Monarchies are facing public demands for modernization and adapting to changing societal, political, and media environments. This book proposes new directions in the research of contemporary European monarchies and offers innovative perspectives on trans/national royal public interactions and (semi-)fictional representations of monarchs. Its case studies address historic and recent developments, including newly invented royal traditions, media depictions, Meghan Markle’s impact on the image of the British monarchy, and the royal family’s role in Brexit negotiations. With its interdisciplinary analyses, the book reflects current academic, societal, and popular cultural interest in royalty.

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“But I see the world has changed. And one must modernise.”
[The Queen 2006: 01:36:40]

The quote from the film The Queen holds true for contemporary European monarchies; it also pertains to research on monarchies. These age-old institutions offer many starting points for exploring aspects that are of crucial interest to contemporary research in the fields of cultural, media, and literary studies, historic enquiry, and many more.

In order to approach, explain, evaluate, and make sense of the cultural phenomena that contemporary monarchies confront us with, this volume sets out to explore the various realms of influence, functions, and ramifications of contemporary European monarchies. Its chapters offer explorations of the nexus between monarchies, their cultural representations, and contemporary societies from various theoretical perspectives, pertaining to a broad range of historical contexts and encompassing a variety of genres (from plays and biography to cinema). The three sections range from the historical to the contemporary (19th-century to 21st-century contexts), and from the socio-political (honors, exile, speeches) to the popular-cultural (comics, film, and television).

This volume emerged from a conference held at the International Graduate Centre for the Study of Culture (GCSC) at Justus Liebig University, Giessen, Germany in April 2017. At this conference, PhD students, postdocs, and university professors from various disciplinary backgrounds, e.g. History, the Study of British Literature and Culture, or Marketing and Consumer Research, gathered to discuss facets of researching contemporary European monarchies and thus paved the way for this book.

Publishing the results of these discussions would not have been possible without substantial support. We thank the GCSC for financially and logistically supporting the conference and for contributing a substantial amount to the printing
costs of this volume. We would also like to express our sincere thanks to the Dr.-Herbert-Stolzenberg-Foundation for awarding the prize for excellence in higher education teaching 2017 to us and our seminar Two Elizabethan Eras: Literary and Intermedial Portraits of Elizabeth I and Elizabeth II, taught at the English department at Justus Liebig University Giessen. We are delighted to dedicate the prize money to the realization of this book project.

We give our heartfelt thanks to our doctoral supervisor Prof. Dr. Dr. h.c. Ansgar Nünning, whose academic and personal support and encouragement we greatly value. More thanks go to a wonderful team, without whose dedication this book would not exist – especially Rose Lawson, who assisted us with proofreading and her valuable comments. We thank the student assistants at JLU’s English department, Nele Grosch, Laura Howe, and Janna Thonius, who supported us in repeatedly and attentively checking the articles and bibliographies. Thank you to Franziska Eick for her assistance with the formatting and compilation of the manuscript and to Simon Ottersbach for many helpful suggestions on how to make the project run smoothly. We would like to thank Jeff Coons who took the photograph for the book cover. We would also like to thank Annika Linnemann at transcript for her support during the preparation of the manuscript. Finally, we would like to extend our thanks to the contributors to this volume, whose thorough work addresses many questions on conceptualizing, theorizing, exemplifying, and analyzing the “Realms of Royalty” and point out avenues for future research.

Giessen, November 2019
Christina Jordan & Imke Polland
Introduction:
Mapping New Realms in the Study of Contemporary European Monarchies

Christina Jordan and Imke Polland

CONTEMPORARY EUROPEAN MONARCHIES AS AN OBJECT OF RESEARCH

For centuries, monarchies have dominated European politics and power relations and they still permeate European cultures, even if sometimes in a post-political form. Having carved out new spheres of influence for themselves and having exchanged hard-against soft-power instruments (cf. Müller/Mehrkens 2016), the royal families of Europe are currently encountering a wave of popularity, especially as regards the celebration of royal events and the commercialization and ongoing production of fiction about royal history. The latest remediations for stage and screen focus particularly on the British monarchy, e.g. the popular Netflix series The Crown (2016–) or ITV’s Victoria (2016-2017), theatre plays such as Mike Bartlett’s King Charles III (2014) or Peter Morgan’s The Audience (2015 [2013]) as well as films such as The King’s Speech (2010) and Mary Queen of Scots (2018).

