The Foreignness
of Foreigners

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Cultural Representations of the Other in the British Isles (17th-20th Centuries)

Edited by

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FOREWORD

This collection of essays gathers articles revised from the conference "The Foreignness of Foreigners: Cultural Representations of the Other in the British Isles" held at the University of Lille 3 in 2011. It aims at examining how the various figures of the foreigner have been constructed in Britain through representations and discourses in the political and literary fields, as well as in the visual arts from the 17th century to the contemporary period. These essays focus in particular on the way Otherness has participated in the shaping of a national, religious or regional identity, through ambivalent relations of domination or admiration, integration or rejection, idealisation or demonisation. Thus the question of cultural transfers is addressed to explore the particular ways in which British identity has been enriched by contacts with the Other. The relationship between the British and foreigners/others has played a crucial role in Britain's search for a national identity and in its construction for centuries, and is still relevant today.

British identity has always been forged through contacts with various cultural influences or through encounters with other nations. Those contacts, however, were often perceived as potentially threatening the supposed "essence" of the British nation. In 1785, an essay published in the *Lounger* n°19 bemoaned the heterogeneous, composite and hybrid nature of Britishness, seeing foreignness already oozing out of British identity.

> *A well-educated British gentleman, it may be truly said, is of no country whatever, he unites in himself the characteristics of all the foreign nations; he talks and dresses French, and sings Italian; he rivals the Spaniard in indolence, and the German in drinking, his house is Grecian, his offices Gothic, and his furniture Chinese. He preserves the same impartiality in his religion; and, finding no solid reason for preferring* Confuciu*s to* Brama*, or* Mahometanism *to* Christianity*, he has for all their doctrines an equal indulgence.* (*The Lounger* n°19, 11 June 1785.)

Of course, what the author criticises here is British identity expanding beyond geographical linguistic and religious boundaries and consequently being contaminated, so to speak, from outside, not only from Continental Europe, but also from much more distant Oriental countries. Of great

concern here in the text is the influence of foreign models and manners on the British self, the seeming lack of insularity in constructing the socio-cultural, political, artistic and even religious identity of Britain.

What the essay reveals is the increasing presence of cross-cultural transfers and contacts between Britain and other parts of the world from the 18th century onwards. This tells us how much British national history must be approached not just from a domestic inward-looking perspective but from a global one. It tells us that national histories cannot be understood without looking at the circulation of ideas and the various forms of friction that emerge from discoveries of and encounters with the Other, be they confrontational or leading to imitation, appropriation, cultural syncretism and combinatorial processes of identity-building. This implies the need to encompass European, as well as colonial, imperial and post-colonial histories.

Anti-gallican, anti-Italian and anti-Catholic feeling; the fear of Jacobitism; the fascination for and also fear of Orientals; the tensions within the empire, then its disintegration; the UK's relationship with Europe, or the new multicultural landscape of British society today constitute some of many phenomena that raise issues about what it means to be a British subject or citizen or to be considered foreign, alien, and why foreigners can be perceived from without the British isles but also from within. Cultural exchange can also occur through rejection and fiction mediated by the construction of difference, or by the attempt at negotiating one's identity. As revealed by Edward Said's seminal work on Orientalism[1], the Other is always "a construction", but as Homi Bhabha showed[2], from this seemingly monolithic construction stems the Other's voice sending contradictory signs of resistance.

From the foundation of the East India Company in 1600 with its profound desire to travel eastwards through, to give a few examples, the Act of Union of 1707, the creation of the British Empire, the impact of the arrival of the *Empire Windrush* in 1948, Enoch Powell's *Rivers of Blood* speech in April 1968, to the more recent suggestions made by former Prime Minister Gordon Brown to define and celebrate Britishness as a sum of differences yet to be united under a common sense of belonging through the emblematic Union Flag,[3] it seems fair to say that the history of Britain has always had to face anxieties over what defines and constitutes identity, underlining the aporia of essentialist theories to move towards a more recomposed kind of identity.[4]

This volume aims at examining why and how Otherness was thus fabricated and used. It looks at the performance and staging of foreignness

and selfhood through visual practises and discourses with their possible effects of distortions and stereotyping. This demands at times that we should decenter ourselves, even tropicalise ourselves or endorse the position of tropicopolitans, to use Srinivas Aravamudan's words,[5] to engage in a double optic – that of distance and proximity – to study the relationship between race, ethnicity and nationality.

