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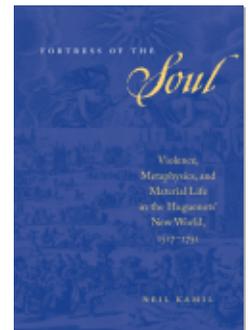
Fortress of the Soul

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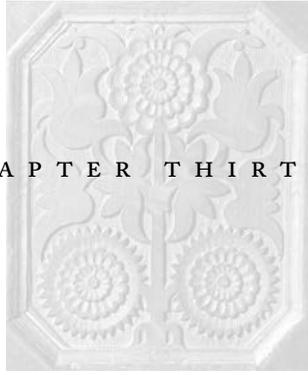


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“Fraudulent father-Frenchmen”

The Huguenot Counterfeit and the Threat to England’s Internal Security

❧ Universal Artisans ❧

Fear of outsiders bringing innovation “near” spread to the refugees themselves. Hence, life in the shadows did not end for Huguenot artisans upon their arrival in London, that great transatlantic entrepôt for refugee labor on the way to the New World. In many cases, despite talk of unity among Protestants, the refugees’ subterranean culture was extended to new contexts in the refuge. Highly skilled Huguenot and Walloon weavers, drapers, furniture makers, and metalsmiths used new “French” styles, family networking, and cheap labor to undercut London’s native craftsmen. As a result, they faced ostracism in the guilds and xenophobic violence from local competitors.¹ Merchants with vested interests in the old English-made woolens fought back, supported by native artisans threatened by outsiders with superior skills, new markets, and productive technology. “The French make fortunes in London,” Cosimo III de’ Medici observed on a visit to England in 1668; “for being more attentive to their business, they sell their manufactures at a lower price than the English.”²

The sudden appearance of Huguenots and Walloons in the 1550s was particularly ominous to Francophobes in coastal England. Large refugee artisan communities settled in London, Southampton, and the Cinque Ports. Within a generation, refugee artisans had dispersed further to form significant concentrations in the textile towns of Norwich, Colchester, Canterbury, and Maidstone. With their arrival in force in

the mid sixteenth century, England's artisanal sectors were thus ambivalent hosts to a sizable, widely dispersed ethnic minority population for the first time in historical memory.³

Riots against Huguenot craftsmen broke out in London first in 1517 and again in 1593. Norwich experienced similar crowd action during the rebellion of 1570, when plotters seeking the duke of Norfolk's release from the Tower of London harnessed their plan for the government's overthrow to a popular call for the violent expulsion of Norwich's 4,700 Huguenot artisans and their families. Complaints that resulted in litigation by town magistrates during the 1570s usually accused Huguenots of hoarding wealth at the expense of native English artisans, claimed that strangers were drunk and disorderly (which resulted in an eight o'clock curfew in Norwich), expressed anxiety that the French were monopolizing the finest wool for their workshops, or decried the ways in which foreigners broke local ordinances governing craft practice.⁴

Although the large influx of Walloon woolen workers threatened traditional labor practices that had supported native craftsmen in southeastern England since the early fourteenth century, refugee artisans were nevertheless championed by some of London's international merchant houses and master craftsmen in the more cosmopolitan shops. Potentially great benefits in the shape of innovations were projected for native English weavers and merchants, who were expected to acquire foreign skills. The new weaving techniques mastered by Huguenots to produce profitable textiles called "new draperies" were especially sought after.⁵ "[W]e ought to favor the strangers from whom we learned so great benefits," the author of a 1577 treatise on relations between the English and Huguenot artisanal cultures concluded pragmatically, "because we are not so good devisors as followers of others." While "the native weavers seemed always ready to complain about aliens taking advantage of their hospitality," writes Joseph P. Ward, capturing the ambiguity of this process of acculturation for London, "this concern came with the corollary that if the strangers would play by the economic rules laid down for them, then the Londoners would treat them kindly." Unfortunately, the rules were seldom clear, and when they were, the refugees proved masters of clandestine means of getting around them.⁶

Other economic treatises added scholarly weight to an already substantial record of mercantile correspondence by leading international merchants. Everyone adumbrated the economic historian Warren Scoville's primary assertion of the baneful effect of religious persecution on French economic development. Migration of reformed French textile workers who carried industrial secrets with them to the British archipelago (as well as to the Netherlands, Switzerland, and the Protestant Germanic principalities) eroded France's ability to compete internationally. In the instance of the new draperies, this was effected by absorption into the most highly capitalized segment of the British economy of France's most innovative and integrated artisanal and mercantile sector.⁷

Most new draperies produced and sold by this sector were lightweight “bays” (baize) and “says” (serge).⁸ Unlike the traditional heavy domestic English broadcloth, these finely woven fabrics had already captured the lucrative Mediterranean market, where lightweight clothing was in great demand. Merchants also saw potential for Iberian transshipment to expanding markets in Latin America and, by the 1620s, to southern British America and the West Indies as well.

