous crime of mutiny... Yet mutiny at times took on a more permanent and material form; it ceased to be a redressive and defensive posture and assumed the aggressive stance of piracy.”<sup>53</sup> The maritime workplace was then rearranged and reappropriated, creating “a social world constructed apart from the ways of the merchant and the captain—and hence apart in significant ways from capital.”<sup>54</sup> Rediker claims that, “pirates abolished the wage,” and even “considered themselves risk-sharing partners rather than a collection of ‘hands’ who sold their muscle on an open market.”<sup>55</sup> In *One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest*, Bunce allies himself with Darcy and Morse when he realizes that Snelgrave’s oppressive behavior will not simply subside; so rather than continue to be subservient, Bunce chooses to share the risk of both females, as all three have a common enemy. Through the perspective of the maritime world turned upside down via mutiny, a line social of conflict can be seen in both the workings of Rediker’s history and Wallace’s dramaturgy.

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<sup>52</sup> Ibid., 110.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid., 106.

<sup>54</sup> Rediker, *Between the Devil*, 106.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid., 107.

Finally, while the *line of individual conflict* can be seen between Snelgrave and the other characters in the play, it is most clearly illustrated through the relationship between Snelgrave and Bunce—a relationship that exemplifies the captain-sailor dichotomy. Though Snelgrave oppresses Darcy, degrades Kabe, and demeans Morse, he reserves his most egregious animosity in order to subjugate Bunce with household chores, his finely carved cane, and lessons in history (detailed later). The Bunce/Snelgrave conflict also personifies the “devil” character in Rediker’s titular metaphor.

Writing in 1756 about the character of the sea captain, Ned Ward (a prominent source for Rediker) describes the captain as “more of devil than the Devil himself,” who forces sailors “not only to work, watch, and fight, but to starve too, for his sole advantage.”<sup>56</sup> Ward’s description of the sea captain as a “character” also reifies the dramaturgical setting of a ship deck, upon which Snelgrave rolls precious oranges and apples to Bunce so that may be nourished in exchange for spectacular stories about the sea.<sup>57</sup> Bunce’s eventual refusal to tell more stories, however, leads to him enumerating why he has his mind on other things—one of which includes Snelgrave’s wife. This form of protest followed by combative honesty leads directly to a mutinous conflict wherein Snelgrave not only loses his position of power, but also his shoes—which ironically prove to be an object lesson in the movement of history that will later be explained in greater detail.

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<sup>56</sup> Edward Ward, *The Wooden World Dissected: In the Character of a Ship of War* (London, 1756), 4.

<sup>57</sup> For more analysis of transactions within *One Flea Spare* see Talaya Adrienne Delaney’s dissertation entitled *Performing history: History and politics in the works of Suzan-Lori Parks, Anna Deavere Smith, Naomi Wallace, and Charles Mee*, (Harvard, 2007), 106-118.

## B. WALLACE'S WOODEN WORLD

As previously mentioned, the ship at sea was a kind of wooden world, and one set apart from the rest of society. The setting in *One Flea Spare* mimics Rediker's wooden world by enclosing the characters within a confined and isolated space, thereby focusing on the danger within the house, not without. For Bunce, certainly, the situation proves all too familiar as Rediker's description of life on a ship could apply equally to the Snelgrave house:

Work at sea also meant virtual incarceration, as the seaman was forcibly assimilated into a severe shipboard regimen of despotic authority, discipline, and control. Shipboard life constituted a binding chain of linked limits: limited space, limited freedom, limited movement, limited sensory stimulation, and limited choices of leisure activities, social interaction, food, and play. There was little space aboard the ship and too much space outside.<sup>58</sup>

The characters' quarantine in *One Flea Spare* forces a veritable incarceration with Snelgrave as a "despotic authority," who enforces further limitations on the other characters' interactions. In terms of overall description, Wallace transcribes the maritime disposition onto the characters' lives within the house. Isaac's definition of dramaturgy also proves useful when considering "that each culture and subculture has its own distinctive dramaturgical kit, consisting of 'settings,' 'props,' 'costumes,' 'roles,' [and] 'script formulas'."<sup>59</sup> If we recognize that Rediker applies the same kind of dramaturgical metaphor to his maritime history, what else can we determine by how Wallace deploys Rediker's historical elements in the creation of her own dramaturgical application of language, props, and social roles? How do the dramatic elements found in

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<sup>58</sup> Rediker, *Between the Devil*, 159.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, 351.

Wallace's play emphasize the sailor's dual dramatic conflict (between the captain and the sea), while at the same time examining collective and creative survival?

In *One Flea Spare*, Naomi Wallace (through the character of Darcy Snelgrave) characterizes Bunce using traits Rediker collected from Edward Ward, the late-seventeenth and early eighteenth-century satirist and travel writer. When Darcy engages Bunce on the topic of his occupation she says, "Then it's the sailor's life for you: drinking, thieving, whoring, killing, backbiting. And swearing."<sup>60</sup> The activities that Darcy lists come from what Ward called the "liberal Sciences" taught and perfected in "Old Nick's Academy" aboard the ship.<sup>61</sup> Though there is some truth to the romantic generalizations of a sailor's life Darcy lays out, Bunce decides to take her up on the invitation to know more by elaborating on her choice of words, particularly swearing, in order to give her a more accurate representation of a sailor's life:

BUNCE: Yeah. Swearing. And once or twice we took hold of our own fucked ship from some goddamned captain. We let our men vote if the bloody prick lived or died. Mostly our men voted he died, so first we whipped and pickled him, then threw the fat gutted chucklehead overboard. And because we couldn't piss on his grave we pissed on the bastard's back as he sank to the sharks below.

DARCY: A tongue that swears does not easily pray.<sup>62</sup>

The response Darcy gives to the expletive laden anecdote of mutiny shows that her initial interest in the salacious adventure of a sailor's life wanes once Bunce describes how graphic and violent life at sea could really be given the extreme conditions. Once again, Wallace utilizes the character of Bunce to present the harsh reality of maritime world and those that worked in it in order to demonstrate, like Rediker, that seamen did not go to

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<sup>60</sup> Wallace, *One Flea Spare*, 30.