The concept of Otherness is abstract and fluctuating. Its indeterminacy allows for various modes of representation which blend myth and reality. More often than not, the perception of the foreigner spawns a feeling of strangeness, unease, even defamiliarisation when the "native" is confronted with geographical, cultural and linguistic differences. In the 17th and 18th centuries, voyages of exploration, together with commercial and colonial trips from the West to the East Indies led the English to discover other peoples and territories. 19th-century British imperialism and colonisation, 20th-century decolonisation and the rather strained British relationship with Europe raised many issues that beg the question of how the Other has been perceived and represented in Britain.

These essays provide relevant case studies to explore the notions of Englishness and Britishness where the integration or the exclusion of difference plays a significant role. Although tackling specific issues related to Britishness and Otherness, they all contribute to mapping the many reactions in Britain and of Britons to the encounter with the Other, and help to identify similarities in these modes of encounter throughout the centuries. Starting with the modern period, two essays investigate how the notion and idea of Englishness came to be defined, and provide historical interpretations for a surge in Englishness. Anne-Claire Faucquez investigates the building up of a sense of Englishness in the colony of New York in the 17th and 18th centuries, whilst Xavier Cervantès analyses how Englishness and Britishness were further defined and strengthened in Britain in the 1720s in the context of the marked opposition to Italy, the Italian operatic community in London and Catholicism.

The essays all draw on different theoretical approaches, among which are cultural history, colonialism, post-colonialism, orientalism and feminism. Anne-Florence Quaireau proposes a post-colonial and feminist reading in her analysis of the encounter between Anna Jameson and Canadian natives. She uses Mary-Louise Pratt's concept of the "contact zone"[6] to investigate how gender shapes Jameson's account of the encounter with the Indians in *Winter Studies* and *Summer Rambles in Canada* (1838). Orientalism is tackled in three articles which examine the British presence in various Orients in the 19th and early 20th centuries. Daniel Foliard studies the Orient through photography, with the analysis

of British photographer James Robertson's work in Constantinople. Caroline Lehni investigates the British percepetion of Egypt through illustrations in 19th-century travel books. Finally Xavier Lachazette adopts a cultural and literary perspective of the British perception and representation of China through Somerset Maugham's writing *On a Chinese Screen* (1922).

Imperialim and the decline of the empire are both studied from various angles in this volume, looking at the perception of others from outside Britain but also from within. Maud Michaud examines how British missionaries shaped British identity and defined the contours of Otherness by analysing case studies of missionary work in Uganda and in the Great Lakes region in the last decades of the 19th century. Olivier Esteves and Philippe Vervaecke look at the perception (and rejection) of the Pakistani community in Britain after the Second World War, whilst Richard Davis analyses the complex position of Britain within the European Union and especially vis-à-vis France after the loss of its empire.

Two articles in this collection also examine the perception of Ireland from the perspective of exoticism and that of representing division. Valérie Morisson offers an original study of the British perception of the inhabitants of the Aran Islands, whilst Gabriel Gee analyses the theme of the division of space in Northern Ireland in the visual arts by focussing on works evoking borders, passages and markers.

Over the course of the volume, readers will discover the myriad ways in which the themes of cultural contacts and encounters allow us to understand the politics and aesthetics of cultural identity and difference.

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PART I:

FASHIONING ENGLISHNESS IN THE 17TH AND 18TH CENTURIES

CHAPTER ONE

OTHERNESS AND ENGLISH IDENTITY IN THE COLONY OF NEW YORK IN THE 17TH CENTURY

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When Charles II became king in 1660, under the period known as the Restoration, England was experiencing a new type of territorial conquest. The idea of empire was no longer seen as something purely religious, aiming at fighting the Spanish "popish" enemy, as the black legend has it, but had acquired a new economic dimension. The colonies belonging to foreign empires started to be perceived as new opportunities where England could trade and increase the Crown's revenues.[1] This hunger for conquest in North America was assuaged in August 1664 when England took possession of New Netherland, a small piece of Dutch territory lodged between New England and Virginia[2]. The new English colony was given by the king to his brother, the Duke of York who renamed it New York, and was turned into a royal colony when the Duke became James II, King of England, in 1685.