The economic benefit refugee artisans and the new draperies provided to England’s textile-producing regions in Essex and East Anglia is well known. One example from Norwich should suffice here to illustrate their combined potential to stimulate local economies.⁹ In the year 1566–67, records for the Norwich Cloth Halls indicate that woolen workers had officially produced a total of 1,200 “cloths.” However, by the time the new draperies were fully integrated into Norwich’s textile industry, between 1583 and 1588, the Hall count indicated that production averaged over 36,000 cloths per year, and Norwich ranked second in urban wealth behind London.¹⁰ Not surprisingly, as Norwich’s wealth grew and spread economic competency to tradesmen during the 1580s, Anglo-French artisanal relations also began to improve. By law, native weavers were apprenticed exclusively to foreign artisans, and English boys anglicized their Huguenot masters while learning the art and mystery of weaving the new draperies in French shops.

Still, it is misleading to say that periodic economic recessions in the international woolen markets did not make scapegoats of Huguenots. The London riots of 1593 triggered a Commons debate on immigrants’ rights, which reiterated earlier claims that Huguenots were enriching themselves through illegal retail trade practices, which victimized “thousands” of true Englishmen, whose only recourse was to beg alms in the street.¹¹ When an act of Parliament to outlaw such practices was not forthcoming, frustrated London artisans posted broadsheets in Huguenot neighborhoods that revealed the cultural depth of English tradesmen’s fears that French secrecy and duplicity were fragmenting the Reformation and subverting the once-unified religious body of the state:

You fraudulent father-Frenchmen, by your cowardly flight from your own natural countries, have abandoned the same into the hands of your proud cowardly enemies; and have, by a feigned hypocrisy and counterfeit show of religion, placed yourselves here in a most fertile soil, under a most gracious and merciful prince, who hath been contented to the great prejudice of her natural subjects, to suffer you to live here, in better ease and more freedom than her own people.¹²

This sense of the French material and spiritual “counterfeit”—that even French Protestantism was fraudulent and that stranger artisans remained crypto-Catholic during the sixteenth century—pervaded English discourse on authenticity in com-

merce and the question of "secret" Huguenot materials and "unnatural" artisanal practices. Within the new categories of woolens, for example, Walloon weavers and dyers from the Hainaut region specialized in the production of mockadoes (a variant of the Italian *mocajardo*, derived from the Arabic *mukayyar*, for mohair), as well as carrels and grogroms. All were colorful, technically complex dry-woven luxury goods, more prestigious and expensive overall when first introduced as novelties than the standard bays and says. Exotic woolens were sometimes made of mixed materials; they combined uncertain proportions of wool with mohair, silk, or linen. In part because the mockadoes' true material nature was concealed, the word itself received wide comment in both English consumer and political discourse as a synecdoche for Huguenot artisanal culture.

The *Oxford English Dictionary* traces the linguistic transformation of these products from sought-after novelties to targets in attacks on effeminate French politesse as early as 1562, when London's materialistic aristocracy was accused of having lost its manly English virtue under a labyrinth of deceptive new draperies.¹³ Mockadoes were often used as curtains for new-style "French beds" or as fringes on expensive chairs made stylish in London court circles by Huguenot upholsterers. By the late sixteenth century, however, in addition to talk of usefulness, these words commonly appeared as pejoratives. They were often ridiculed in sarcastic wordplay or accompanied by suspicious modifiers such as "trumpery," "mockery," "mak-a-does," "tufted," "padding," "ridiculous," and "mockado Eloquence." Thus, they connoted baneful dissimulation, surface polish without ballast of core substance, superfluity, and sham "French" artifice. The noun "mockado" was also an adjective synonymous with French refugee artisans, reflecting their allegedly fraudulent substitutes for authentic, natural materials of intrinsic and enduring value to English consumers. Ersatz material explained how Huguenot artisans produced and sold goods cheaply, undercutting native artisans. "Sham" silk was one such artfully adulterated material, because silk remained relatively scarce in England until, again, Huguenot artisans and merchants upgraded the "new draperies" and came to dominate the London silk industry a century later.¹⁴ Having reinvigorated the English woolen industry with new draperies to end decades of recession for many native artisans and merchants in the textile towns, French weavers and upholsterers nevertheless remained suspected of hidden impurities.

