

London Semester: Spring 2009
LOND 933: Colonial Impact on the Shaping of British Identity

Meeting Times: Tuesdays and Thursdays, 10:00 AM – Noon, program center.

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This seminar focuses on a critical examination of the formation of a national English identity, not via its preferred self-definitions, but as a product of Britain's sustained interaction with its colonial "peripheries"—the Caribbean and Africa, the Indian subcontinent and the Far East. This examination will be carried out in London where there has been, until relatively recently, both a more or less consolidated vision of a homogeneous (and exclusive) English/British identity as well as the reality of increasingly variegated interactions with substantial immigrant populations from these former colonies.

Such a focus enables the exploration of a subject—national self-definition and identity—that continues to preoccupy scholars in a number of fields (history, politics, literature) despite the relentless drive towards globalization that presumably is producing a world without national boundaries. In particular, the inquiry this seminar undertakes rests on the recognition, currently central to the study of British history and cultural studies, of the seminal impact of the so-called peripheries on the making of British identity. As such, our examination also looks at the formation of what is in effect a multicultural, multiracial Britain, at odds with the much more familiar concept of "this island nation" as defined by a uniform (white, English, Protestant) identity.

Bearing in mind that national identity is a product of "organized remembering and deliberate forgetting," this seminar will simultaneously explore the memories, myths, and histories that underwrote dominant representations of English identity as well as those invoked by marginalized populations that nonetheless worked their way into standard narratives, in the process contesting or modifying them. Thus, for example, in addition to the writings of some important historical, anthropological and cultural theorists (Linda Colley, Kathleen Wilson, Catherine Hall, David Armitage, Sidney Mintz, Stuart Hall, Uday Singh Mehta), the seminar examines the shaping of English national identity by closely reading canonical literary writers (Defoe, Conrad, and Mary Shelly, among others) and philosophers (Locke, Mill) alongside the rich literature of the African and South Asian diasporas within Britain (Equiano, Naipaul, Selvon, Rushdie, Kureishi, etc.). These writers often reworked the canonical English text to redefine Englishness in a multicultural and multiracial fashion.

Significantly, a number of these reformulations of English national identity are set in London, recognizing it as a primary site within which multicultural and multiracial identities have been and continue to be forged. Being located in London gives the

seminar participants access to, and an understanding of, the physical spaces within which these identities were mapped. Many sites in and around London will prove to be particularly valuable in complementing our discussions of the historical and literary texts in the morning sessions and will provide a significant context for an overall understanding of the seminar's subject matter.

Readings:

All articles in the syllabus are available on Blackboard and will be copied to a CD-ROM which will be distributed to you in London. There are a few books required which can either be purchased in the US and taken with you or purchased (usually second hand) in London. Book prices are generally higher in London, certainly higher than some on-line used book services in the US (e.g. Amazon.com).

Assignments:

There are three papers/projects assigned for the course, each covering the previous section of the class. The first covers the classes between February 17 and March 5, examining materials prior to the 19th century. The second covers the classes between March 10 and 19, covering 19th century materials. And the final paper covers the course materials between March 31 and May 5 (the second half of the course), the 20th-21st centuries. They are due as follows:

First Assignment: March 10

Second Assignment: March 31 (you can turn it in before spring break if you prefer)

Third Assignment: May 7

In each of the assignments, you are to engage the materials and experiences covered during that section of the course. You can ask any questions of the materials or cover any aspect of them that is of interest to you, but you must use *both* literary and historical materials. Normally the assignments will be done as traditional papers using any standard method of citation (MLA, Chicago, etc.). Papers can be printed out or sent as email attachments if printing is not possible. If you are going to send them by email, send them to Steve (steven.volk@oberlin.edu).

First Assignment: 5-7 pages

Second Assignment: 5-7 pages

Third Assignment: 10-12 pages

You may also consider doing a project, dealing with the materials in a different format (as a video, oral history, etc.). In this latter case, you need clear the assignment with one of us.