<sup>61</sup> Edward Ward, *The Wooden World Dissected: In the Character of a Ship of War* (London, 1756), 2.

<sup>62</sup> Wallace, *One Flea Spare*, 30.

sea for pleasure, so much as they tried to survive while there. The above passage can also be seen as a rehearsal for mutiny within the play as Bunce lays out the circumstance whereby a crew decided to overthrow the captain. This kind of foreshadowing of dramatic reversal will be illustrated later by another scene with Bunce and Snelgrave.

The language seamen shared set them apart from other parts of society, and at the same time created an efficient mode of communication between seamen. Novices “learned the ropes” on the ship, acquainting themselves with new terms for everything from the rigging, masts, and sails to the different types of knots, vessels, and clouds they would also see. As deep sea vessels were some of the most technologically advanced machines during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the “maritime language was constructed to serve as a precise set of relays for authority, to link captain and crew with a machinelike efficiency.”<sup>63</sup> Sailors therefore quickly came to understand that the most important form of communication on board a ship was the command: the social relations and hierarchy flowed from the recognition, obedience, and creative resistance to the commands of the captain. Further, as Rediker points out, some novices were warned there were only two words to describe a sailor’s behavior at sea: duty or mutiny. What they were ordered to do was their duty, and everything they refused to do was considered mutiny.<sup>64</sup> Such was one significant example of the streamlining of power relations aboard ship that Bunce must have known well. During the first half of the play, Bunce obeys almost every coercive command given by Snelgrave. Toward the end of the play, however, Bunce realizes his refusals instigate mutiny. Through the course of *One Flea*

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<sup>63</sup> Rediker, *Between the Devil*, 163.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, 211.

*Spare*, Wallace utilizes the language of the maritime world to reveal that Bunce knows how to use language for the purposes of duty *and* mutiny.

Correspondingly, Rhys Isaac also writes of how coercion is accomplished through “social-dramatic devices” which can prove dialectal in nature.<sup>65</sup> For example, just as the ship can resemble a prison for sailors, it can also be mutinously transformed into a vehicle for their freedom. Along the same lines, Rediker writes that greatest tools of coercion a captain could use were the tools seamen used everyday. If authoritarian persuasion faltered, then coercion could be literally picked up by the captain from the deck of the ship in the form of “handspikes, boards, hogshead, staves, sticks, ropes, cables, marking irons, braces, hooks, adzes, axes, tar brushes, broomsticks, pitch mops, oars, harpoons, cutlasses, knives, or pistols.” Not only did this availability of potential weaponry make “the possibility and reality of armed struggle ever-present,” those same tools could also be used by sailors to defend themselves *against* a captain.<sup>66</sup>

Consequently, one should see that the properties of a seaman’s profession were integral to his labor as well as properties of his resistance. Wallace translates this concept into a knot-tying motif as Bunce is asked to demonstrate a myriad of knots throughout the play, which is almost always followed by a revealing plot point. For example, in the first act of *One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest*, Bunce deflects a question from Snelgrave about the scar on his neck with an anecdotal riposte. After the other romantic imaginings about sea monsters and a lake of rubies, Snelgrave romanticizes Bunce’s visible wound by asking: “How’d you get that scar? Spanish Main pirates?!” Bunce finishes the tying of another knot with a rope for requested demonstration, and then says,

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<sup>65</sup> Rhys Isaac, *The Transformation of Virginia, 1740-1790*, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1982), 350.

<sup>66</sup> Rediker, *Between the Devil*, 237.



Sail hook... The press gangs were looking for fresh recruits and boarded us just as we came into port... To keep from the press, sometimes we'd cut ourselves a wound and then burn it with vitriol. Make it look like scurvy. They wanted whole men, so I stuck myself in the neck with a sail hook. They passed me over when they saw the blood.<sup>67</sup>

Bunce's resistance involves harming part of his own body for the sake of his whole body in this case. Or, in other words, he dodges the plot of the press gang by using tools of his trade to help him survive not a squall at sea, but an onslaught from powerful men. This anecdote of a self-inflicted wound violently illustrates Rediker's assertion of sailors' "creative survival."

As the play progresses, a collective line of defense finally occurs, when in Act II, Snelgrave accosts Bunce with his cane, but Bunce takes it from him, and forces him into a chair. A mutiny then collectively commences as Darcy sides with Bunce and asks Morse to get the rope in order to help tie Snelgrave to the chair while Bunce keeps him pinned down. With the master now under control of the rest of the characters, and the rope used for a mutinous cause instead of dutiful acquiescence, Bunce reinforces the turn in power by putting Snelgrave's shoes on his own feet. When Snelgrave demands, "What in God's name are you doing?" Bunce simply replies, "I'm practicing."<sup>68</sup> I would argue, however, that Bunce has been practicing for a while—practicing and preparing for mutiny whether it be on land or on sea. Familiar with patterns of abuse, and well versed in methods to counteract such treatment, Bunce is not surprised when his fellow "crew members" assist him in subduing the master of the house. Since "mutinies were rarely a response to a single incident, but rather to an overall pattern of abuse, and most revolts contained multiple grievances and causes," all of the other characters can be seen to have

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<sup>67</sup> Wallace, *One Flea Spare*, 16.

<sup>68</sup> Wallace, *One Flea Spare*, 52.

a stake in the mutiny against Snelgrave.<sup>69</sup> Morse is maligned, Darcy has suffered from neglect most her life, Kabe is cursed, and Bunce can no longer endure the subservience and coercion along with seeing the abuse doled out to the others by Snelgrave. All of the other characters have cause to either be active participants or complicit in the mutiny against Snelgrave.

So then, given these parallels, why does Wallace choose to set her play within a house on land instead of a ship at sea? Wallace's choice of a house allows for an intimate interrogation of the romantic notion of a seaman's life, while at the same time exposing how similar roles of power and class can coerce (or reverse) within a different type of wooden world.

### **C. CHARACTERS AND THE DRAMATIC / HISTORIC RECORD**

Notably, almost all of the character names found in *One Flew Spare* can also be found in *Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea* and, moreover, Wallace's characterizations resemble people from history in terms of their motivation and/or their occupation. The pairings of these dramatic and historic characters reveal how Wallace relates the social and economic world of her play to the maritime world. In transcribing the character names of Bunce, Snelgrave, Braithwaite, and Kabe from Rediker, Wallace alludes to the characters' historic namesakes and uses this springboard from history to craft their attributes, social roles and/or interpersonal dynamics.