London's guilds were at the forefront of English assaults on Huguenot artisanal secrets. Their most important weapon was the Ordinance of 1483, written into the *Statutes of the Realm*. This ordinance stated that foreign-born artisans were required to take native-born Englishmen as apprentices, and English weavers in textile centers such as Norwich tried with considerable economic success to appropriate the new technology from French refugees.¹⁵ Still, the London guilds claimed that through secrecy and dissimulation, hidden Huguenot craft networks managed to manipulate the

rules to the strangers' advantage. In the early seventeenth century, similar complaints were heard from other than the weavers' company, albeit some of these trades—the joiners and carvers in particular—were often closely related in the luxury market. By quantifying the yearly Returns of London's aliens, combined with an analysis of apprenticeship records of its Worshipful Company of Joiners, the furniture historian Benno Forman documented remarkably high numbers of Huguenot woodworkers in residence, indicating their conspicuousness among foreign craftsmen who migrated to London before 1626. So high, in fact, was the percentage of Huguenot furniture makers that it is reasonable to assume that the vast majority of seventeenth-century Huguenot artisans who fled to London—and probably Amsterdam, Leiden, and Frankfurt as well—practiced either the textile or elite woodworking trades. Indeed, Forman concludes, “with the exception of the Weavers' Company, the total of joiners and carvers exceeds the stranger craftsmen listed by all the other companies of the city combined.”¹⁶

That these two crafts followed parallel trajectories was no coincidence. It underscored the intensive interaction then taking place between refugee Huguenot drapers and woodworkers, which was set in motion by the growing demand among elite consumers for the cosmopolitan tastemaking and technical skills represented by the Huguenot upholsterer's craft. By the early seventeenth century, Huguenot upholsterers laid personal claim to the dissemination of an anglicized (or Batavian or Germanic or Scandinavian) Bourbon court style, which was then in the process of relocation with the migrating diaspora to the urban style centers of Protestant northern Europe. Before the influx of refugee artisans, English “upholders” (later “upholsters,” then “upholsterers”) were relatively uninvolved in the design and manufacture of the woodwork used in their products. At best, they were concerned primarily with the supply and manufacture of a range of products made out of fabric. Although a guild ordinance of 1474 recognized the upholders' “right of search” over feather beds, pillows, mattresses, cushions, and curtains, the clear reference to scavenging remnants indicates that their historical status in the English trades could be very low indeed. The first edition of John Stow's *Survey of London* (1598) also noted that in the reign of Henry VI (1422–61), many upholsterers had dealt in secondhand goods and could be found on “Birchover's Lane [in Cornehill Ward], on that side street down to the stocks,” where “Fripperers or Upholders . . . sold old apparel and household stuff.”¹⁷

But near the end of Elizabeth's reign, refugee upholsterers redefined and revolutionized the trade in England. Upholstery was harnessed to elite fascination with the accessories of French courtly manners and the development of expanding markets for the new draperies. Upholsterers redefined their own artisanal identity and status as well. Thus, for the first time in the history of the English trades, upholsterers became directly involved in the design and production of the wooden frames that would house

their fabrics. Indeed, the Huguenot style derived its aesthetic identity entirely through the prescribed deployment of fashionable textiles; that is, the new draperies were "upheld" ("held up" and nailed onto wooden frames) in uniform sets of expensive upholstered "French beds" and conforming upholstered seating furniture. Taken together, all this required an enormous quantity of costly new fabrics, which Huguenot weavers (or their English apprentices) provided.¹⁸ A most complete description of the upholsterer's new "universal" artisanry was made by Robert Campbell in 1747 in *The London Tradesman*:

I have just finished my House, and must now think of furnishing it with fashionable Furniture. The Upholder is the chief Agent in this Case: He is the Man upon whose Judgement I rely in the Choice of Goods; and I suppose he has not only Judgement in Materials, but Taste in the Fashions, and Skill in the Workmanship. This Tradesman's Genius must be *universal* [emphasis added] in every Branch of Furniture; though his proper Craft is to fit up Beds, Window-Curtains, Hangings, and to cover Chairs that have stuffed Bottoms: He was originally a species of the Taylor; but, by degrees, he crept over his Head, and set up as a Connoisseur in every article that belongs to a House. He employs Journeymen in his proper Calling, Cabinet-makers, Glass-Grinders, Looking-Glass Frame-Carvers, Carvers for Chairs, Testers and Posts of Bed, the Woolen Draper, several species of Smiths, and a vast many Tradesmen of the other mechanic Branches.¹⁹