However, if New York was now officially part of the English empire, English influence was hard to spread in this former Dutch colony. Indeed, English people found themselves in a difficult position in which they were the leading and conquering authority but represented a minority group among an extremely heterogeneous population composed of Dutch, Swedish, Jewish, Huguenot and German settlers but also African slaves and Native Americans.[3]

For more than half a century, English authorities tried to impose themselves and anglicize the colony through various political, religious and cultural means. This strategy of conquest as well as this will to dominate other groups were what shaped the new English identity in the colony of New York. This environment of multiple others gave birth to a fluctuating identity shaped by the various representations English people made of foreigners, which evolved along the century according to threats

and needs. In other words, English identity in the colonies was both a mirror of the mother country and a product of the colonial environment.

This paper aims at illustrating the complexity of this process of identity-making in the particular context of the colony of New York in the second half of the 17th century. First, identity can be seen as an ambivalent concept as it differed between the population and the elites who tried to position themselves within the colony and the empire in relation to other groups and the mother country. English identity was thus forged artificially by the mother country and imposed on the population through a massive campaign of anglicization aimed at assimilating politically and culturally their European archenemy, the Dutch. Once the English had managed to assert their power and as Dutch influence started to fade, English identity was reshaped by the figure of a new "other": the African slaves, whose presence and concentration had become a real threat at the turn of the 18th century. English identity in the colony of New York had thus successively taken a national, religious and racial acceptation over less than half a century.

The ambivalence of English identity

Despite the very easy conquest of the colony in August 1664, when Director General Pieter Stuyvesant surrendered without any resistance, English authorities found it hard to impose themselves on the colony. First, it was not until the 1730s that English people managed to outgrow the Dutch population who represented 88% of the population of New York City in 1664 and 39.4% in 1730, while the English accounted for 4.5% in 1664 and 49.5% in 1730.[4] Indeed, New York attracted few English migrants who preferred to settle in the neighboring colonies of Virginia, New England or in the West Indies, which presented more economic opportunities, an easier access to land, lighter fiscal pressure and less religious heterogeneity (gathering either Congregationalists or Anglicans). Moreover, thanks to the economic prosperity of the Restoration, few English people left the country compared to Scots, or Irish-Scots—the descendants of Scottish settlers in Northern Ireland—who were mainly Presbyterians. To these were added a few Catholics, Congregationalists from New England, Quakers and Anabaptists. Charles Lodwyck, the New York mayor from 1694 to 1696, deplored such a great diversity among the population, declaring that his "chiefest unhappiness [t]here [wa]s too great a mixture of nations […] and ye English ye least part".[5]

The "English" community was in fact very diverse geographically and religiously and lacked an ethno-religious unity—that is, a cultural, social

and religious cohesion—contrary to Dutch and French people who all belonged to the same church, the Dutch Reformed church or *l'Église Françoise de la Nouvelle York*. Indeed, the London episcopacy, which had become the main ecclesiastical authority in the colony, had sent few ministers after the conquest and it was only by the end of the century that the Anglican Church could finally be established with the 1693 Ministry Act and could have its own service in Trinity Church which was built in the City of New York in 1697. Before that date, English people had to follow the services of the Dutch Reformed Church with English-speaking ministers, but it knew few followers. By the turn of the century, the representatives of Trinity Church felt that the Crown had failed in its colonizing role and said that the colony looked more like "a conquered Foreign Province held by the terrour of a Garrison, than an English Colony, possessed and settled by people of [its] own Nation".[6] It was precisely this lack of religious establishment which impinged on the success of English authorities.

English settlers also shared different conceptions of the Empire, which confronted one another at the time of the 1689 Glorious Revolution. Indeed, under the Stuarts era, the empire was essentially focused on the power of the king and was embodied in New York by the laws of the Duke of York, which aimed at turning the jurisdiction of the colony into a "kingly government"[7] and at "reviv[ing] the Memory of Old England amongst [them]".[8] From this perspective, in 1686 the Lords of Trade had established the Dominion of New England, a unified administration gathering the New England colonies—Massachusetts, Plymouth, New Hampshire, Maine, Narragansett, Rhode Island and Connecticut—as well as New York, East and West Jersey, in order to secure the regulation of trade through the reinforcement of the Navigation Acts and to coordinate a mutual defense of the colonies against French people established in New France and hostile Natives.