As the most salient character in this study, Bunce has a lineage that makes him undeniably inspired. In this instance it can be argued that Wallace selects the character's name because of *how* the historical figure was known. Rediker writes that in 1718,

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<sup>69</sup> Rediker, *Between the Devil*, 228.

“Daniel Mcarty and Phineas Bunce had led an uprising that overthrew Captain William Greenaway’s command aboard the *Lancaster*,” and were sentenced to be hanged for “Mutiny, Felony, Piracy” in New Providence, the capital of the Bahama Islands.<sup>70</sup> On the surface, this seems to also be a fairly straightforward transcription of a historical figure into fictional character—but what is the narrative and ideological context in Rediker’s history?

Bunce is mentioned in the first chapter entitled, “The Seamen as Man of the World: A Tour of the North Atlantic;” and within that chapter Rediker gives a narrated tour describing what a sailor would have seen and experienced sailing from London to Glasgow, New York to Charleston, and New Providence to Port Royal. As ports change, so do political circumstances, for the distance from London was proportional to the amount of resistance. Once across the Atlantic, the imperial reach of England grew weaker. For Wallace, however, setting Bunce in London brings the entire experience of English seamen home in a way that serves to raise the stakes in the Snelgrave house. If it is known that the dramatic character of Bunce brings with him the historical character of maritime experience, which is punctuated with exposure to piracy, then his exploitation by the maritime industry along with his potential to resist that same exploitation must be appreciated. Though Bunce would know his role in relation to a master aboard a ship, he would also know how to parley with that master. As a result, the presence and name of Bunce in *One Flea Spare* is no arbitrary decision, but instead a manifestation of the playwright’s historical dramaturgy. Wallace has created a little world that which mirrors the larger world for a sailor. For Bunce, a master of a house resembles all too easily a

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<sup>70</sup> Ibid., 56. Rediker has sourced for the episodic mention of Bunce from both the Minutes of the Vice-Admiralty Court of Charleston, South Carolina, 1716-47, and from the Colonial Office Papers, Public Record Office, London.

captain of a ship—especially when that master is a captain of industry for the Royal Navy. In both worlds, Bunce must navigate his own survival between the potentially lethal elements and the person in power, encountering parallel situations where he must decide whether obedience or resistance is the correct course.

Rediker describes the common sailor as “a marked man, much to the delight of the press gangs that combed the towns in search of seamen to serve the crown.”<sup>71</sup> While in London, sailors congregated in the East End of the city. Rediker’s description of a sailor’s community on land is worth quoting *in extenso*:

Jack Tar most likely lived in Wapping among the narrow-fronted, two-story houses of wood and Flemish wall, many of which by the 1740s were in a state of decay. Families and individual borders, longtimers and transients filled the modest dwellings that crowded the serpentine streets, narrow lanes, and back alleys and clustered around the sometimes rowdy music houses, the small shops, markets, workshops, and alehouses. Jack and his friends were especially fond of alehouse cheer. Whether in search of spirits, food, rest, a short pipe full of tobacco, or a game of cards, dice, or ten-bones, or just the latest information on shipping, satisfaction could usually be found in these establishments “run by the poor for the poor.” Jack also counted on the pubs, gin shops, and taverns to keep himself informed of the activities of the spirit, the crimp, and the naval lieutenant who led the press gang, three shrewd and ruthless characters who took a deep if not always honest interest in the sailor’s affairs.<sup>72</sup>

Consequently, even while on land sailors had to wary of coercion by those who sought to take advantage of their labor. Besides frequenting alehouses, a sailor’s clothes also distinguished him from other people and trades. As Rediker attests, “He wore wide, baggy breeches, cut a few inches above the ankle and often made of heavy, rough red nap.

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<sup>71</sup> Rediker, *Between the Devil*, 12.

<sup>72</sup> Rediker, *Between the Devil*, 27.

The breeches were tarred as a protection against the cold, numbing wetness.”<sup>73</sup> Rediker also estimates the average sailor’s age as twenty-seven.<sup>74</sup>

Correspondingly, Wallace introduces Bunce as almost a sailor archetype. Her description of him is of a man in his late twenties, and he is first seen relieving himself into one of the Snelgraves’ vases because, as Bunce says, “Thought I’d. Save my piss. It’s got rum in it. Might be the last I’ll have for weeks.”<sup>75</sup> Two scenes later, Snelgrave remarks upon the stink that has accompanied Bunce, to which Bunce replies that is the tar, which only confirms Snelgrave’s suspicion that Bunce is indeed a sailor. According to Rediker, all of the preceding descriptions were hallmarks of sailors during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. So, beyond character description, how do Bunce’s drinking habits, age, and appearance set the stage for an ideological struggle of captain versus sailor in the dramatic and historical sense? Following Rediker’s descriptions, Bunce’s traits make him a prime candidate to be picked up by the press gangs and forced into serving the navy. Wallace translates this historical potential into theatrical reality, as William Snelgrave wastes no time subjugating Bunce as a servant. This in turn sets up a pattern observed by Rediker whereby strict servitude leads to coercion, which ultimately, dramatically and dialectically leads to resistance.

The choices of Bunce, however, are not always clear-cut in this drama. Wallace provides moments where the timber of Bunce is tested, such as when Snelgrave orders him to strike Darcy. Though the life of sailor at sea was beset with dominance from above in the form of the ostensibly omnipotent captain, Rediker qualifies and describes how:

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<sup>73</sup> Ibid, 13.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid., Table A.1, 299.

<sup>75</sup> Naomi Wallace, *One Flea Spare*, 4, 9.

The work experience at sea—the source of an oppositional culture—was in many ways carried ashore. Seamen often brought to the ports a militant attitude toward arbitrary and excessive authority, a willingness to empathize with the grievances of others and to cooperate for the sake of self-defense, and a tendency to use purposeful violence and direct action to accomplish collectively defined goals. As an East India Company captain noted, “seamen being zealous abettors of liberty, will admit of no arbitrary force, and may be easily led, but not drove.”<sup>76</sup>

The threshold Rediker describes opens an opportunity to explore the limits of coercion, which Wallace takes up in her play through Bunce’s interaction with Snelgrave. The mutiny led by Bunce against Snelgrave does not, of course, occur immediately since it must be established how Snelgrave relates to (and coerces) the other characters of the play first. As Bunce begins to relate to and empathize with other characters (due to Snelgrave’s antagonism), he recognizes and reacts against coercion, which has limits on the sea and on shore.