French refugee upholsterers and weavers thus worked together in the new courtly style to add value to the single most marketable immigrant product. This, in turn, increased capital and presented skilled Huguenot artisans with expanding opportunities to acquire prestige and patronage through the medium of London's luxury trades. Upholsterers positioned themselves as middlemen serving both elite consumers and artisanal producers simultaneously. So the multilingual Huguenot upholsterer synthesized the tastemaker, textile merchant, and elite woodworker.

❧ Buckingham's Universal Tastemaker ❧

Access to noble households that commanded mastery of such a formidable synthesis of international skills could also arouse suspicion. The Huguenot Balthazar Gerbier began his career as a courtier in 1617, becoming England's most notorious tastemaker when Buckingham granted him unlimited state funds to design for his expanding household. Although Gerbier admittedly had a remarkable patron, his own background and combination of skills were not unique. Huguenot tastemakers with Gerbier's skills were in demand, and skilled refugees were numerous enough to compete for patronage at every level throughout Protestant Europe. Gerbier's post required constant travel and the ability to undertake extended multilingual negotiations with

both international art dealers and London's refugee craft communities. He was fluent in French, Dutch and Spanish, and possessed a natural philosopher's ability to unify a multitude of skills. As he promoted himself in his book *To All Men Who Love Truth* (London, 1646), Gerbier marketed a "good hand in writing, skill in sciences such as mathematics, architecture, drawing, painting, contriving of scenes, masques, shows and entertainments for great princes." He was experienced as an itinerant, knocking about Europe in search of courtly patronage. So he was experienced in the coded languages that belonged to the submissive creature of influence. He quickly developed a confident relationship as his master's mentor. Buckingham took Gerbier's lessons in connoisseurship as essential instruments for his self-realization as a great man. Their relationship was the subject of intense public scrutiny.²⁰

By 1621, the duke had become a collector of international renown. Buckingham also felt sufficiently secure both in his position at court and of Gerbier's abilities to commission the refugee to travel the Continent and "choose for him rarities, books, medals, marble statues, and pictures [in] great store." Gerbier would accomplish this task in a remarkably short period of time, in part because of his natural acquisitive zeal, but primarily because he had immense quantities of cash at his disposal. Much was gifted to the favorite in lands, rents, and jewels by his lover James I, and during the reign of Charles I, he benefited from the high price of patronage and access to the king. But most was borrowed from Buckingham's growing list of creditors, at an interest rate calculated at between 30 and 40 percent yearly. In the seven years that remained until the duke's assassination on August 22, 1628, he accumulated one of England's greatest collections of paintings, sculpture, and furniture. With it, he acquired England's foremost collection of creditors as well. More important for our purposes however, Gerbier was much more than Buckingham's agent in major transactions involving art. He also had a strong hand in the day-to-day details of the duke's housekeeping designs.

In 1624, Gerbier glorified his patron with the news that Inigo Jones (1573–1652), the favored designer of mechanical marvels and courtly spectacles produced under the Stuarts, had come in person to see the favorite's new Titian, *Portrait of a Secretary*.²¹ Gerbier had recently acquired the painting and put it on display in the duke's rooms in York House, which were then undergoing a major remodeling. In the process of playing his all-important role as interpreter reconstructing the subtleties of this unveiling for his master, Gerbier provided insights into the function of their relationship and the guile of the Huguenot upholsterer's craft. Consider the effect of Gerbier's manipulation of interior space using the new draperies and, with it, the intentionality of dominant artifacts and the phenomenology of levels of perception. Gerbier thus represented his mastery over space and materials to Jones, his rival and the designer of Buckingham's apartments at the royal palace of Whitehall in 1619.²² He claimed to read Jones's practiced eye as it surreptitiously withdrew from his intended viewing of Titian's mas-

terpiece—which occupied the room’s privileged position—to the French textiles that were the talk of London’s artisanal and mercantile communities, which competed for the beholder’s attention on the painting’s perceptual margins. This subversion of artifactual hierarchies was simultaneously cultural and economic. In effect, Gerbier’s reading subtly asserted his interest in establishing a symmetry of desire between his mastery of the new Anglo-French taste and a masterpiece of the historically dominant Italianate style.