NOTE: All papers and projects are due on the day specified and should be turned in at the start of class. Papers/projects turned in late without an explicit extension will be graded down one grade step for each day that they are late. It is always your best option to

discuss any issues regarding turning in work with one of us as soon as you know there may be a problem.

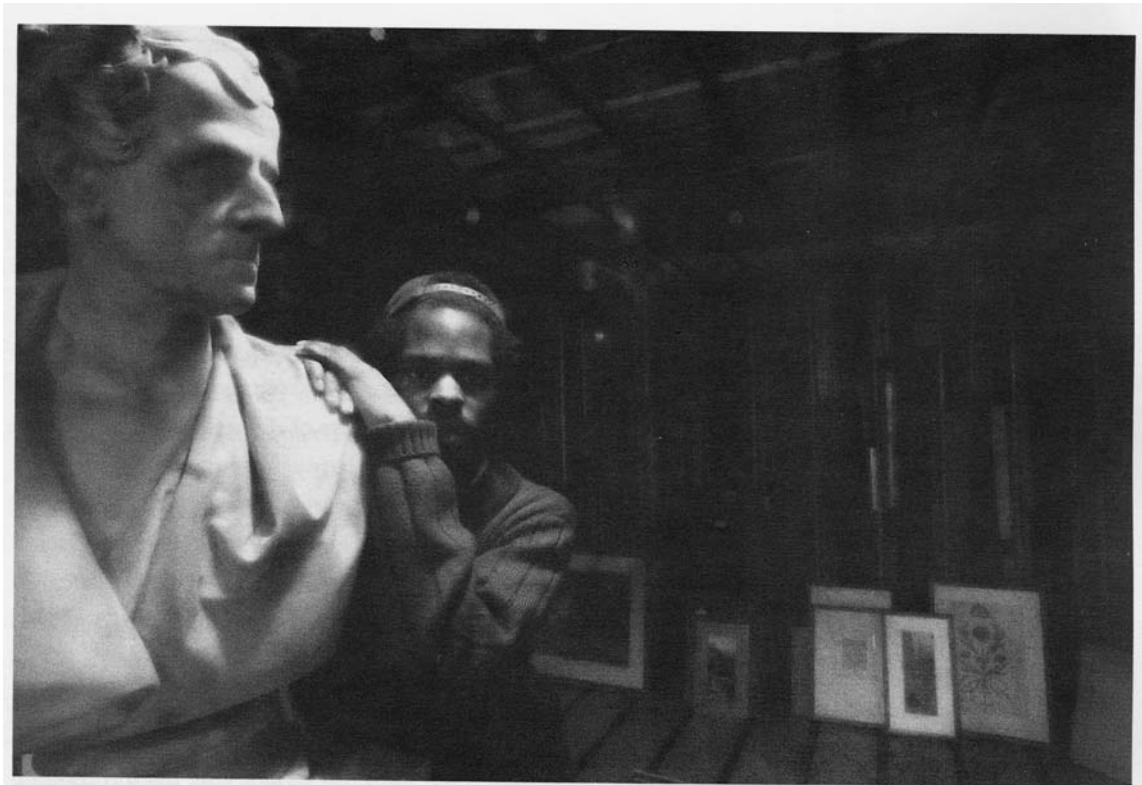
Honor Code: Students are required to sign an honor code on all their work. For further information on plagiarism at Oberlin, see the student [Honor Code](https://oncampus.oberlin.edu/courses/1/SL-dean/content/_187961_1/honorcode.pdf) [https://oncampus.oberlin.edu/courses/1/SL-dean/content/_187961_1/honorcode.pdf]

Grading:

Participation: 15%
First Assignment: 20%
Second Assignment: 25%
Third Assignment: 40%

Students with Disabilities:

Appropriate accommodations will always be granted to students with documented disabilities. Any questions about the necessary process of documenting disabilities should be addressed to Jane Boomer, Coordinator of Services for Students with Disabilities (Peters G27-28; x5-5588).