As I have noted, *One Flea Spare* takes place within the home of William and Darcy Snelgrave. The Snelgrave name provides another intriguing, yet complicated, opportunity to examine the nomenclature used within Wallace’s play. In *Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea*, Rediker chronicles a “real-life” William Snelgrave, a merchant captain who trafficked manufactures and slaves. Ironically, Rediker cites Snelgrave in his book as a rare example of a crew favoring and vouching for their captain after being overrun by pirates. Wallace’s antagonistic and overbearing version of *her* William Snelgrave can be seen as playing a foil to Rediker’s Snelgrave, allowing us to see how one captain endears himself to a crew, and how one does not.

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<sup>76</sup> Rediker, *Between the Devil*, 250. The author quotes an anonymous officer of an East India Company ship, *Piracy Destroy’d, Or, a Short Discourse Shewing the Rise, Growth, and Causes of Piracy of Late, with a Sure Method How to put a Speedy Stop to that Growing Evil* (London, 1701), 12.

Within a chapter entitled, “The Seaman as Pirate,” Rediker describes the social and cultural dimensions of piracy and how pirates consciously situated themselves within the maritime economic construct. Pirates rejected the established rule of the sea by creating a code of conduct, which was more democratic and egalitarian than one might expect. For example, captured treasure and money was split equally among the pirate crew according to skills and duties. When pirates seized a ship, the captain and first mate were typically the first killed after the captured crew was asked if their superiors treated them fairly. Vengeful retribution sprang directly from the hard and violent treatment meted out by captains and suffered by seamen, since “almost all pirates had labored as merchant seamen, Royal Navy sailors, or privateersmen.”<sup>77</sup> This “Distribution of Justice” took into explicit account how the captain had treated his crew: if the crew reported that the captured captain mistreated them, that captain would be swiftly “whipp’d and pickled,” thrown overboard, or summarily run through.<sup>78</sup>

Rediker holds up the example of William Snelgrave as a representative example of pirates’ notion of justice. In the midst of the historic Snelgrave suffering a terrible beating by a pirate quartermaster with a butt of a pistol, his own men interceded claiming that he had always treated them well. With the course of events turned, Snelgrave was then wined and dined and later given a different captured ship loaded with merchandise all for his good behavior. Hoping to show that “good fortunes befell good captains,” the pirates treated him with surprising kindness.<sup>79</sup>

That same type of kindness was not, however, reserved for William Snelgrave in *One Flea Spare*. Wallace’s reasoning works on the same pirate principle: the “crew” of

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<sup>77</sup> Rediker, *Between the Devil*, 258.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*, 270.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*, 272.

the house decided that Snelgrave's abusive behavior deserved punishment. In other words, bad fortune befell a bad captain.

While the names of "Bunce" and "Snelgrave" can be traced in Rediker's work, the name of Morse is not found within the pages of *Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea*. However, the character named Morse in the play originally assumes a different identity, claiming the name of "Braithwaite." In so doing, Wallace uses Rediker's description of a Richard Braithwaite to help characterize the role of Morse. In his maritime history, Rediker cites references to the seventeenth-century writer, Richard Braithwaite. Braithwaite published *Whimzies* (1631), a book that offers colorful character sketches of seventeenth-century sailors, among other "characters" of the time.<sup>80</sup>

As an intruder who comes into the Snelgrave house at the top of the play through an upstairs window, Morse assumes the identity of the daughter of an upper-class family whom she and her mother served. The Braithwaite name, which Morse falsely claims as her own, belongs to neighbors of the Snelgraves and they recognize the Braithwaites as belonging to their own class. This identity theft has historic resonance: in the turbulent times of the plague, identities could easily be usurped and Morse takes advantage of this opportunity to change her station. Morse, however, is found out. Her coarse habits and unbridled tongue raise Snelgrave's suspicion that she may not be as well-bred as she purports. Her unconventional singing also leads Snelgrave to state, "She doesn't sing like a Christian child."<sup>81</sup> After Snelgrave finds his Spanish gold coins in her possession, he leads her onstage with her hands bound with rope and accuses her of being a low-class thief. Although, in the end, the Braithwaite name gives no "weight" of class distinction

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<sup>80</sup> Richard Braithwaite, *The Whimzies; or A New Cast of Characters*, (London, 1631), 85-90.

<sup>81</sup> Wallace, *One Flea Spare*, 17. Coincidentally, Rediker first quotes Braithwaite while discussing the ungodly ways of sailors.



for Morse, Wallace seems more interested in using the name in order to spur conflict and trouble.<sup>82</sup> Wallace uses that strife to instigate conflict whereby characters begin to defend each other against Snelgrave. This begins the isolation of Snelgrave.

As rifts open up in the house and tensions rise, Snelgrave begins to threaten violence more often. Each time he threatens violence, however, someone intercedes. After Morse reveals her unblemished stomach where the real Braithwaite girl was said to have a distinctive scar, Snelgrave is determined to punish his wife for lying in an attempt to defend Morse. This time, however, Morse breaks down, pisses herself, and says she is full of angels. Though a seemingly unplanned diversion, Morse can no longer rely on her subterfuge of upper-class status, and uses her incipient illness as a distraction.

As the recognized and established social order breaks down during the height of the plague in London, another character switches back and forth from accepted norms in order to take advantage of plague-adapted procedures. Kabe, the guard stationed outside the Snelgrave house, takes certain liberties with his position of power. Knowing that the people inside the house want to get out, and want all manner of things they cannot immediately have, Kabe realizes he is in a position to bargain.