Buckingham was aware that Jones’s experiments with Italian Renaissance design, following his Roman travels, constituted the earliest adaptation in England of the work of Andrea Palladio (1508–80). As a result, Jones was also considered a leading local authority on Italian painting. The Palladian style came under fire as papist design by some Calvinist ideologues during the Long Parliament, but Jones had already begun a prestigious career at court as designer of theatrical masques for James I (featuring Buckingham’s famous dancing).²³ Jones’s fusion of classical Roman architecture and modern Roman ornament drew the attention of the anti-Calvinist William Laud, the duke’s powerful ally at court, who favored the high baroque Italianate style for his Arminian program, then ascendant in the Church of England. With an alchemist’s skill at designing mechanical marvels, including automata and other self-animated novelties, and having the support of such lofty patronage, Jones was rewarded with the title of Surveyor of the King’s Works in 1615, a post he held until Civil War began in 1642. While Gerbier effused that Jones “almost threw himself on his knees” in front of the Titian, he also conveyed the news that after having been drawn initially to the painting’s riveting beauty, the connoisseur was compelled to turn away toward something unexpected. Jones was instantaneously “surprised and abashed,” distracted by the novelty with which the painting was framed and contextualized by the new velvet hangings that Gerbier—now playing the role of French upholsterer—had used to re-decorate the rooms.²⁴ Buckingham was impressed with Gerbier’s gloss on the power of textiles, deployed in the Huguenot style, to destabilize the perception of London’s most sophisticated beholder. Gerbier’s career was assured when the duke passed his protégé on to Charles I in 1625.²⁵ Others in government were less than pleased with the results of Gerbier’s work, however. In the two impeachment proceedings against Buckingham, and additionally during the Commons debates of 1628, the vast cost of Gerbier’s designs was blamed for the favorite’s unprecedented household expenses. This was a fair assessment, because Buckingham’s spending on interior decoration, combined with his lavish clothing requirements, meant that the price of his art collection may have been exceeded by capital outlay on fabric alone.²⁶ The duke’s implacable enemies in the Commons could only speculate as to what transpired in rooms presumably designed by Gerbier. Had the simultaneously counterfeit and absolutist French style secretly influenced his “effeminate” crypto-Catholic master to undermine

the state and corrupt the king's manly English virtue? After all, by 1625, Gerbier constituted yet another hidden link between the corrosive Buckingham and the household of Charles I. Notwithstanding the risk of being caught up in the eclipse of Buckingham's star, Gerbier hung on; the measure of risk versus benefit was a way of life for refugee Huguenot artisans in search of patronage at court (as Palissy demonstrated by his dangerous alliance with Catherine de Médicis in 1565).²⁷ Huguenot upholsterers understood that Gerbier's access to Buckingham meant money, prestige, and protection, and with the possible exception of Amsterdam, nowhere outside France was Gerbier's synthesis of skills more in demand than in metropolitan London.

The second edition of John Stow's *Survey of London* (1603) is important in the history of British-American material culture, because it included an early, polemical "Apologie against the opinion of some [country] men, concerning that citie, the greatnesse thereof." In updating his 1598 *Survey*, Stowe asserted that London had been made a metropolis by commerce, specifically the expanding market for luxuries, catering to the "greater" numbers of Stuart courtiers now drawn for the first time to live permanently in the capital and "vain" young members of the urban elite.

Moreover, both groups of voracious consumers were more "gallant" in both public and private life than before. In this context, the definition of the word "gallant," is best understood to conform with new and ferociously contested rules of beauty, desire, and comportment—and, by extension, consumption—devised by the duke of Buckingham under Gerbier's direction to help gain and maintain the post of royal favorite. The new rules that Stow called "gallant" in 1603 were simultaneously absorbed into the specifically French—hence deeply problematic—political and cultural category of *politesse*, with which, for both good and evil, Buckingham's courtly behavior was associated.²⁸ In short, by the 1620s, new courtiers and members of the urban elite were willing to incur unprecedented debts in pursuit of prestige and to accommodate their household furnishings and public presentation of self to the French courtly style epitomized by the success of Buckingham and others:

To aunswere the accusation of those men, which charge London with the losse and decay of many of the auncient Cities, Corporate Towns and markets within this Realm by drawing from them to her selfe alone, . . . all trade of traffique by sea, and the retayling of Wares, and the exercise of Manuall Arts also, . . . it is no maruaile if [Handicraftes men] . . . resort to London: for not onely the Court, which is now a dayes much greater & more gallant then in former times, and which was wonte to bee contented to remaine with a small companie [in the country], . . . is now for the most part either abiding at London, or else so neare unto it, that the provision of thinges most fit for it, may easily be had from thence: but alos by occasion thereof, the Gentlemen of the shires do flie and flock to this Citty, the yonger sort of them to see and shew vanity, and the elder to save the cost and

charge of Hospitality, and house keeping. . . . Artificers . . . do leave the Countrie townes, where there is no vent, and do flie to London, where they be sure to finde ready and quicke market.²⁹

❧ "Like Israel in Egypt": The Demographics of Politeness ❧

Glossing Neil McKendrick and Joyce Appleby (with links to T. H. Breen's "empire of goods" in British America), Lawrence Klein reiterates the current consensus (and the thrust of Stow's *Survey* of 1603). To wit, although economic historians trace the origins of England's market economy to the fourteenth century, "only in the early modern period did commercialization in the economic and social organization of English society proceed at a rate sufficient to force people to reflect and write about the phenomenon . . . England was rapidly becoming a consumer society."³⁰ The commercialization of "vanity," "hospitality," and the culture of politeness may have supported demand for fashionable products that benefited elite Huguenot upholsterers and other suppliers of the materials of "disguise and dissimulation," but this did not mean that the middling and low-level Huguenot joiners and carvers who provided the underlying armatures for such materials enjoyed a warmer reception from native woodworkers threatened with displacement than did their counterparts in the textile trades.

London's woodworking guilds were already under intense pressure as a result of an influx of skilled English craftsmen from the countryside, according to Stow, when the pressure effectively doubled because of a new influx of French-speaking refugees after Philip II of Spain (r. 1556–98) sent 10,000 troops under the duke of Alba in 1567 to crush Calvinist resistance to faltering Roman Catholic authority in the Walloon region of the southern Netherlands (later Belgium).³¹

With Henri II's death in 1559, confessional violence increased in France, and with it, the number of refugees. But the first civil war of religion did not erupt until March 1562, after a massacre of Huguenots at Vassy planned by the ultra-Catholic Guise family under the personal direction of François de Guise. The fighting ended briefly in 1563, with the Edict of Amboise, and in France, as elsewhere in war-torn northern Europe, the lull provided opportunities for uprooted refugees to move. Regional populations dispersed in waves, following the pattern of religious warfare, and there was an upsurge in emigration.

This was followed in France by the brutal second war of religion, which began with a massacre of Catholics by Protestants at Nîmes in 1568, and the pattern continued with a third, which ended in 1570. But this was just the beginning of a decade of massacres, cresting in the infamous St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre in 1572, an event that caused many Huguenots north of the Loire to flee the country or seek refuge in La Rochelle, which was besieged in 1573, as was Jean de Léry's refuge of Sancerre. There

were eight civil wars of religion in France in the years between 1562 and 1598, not counting the innumerable undeclared local wars, village massacres, settlings of personal grudges, and episodes of gang violence that complete the picture of sixteenth-century French confessional violence. France experienced a lull in the violence when the Edict of Nantes was signed in April 1598, however, and the crisis shifted temporarily from the battlefield to polemics.³²

Demographic evidence is available from the seventeenth-century records of London's Threadneedle Street Eglise française, but quantifying French refugees in sixteenth-century England is tricky. In the absence of corroborating evidence—above all, genealogical evidence—judging ethnicity based on surnames is unreliable at best.³³ To make things worse, reports on immigrants were politicized, with disgruntled guild wardens and M.P.'s exaggerating their numbers. Moreover, depending on the political climate when counts were taken, immigrants tended to report numbers that were probably much too low.

By 1628, when Laud (1573–1645) was named bishop of London (five years in advance of becoming archbishop of Canterbury) and was blamed by ideologically “orthodox” Calvinists for conniving with his patron Buckingham in ways that led to the devastating defeat at La Rochelle, he responded by turning Parliament's praetorian guard argument on its head. As Charles I's chief minister during the Eleven Years' Tyranny (1629–40) of rule without Parliament, Laud portrayed England's Huguenots as being “like Israel in Egypt”; the refugees, with their own ecclesiastical institutions and sectarian tendencies, which were particularly troublesome in the face of Laud's Act of Uniformity of 1634, were thus subversive of the kingdom's moral, economic, and military security. The Huguenot leadership responded by reporting defensively after the siege of La Rochelle that only 5,213 French Calvinists lived in the entire realm, with 2,240 at most in London.³⁴ However, 4,700 immigrants were reported in Norfolk alone in 1579 (even after the great plague), 1,300 in Colchester in 1586, and London and its environs averaged about 4,000 during the second half of the sixteenth century. If we are to believe the earlier figures, then the census of 1635 tells us that London's immigrant population had fallen approximately 13 percent to 3,546. This decline may be explained, in part, by the “urban graveyard effect”: early modern urbanites experienced lower birthrates and higher mortality rates overall than did their rural counterparts, and Huguenots were primarily town dwellers. Recent transatlantic regional studies, including studies of New York City, offer preliminary support for this hypothesis.³⁵ The number of French immigrants remained steady or declined slightly until an upsurge of 1,182 new members was recorded in the Threadneedle Street French church in 1681, the year the dragonnades began in southwestern France.³⁶

