

## Editor's Introduction

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**T**he articles in this issue continue a theme that is so important in recent British historiography: the relationship of religion and ethnicity to empire, nation, and state. Three articles also address the implications of the intimate relationships between men and women for British nationalism and imperialism. We are also happy to include two articles on Islam.

Philip J. Stern's article, "'A Politie of Civill & Military Power': Political Thought and the Late Seventeenth-Century Foundations of the East India Company-State," presents an exciting new perspective on the early modern state. Recently, historians have suggested that early modern states can be seen as composite forms with overlapping jurisdictions that may or may not have had definite boundaries. In this context, Stern argues that as early as the seventeenth century, the East India Company asserted itself as a sovereign power. It established alderman's courts in places such as Madras to claim its own legal jurisdiction and even declared "a form of sovereignty over the sea lanes" (254). Stern thus convincingly challenges the traditional understanding that the East India Company was a trading company of merchants that only acquired sovereignty in India after the battle of Plassey in 1757.

Nabil Matar gives us a surprising and insightful overview of the intellectual, diplomatic, and commercial understanding of Islam in "Islam in Britain, 1689–1750." First, he points out that as part of his wider call for religious toleration, John Locke actually advocated edenization, the granting of citizenship by royal patent, for Muslim residents in Britain.<sup>1</sup> Second, he shows that during the early eighteenth-century wars, North African Muslim countries offered aid to the British, who eagerly received it. This is an interesting counterpoint to the attitude toward trade and war with Muslim rulers expressed by some East India Company officials in Stern's article. Third, Matar uses the case of Joseph Morgan to argue that some British writers were beginning to study Islam on its own terms; they even criticized their own compatriots for an unjustified attitude of superiority toward Muslims. In sum, Matar demonstrates that not all early modern British people were hostile to Islam and that some were actually sympathetic or at least open-minded.

In "Race and Erasure: Sara Baartman and Hendrik Cesars in Cape Town and London," Pamela Scully and Clifton Crais shed new light on the woman known

<sup>1</sup> For a discussion of edenization and naturalization from a somewhat earlier English perspective, see Jacob Selwood, "'English-Born Reputed Strangers': Birth and Descent in Seventeenth-Century London," *Journal of British Studies* 44, no. 4 (October 2005): 728–53.

as the “Hottentot Venus,” the canonical subject of much important recent work in postcolonial studies on race, gender, and representation. Scully and Crais provide a subtle analysis of the problem of race, class, gender, and agency in the early nineteenth century and new facts about Sara Baartman’s life. Based on extensive research in South Africa and London, the article presents a richly detailed account of her life as a Khoekhoe woman in Cape Town. Scully and Crais reveal, for instance, that she was older and more experienced than has been previously thought. Furthermore, while scholars have long assumed that Hendrik Cesars, who put her on display in London, was a white Boer, he was actually considered to be a free black in the Cape Colony. Sara Baartmann therefore emerges not just as an object of racist representation but as a woman who navigated the dangerous shoals of empire.

In “English Cosmopolitanism and/as Nationalism: The Great Exhibition, the Mid-Victorian Divorce Law Reform, and Brontë’s *Villette*,” Vlasta Vranjes ingeniously asserts that nineteenth-century English liberals both incorporated difference into their definitions of nationalism and simultaneously asserted their superiority to the other. Brontë was writing *Villette* in the context of the Great Exhibition and divorce law reform. Vranjes argues that the responses to the Great Exhibition celebrated Englishness as enriched by the cultures of all nations, but at the same time, England also surpassed them. During the divorce law debate, opponents of reform recognized that by essentially prohibiting divorce for women, England had retained some Catholic elements and thus exemplified a more universalistic Christianity than other Protestant nations. Finally, Vranjes analyzes the hybrid characters Brontë creates in *Villette* to show that they combine elements of Protestantism and Catholicism, masculinity and femininity, and Englishness and foreignness. Each of these three themes enables Vranjes to explore the relationship between cosmopolitanism and nationalism.

Gail Savage’s article, “More than One Mrs. Mir Anwaruddin: Islamic Divorce and Christian Marriage in Early Twentieth-Century London,” also concerns questions of religion and marital indissolubility. Savage ably dissects the fascinating case of Mir Anwaruddin, who married one English woman and then tried to divorce her in India in order to marry another English woman. This article also illuminates the intersection of Indian and English law in both the colonial and metropolitan context. Mir Anwaruddin was an Indian Muslim who obtained an English law degree and tried to use both English law and customary Muslim law to solve his marital woes. Judges tried to balance his claims as a husband with their anxieties about interracial marriage and Islamic law in World War I-era England.

In “The People’s Protectors? The Irish Republican Army and the ‘Belfast Pogrom,’ 1920–1922,” Robert Lynch undercuts the heroic image of the Irish Republican Army (IRA) as defenders of the Catholic population of Ireland during the years of war and partition. He demonstrates that while the Catholic population indeed faced horrific violence during this era, the Ancient Order of Hibernians was actually much more important in protecting them from unionist mobs than the IRA. Lynch depicts the IRA in Belfast as a small organization that focused more on attacking the Hibernians as rivals than on defending the Catholic population.