A relationship of animosity is readily apparent when Kabe first shows up at the window of the house. Kabe's appearance at the window is not a predictable occurrence, and it always demands attention when it occurs, as he is the only link to the outside world. For the most part, Kabe brings news, food, and interpretation through the window. Much like how ships suspected of carrying plague would not be allowed to unload cargo or

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<sup>82</sup> Under the topic of "Sayler" Braithwaite declares, that said personage "likes to fish in troubled waters." Applying this Braithwaite description to Morse as a "sayler" seems to fit when we consider how Morse befriends Bunce, and pries into other people's history when she knows it will lead to strife. Richard Braithwaite, *The Whimzies; or A New Cast of Characters*, (London, 1631), 86.

passengers at port, but rather only be communicated with from the pier, the window provides an impersonal form of communication. Nonetheless, the window and Kabe are a constant, and regardless of how Kabe abuses his privilege of looking in (and down) at the Snelgraves, they cannot shut him out. This relationship seems straightforward enough as Kabe is also employed to shop for the Snelgraves, but even that relationship begins to breakdown as the city continues its death spiral. Kabe's appearances, however, become more hostile and his affected politeness devolves into ranting madness. Interestingly though, Kabe never loses his penchant for bargaining—which calls into question how mad he actually becomes. Even at his most hysterical—preaching doom and gloom with a pan of charcoal on his head—he still does not miss the chance to swindle and mock Snelgrave by persuading him to buy Solomon Eagle's "plague water."<sup>83</sup>

After all of this, consideration of Kabe's namesake as given by Wallace through Rediker also illuminates the playwright's choice. Although the name "Kabes" is mentioned only once in Rediker's *Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea*, the fictional Kabe depicted by Wallace corresponds to his brief mentioning in Rediker's maritime history. According to Rediker, "the English made many of their deals through Johnny Kabes of Komenda, an entrepreneur who possessed a private army and cleverly pitted Dutch against English traders as he arranged exchanges with the royalty of the Asante Kingdom [on the Gold Coast of west Africa]."<sup>84</sup> The African Johnny Kabes gained power on the coast of present-day Ghana during a time of burgeoning trade, demonstrating how middlemen in a capitalistic environment can be economically driven

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<sup>83</sup> Wallace, *One Flea Spare*, 41; See also Daniel Defoe, *A Journal of the Plague Year*, ed. Louis Landa (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 89.

<sup>84</sup> Rediker, *Between the Devil*, 46.

towards profit-making opportunities in order to assure some sort of survival. Similarly, while writing about the historical figure of Kabes, and what little we know about his historical circumstance, David Henige asserts, “The mobility, the adaptability, and, most important, the role of these middlemen as mediators often allowed them to become entrepreneurs in the legitimate senses of that term.”<sup>85</sup> Henige also touches upon the economic eventuality where, given a high demand for goods or services, “an individual might manipulate conditions to his own long term advantage.”<sup>86</sup> Both the historical Kabes and the fictional Kabe use mobility and their role as middlemen to order gain personal advantage during their respective times.

Politics also play a role in the banter at the window when Kabe shows up. Snelgrave only scoffs at Kabe after listening to him rant against the “monsters of Oxford.” But, when Kabe calls for the rabble to “Rise up!... Arise, arise into all your glory!” Snelgrave then threatens Kabe by saying, “I smell a Leveller’s blood in you, ringing loud and clear. I thought we buried the lot of you... Levellers. Diggers. I say cut them to pieces or they will cut us to pieces.”<sup>87</sup> Snelgrave references the political group known as the Levellers, who, during the English revolution in the mid-seventeenth century, “demanded a free Parliament and a wide electoral franchise.”<sup>88</sup> This kind of thinking made people like Snelgrave anxious, because they knew that such a Parliament would chip away at their own power and influence, and consequently, attempt to level the disparity and inequality in society. The Diggers, a splinter group of the Levellers, took the political philosophy even farther by attempting to build their own community just

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<sup>85</sup> David Henige, “John Kabes of Komenda: An Early African Entrepreneur and State Builder,” *The Journal of African History* 18, no. 1 (1977): 3.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.

<sup>87</sup> Wallace, *One Flea Spare*, 40-41.

<sup>88</sup> A.L. Morton, *A People’s History of England* (London: Victor Gollancz, 1938), 242.

outside of London.<sup>89</sup> Snelgrave's established, royalist, and hegemonic tendencies certainly would not let stand the perceived political aggression from the likes of Kabe. This ideological distinction places Snelgrave in opposition to any organized attempt to undermine his privilege and authority, and gives Kabe reason enough to be complicit when Snelgrave is finally tied up.

#### **D. (RE)SCRIPTING HISTORY**

Illuminating the ways and reasons Wallace chooses her characters' names helps give a historical shape to *One Flea Spare*, just as a closer look at the main conflict of the play (the conflict between Bunce and Snelgrave) helps to illuminate its meaning. For this reason, the intertextual dramatic core of the seaman versus the captain deserves to be revisited and underscored. The explication of certain scenes from *One Flea Spare* where Bunce must make choices regarding history, violence, and resistance punctuates themes within the work of Wallace and Rediker. This section will look at the interactions between Bunce and Snelgrave and how the playwright's dramaturgy echoes the dramaturgy of the historian.

"We have the sea between us," Snelgrave declares to Bunce upon discovering in scene three that the two men have something in common. Snelgrave's declaration, however, must be tempered by how he responds to the reactions Bunce gives to his prompting. "I know a bit about the waters myself," Snelgrave states, "I work for the Naval Board... My friend Samuel and I, we control the largest commercial venture in the country, hmm. The Royal Dockyards."<sup>90</sup> Snelgrave not only sees the maritime world

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<sup>89</sup> See Christopher Hill's chapter "Levellers and True Levellers" in *The World Turned Upside Down* (Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1975), 107-150.

<sup>90</sup> Wallace, *One Flea Spare*, 14.

differently than Bunce, but he also sees the entire world differently. This worldview becomes immediately apparent when Bunce informs Snelgrave that the Royal Dockyards are closed, and Snelgrave responds by saying, “That’s the curse of this plague. It’s stopped all trade.”<sup>91</sup> Snelgrave’s perspective from the top obviously calculates business before he worries about the human costs of the plague. Similarly, because Snelgrave had already “heard the stories at the coffeehouse” about life at sea from the admirals and captains, he only wants to hear confirmation from Bunce of the distant and idealistic tales of life at sea.<sup>92</sup> Snelgrave continues to insist upon his contrived narrative based on the exotic and romantic aspects of a sailor’s life, and even attempts to commune with Bunce:

SNELGRAVE: ... The struggle, the daring, the wrath. Cathay’s lake of rubies. The Northwest Passage. Ice monsters fouling the sea—that angry bitch that’ll tear you limb from limb. Man against the elements.