The relatively low figures also reflect London's status as a way station. Most refugees passed through temporarily, staying if there was opportunity and moving on if

there was none. If the population of London grew to about 200,000 by the time of Elizabeth’s death (and publication of the second edition of Stow’s *Survey*) in 1603, then immigrants accounted for no more than 4 percent of the city’s total population in the sixteenth century. But this was clearly perceived by artisans, merchants, and many consumers as an important 4 percent. Gross quantification cannot possibly account for the complex variations that obtained in the neighborhood-centered experience of early modern urban life. The vast majority of Huguenots lived in notorious artisan “ghettos” in Westminster, Southwark, Bishopsgate, and Spitalfields, where their *occupational* visibility was much higher there than elsewhere in London. More important, the rise in commercial discourse in the early seventeenth century made it common knowledge among producers and consumers that Huguenot artisans dominated the production of novelties in the textile and woodworking trades. Together with new technologies for the reproduction and diffusion of quantities of consumer products in the “French taste”—that is to say, things in daily conversation identified *specifically* as signifiers of one cultural group—it is easy to see how anxious natives amplified the number of Huguenot craftsmen into hidden armies of aliens hard at work in London’s subterranean niches. Moreover, Huguenot dominance in trades such as upholstery tended naturally to heighten these anxieties. Amplification was also a response to the glut in the supply of skilled Huguenot labor during the war years. Refugee churchwardens monitored supply and demand in the local labor force before directing newcomers to leave or stay. Yet newly arriving craftsmen were almost always available to work.

❧ The Appropriation of Novelty ❧

The fluidity of Huguenots’ artisanal life was harnessed to their production and hence to native perceptions that Huguenots “dwelled” in every artifact associated with their artisanry. Therefore, in the metaphorical as well as the physical sense, Huguenots were present *virtually* everywhere in the expansion of English material life by the late 1620s—and, if the diffusion of new draperies is taken fully into account—throughout the Mediterranean and Atlantic worlds as well. Because of the transformative power associated with Huguenot craftsmanship, and the fact that it represented cheap, available labor, the English were ambivalent about the French refugee artisans’ ability to channel innovation through work to create novelty in unprecedented abundance. Indeed, much of the rage of native craftsmen during the weavers’ riots of 1675 was directed at the refugees mechanized new “engine-weaving-looms,” which were dragged out into the streets of London’s craftsmen’s ghetto and burned. New things were thereby conflated and made almost interchangeable with the new people who produced them, as well as the new words that were used to communicate their novelty.

In the Ordinance of 1474, English “upholders” were little more than ragpickers—

mere “fripperers” (from the French *friperie* meaning “cast-offs”)—granted “right of search” in the streets of London, to recover vile remnants from the corpses of homeless vagrants or the houses of the dead.³⁷ By the end of the sixteenth century, English Huguenot artisans seemed to embody the alchemists’ dream exactly as written in the ancient texts. After all, they had somehow acquired the mechanical knowledge to discover the philosopher’s stone, which had given them the means to transmute, purify, replicate, and, in Palissy’s words, “multiply their treasures,” in the form of valuable substances for the market from base materials and thus transform worthlessness into cash and power. And if Huguenot artisans had not discovered the stone, they were nonetheless masterful counterfeiters. Moreover, if “the stone” lay in the streets and was available to even the poorest artisan by “right of search,” adepts would argue that this was final proof of authenticity. How many refugee Huguenot artisans there may have been thus seems less important than why this “declining minority” were constructed by their hosts as mankind’s most powerful and mysterious manipulators of the material world.³⁸