In an age of increasing royal celebrity – a trend that began in the 19th century (cf. Plunkett 2003) and was repeatedly diagnosed by several scholars (e.g. Couldry 2001; Blain/O’Donnell 2003; Nairn 2011 [1988]; Minier/Pennacchia 2014) – the notions of what monarchy is and should be about in contemporary Europe are shaped by and renegotiated in response to the logics of these cultural developments. More than ten years ago, Blain and O’Donnell have stated that notions and forms of celebrity are constantly changing, “in its current phase having also been increasingly associated with ordinariness” (2003: 163), basing their observation
on the increase in reality TV shows and the altering effects these had on celebrity culture. Reacting to these recent developments and to a great extent fashioned by them, a notion of “royal ordinariness” (Widholm/Becker 2015: 10) has indeed developed. This is exemplified by the recent royal weddings to ‘commoners’ in Denmark (2004), Great Britain (2011 and 2018), and Sweden (2015) or by the new middle-class appearance of the royal heirs’ family lives, which is frequently thematized in the media (e.g. amongst others, Prince William and Catherine or Prince Harry and Meghan in the UK as well as Crown Princess Victoria and Daniel in Sweden).

The current state of Europe’s royal houses, their having-become, and their importance for the contemporary cultural sphere are the areas of interest that lie at the heart of this volume. These topics inspire some of its central questions: Why do royals still seem to play such an important role for contemporary European societies? What renders them culturally important? In how far do the concept of monarchy and its representations change in the face of constant media developments and ever-changing media consumption practices, societal needs and demands? And, consequently, how does research on monarchies have to react to its ever-changing objects of interest?

The present volume addresses these questions and thus fills a gap in current academic debates about European monarchies. Despite the ubiquitous media presence of European royals and the sheer number of royal events since 2000, the topic of 21st-century royalty has received an astonishingly modest amount of academic attention, especially by scholars of literature, media, narrative, and culture. Ruth Adams rightfully diagnoses a “widespread neglect of topics relating to the British monarchy by academia, an inattention that is perhaps ‘perplexing,’ given its prominence in British culture and society, and the strong emotional attachment demonstrated by a significant proportion of the population.” (2016: 265) Notwithstanding a number of interesting recent publications (cf. especially the recent volumes of the Palgrave Series ‘Studies in Modern Monarchy’ [Glencross/Rowbotham/Kandiah 2016; Müller/Mehrkens 2016; Banerjee/Backerra/Sarti 2017], but also Merck 2016, Laing/Frost 2017, Woodacre et al. 2019), the topic of contemporary European monarchies begs for more attention in the study of culture. A first approximation in this direction is proposed by Pankratz and Viol’s collected volume entitled (Un)Making the Monarchy, which approaches the monarchy from a constructivist perspective “trying to come to grips with texts and discourses, making and (un)making specific versions of the British monarchy” (2017: 17). The present volume further responds to this demand, offering a range of contributions that explore the nexus between monarchy and contemporary European cul-
tures, which encompasses a variety of fictional and non-fictional media and genres, from newspaper articles, live radio and television broadcasts to plays and TV series to cinema and comics. Beginning with tracing developments by addressing trans/national perspectives on royal families as well as their public interactions from the 19th century until today, proceeding with fictional imaginations of monarchies, and ending with a section on negotiations of 21st-century representations of royalty in popular cultural contexts, this collection of essays by young and established scholars in the fields of history, marketing, literary and cultural studies provides perspectives on European monarchies in diverse cultural contexts. Moving from the historical to the contemporary, through the socio-political and the fictional, the volume’s goal is to capture the complex and myriad ways in which contemporary European monarchies permeate cultural spheres.

In addition, responding to royalty’s cultural ubiquity, the study of monarchies is particularly interesting for literary and cultural studies, because it offers a wide range of fictional and non-fictional materials and foci of research. It allows to scrutinize categories such as identity, gender, heritage as well as dichotomies such as tradition/modernity, public/private, or national/transnational. Due to its numerous cultural facets, contemporary royalty also challenges established approaches by demanding interdisciplinarity and combining the expertise of fields of research, which are aptly equipped to do justice to this complex object of research.

Furthermore, studying the variety of cultural negotiations of contemporary monarchies serves to shed light on developments regarding societies’ norms and values, its concerns and its dominant forms of expression, preferred media and genres. Neil Blain and Hugh O’Donnell’s observations and analysis of monarchies’ economic, psychological, and cultural importance is still valid for present-day royalty:

“It may be true that the phenomenon of monarchy in the media is primarily economic and secondarily political – as well as cultural and psychological. However, we might say that the phenomenon manifests itself in a circuit of production and reception in which eventually it seems to have acquired economic and political importance because it is originally of cultural and psychological importance. That is to say, even if royal media production is driven most strongly by economic benefit to the media industry, and political (or psychological) gratification to its proprietors or custodians, it is also true that exposure to royal events and personalities finally manifests itself as an imagined psychological need, conditioned by cultural reality: or indeed as a cultural reality, conditioned by psychological need, depending on one’s philosophical inclination. Either way, it becomes immensely hard to deny the reality of a public and private need for royal narratives and imagined participation in royal lives.” (2003: 60)
Explorations of the role of the institution of monarchy within contemporary European societies and cultures can go in many directions. To provide some conceptual and theoretical orientation points for navigating this varied topic of research, the following sections of this introduction offer perspectives that we find helpful for coming to terms with the cultural phenomena that monarchies and contemporary notions about them confront us with. Part two of this introduction discusses contemporary monarchies as cultural phenomena, because they are constructs which “we can only approach […] via texts, material practices, and discourses” (Pankratz/Viol 2017: 17). Against the background of discussing transformations of monarchies as well as of the research on monarchies itself, in part three, we provide a brief historical contextualization. We argue that especially interdisciplinary approaches are needed to be able to adequately address contemporary royalty as an object of research. Proceeding from this assumption, the final part of this introduction then maps out the structure of the volume and gives an overview of its contributions, illustrating how the different articles approach the multifaceted research topic of European monarchies. We conclude by outlining some trajectories for further research.

MONARCHIES AS CULTURAL PHENOMENA: COMING TO TERMS WITH CONTEMPORARY NOTIONS OF ROYALTY

Having forfeited most of their political power, European royalties have nevertheless maintained or even increased their cultural significance.1 As historically grown complexes of institutional power, symbolic value, and ‘treasure chests’ of historic and fictional narratives, monarchies may be regarded as cultural phenomena. They do not merely exist for the sake of their own continuity, but because people value the institutions and choose to support them. Charged with meanings, as these institutions thus are, they do important cultural ‘work.’

A prime example is the ITV documentary *Diana, Our Mother: Her Life and Legacy* (2017) produced on the occasion of the 20th anniversary of Diana’s death. This 90-minute program not only attracted an estimated number of about seven

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1 Müller/Mehrkens (2016) have already spelled out the increasing uses of soft power by royal heirs in the cultural sphere for the 19th century. Jürgen Kramer delineates “the reinvention of the role of the monarchy as a symbolic force in the 19th century” (2017: 21).
million viewers, but it also joined other forms of cultural remembrance taking place at that time. In the documentary, Princes William and Harry flip through family photo albums and talk about their individual memories of their mother Diana. Thus, they make their personal psychological and emotional work available to the public, who can reprocess their own emotional involvement. It can be said that – in light of remembering an occasion, which has often been called a collective national trauma – the princes mourn on behalf of the nation.

An occasion on which the monarchy, in this case the Spanish King Felipe VI, recently added a cultural layer to a political discussion, is the Catalan push for independence. In October 2017, the king held a televised speech, in which he – against the expectation of neutrality – was openly judgmental and accordingly accused of taking a side and of adopting ‘the Spanish position’ against the Catalan one. This promotion of an outspoken view on political matters goes beyond the king’s constitutional position and one might conclude that he acted as a cultural broker instead of a neutral mediator in this case. In his speech, Felipe VI still frequently emphasized those values that the monarchy usually advocates, i.e. unity, solidarity, and stability. His speech was thus of cultural importance: On the one hand, the figurehead, officially meant to represent the Spanish nation, openly interpreted the event and thus manifested a concrete denotation appealing to a majority. On the other hand, this meaning-making process has the potential to further oppose the differing camps. In conflictual situations people often turn towards their head of state and the leading institutions of the nation. What is happening in Spain, however, raises the question for which ‘nation’ the king spoke.

In the case of the 2014 Scottish referendum, Queen Elizabeth II did not reveal any personal opinions, but she still made a political intervention – despite preserving neutrality – by encouraging people to carefully deliberate before voting. Her seemingly neutral speeches are often interpreted as constituting indirect comments on politics. In this regard, both her Christmas address 2018 as well as a speech she gave in January 2019 on the topic of finding common ground and respecting differing positions, were widely discussed as the queen’s comments on the messy Brexit discussions in British parliament.2 These cultural acts of the kings and queens in the face of crisis-like situations reveal how entangled the institution of monarchy still is with the Realpolitik of the day, even though it occupies a rather symbolic position.