BUNCE: Mostly for us sailors it was man against the captain.

SNELGRAVE (*begins to rock back and forth, eyes closed, living in the moment of a sea story*): And the winds, how they blow like a madness and the sea leaps up like continuous flame...<sup>93</sup>

Rubies and ice monsters, daring and wrath. These are things Snelgrave has populated his imagination with, a romantic fantasy of man against the elements. Undoubtedly, the elements seamen had to contend with were some of the most dangerous in the natural world, and Bunce’s rejoinder strikes against the romantic fantasy of life at sea.<sup>94</sup>

Bunce’s retort is reinforced by historical evidence from Rediker who writes about how “[t]he romantic image has distorted the reality of life at sea by concentrating on the struggle of man and nature to the exclusion of other aspects of maritime life, notably the

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<sup>91</sup> Ibid., 14.

<sup>92</sup> Ibid., 15.

<sup>93</sup> Ibid., 15.

<sup>94</sup> Interestingly enough, the imagined sea story Snelgrave tells along with Bunce filling in some details comes from the opening of Rediker’s book. And, though the character of Snelgrave drives the story into a crescendo of death, Rediker steers the story towards the struggle of the sailor against the captain—just as Bunce does. See Rediker, *Between the Devil*, 1-5.

jarring confrontation of man against man.”<sup>95</sup> As previously articulated, Rediker (like Wallace) hopes to bring about a fuller understanding of life at sea by taking into account a broader social approach. Rediker then expounds upon the core conflict:

The seaman’s dilemma went beyond the menacing, seemingly boundless forces of nature he confronted. The tar was caught between the devil and the deep blue sea: On one side stood his captain, who was backed by the merchant and royal official, and who held near-dictatorial powers that served a capitalist system rapidly covering the globe; on the other side stood the relentlessly dangerous natural world. Many important ideas and practices emerged in the social zone between the man-made and natural dangers that governed the seaman’s life.<sup>96</sup>

Snelgrave, however, does not envision life at sea in this way. Neither has he heard about the sea from such a perspective, nor does he want to know the truths of maritime life. Instead, Snelgrave seeks entertainment from imaginary sea stories and hopes Bunce will animate those fantastical, mental voyages. Consequently, Snelgrave’s claim of having “the sea between us” connotes not a shared experience, but one that distances Snelgrave from Bunce.

Within a dramaturgy of social forces, power and class rise to the surface from where their deeper currents remain always present. Even when Snelgrave attempts to relate to Bunce on the surface by sharing a story, Snelgrave still occupies not only the position of authority, but also a position of privilege—which at times does not need to acknowledge reality in order to maintain its established status. By the same token, Rhys Isaac reminds us of the potential for coercive persuasion: “The social power of a person is commensurate with the capacity to make others’ actions subservient to his or her own

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<sup>95</sup> Rediker, *Between the Devil*, 5.

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.

ends.”<sup>97</sup> Accordingly, Snelgrave hijacks actual history with fantasy, instead of allowing the experienced sailor to tell his own story. Snelgrave wants to be entertained, not educated, and under his prerogative history evaporates into myth. Roland Barthes writes about this kind of abstraction as “the privation of History,” where “myth deprives the object of which it speaks of all History.”<sup>98</sup> The aforementioned episode near the beginning of *One Flea Spare* sets the tone for the rest play, as Snelgrave continues to attempt to make the actions of Bunce subservient to his own ends.

As alluded to above, in one of the most memorable scenes from *One Flea Spare* (Act I, Scene Six), Snelgrave asks Bunce a series of “historical” questions while also requesting Bunce to try on his shoes. At the same time the episode can be seen as a rehearsal for mutiny, turning this maritime-like world upside down. Snelgrave, however, mistakenly thinks his history lesson can change only *he* sees fit.

SNELGRAVE: A little learning, Bunce: patterns will have it that you, a poor sailor, will never wear such shoes as these. And yet, the movement of history, which is as inflexible as stone, can suddenly change... Put my shoes on your feet... Now, Bunce. What do you see?

BUNCE: I see the master is without shoes. And his new servant. He is wearing very fine shoes.

SNELGRAVE: And history? What does history tell you now?

BUNCE: Not sure how that works, sir.

SNELGRAVE: Historically speaking, the poor do not take to fine shoes. They never have and they never will... However, what we see here is not real. It's an illusion because I can't change the fact that you'll never wear fine shoes.

BUNCE: But I'm wearing them now, sir.

SNELGRAVE: Yes, but only because I allow it...<sup>99</sup>

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<sup>97</sup> Rhys Isaac, *The Transformation of Virginia, 1740-1790*, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1982), 350.

<sup>98</sup> Roland Barthes, *Mythologies*, trans. Annette Lavers (New York: Hill and Wang, 1972), 151.

<sup>99</sup> Wallace, *One Flea Spare*, 25-26.

Afterwards, Snelgrave must then explain to Bunce that he is playing a game with him, a fantasy that he allows Bunce to indulge in for the time being. Snelgrave, however, fails to understand that the course of history is not inflexible, and rather, change can be instigated from below as well as from the top. Snelgrave demonstrates how he subscribes to a set script formula using costume as a signifying basis for assumed hierarchy. By *allowing* Bunce to wear fine shoes, Snelgrave believes he is safe from any substantial change to the script that he thinks he knows. On the other hand, Bunce is familiar with another script, which he has also seen in action: the reversal of captain and sailor.

Unwittingly, Snelgrave has revealed for Bunce how hierarchy works in this house, in accordance to these particular circumstances. Bunce only has to translate that example into the history of his own experience to recognize that a parallel power structure in the Snelgrave house may be inverted. Here we can see Bunce working through Marx's assertion of historical materialism: "Men make their own history, but they do not make it just as they please; they do not make it under circumstances chosen by themselves, but under circumstances directly found, given and transmitted from the past."<sup>100</sup> In the final analysis, Wallace places the character of Bunce within a house built on a history where characters were continually coerced by an oppressive ideology. The possibility for change provides the only chance Bunce has to take charge of his present circumstances for the sake of his future history.

