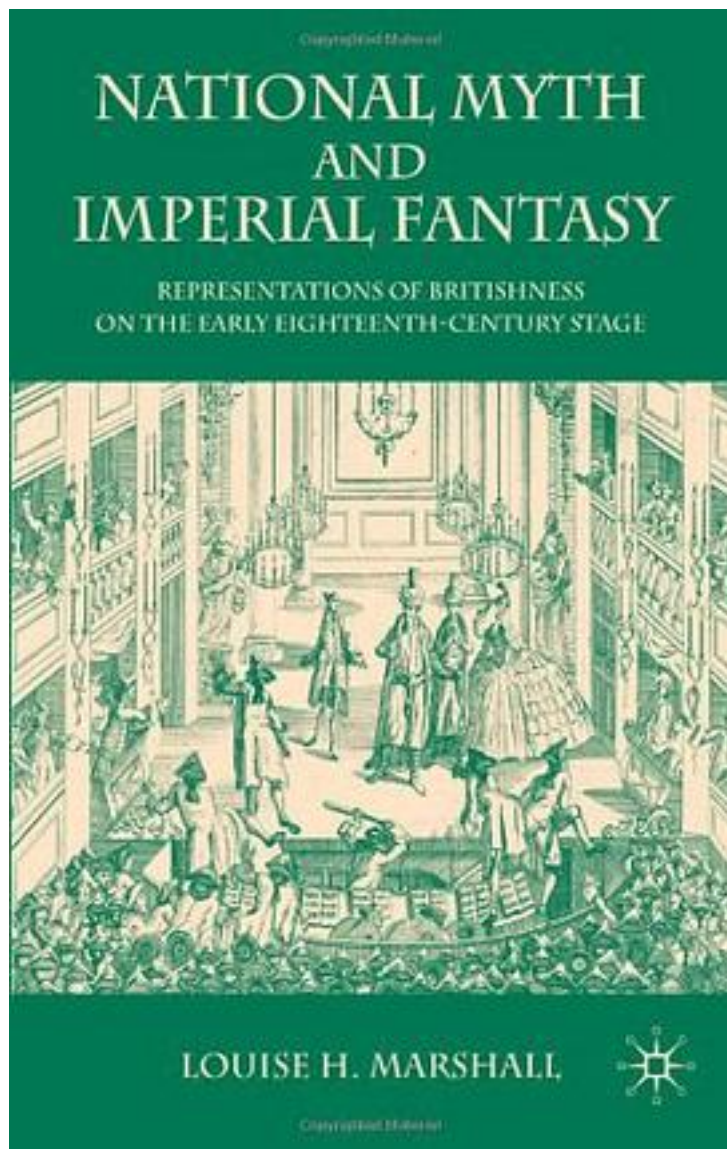


# National Myth and Imperial Fantasy



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Although eighteenth-century drama has been dismissed as stylistically homogenous, aesthetically uninteresting, and even politically complacent, *National Myth and Imperial Fantasy* reveals the intriguing and intricate nature of the period's history plays. As a body of texts, these plays disclose the conflicts and concerns of contemporary political and private lives, creating, for modern readers, a picture of the period's instabilities. Through their often messy dramatisations of the complexities of patriotic rhetoric and national identification, they reflect a world of contrasts, where the shrinking globe gives rise to increasing commercial and imperial possibilities, and where fantasies and mythologies of Britishness vie to construct a cohesive image of the nation as a dominant colonial power. Examining representations of the nation's imagined patriotic predecessors and historical enemies, both foreign and domestic, *National Myth and Imperial Fantasy* offers one of the first close readings of a series of lesser known yet historically vital dramas.

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