Monarchies are not only political or historical instances, but confront us with cultural phenomena such as ritualistic actions and (invented) traditions, (fictional)

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2 See, for example, the editorial article “The Guardian View on the Queen and Brexit” in The Guardian.
depictions of the monarchs’ lives, or their entanglement with national and cultural concerns. Thus, it is necessary that the study of culture approaches these phenomena with the special qualities, methods, and perspectives it comprises. There are as many notions of culture as there are differentiations of studying its forms, such as (British) Cultural Studies, the study of culture, or the German Kulturwissenschaft(en). The theoretical, methodological, and conceptual ways of studying culture made use of in this volume are marked by a transdisciplinary approach to phenomena which encompass all aspects of human life. Important to this volume’s underlying notion of culture is Clifford Geertz’s understanding of culture as a “web of significances,” which generates meanings that the study of culture uncovers and analyzes. Geertz explains that

“[t]he concept of culture that I espouse […], is essentially a semiotic one. Believing, with Max Weber, that man is an animal suspended in webs of significance he himself has spun, I take culture to be those webs, and the analysis of it to be therefore not an experimental science in search of law but an interpretive one in search of meaning.” (1973: 5)

Based on these considerations we suggest to regard monarchies as this complex aggregate of meanings from the perspective of the study of culture and thus complement existing (prevailingly historical) studies on that topic. It is evident that the current cultural importance of monarchies cannot be grasped without the respective contexts and histories. In the following section of the introduction, we will therefore also very briefly draw on historical developments to contextualize the present volume, before moving on to describing its outline.

**EUROPEAN MONARCHIES IN THEIR HISTORICAL CONTEXT: A BRIEF OVERVIEW**

Monarchies have been the predominant state forms in Europe during the Middle Ages until the 19th century, when only France, San Marino and Switzerland were republics. They flourished and often developed into huge empires, especially England (later Britain) and Spain were among the largest empires in world history. However, most European monarchies were abolished after World War I and as of 2019, only twelve monarchies, most of them constitutional, remain in Europe: The

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3 With this, we refer to Raymond Williams’s famous notion of “culture as a whole way of life” (2008 [1958]: 83).
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Denmark, Norway, Sweden, the Netherlands, Belgium, Spain as well as the petty states of Andorra, Liechtenstein, Monaco, Luxembourg, and the State of the Vatican City. Those remaining monarchies, which survived crises of abolishment, abdications, revolutions, and decolonialization have to renegotiate their places between the institutions’ histories and traditions on the one hand and (post-)modern political, social, and medial environments.

The present state of monarchies, which many of the articles focus on, cannot be understood as given and independent from history, but must be seen as the result of developments both of the institutions themselves and their political, social, and cultural contexts. These contexts were crucial in giving shape to monarchies’ present position in society, including their functions and our understanding of them. While Richard Williams in his 1997 study of the British monarchy entitled *The Contentious Crown* claimed that 19th-century research mainly focused on the development of the British working and middle class, “what might be called ‘the survival of the upper class’ – the monarchy and aristocracy – was neglected” (1997: 1), this period is well researched nowadays (e.g. Giloi 2011, Paulmann 2000, Cannadine 1996 [1990], or Williams 1997).

In the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century, European monarchies underwent severe changes. The 19th century was the time in which most nation states were formed in Europe, often as the results of nationalist movements such as in Germany or Italy. Monarchies partly took a crucial role in the process of nation building, but on the other hand also had to face changes with regard to the nations’ and their own political situations and struggled for a survival of the institutions. Some European monarchies still were important imperial powers. While Spain already faced anti-colonial uprisings and the resulting losses of colonies, especially in America (e.g. Spanish-American War 1898), the British Empire flourished at the same time and Queen Victoria was proclaimed the Empress of India in 1876. Thus, transnational concerns and negotiating the monarchies’ place in a changing European and imperial context were crucial for maintaining power (Banerjee/Backerra/Sarti 2017).

A great caesura concerning the international standing of most European monarchies was World War I. Many European monarchies were abolished and the situation of the remaining monarchies – at home and abroad – became increasingly difficult. After WWI, Europe suffered in great parts from unemployment and poverty which led to a general dissatisfaction. Not only the British King George V faced a loss of his power and had to fear a revolution. In Spain, local and municipal elections led to victories of candidates favoring an end to the monarchy and an establishment of a republic in 1931. King Alfonso XIII did not abdicate, but went
into exile and Spain temporarily became a republic – the second time after 1873-1874. Sweden, which remained neutral in both World Wars, saw a breakthrough of parliamentarism in 1917, when the coalition government of liberals and social democrats was appointed. As with most other European monarchies, this meant that the sovereign’s political influence was significantly reduced.