## **XII. RETURNING TO PORT**

If struggle and conflict is the essence of drama, and "the history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles," then it is understandable why Wallace

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<sup>100</sup> Karl Marx, *The Marx-Engels Reader*, second edition, ed. Robert C. Tucker (New York: W.W. Norton, 1978), 595.



chooses to write about history from a class-conscious perspective.<sup>101</sup> Naomi Wallace and Marcus Rediker share a particular volition, whereby both are concerned with the relationship of drama, history, and class. Wallace's unique relationship with Rediker has created the opportunity for him to read drafts of her most recent play, *The Liquid Plain*—another play inspired by Rediker's maritime scholarship, but set in eighteenth-century America.<sup>102</sup> Through correspondence, Rediker has offered artistic fodder for Wallace, sharing thoughts “not only on historical accuracies, but on creative possibilities as well.”<sup>103</sup> In terms of present-day dramaturgy, my hope is that more scholars will explore how following the dramaturgy of Wallace in select plays leads to the history of Rediker—and reciprocally, how following the histories of Rediker enriches the dramas of Wallace.

As I have asserted, Rediker relies upon the metaphor of drama in order to tell the story of the Anglo-American seamen in the eighteenth-century Atlantic. His method, therefore, inherently involves a historical dramaturgy in order to appropriately dress the historical actors and set the scene. Following a theatrical paradigm of reversal, Rediker also expounds upon a seamen's tools of the trade that could be used for work as well as for defense against an overbearing captain. And, akin to the deployment of specialized dialogue, Rediker incorporates characteristic language of a specialized nature to signal the seaman's disposition between the captain and the sea. Moreover, the historian tells how the story of the tar unfolded not only with spectacular storms, but also with

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<sup>101</sup> Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *The Communist Manifesto* (New York: Verso, 1998), 34.

<sup>102</sup> As described by the Oregon Shakespeare Festival: “On the docks of late 18th-century Rhode Island, two runaway slaves find love and a near-drowned man. With a motley band of sailors, they plan a desperate and daring run to freedom. As the mysteries of their identities come to light, painful truths about the past and present collide and flow into the next generation.” <http://www.osfashland.org/productions/2013-plays/the-liquid-plain.aspx> (accessed January 22, 2013).

<sup>103</sup> Naomi Wallace, e-mail message to the author, March 16, 2013.

spectacular mutinies. All of these elements make up a history ripe for a playwright's picking. Wallace accommodates this history with a play of parallel circumstances and strategies—but on land, in a time and place where the stakes are just as high. London's plague of 1665 provides a situation where the metaphor of the mutiny grapples with the opportunity for life-changing possibilities.

In a 2008 essay published in *American Theatre*, Naomi Wallace asks teachers to “[e]ncourage students of playwriting to read history, constantly, aggressively—to inform themselves thoroughly of the subject matter about which they write.”<sup>104</sup> Wallace emphasizes not only the interdisciplinary aspect of theatre that attracted me to the field to begin with, but she also highlights the historical impulses in her own writing. As a teacher and theatre scholar, I am keenly aware of the value of having students imagine stories from the past. It gives them a deeper understanding and a sense of ownership. As a practicing dramaturg, I am also keenly aware of the value of having an audience engage with a play that challenges their preconceptions. Such a circumstance helps to make things strange in the Brechtian sense so that an audience may constructively critique social relations.<sup>105</sup> Following a similar vein of thinking, Wallace continues in her essay to say, “[i]f writers can reimagine language, with an effort that aspires to fluency in history and its myriad forces, then we can reimagine ourselves and our communities—and that for me as a writer, is the highest aspiration.”<sup>106</sup> This relationship of history through theatre encourages students, as future audience members and future citizens, toward an active participation in society.

I believe that Marcus Rediker would agree with Naomi Wallace's encouragement

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<sup>104</sup> Naomi Wallace, “On Writing as Transgression,” *American Theatre*, January 2008, 101.

<sup>105</sup> See *Brecht on Theatre*, trans. John Willet (New York: Hill and Wang, 1964), 125, 190-193.

<sup>106</sup> Naomi Wallace, “On Writing as Transgression,” *American Theatre*, January 2008, 101.

to pair history with playwriting, because the world created onstage in *One Flea Spare* helps tell the story of what happened in the Atlantic centuries ago. Wallace deploys maritime history with a purpose of emphasizing a pattern of oppression that cannot exclude a possibility for change. In fact, a few years ago Rediker authored an essay entitled, “The Poetics of History from Below” for the American Historical Association’s “Art is History” series. With simple eloquence Rediker claims, “all good storytellers tell a big story within a little story, and so do all good historians.”<sup>107</sup> Just as Naomi Wallace is aware of the nature of storytelling, so, too, is Marcus Rediker. Their collaboration inspires the creation of drama that resonates beyond the walls of the theatre, and traces the ripples of history.

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<sup>107</sup> Marcus Rediker, “The Poetics of History from Below,” American Historical Association, <http://www.historians.org/perspectives/issues/2010/1009/1009art1.cfm> (accessed 12/18/2012).

## ADDENDUM 1

### DRAMATURGY AS PRODUCTION CONCEPT

If one were so inclined to apply the dramaturgy contained herein for conceptual production purposes, an argument can be made for a particularly seaworthy interpretation. The metaphorical parallel between the plague and the sea isolates and concentrates the dramatic action, which can give rise to multiple opportunities to amplify a world within and without.

For example, at rise, if the screams of people dying from the plague on the streets of London faded into the sound of gale force winds, predawn light could concurrently begin to waver over the stage like the luminescence of a nearly extinguished candelabrum inside a captain's cabin. An opening as such could begin to suggest the convergence of disasters. And, if we were to continue, Bunce could roll onstage from below like a barrel at sea with Morse awkwardly, unnaturally and ever so slightly hoisted and hovering up the wall as she narrates her first monologue, which could allude to her later angelic inclinations.