86. David A. Bailey, 'From the Sheffield residency on the centenary of the Mappin Art Gallery', 1987.

Syllabus

Friday, Feb. 6: Orientation, 10:00 AM

Saturday, Feb. 7: Orientation activities, 9:30-1:30

Sunday, Feb. 8: London markets walk, 9:30 AM

Feb. 10, 12: Introduction – England, Britain, and Identity

Readings:

Catherine Hall, “British Cultural Identities and the Legacy of Empire,” in David Morley and Kevin Robins, eds., *British Cultural Studies: Geography, Nationality, and Identity* (New York: Oxford, 2001), 27-39.

Ian Baucom, “Introduction: Locating English Identity,” in *Out of Place: Englishness, Empire, and the Locations of Identity* (Princeton: Princeton University Press), pp. 3-40.

Krishan Kumar, “‘Englishness’ and English National Identity,” in David Morley and Kevin Robins, eds., *British Cultural Studies: Geography, Nationality, and Identity* (New York: Oxford, 2001), 41-55.

Henry Louis Gates, Jr., “Black London,” *New Yorker* (April 28 and May 5, 1997): 194-205.

Colin Wright, “Conserving Purity, Labouring the Past: A Tropological Evolution of Englishness,” in Graham McPhee and Prem Poddar, eds., *Empire and After: Englishness in Postcolonial Perspective* (New York, Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2007), 159-180.

Feb. 17, 19: Britain Invented – British Identity in the late 17th and 18th Centuries

Readings:

Linda Colley, “Britishness and Otherness: An Argument,” *The Journal of British Studies*, 31:4 (Oct., 1992): 309-329.

Kathleen Wilson, “Introduction: Nations, Empires and Identities in the Eighteenth Century,” and “Citizenship, Empire and Modernity in the English Provinces,” in *The Island Race: Englishness, Empire and Gender in the Eighteenth Century* (London and NY: Routledge, 2003): 1-53.

David Armitage, “The Empire of the Seas,” and “Liberty and Empire,” in *The Ideological Origins of the British Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), pp. 100-145.

Michael H. Fisher, “Asians in Britain: Negotiations of Identity through Self-Representation,” in Kathleen Wilson, ed., *A New Imperial History: Culture, Identity, and*

Modernity in Britain and the Empire, 1660-1840 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004): 91-112.

Feb. 24, 26: British Colonialism and the Mapping of an English (National) Identity

Readings:



Daniel Defoe, *Robinson Crusoe* (any edition, although the Norton Critical edition is quite valuable). [1719]

Sam Selvon, *Moses Ascending* (London, Portsmouth, NH: Heineman), 1991.

[NOTE: During this week we will arrange a to visit the exhibit at the British Library on “Taking Liberties: The Struggle for Britain’s Freedoms and Rights.” The exhibition closes on March 1, 2009]

March 3, 5: Slavery, Liberty, and British Identity in the 18th Century

Readings:

Uday Singh Mehta, “Strategies: Liberal Conventions and Imperial Exclusions,” in *Liberalism and Empire: A Study in Nineteenth-Century British Liberal Thought* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999), pp. 46-64 (top).

[John Locke, *Fundamental Constitutions of Carolina*](http://www.yale.edu/lawweb/avalon/states/nc05.htm) [1669]: [http://www.yale.edu/lawweb/avalon/states/nc05.htm].