Following the Second World War, monarchies in Europe have faced an era of rapid change. Media developed as quickly as never before, global ties were strengthened and European networks such as the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC as of 1951) or the European Economic Community (EEC as of 1958) as predecessors of the European Union were formed. With regard to the British context, historian David Cannadine called the time post World War Two “a period of unprecedented change” (1983: 139) – a development that has not ceased today. In their volume *The Windsor Dynasty 1910 to the Present*, Matthew Glencross, Judith Rowbotham, and Michael D. Kandiah show “the extent to which, amongst other things, flexibility or adaptability in the face of change has been one of key characteristics of the Windsor dynasty.” (2016: 10) After WWII, the British Empire was slowly but surely transformed into the Commonwealth of Nations. Anti-colonial movements reached a new heyday in more or less all remaining European colonies, sometimes resulting in war, as in the cases of Britain, France, and Portugal, in general having the effect of a loss of the colonies. All British colonies were granted independence by 1968, and by the 1980s all remaining colonies in Africa had gained their independence. Nevertheless, imperial ties remain (albeit in new and changed forms).

With regard to this loss of (political) power at home and in the empires, a wholly new image of the monarchy had to be created, with the monarch being stylized as the people's sovereign, ‘public servant,’ and a national figurehead (cf. ibid: 4-5). One of the most striking examples might be the British King George VI, who visited miners and football games and became engaged in charitable causes. A strong emotional tie between monarchy and people was supposed to create support for the institution (cf. Owens 2016; Zweiniger-Bargielowska 2016). Special emphasis was placed on the monarchy’s perseverance, continuity, and function as a means of group identification. As David Cannadine notes, “the monarchy appeared, particularly on grand, ceremonial occasions, as the embodiment of consensus, stability and community” (1983: 140; Kramer 2017).

The stylization of monarchies as families significantly contributed to the endearment of the monarch to the people (cf. Wienfort 2016). In Britain, this process already saw its beginning with Queen Victoria, Prince Albert, and their nine children (cf. Williams 1997: 7). With regard to the marriage of the then Prince of Wales, Walter Bagehot felicitously observed that “a *family* on the throne is an
interesting idea,” as it brings an air of ordinariness to the Crown and fosters emotional engagement (2009 [1867]: 41). The display of a family life gave subjects the opportunity to identify with the royal family. When King George V went on his regular outings and visits, he brought along his wife, Queen Mary, as well as their older children. A constant modernization of the monarchy took place, including a significant increase in public relations work, a strong focus on the relationship towards the people as well as upholding family and national values. In 1923, Prince Albert, later King George VI, was allowed to marry Elizabeth Bowes-Lyon although she was not of royal descent – at the time, this was a revolutionary decision and a sign of modernization of the institution, which paved the way for many similar developments to come. In many European monarchies, sovereigns and heirs to the throne are nowadays married to commoners with ordinary jobs. To name only a few, King Carl XVI Gustaf is married to Silvia Sommerlath, a German commoner who got to know the prince 1972 as Olympia-hostess in Munich, their daughter Crown Princess Victoria married the fitness coach Daniel Westling, and Mette-Marit, wife of the Norwegian Crown Prince Haakon has what is frequently called “a controversial past.”

With the evolution of electronic mass media in the first half of the 20th century, monarchies increasingly turned to representational capacities, which go hand in hand with their new cultural presence and their visibility as royal celebrities. The 1930s meant the rise of the radio and the monarchy began to use it for its own ends. The first Christmas broadcast by the king was aired in 1932 and instigated the beginning of a tradition that is still upheld today, albeit on TV. Especially since Elizabeth II’s coronation in 1953, which even sparked the sales numbers of TV sets, media developed as quickly as never before. Until today, the monarchies try to keep pace with it and partake as “active participants in this brave new media world. Conscious that their survival depends to a large part on popular support, they have embraced social media and the digital, and boast Facebook, Flickr and Twitter accounts.” (Adams 2016: 282) Additionally, this development is flanked by unauthorized and fictional media representations of the sovereigns, their families, and their lives including crises and scandals.

In his pioneering study on the history of performing royal rituals between 1820 and 1977, David Cannadine concludes explaining that “[b]y definition, the period since the coronation [of Elizabeth II] in 1953 is too recent for detailed or satisfactory historical analysis” (1983: 155). While the 1980s slowly but surely move into the realm of research in newest historical studies, historical science more often than not shies away from researching contemporary phenomena.
The contributions in this edited volume offer insights into the developments of European monarchies since the 19th century as well as into their present condition, thus giving an impression of both continuities and changes of European monarchies. Royal families are permanently adapting to contemporary society with its challenges of contingency and rapid changes. Reflecting the modernization of monarchies including their recent developments, this volume aims at contributing to an adequate analysis of recent and contemporary royal phenomena, a subject area that has barely received scholarly attention so far. When it comes to contemporary phenomena, the study of culture is especially well equipped to provide a comprehensive perspective, taking into account the multifarious layers of cultural realities and their representations.