Another potential sound concept at the beginning of the play could be to creatively accentuate the characters' realization of additional boards being hammered to the windows, which further encloses them within a "wooden world." Likewise, the creaking of a ship at sea could be all that is left in the wake of a scene, or an act. Additionally, the costumes could also be made from fabric that resembles the canvas of sails. All made from the same stuff, but styled differently.

Several times during the course of the play, stories are told of life at sea. Some stories may deserve creative amplification of light or sound, but some—like Snelgrave's

contrived and fiendish story of rubies and monsters—should perhaps remain consciously vacant design-wise.

A definite prop is a length of rope. A strange and somewhat surreal idea would be to slowly accumulate coils of rope onstage as Bunce ties more and more knots throughout the play. If all the rope disappears at the end, before the next to last scene where Bunce shows Morse how to tie one last knot before he leaves, so much the better. In the late seventeenth and early eighteenth century, ropes hoisted sails and sailors-turned-pirate alike. Darcy then says her head is full of ocean. That could serve as an invitation to have the sound of waves gradually crash into a sweeping tempest toward the end of the scene.

In continuing the seaworthy milieu, the walls of the house could even go as so far as to billow and blow away like sails exhaling the death of Darcy. Does Kabe then, while covering the dead at the end of the play, become another kind of intermediary, like Charon, ushering the floating dead across the water?

There are many staging possibilities based upon this dramaturgy that could leave the audience feeling as if they had just experienced a storm at sea—along with witnessing a reversal of mutinous proportions. As a new day dawns, Morse's monologue at the end brings hope for a new beginning, and a possibility for change.

## ADDENDUM 2

### POTENTIAL STUDENT PROJECTS

“Historically,” writes Naomi Wallace, “theatre has been synonymous with politically challenging and socially pressing subjects.”<sup>108</sup> In order to keep this tradition alive, theatre artists and theatre teachers must continue to interrogate history with theatre. *The Dramaturgy of a Maritime Metaphor* has explored the relationship of a play and a history, and how even as the history inspired the drama, the history also lends itself to a dramatic reading. Serving as a model, this thesis aims to reveal how both scholars and artisans can dig into the historical circumstances of a play, leading students and practitioners to move beyond the “wow” (of historical parallels) to discover the “how” (of history). Wallace’s dramaturgy prompts us to ask: “How did it come to this? How am I diminished by my own ignorance? How have I been silenced in ways I am not aware of? How do I restore to language, on the stage, an agency and quality that clarifies rather than colludes, that resists rather than conforms?”<sup>109</sup> To further embolden the “Wow” and “How” factors, teachers should also ask “What Now?” What is happening *now* that can make others reflect on, and relate to, our own history? If the past is, indeed, prologue, what dramatic action can change the course of history? I offer the following assignments and exercises to help students and pedagogues explore such queries. These potential assignments can be adapted to fit a number of different courses and fields, especially those within theatre, history, or English:

**Oppression Revision:** Ask students to remember a time where they wish they had stood

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<sup>108</sup> Ibid., 100.

<sup>109</sup> Ibid., 102.

up for someone who they witnessed being bullied. They did not say or do anything in that moment, but only watched—or regrettably, they were doing the bullying. Have them briefly write out any vivid details they remember about the incident (words, sounds, visuals, etc.). Next, ask the students to create in dialogue form a scene based on the moment in question that includes a beginning, a middle, and an end—BUT, they must intercede and defend the person being bullied. No violence is permissible. Should be a speaking length of at least three to five minutes.

**Historical Connection:** Students will choose a Naomi Wallace play where she provides a select bibliography at end (e.g. *One Flea Spare*, *Slaughter City*, *The Inland Sea*, *Things of Dry Hours*, *The Fever Chart*, or *In the Heart of America*). Students then select one book from the list that you think best complements a theme of that play. They will read the play, and then explore the historical source. Ultimately, they will create a presentation that summarizes the play and its themes, then explain how the historical source they chose supports a theme of the play, and how that source is manifested in the play. Presentations will be supported with at three pertinent images and two pertinent quotations from the historical source.

**Alternative / Advanced Historical Connection:** Students choose a Naomi Wallace play where she does NOT provide a select bibliography at the end (e.g. *The Trestle at Pope Lick Creek*, *The Hard Weather Boating Party*, or *The War Boys*.) The students will find read that play and select at least one historical source that could be feasibly used to explain historical circumstances and themes in the play. Follow directions for presentation above.

**Dramatic Connection:** Students will find a historical sailor mentioned in a Marcus Rediker book (whether it be a common seamen, pirate, or captain) and research how and why Rediker chose to mention him or her in his book. Students then must present the theme of the Rediker book where the sailor was found, why Rediker mentioned that person, and then perform a one-minute monologue in the character of that sailor which narrates an episode from that sailor's life. The monologue should be original, but based on the presented historical research.

**Dramaturg a Historical Painting:** Students will select and research a historical painting, which includes people or an event. The painting must tell a story that can be researched. (e.g. a revolution, an execution, a wedding, a battlefield scene, etc.) The students must then animate the painting by creating a dialogue, which incorporates the tableau into the mini-story at the beginning, middle, or end. Students may storyboard the project if so inclined.

**Dramaturg a Ship:** Historians, novelists, and playwrights have written about life at sea for centuries. Students will select a ship museum (or other rich source) and give a virtual tour of what life at sea would have been like for the seamen aboard a particular vessel. What are the stories that come from that ship which made it memorable and particular? Students will use images and first-hand accounts of life at sea to build a depiction of what life was like within that wooden (or steel) world. Potential sources could include, but are not limited to the following:

- The Vasa Museum of Sweden, housing the actual *Vasa*, which sunk on her maiden voyage in 1628: <http://www.vasamuseet.se/en/>



- The *Pequod* of Herman Melville's *Moby Dick*:  
<http://www.mobydickbigread.com/chapter-16-the-ship/>
- The 1854 Sloop of War, the USS Constellation (along with other ships in Baltimore Harbor): <http://www.historicships.org/constellation.html>
- The New Bedford Whaling Museum: <http://www.whalingmuseum.org/>
- The only pirate shipwreck ever found, the *Whydah* (sunk in 1717):  
<http://whydah.com/>
- And, for more ideas, here is a Master Index to Maritime Museum websites:  
<http://maritimemuseums.net/index.html>

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