A Nation Transformed

A Nation Transformed is a major collection of essays by a mix of young and eminent scholars of early-modern English history, literature and political thought. The fruit of an intense interdisciplinary two-day conference held at the Huntington Library, California, it asks whether and in what ways the culture and politics of early-modern England was transformed by the second half of the seventeenth century.

In sharp contrast to those who have emphasized continuity and the persistence of the ancien regime, the contributors argue that England in 1700 was profoundly different from what it had been in 1640 – so different in fact as to be deemed a modernizing society. Essays in the volume deal with changes in natural philosophy, literature, religion, politics, political thought and political economy. The fresh insights offered here, based on new and innovative research, will interest scholars and students of early-modern history, Renaissance and Augustan literature and historians of political thought.

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A NATION TRANSFORMED

England after the Restoration

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Acknowledgements

This book took shape at the Huntington Library in San Marino, CA. In November 1996 a group of scholars from North America and Great Britain met to discuss England after the Restoration. Our explicit purpose was to challenge the conventions of recent Stuart historiography, which have emphasized consensus and continuity over conflict and change. We thank the trustees of the Huntington for generously sponsoring this two-day gathering. We are especially grateful to Robert C. Ritchie, the Huntington’s Director of Research. Roy responded warmly to our original conference proposal and provided vigorous intellectual and material support throughout. This volume would not have been possible without his efforts. We also thank Peter Lake, whose comments brought the conference to a close. Though not reproduced here, Peter’s remarks lent vibrancy to our collective deliberations; their impact can be seen in many of this volume’s individual essays. Finally, we thank our fellow contributors for the quality of their research, the timeliness of their submissions and the patience with which they have met our editorial requests.

In a less tangible sense, this book originated fifteen years ago at the Bodleian Library. Pincus the historian and Houston the political scientist met during a readers’ tug-of-war over the manuscript of Edmund Ludlow’s *Voyce from the Watchtower*. Pincus was researching the Anglo-Dutch wars; Houston was tracing the republican imagination. Each was guided in his investigations by Wallace MacCaffrey. For nearly two decades Wallace has provided each of us a model, as both teacher and scholar, for combining fine-grained historical research and questions of broad intellectual concern. We dedicate this volume to him.

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