

José Igor Prieto-Arranz  
University of the Balearic Islands

## ***DURABILITY OR TRANSIENCE? ENGLISHNESS AND THE LEGACY OF THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND<sup>1</sup>***

**Keywords:** *Anti-Catholicism, Church of England, Elizabeth I, Englishness, Otherness, Shekhar Kapur*

**Abstract:** *Whig historiography has long linked Englishness to an English Protestant church. In the face of evidence suggesting that this pillar of Englishness is shaking in the current secularising times, this article aims to explore the Church of England's contribution to the definition of Englishness by addressing the following questions: Can any elements be identified in 16<sup>th</sup>-century English culture as instrumental in the country's smooth transition to the English Reformation?; Which role did the Church of England and Protestantism play in the consolidation of English / British national identity?; Does contemporary English society still bear the imprint of the Church of England? On the assumption that "'religion' may exist outside the forms of the churches" (Robbins 82), this work presents data suggesting that England's (and even Britain's) religious heritage has left indelible traces which remain latent in the English imagiNation. Evidence will be supported by a brief analysis of Shekhar Kapur's recent Elizabeth films, which will be shown to borrow from Elizabeth's official iconography and so contribute to the dissemination of formerly hegemonic discourses.*

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