OVERVIEW OF THIS VOLUME’S THREE SECTIONS

As the previous sections have illustrated, European monarchies’ pasts are widely researched nowadays, especially in historiography. However, the study of culture and related disciplines only recently started to approach this topic. All articles in this edited volume are dedicated to cultural concerns regarding monarchies. Their range of interest reaches from the 19th century until today, acknowledging that research on monarchies has to adapt to its object of research, which is itself in a constant state of flux, change, and modernization. As frequently the case with topics newly emerging in certain disciplines, these circumstances create both methodological chances and challenges, that are taken up and fructified in the book’s three sections, which focus on diachronic as well as contemporary issues, national and transnational contexts, and various aspects concerning the intricate relationships between sovereigns, their subjects, and the media.

Royal Public Interactions and Trans/National Relations
(19th-21st Century)

The first section sets the stage for the volume by contextualizing both national and transnational roles and challenges taken on by European monarchies from the 19th century until today. The contributions to this section offer diverse perspectives on remnants of imperial monarchical forms such as honors and decorations in (post)colonial societies, on ‘royal residues’ in and through exile, the sovereigns’ use of technological innovations such as the radio in the 1930s, and their marketing strategies and self-fashioning through an updated family image in the 21st
In this way, the section fruitfully explores the application of interdisciplinary approaches from historical studies to media analysis and marketing and paves the way for a multifaceted discussion of the roles monarchies play for contemporary European societies.

In their article on Meghan Markle’s “Impact on the British Royal Family Brand,” Pauline MacLaran and Cele C. Otnes explore the various ways in which Prince Harry’s 2018 marriage to the African American actress Meghan Markle influences the perception of the British monarchy. They illustrate the paradox of an “accessible mystique” of the British royals, that is carefully negotiated as members of the royal family have to stay above other forms of celebrity. Based on their analysis of archival as well as ethnographic data such as interviews and participant observation, the authors suggest a conceptualization of the British royal family as a corporate brand, which is composed of five key elements that they identify as global, heritage, human, family, and luxury. Maclaran and Otnes elaborate on how Meghan Markle, as the newest addition to the British royal family, already has and will continue to contribute both positively and negatively to all of these five brand elements.

Deirdre Gilfedder is also concerned with developments that impact the royal image. Her historiographic article sets out to explore the early royal radio addresses, which she describes as the centerpiece of the BBC in its nascent years and which were instrumental in the corporation’s strategy for its Empire service. Gilfedder discusses the decisive role of royal broadcasting for the advancement of what she describes as “a new ‘media empire’ of radio.” She approaches the radio broadcasts as media rituals and communication events from a media theoretical perspective, drawing on works by John Durham-Peters, Nick Couldry, and Daniel Dayan. Gilfedder further discusses how these broadcasts returned the king to the imagined ‘center’ of society and thus contributed to a modernization of British royalty. With the example speeches she analyzes – George V’s Christmas message of 1932, the 1936 abdication speech of Edward VIII, and George VI’s rally to war speech of 1939 – she scrutinizes the imperial outreach of the British monarch’s political communications.

Robert Aldrich and Cindy McCreery, equally concerned with the imperial complexities of the royal past, outline the creation and proliferation of European and colonial honor systems in the 19th century. Their contribution is concerned with the distribution of honors and decorations, individuals’ complex affective relationship to them and what they stand for in 19th and 20th-century European states as well as throughout their colonial and postcolonial territories. Focusing on the examples of British knighthoods and colonial honors in India and beyond as well as honors in other European empires and their post-colonial legacies, Aldrich
and McCreery’s article shows that many of the post-colonial states adopted and adapted the honors systems established under colonial rule. Their contextualized and interpretive analysis provides a comprehensive approach to orders and decorations as a means of understanding colonial and postcolonial power dynamics in connection to monarchies.

With its focus on monarchs and royal families in exile, Torsten Riotte’s article continues along the line of discussing power relations and the transnational dimensions of monarchies. Hezooms in on the questions of how former sovereigns (and their families) survived dynastically, how they found financial support to live in exile, and under what circumstances they remained part of the exclusive group of European dynasties. Riotte’s historiographic analysis mainly takes into account economic and legal documents and thus provides an innovative perspective on ‘royal survival’ and the adaptation processes European monarchs had to undergo when facing challenges of societal and political developments. He emphasizes the dimension of cultural negotiations when arguing that monarchs in exile had to make use of their social or cultural capital to negotiate their legal status in their new home countries.