However, this royal effort of centralization was not welcomed by the colonies and proved a failure. New York settlers in particular were staunch supporters of free institutions and complained fiercely when Governor Dongan suppressed the Charter of Liberties in 1685, declaring:

> By word and writing we were promised and engaged the enjoyment of all privileges and liberties which other of his majesties subjects doe enjoy. Since that time we are deprived and prohibited of our birthright freedoms and privileges to which both wee and our ancestors were born. Laws and orders have been imposed upon us from time to time without our consent and therein we are totally deprived of a fundamental privilege of our English nation.[9]

This is one of the reasons why the overthrow of James II during the Glorious Revolution was such a relief in New York where it found an echo with Leisler's Rebellion. On October 23, 1689 a group of Dutch settlers led by the German Calvinist Jacob Leisler took over the fort in New York, declared martial law and imprisoned James II's representatives in order to demonstrate their support to the new English monarch, their fellow countryman, William of Orange. This event divided the city into two groups. One side gathered the Anglo-Dutch elite, essentially made of big landowners (Dutch *patroons*), wealthy merchants, members of the city, and colonial government and ministers; that is, all those who had largely benefitted from the advantages offered by James II and who wished to maintain the position of royal officials. The other side was mostly composed of small farmers, artisans, shopkeepers, and Dutch Calvinists who followed Jacob Leisler's enthusiasm and wished to see the restoration of a representative assembly in the colony. This struggle was the outcome of the resentment Dutch people had felt towards the English since the conquest. They despised the Dutch merchant elite, who had anglicized themselves and enjoyed many privileges such as commercial monopolies or political offices, but they also despised the Dutch clergy who had welcomed the "papist" enemy in the person of the Catholic governor, Thomas Dongan.

These revolutionaries were fighting in the name of English liberties and Protestantism against the Catholic Stuart rule. Indeed, when James II, as proprietor of the colony, appointed two Catholic governors (Anthony Brockholls, 1681-1683, and Thomas Dongan, 1683-1688), fear of a Catholic plot overwhelmed the City of New York. After Leisler's rebellion, rumors started to spread according to which James II intended to retain control over New York by joining with Catholic France during King William's War (1689-1697).[10] Far from the royal conception of a centralized empire, the settlers rather considered themselves as "a loose combination of territories defined by their common Protestantism".[11] The outcome of that rebellion was a systematic denial of Catholics' religious and civil liberties in the colony. The official instructions from London to governors ordered them "to permit a liberty of conscience to all Persons (except Papists)".[12] In 1700, the New York assembly passed a law that threatened life imprisonment for any Catholic priest who came to New York.[13]

English identity was thus an ambivalent notion in this second half of the seventeenth century, implying both the feeling of belonging to the mother country and its empire and a more autonomous acceptance putting the emphasis on its religious identity, a Protestant one, and its defense of

free institutions. Englishness thus served as a tool for the governing elites to impose their authority and try to assimilate politically and culturally the majority of the population, namely their Dutch archenemy.

The Dutch foe: identity-making through political and cultural assimilation

Peppered by three wars in almost half a century (1652-1654, 1665-1667, 1672-1674), Anglo-Dutch relations were rather tense in Europe and it is precisely with their archenemy that English people had to cohabitate on the southern tip of Manhattan Island. Forty years after the conquest, relations had not improved as this declaration of Governor Bellomont to the Lords of Trade in 1699 shows: "Those that are honest of the Dutch, are very ignorant, and can neither speak nor write proper English. […] Dutchmen […] were generally the meanest of the people, men extremely ignorant of all things, few of them understanding the English tongue much less the laws".[14]

However, English people had to adjust their stance and show a great deal of tolerance towards Dutch people because of their position as a conquering minority. The instructions of the Crown to Governor Nicolls (1664-1668) demanded "that [the authorities] w[ould] take them [Dutch people] into [their] protection, and that they shall continue to enjoy all their possessions (Forts only excepted) and the same freedome in trade".[15] Indeed, the first three English governors (Richard Nicolls, Francis Lovelace and Edmund Andros) tried to soften relations with the Dutch elite by nominating councilors who were close to the Dutch population, by allowing Dutch merchants to trade with England and by consenting that the Dutch Reformed Church should maintain a privileged position in the parishes where a majority of Dutch people lived as well as the existence of a Dutch school.[16]

The authorities then tried to assimilate this foreign population politically and culturally. In her study of racial relations in the City of New York, historian Thelma Wills Foote explains that the typical English strategy of conquest was to spread Englishness through the granting of national rights:

> For them [the English], practicing the art of colonial governance involved the extension of English rights to the mainly foreign born Protestant settler population, the incorporation of these peoples into the political community of loyal English subjects, and the transplantation of legitimating institutions of English culture for the cultivation of English civilities in the settlers.[17]

The passing of the 1683 Act for Naturalizing All these Foreign Nations at Present Inhabiting Within this Province and Professing Christianity and for Encouragement of Others to Come and Settle Within the Same suppressed all political distinction between English subjects and foreigners as long as they were Christians, that they had been New York residents for at least six years and that they be ready to swear allegiance to the Crown.[18] These rights included the freedom to trade or practice a craft, to inherit and bequeath property, to participate in the elections and hold political functions.

The Dutch were thus recognized as free denizens, an intermediate status between the English natural born subject and the foreigner. This title granted them the right to enjoy their property, to own lands, to bequeath their goods to their descendants, to keep on trading with the United Provinces in spite of the Navigation Acts and to practice their faith, and it prevented them from being enrolled in the militia to fight against their own country.

If tolerance was necessary to gain the favor of the Dutch population, religious assimilation was indispensable to assert English authority. Indeed, the anglicization of the colony went hand in hand with its anglicanisation, the Anglican Church acting as "an instrument of social control and political assimilation".[19] In 1693, Governor Fletcher (1692-1697) declared that the privileges and the liberties granted by English subjecthood were inseparable from spiritual duties, introduced in the Ministry Act. This law recognized the Anglican Church as the official religion in the colony and stressed the necessity to convert Dutch people in order to increase English hegemony over the colony. In 1711, Lewis Morris, who was to become governor of New Jersey in 1738, also underlined this necessity:

> It's not an easy task to persuade men to change their Religion. […] As the bringing over the Dutch will be of great use in this part of America, where their Numbers are so considerable, so to accomplish it will be difficult and a work of time. Most of them are ignorant of our Religion, many of them take the Character of it from our Enemies, whose practice it is to misrepresent it.[20]

The anglicization of the colony was reinforced in 1702 with the setting up of the SPG, the Society of Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Lands, the missionary branch of the Anglican Church in the colonies. The role of the missionaries was to promote Anglicanism, to convert as many settlers as possible and to teach the English language. In 1691, a bill had already been presented to the assembly to nominate a schoolteacher who could

teach children and young people how to read and write English in every town of the colony. In 1702, a school was erected, financed at the same time by private funds from wealthy Barbados planters, by the colonial assembly and by the tuition fees paid by the pupils' parents. In 1715, William Huddleston who had founded Trinity School in 1709 declared he was proud to have taught English to more than 650 French and Dutch people.[21] The SPG also showed some interest in converting African and Native American slaves and sent in 1704 Elie Neau, a Huguenot catechist who had joined the Anglican Church, to erect a school in New York City. Despite the reluctance of many masters who feared they would have to free their slaves if they were baptized, he still managed to receive some two hundred blacks and natives in his evening classes.[22]

The missionaries used little books called catechisms, which were printed in several languages in order to enable all nationalities to immerse themselves in Anglicanism. Nevertheless, teaching English was essential in order to understand the Bible and the Book of Common Payer. Spreading English was a convenient way to unite the empire and the English nation in a united linguistic community. Governor Lord Cornbury (1702-1708), who was persuaded that Dutch schools spread anti-English feelings, tried to limit lessons in Dutch as well as the number of Dutch teachers. Yet, the Dutch Consistory complained to the Classis of Amsterdam—the Dutch religious authority in the United Provinces— about the "evil, rude, and utterly insulting treatment"[23] they received by English authorities and were worried about their future:

> If things are to proceed in this fashion, practically holding back the training schools of the Dutch, in which alone our children could be educated in our religion, is not the hope of expecting a rich harvest and fruitage destroyed? Will not the churches necessarily in the course of time decline, and our labors in many respects be found fruitless?[24]

English authorities also tried to anglicize the population by restructuring the institutions of the colony. The introduction in 1691 of the Judiciary Act reformed its judiciary system and established the first Supreme Court as well as the Common Law. In 1703, a new system of units and measures was established with the Act to Bring the Weights and Measures of this Place, which hitherto have been according to the Standard of Holland, to that of England.[25] The English calendar was also progressively made official with its symbolic holidays such as Guy Fawkes Day, Gunpowder Treason Day, the Queen's birthday or the Queen's Coronation Day.[26]

If the identity of the conquering English settler was fashioned during

almost half a century by his will to dominate and assimilate his Dutch enemy, once this threat had disappeared at the turn of the century when English people had finally managed to get the upper hand numerically, politically and culturally, English identity was refashioned on the figure of a new other: the black man. This new identity had acquired a very different meaning, being no longer based on national grounds but on biological and racial characteristics.

