

# Fashioning National Identity in 19<sup>th</sup> Century Britain

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## Abstract

*The purpose of this paper is to underline several features displayed in the representation of the nineteenth-century Englishness, which emphasize the constructedness of national identity.*

*For this aim I have chosen three materials that, in my opinion, are illustrative examples of the way Britain's imperial mission was propagated through visual media. The first one, 'Blacks celebrating the Emancipation of Slaves in British dominions' (1834), is discussed in close relation with the social impact of the abolition of slavery in 1833. Further on, I will focus on another colonial discourses—the cover image of *True as Steel*, an adventure novel written by G. A. Henty in the 1880s. Last, I have chosen for analysis an illustration from *Heroes of Britain in Peace and War* by E. Hodder (1894), which shows a clear shift of perspective: here, savages were no longer 'good', but, on the contrary, they could be civilized only by armed force.*