Selections from John Locke's *Two Treatises of Government*:

From the *First Treatise of Government*

Book 1, Chapter 1: Paragraphs 1,2,3; [http://www.lonang.com/exlibris/locke/loc-101a.htm]

From the *Second Treatise of Government*

Chapter 4 [http://www.lonang.com/exlibris/locke/loc-204.htm]

Chapter 6 [http://www.lonang.com/exlibris/locke/loc-206.htm]

Chapter 7 (paragraphs 77-86) [http://www.lonang.com/exlibris/locke/loc-207.htm]

Olaudah Equiano, *Life of Olaudah Equiano, of Gustavus Vassa, the African* (Dover Thrift Editions, 1999)[1790]. Other editions also acceptable.

Optional:

Anthony Padgen, *Lords of All the World: Ideologies of Empire in Spain, Britain, and France, c. 1500 to c. 1850* (New Haven: Yale University Press), 1995.

David Armitage, *The Ideological Origins of the British Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), 2000.

FIRST PAPER DUE ON MARCH 10: 5-7 PAGES ON ANY MATERIALS PRIOR TO THE 19TH CENTURY

March 10, 12: Liberalism and Empire

Readings:

Catherine Hall, *Civilizing Subjects: Metropole and Colony in the English Imagination 1830-1867* (Cambridge: Polity, 2002), Introduction, Prologue and Mapping Jamaica (pp.1-83) and Part II (Metropolis, Colony and Empire), pp. 265-433. [Note: Book readily available in used edition via amazon.co.uk or at many bookstores in London.]

[John Stuart Mill, "On Liberty"](http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/jsmill-lib.html) (1859), selections to be assigned: [http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/jsmill-lib.html].

Simon Gikandi, "Through the Prism of Race: Black Subjects and English Identity," in *Maps of Englishness. Writing Identity in the Culture of Colonialism* (Columbia, 1996), pp. 50-83.

Optional:

Andrew Sartori, "The British Empire and its Liberal Mission," *The Journal of Modern History* 78 (September 2006): 623-642.

Eileen P. Sullivan, "Liberalism and Imperialism: J.S. Mill's Defense of the British Empire," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 44:4 (October-December 1983): 599-617.

Uday Singh Mehta, *Liberalism and Empire: A Study in Nineteenth-Century British Liberal Thought* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press), 1999.

March 17, 19: British Romanticism and Empire in the 19th Century

Readings:

William Wordsworth, *Prelude, Book 7: Residence in London*.

Selections from Thomas DeQuincey, *Confessions of an English Opium-Eater*.

Selections from Wordsworth's *Guide to the Lakes*.

Selections from P.B. Macaulay's "Southey's Colloquies on Society."

Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein* [any edition will do; if you want a recommendation: *Frankenstein, or, The Modern Prometheus*; edited with an introduction and notes by M.K. Joseph (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press) 1998].

Samuel Coleridge, [*Rime of the Ancient Mariner*](#) (any edition, or various on-line versions. The Electronic Text Center at the University of Virginia has a very nice on-line edition with illustrations from many 19th century editions of the work: <http://etext.lib.virginia.edu/toc/modeng/public/Col2Mar.html>)

March 24, 26: Spring Break

**SECOND ASSIGNMENT DUE ON MARCH 31 COVERING MATERIALS
DEALING WITH THE 19TH CENTURY**

March 31, April 2 and April 7, 9: Inhabiting Englishness

Readings:

V.S. Naipaul, *The Enigma of Arrival* (any edition will do, you might try the 1988 Vintage edition).

Joseph Conrad, *Heart of Darkness* (any edition).

Hari Kunzru, *The Impressionist* (Plume), 2003.



... it's as if the Black experience is only lived within an urban environment. I thought I liked the LAKE DISTRICT, where I wandered lonely as a BLACK face in a sea of white. A visit to the countryside is always accompanied by a feeling of unease, dread ...

Plate 23. Ingrid Pollard, from the Pastoral Interlude Series, 1987-88.

Optional background reading:

Rudyard Kipling, *Kim* (any edition). Available on-line at: <http://www.online-literature.com/kipling/kim/>

E.M. Forster, *Passage to India* (any edition; the Harvest 1984 reprint edition is relatively inexpensive).