A racialized identity

The colony's demographical landscape had evolved by the turn of the century. From an overwhelmingly Dutch population with a minority of English and French settlers and one fifth of black people (slave and free) in 1664, the colony in 1703 accounted for half of Dutch people, one third of English people, one tenth of French people and another one fifth of black people. If the proportion of black people within the city's population remained the same in 50 years, the political and economical stakes of slavery were different. English merchants had well established themselves within the Dutch slave routes between Africa and America and the economy of the colony was partially relying on slave labor. The importance slavery had gained in New York can justify the hardening of slave laws during this half century. As the Dutch threat no longer existed, English people started to focus on the figure of the African. If blackness was a sufficient ground to justify their otherness, one has to understand that it was only once they were considered a threat that they started to be stigmatized and excluded. Slavery in New Netherland was never codified, for instance, because at the time of settlement Blacks were less of a concern than Native Americans were. The emergence of the slave codes thus reflects the conscience of the elites about the potential dangers of the slave population and was an accurate reflection of the fears and apprehensions of the colony. Ironically, many slave laws targeting black people's gatherings, carrying arms, or attempts at "lifting up [their] hands against any Christian" (the 1702 Act for Regulating the Slaves), were passed before any rebellion happened in the colony. They thus emerged from the imagined fears of that "other", the mere thought of a conspiracy being sometimes more fearful than an actual rebellion.

Yet, New Yorkers' anxieties proved to be true on Sunday, April 6, 1712, when about twenty free and enslaved blacks set fire to a building of the East Ward and ambushed the white settlers who came to extinguish the blaze, killing nine people and injuring seven. Thirty years later, the city was prone to similar acts. A series of fires bursting throughout the city

between March 18th and April 6th 1741 led the governor to think of a new slave rebellion.

Authorities reacted violently, passing severe slave codes, incriminating black suspects frenetically; condemning them to extremely violent forms of punishment in order to assert their power on the population. Governor Hunter wrote to the Board of Trade in 1712 and recognized the brutality of the executions but explained that it was necessary for the population to be reassured: "I am informed that in the West Indies where their laws against their slaves are most severe, that in case of a conspiracy in which many are engaged a few only are executed for all example […] (but) nothing less could please the people".[27] He also apologized for the ruthlessness of the 1712 Negro Act, having in mind that in 1704 in New Jersey, the Act for Regulating Negro Indians and Mulatto Slaves was considered so severe that the Queen overruled it five years later on the grounds that "the Punishment to be inflicted on negroes &c is such as never was allowed by or known in the Laws of the Kingdom".[28]

The court proceedings, while focusing on the black scapegoats, temporarily united the factious white settlers around the discovery and suppression of a dangerous conspiracy from below, diverting their attention from the internal conflicts that had been dividing them since Leisler's rebellion. As historian Thomas Archdeacon put it: "fresher fears of a racially different, subversive element in the population submerged the remnants of outdated hostilities bred by national competition for dominance in Manhattan, and brought about an end to the first episode in the politics of ethnicity in New York City".[29] In his account of the 1741 proceedings, Judge Horsmanden told how this exclusion of black people from the white community provided by opposition solidarity within society, when for instance "upon the bells ringing […] great numbers of people […] came to the assistance of the lieutenant governor and his family," or how a black "villain" was carried to jail "upon the people's shoulders".[30] In this propaganda document, the aim of which was clearly to justify and defend the authorities' violent reaction, the inhabitants are described as heroes protecting their governor and city whereas the magistrates are represented as true patriots who saved the city against this hellish plot. Indeed, these prosecutions of black insurgency can be seen, as Bertram Wyatt-Brown described them, as "a communal rite, a celebration of white solidarity, in which individual slaves were sacrified to the sacred concept of white supremacy". According to him, "the standards of evidence used in court trials were so low, the means of obtaining damaging testimony so dubious, the impotence of constituted authority so evident, that insurrectionary prosecutions at law must be seen as a

religious more than a normal criminal process".[31] The outrageousness of the 1741 plot might have thus served as a catharsis to the anxieties of the white population.