**Monarchy on Page, Stage, and Screen**

The second section “Monarchy on Page, Stage, and Screen” discusses representations of former and current monarchs in films, on television as well as in theatre plays and biographies. The four case studies address questions of gender, power, cultural memory, and national identity by approaching the filmic, dramatic, and biographical texts from a literary and cultural studies perspective. They highlight not only the way the respective depictions inform their audience about the monarchs at their center, but also what these representations reveal about present views on society, politics, and the institution of the monarchy.

In her article on the remediation of Elizabeth I in Shekhar Kapur’s *Elizabeth* (1998), Susanne Scholz investigates how this iconic queen is made sense of in contemporary filmic representations. The article’s special focus is on Elizabeth I’s relationship to the Earl of Leicester and its visualization in dancing scenes. Susanne Scholz’ contribution scrutinizes royal dance as a language to visually represent the queen’s ‘political body’ – which is essentially unrepresentable – and thus to render it intelligible for modern audiences. She places Kapur’s fictitious depictions of the dancing Elizabeth in a historical perspective through a comparison with 16th-century representations of courtly dance. Scholz discusses issues such as romantic love, sexuality, gender (hierarchies), and a patriarchal order as well as questions concerning (fictional) remediations and cultural memory. The
article thus reveals resemantizations of royal dance and discusses how these representations customized for a modern gaze reflect today’s cultural concerns, desires, wishes, and anxieties.

The topic of cultural memory in the representation of a former sovereign forms the thematic core of Stefan Trajković Filipović’s article on the Montenegrin Tsar Stephen the Little (1767-1773) and his filmic afterlife. Being a highly controversial figure during his lifetime, Stephen the Little gained literary attention since the late 18th century and became the focus of the films *Lažni car* (1955; *The Fake Emperor*) and *Čovjek koga treba ubiti* (1979; *Man to Destroy*). In his article, Trajković Filipović analyzes both films with respect to the sovereign’s depiction as a beloved reformer, unifier, and alternative to internal feuds, corruption, and political hypocrisy. Trajković Filipović critically approaches the filmic representation of his reign as a short ‘golden age’ of Montenegro’s history from the perspective of (media) memory studies and reviews them against the background of historical sources.

In her contribution to this volume, Marie-Theres Stickel discusses the question of how literary works may shape the public perception of a royal figurehead. She scrutinizes how Mike Bartlett’s play *King Charles III* (2014) and Catherine Mayer’s biography *Charles: The Heart of a King* (2015) represent Prince Charles’ struggle with the political neutrality expected of the heir apparent. As both works toy with the idea of an outspoken (future) king meddling with political matters, Stickel’s article elaborates on the evaluation of Charles’ activist stance. Her literary studies perspective reveals how the works use their respective generic qualities to not only portray the heir, but also to imagine the future king and thus to contribute to political debates surrounding the monarchy.

The section’s final article is dedicated to two fictional representations of Queen Elizabeth II in contemporary theatre texts, Peter Morgan’s *The Audience* (2013) and Moira Buffini’s *Handbagged* (2013). Both plays focus on the relationship between the queen and her prime ministers, depicting their confidential meetings and thus imaginatively filling the gap of what is known about the queen’s personal opinions and her involvement in political matters. Against this backdrop, Eva Kirbach explores the construction of the queen’s fictional character especially with regard to her gender and political power. Given that the sovereign nowadays lacks political ‘hard power’ and is supposed to refrain from expressing political opinions, the article demonstrates how the fictional queens use patterns of both male and female gendered behavior to exercise power and to wittily influence their prime ministers.
Royal Representations in Contemporary Popular Cultural Contexts

The book’s third and concluding section “Royal Representation in Contemporary Popular Cultural Contexts” traces modes of representing royalty in comics, cult series, and concerts. The realm of popular culture is still often neglected in the study of culture as well as in royal studies. However, the analysis of the popular in regal contexts allows for promising insights into how monarchies’ (unofficial) representations change over time and how ‘bottom-up’ approaches to the monarchy might subvert the images carefully constructed and conveyed by official sources. The section uncovers various ways in which the contemporary British monarchy enjoys a popularity that permeates fictional and factual representations, thus reproducing the royals’ special celebrity status.

Natalie Veith’s article is dedicated to an examination of neo-Victorian comics, which form part of a popular cultural counter discourse to conventional heritage culture surrounding Britain’s (monarchical) history. Through a close reading of Alan Moore and Eddie Campbell’s *From Hell* (1989-1996), Grant Morrison and Steve Yeowell’s *Sebastian O.* (1993), and Sydney Padua’s *The Thrilling Adventures of Lovelace and Babbage* (2015), Veith analyzes the depictions of Queen Victoria in neo-Victorian comics, which experiment with anachronistic, intermedial, and metafictional scenarios. Although Queen Victoria seems to be a marginal figure in these comics, Veith argues that the queen’s relevance lies in her apparent insignificance, as the monarch is used to dramatize and negotiate contradictions within the stories, e.g. concerning power, knowledge, gender, and agency.