For this unit, we will also view a film, *Lagaan* (Dir: Ashutosh Gowariker, 2001). You might want to read two essays that relate cricket to (English) national identity:

Satadru Sen, "Cameleon Games: Ranjitsinghji's Politics of Race and Gender," *Journal of Colonialism and Colonial History* 2:3 (Dec. 2001).

Anuradha Dingwaney Needham, "Inhabiting the Metropole: C.L.R. James and the Postcolonial Intellectual of the African Diaspora," *Diaspora: A Journal of Transnational Studies* (1993): 281-304.



April 14, 16: The End of Empire, Re-Racializing England, Clinging to the Empire

[NOTE: Visit “War to Windrush” exhibition at the Imperial War Museum sometime this week – open until November 2009]

Readings:

John M. MacKenzie, “The Persistence of Empire in Metropolitan Culture,” in Stuart Ward, ed., *British Culture and the End of Empire* (Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press, 2001), pp. 21-36.

Bill Schwarz, “‘The Only White Man In There’: The Re-Racialisation of England, 1956-1968,” *Race and Class* 38 (1996): 65-78.

Paul Gilroy, “A London sumting dis...” *Critical Quarterly* 41:3 (1999): 58-69.

Kathleen Paul, "Communities of Britishness: Migration in the Last Gasp of Empire," in Stuart Ward, ed., *British Culture and the End of Empire* (Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press, 2001), pp. 180-199.

Wendy Webster, "Immigration," *Englishness and Empire, 1939-1965* (NY: Oxford University Press, 2005), pp. 149-181.

April 21, 23: A New Kind of English[ness]



(Martin Parr)

Readings:

Hanif Kureishi, *The Buddha of Suburbia* (Penguin), 1991.

Hanif Kureishi, "The Rainbow Sign," in *London Kills Me* (Penguin), pp. 3-37.

Hanif Kureishi, "Hanif Kureishi on London," *Critical Quarterly* 41:3 (1999): 37-56.

Stuart Hall, "New Ethnicities," in David Morley and Kuan-Hsing Chen, eds., *Stuart Hall: Critical Dialogues in Cultural Studies* (London and New York: Routledge, 1996), pp. 441-449.

April 28, 30, May 5: Domestication by Cappuccino, or "Eating the Other". England, the Empire's Others, and Consumption in the 21st Century

[NOTE: Visit to "London, Sugar, and Slavery" exhibit at Museum of London, Docklands. See information at:

<http://www.museumdocklands.org.uk/English/EventsExhibitions/Special/LSS/>]

Readings:

Sidney Mintz, *Sweetness and Power: The Place of Sugar in Modern History* (NY: Penguin), 1986.

Philip Crang and Peter Jackson, "Geographies of Consumption," in David Morley and Kevin Robins, eds., *British Cultural Studies: Geography, Nationality, and Identity* (New York: Oxford, 2001), 327-342.

Stephen Driver and Luke Martell, “Blair and ‘Britishness,’” in David Morley and Kevin Robins, eds., *British Cultural Studies: Geography, Nationality, and Identity* (New York: Oxford, 2001), 461-472.

Ros Coward, “A Question of Identity (I),” *Observer*, 15 October 2000.

Stuart Hall, “A Question of Identity (II),” *Observer*, 15 October 2000.

Selections from the Runnymede Trust’s report, *The Future of Multi-Ethnic Britain* (2000), pp. 2-39.

**THIRD ASSIGNMENT DUE ON MAY 7, DEALING WITH ANY MATERIALS
AFTER THE 19TH CENTURY**

May 7: Conclusions

Readings:

Matthew Hart, “All the Downtown Tories: Mourning Englishness in New York,” in Graham McPhee and Prem Poddar, eds., *Empire and After: Englishness in Postcolonial Perspective* (New York and Oxford: Berghahn books, 2007): 181-199.



(Martin Parr)