As the fears of the black man grew, so did a new perception of English identity. According to historian Thelma Wills Foote, the idea of Englishness could include both inner and outer characteristics:

> The expansion of the communal boundaries of the English nation amounted to a reterritorialization of Englishness—that is, a movement from defining Englishness as primarily consisting of the external trait of having been born on the soil of England to positing certain internal traits of innate racial disposition as the essence of Englishness.[32]

Indeed, in the 17th century, race and nation were similar concepts. The idea of nation had not yet acquired its modern acceptation of a political and geographical entity but was understood as innate characteristics which fashioned the national character.[33] This essentialist conception of the nation thus possessed a racial character, as it could be inherited and transferred through blood. English people thus defined their belonging to the Anglo-Saxon race, which dated from the conquest of Brittany by Germanic peoples (Angles, Saxons and Jutes) in the 5th century. This heritage started to be celebrated in the 16th century at the time of the Reformation, when England was looking for the practices of the primitive church before the Norman Conquest. In the 17th century, the search for free political institutions dear to American colonies popularized this myth celebrating Anglo-Saxons as a people in love with liberty and representative institutions.[34]

This myth of the Anglo-Saxon race, which was used in the process of the anglicization of foreigners, was thus a way for English authorities to incorporate the different ethnicities which were present in the colony and which had in common being white and Protestant (the English, the Scottish, the Scot-Irish, the Dutch, the Scandinavians, the French Huguenots, the Germans) while excluding others who were considered as heathenish and inferior—Catholics, Africans and Natives. In 1706, the Act to Incourage the Baptizing of Negro, Indian and Mulatto Slaves ruled that conversion to Christianity did not change the legal status of enslaved Africans and stated that the status of the black child was determined by the status of the mother. From now on, the fate of the slave was sealed, no longer by lack of religion but by his color. This growing racialization of society also targeted free blacks, so that not only black slaves were differentiated but all black men. Already in 1670, free Africans and Native Americans were forbidden to own white servants; in 1677, a New York

court stated that any person of color brought to trial was presumed to be a slave unless proven otherwise. In 1706, manumitted slaves were banned from inheriting land and bequeathing it to their heirs.[35] Finally, the 1712 black code further restricted the conditions of emancipation of the slaves and the liberties of free blacks. This "idle slothfull people" could no longer have access to private property and the masters had to pay £200 to the city as well as an annual fee of £20 to the slave.[36] Even if this manumission decree was repealed in 1717, it made slave-owners very reluctant to free their slaves.

This political strategy of including all white Protestants, the elite along with the middling and poorer sort, was a way to create a buffer class between black people and the elites, functioning as a defense against a potential threat of rebellion. Colonial governments thus used law as a shield in order to divide society along the color line and prevent any forms of class solidarity similar to what happened in Virginia with the 1676 Bacon's rebellion which gathered the "giddy multitude;" that is, "an amalgam of indentured servants and slaves, of poor whites and blacks, of landless freemen and debtors" against planters.[37] Englishness was thus not only defined by religion, line of descent and language, but also by physical attributes and skin color. This is how the notion of race linked to a people and its culture, the "English race", moved on to a biological notion, the "Anglo-Saxon race", on which New York slave laws were based. The colonial government thus instrumentalized this concept of "race" in order to control the fears of society, but also to help English people establish their authority. Kathleen Wilson summed up this process as follows:

> Race, like gender and ethnicity was a historically contingent construction that did not describe empirical, static or absolute conditions in societies, but positional relationships made and unmade in historical circumstances and manipulated in the pursuit of power. Race was identified and signified through religion, custom, language, climate, aesthetics and historical time as much as physiognomy and skin color.[38]

The stigmatization of the "Other"—that is, the African, the Mulatto or the Native American—reinforced in turn the image of the Englishman as a free man. After the murder of the Hallett family of Newtown in Queens County in 1708 by a Native American man and an African woman, the New York assembly passed an Act for Preventing the Conspiracy of Slaves, which aimed at condemning any acts of rebellion of a slave against his or her master or "any other of her Majesty's Liege People" to capital punishment.[39] Thus, a crime against another slave, a white servant or a foreigner—Catholics for instance—was less punishable than against a free

Englishman, a subject of the king.