The focus of Marie Menzel’s contribution on the remediation of kings and queens in the famous science fiction TV-series *Doctor Who* (1963–) is how monarchy functions as an embodiment of Britishness in popular culture. Interweaving fact and fiction, the program integrates both past and future kings and queens into its fantastical narrative, illustrating the sovereigns’ importance for issues like cultural memory and collective identity. Approaching the series from the perspective of media cultural studies, the article uncovers how *Doctor Who* represents, remediates, and imagines British queens as sites of memory, which invoke a sense of Britishness and national identity. Menzel thus shows how the depicted sovereigns’ mythologies and symbolic as well as mnemonic powers are used in the serial narrative to represent satirical versions of the past rather than to take a critical or evaluative stance towards the monarchy.

Christina Jordan’s article focuses on Elizabeth II’s Jubilee celebrations in the new millennium and scrutinizes the cultural functions of the concerts *Party at the Palace* (2002) and the *Diamond Jubilee Concert* (2012). Pop concerts and parades
of ‘the people’ have become central constituents of the latest large-scale royal events and can thus be regarded as part of a new generation of invented royal traditions. The article shows how the concerts help to modernize the monarchy by inviting public participation in royal celebrations and creating a new layer for the royal image. Jordan delineates how popular cultural events thus add to (seemingly) historic royal traditions and activities and help to shape a modernized image of the monarchy.

While contemporary monarchies are often considered to be rather “post-political” (Higson 2016: 360), Imke Polland’s concluding afterword exemplarily shows that European monarchies currently regain political importance. She reflects on the press’s appraisal of the British monarchy’s role in the context of the Brexit negotiations. By analyzing public reactions to Queen Elizabeth’s speeches and the ambassador function of the royal heirs, Polland elaborates on the subtle involvement of British royals in debates about national independence and their symbolic power in maintaining ties with other nations at times of crises.

This serves as an example of the wider cultural-(political) functions performed by contemporary European royalty. While conflicting demands for European integration on the one hand and nationalist movements on the other hand shape the current political landscape and media discussions in Europe, it should be a focus for future research on monarchies to scrutinize how the institutions and their traditions are instrumentalized in the far-reaching incisions and processes of transformation in Europe. Their continued importance is reflected by the recent wave of interdisciplinary studies on monarchies. While this book contributes to this renewed academic interest in monarchies by adding literary, media, historical, and cultural perspectives, there are many more fruitful trajectories for future research.

In 2019, Swedish King Carl Gustaf’s decision to remove five of his grandchildren from the line of succession and ‘slim down’ the monarchy to the core family testified to a wider trend in royal ‘family politics.’ Officially, this gesture offers his offspring the possibility to lead ordinary lives and follow careers of their own, but it also goes hand in hand with a withdrawal of both their titles as royal highnesses and their royal duties. Prince Charles, too, is known to be planning a similar ‘cutting-back’ for the British royal family upon his succession to the throne. It will be interesting to scrutinize in how far this will affect royalty’s performance of charitable tasks and what changes it will bring for the royal image.

The Duke and Duchess of Sussex, Prince Harry and Meghan, also decided to renounce the title of HRH for their son Archie. Their particular take on the role of royal heirs provides an intriguing case study to analyze the ongoing reconceptualization of royal status. In addition, their strategic use of social media platforms
provides an interesting example of royal ‘activism’ and communication. The press has already observed that “The Royal-Related Action Is Now Happening on Instagram” (Duboff 2019: n. pag.) and generates its own headlines from royal statements made online. The transformations of royal celebrity effectuated by social media might be another fruitful field for studying contemporary monarchies.

Interestingly enough, young royals are increasingly open about their (mental) health issues. It was again Prince Harry, who publicly talked about personal problems, pressures, and psychological needs. Victoria, Crown Princess of Sweden’s history of anorexia was also openly communicated. These confessions combined with royal support for charities dedicated to mental health issues are worth investigating. This new trend may lead to a form of ‘personalized monarchism’ as the public/private dichotomy continues to dissolve. It will be interesting to study how this affects people’s relationship to the royals and public reception processes.

These are merely a few suggestions based on the most recent developments in the royal houses of Europe. As the articles in this volume show, monarchies were, are, and are likely to remain important phenomena within European cultural, historical, political, social, and medial landscapes and thus will continue to provide fruitful areas for interdisciplinary investigation.

WORKS CITED