The presence of black people in the colony also modified the way white people considered labor and social relations as it eroded the distinctions between English subjects and denizens while stigmatizing the harshest forms of labor and assigned them to Africans only. Indeed, many denizens tried to fight against the competition of black labor and tried to distinguish themselves by claiming for their rights as free settlers and presenting themselves as honest and virtuous people.[40] Hendrick Van Dijck, a Dutch worker, complained for instance about the type of work he had to do, comparing it to slaves': "the Director […] employed me very rarely and mostly as his boy; ordering me to look to the hogs and to keep these from the fort which a negro could have easily done".[41] Even free Native Americans tried to stress their difference with black people, who were nothing but slaves. In his 1678 travel account, Charles Wolley, an Anglican chaplain, noted that "the Indians look upon these Negroes or blacks as an anomalous Issue, meer Edomites, hewers of Wood and drawers of Water".[42]

Englishness thus came to be equated with whiteness, freedom and salvation whereas blackness was associated with slavery and spiritual degradation. In 1695, an assembly of the ministers of Kings County declared they wanted to save the settlers who had returned to a primitive condition since their arrival in the colonies. Black people had to be saved and whitened through conversion; whereas one had to prevent the settlers from turning black: "If it is not now held up and continued, by the preaching of the Gospel, through the sending over of ministers for this purpose, the very negroes may be washed and become white by the Gospel, while we may be turned into negroes, and become black and polluted".[43]

As Hume put it, identity is not only "I am" but also "you are" and "they are".[44] Indeed, identity is far from being a fixed, permanent idea but is constantly moving, constructing and deconstructing itself according to the environment in which it is immersed and the "others" the self encounters. Identity cannot exist by itself and is shaped by the representations one makes of others, those who differ from the self. In the colonies, English people were confronted by new environments, new figures of otherness which in turn shaped their identity. Settling in a royal colony, belonging to the king's brother and then to the king himself, English people claimed their pride as English subjects belonging to the English empire and subjected to the king's central authority. Yet, as staunch defenders of English liberties, settlers also had in mind a more autonomous conception of empire, especially after the 1689 Glorious

Revolution: a less centralized one which was freed of any Stuart tinge. Putting the emphasis on its religious identity—a Protestant one—the governing elites used Englishness to impose their authority and try to assimilate politically and culturally the majority of the population, namely their Dutch archenemy. This process of inclusion of white Protestants went hand in hand with the exclusion of Catholics and black slaves, conferring to Englishness a religious and racial acceptation. The construction of Englishness in the colony of New York thus served several purposes: it was successively a survival strategy, a political and religious means to assimilate the heterogeneous population and assert their authority, and finally a racial tool to control and manipulate the fears of the population so as to impose the colonial government's authority.

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CHAPTER TWO

"NULL'ALTRA MUSICA E QUI GRADITA
CHE LA NOSTRA"?
CULTURAL POLITICS, ANTI-CATHOLIC
ANXIETY, AND THE ITALIAN OPERATIC
COMMUNITY IN LONDON IN THE 1720S

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The importation of Italian opera and its success among polite society
was a matter of considerable controversy in England in the early decades
of the 18th century. The implications of this wide-ranging cultural
phenomenon were discussed not only in purely musical or even aesthetic
terms but primarily in broader social, political, and even religious ones.
The introduction into Britain of an alien element triggered a great deal of
cultural anxiety. At that crucial period when the sense of British national
identity was still in the making and was being defined by opposition to the
French and southern Other(s)[1], the introduction of a previously unknown
form of thoroughly Italian entertainment was bound to provoke an upsurge
of patriotism. For the many critics and satirists of Italian opera, its success
in becoming an essential feature of élite culture wounded the traditional
British sense of cultural insularity, vigorously trumpeted with nationalistic
pride. Italian-Continental contamination offered evidence of the overall
decline of the nation in general and of the corrupt cosmopolitan taste of
the ruling élite in particular.

The flood of criticism and satire of Italian opera was based upon a few
recurring tropes, and these built on and reinforced at the same time the
xenophobic stereotype of the Italian and of Italy that had begun to emerge
back in the Renaissance. To borrow Chesterfield's striking phrase, Italy
was a "foul sink of illiberal Vices and manners"[2], and her typical
inhabitant was a devious, greedy, hypocritical coward prone to violence,