Countermeasures were taken by the authorities, but these affected only public performance of craft. On March 11, 1563, in response to the refugee crisis in the trades occasioned by the first war of religion in France, the Joiners’ Company of London appointed four masters to an alderman’s court to consider the “workmanship and conning” of twelve immigrants proposed for membership by the guild wardens. Six were admitted after they agreed to pay a £5 “redemption,” which many other refugees found prohibitive. Just as illuminating, there remained ninety-nine foreign joiners in London available to fill the six places.³⁹ On July 12, 1571, the Joiners’ Company adopted an elaborate set of restrictive ordinances for foreign woodworkers, although only a tiny minority qualified for membership and enjoyed guild benefits. First, it was stipulated that immigrant joiners residing in London not practice their craft without paying the same fees assessed company members. Moreover, after having paid membership fees from which they received no benefit, immigrants were limited to two apprentices, for whom they were expected to record contracts of indenture at Guildhall at the member’s fee. Guild members were also denied the right to employ foreigners except as apprentices and could not instruct foreigners except apprentices. In addition, no immigrant could “take in hand any work” from anyone but a member; immigrants had to make a proof piece that passed company inspection; foreign-made wares were to be brought to Guildhall and marked as such; and finally, immigrants were denied the right to hawk their wares in the street.⁴⁰ The ordinance against retail commerce was a particularly onerous one and was debated in the Commons. The London riots of 1593 followed, when there were incidents of heated speech and action in the streets against alien craftsmen.

In practice, although repressive, most guild ordinances were unenforceable in the large, complex city that London had become by 1603. What was enforced was precisely

what nativists feared: the incorporation of refugee Huguenot artisans into an underground, low-cost craft economy, something they were already familiar with from long experience in France, where similar restrictions were imposed on Protestant tradesmen by Catholic guilds and royal edicts in regions where Catholics were dominant. The opposite held true, of course, in Huguenot-dominated strongholds such as La Rochelle, where Protestant artisans maintained control of the city's guild system by victimizing Catholic members, a state of affairs reversed with a vengeance by the Catholics in 1628.

❧ Huguenot *maleficium* ❧

In addition to encouraging the dissimulation and development of hidden craft and retail practices they were ostensibly meant to negate, the ordinances forced many Huguenots to circumvent guild wardens by falling back on discreet organization and natural forms of personal and artisanal security available in family craft networks whose members were accustomed to an underground economy. To preface a list of immigrant craftsmen requested by the lord mayor of London in April 1583, the Joiners' Company virtually conceded the success of these tactics by French competitors in the increasingly open marketplace:

The Master and Wardens of the Companye of Joyners never licensed nor admitted any of the persons hereunder expressed to use their said trade, yett they, dwelling some in [the Huguenot "ghettos"] Westminster, somme in Saint Katherins, and somme in Sowthworke, do use the sayd occupation, and have joyned themselves togeather . . . to worck in London as fullye as a Freeman may doe, to the utter undoing of a great number of Freeman Joyners, mere Englishe men, who are allsowayes ready for any service for her Majestie, this Realme, and Citie of London.⁴¹

These themes were reiterated and amplified in a report to James I in 1616. This report consisted of a collection of petitions from London guild wardens who attested to the secret and malevolent activities practiced by Huguenot artisans who had managed to infiltrate no less than 121 separate occupations.⁴² The timing of the report also reflected a long period of depression in the production of the old heavy woolens, which fell on southeastern England's core textile regions. By the 1620s, the depression in the Suffolk woolen industry was so profound that John Winthrop the Elder and his neighbors began to slaughter their flocks and sell choice meadowland. Winthrop also chose to spend more time in London to increase his income. With the help of Emmanuel Downing, Winthrop diversified into mercantile activities, pursued attorney's fees at Parliament, and pondered resettlement in Ireland.⁴³

This situation sent anxious Stuart officials scrambling for political cover, and they

found it in Huguenot artisanal *maleficium*. The 1616 report to King James documented the penetration of a veritable encyclopedia of trades by insidious Huguenots, and there were renewed calls from native artisans for the expulsion of the aliens. The metaphor of Huguenot *maleficium* endured into the Protectorate. Although Cromwell was a friend to the Huguenot cause in religious and international affairs, he did not prevent London artisans from circulating a petition in 1654 that claimed that refugees “take large houses, divide them, take inmates, and so breed infection.”⁴⁴

Second only to workers in the textile and upholstery trades, members of the London goldsmiths’ guild were challenged to change their practices in response to a paradigm shift brought about by innovative Huguenot technology and design of naturalistic cast mounts. Methods akin to Palissy’s live casting were used by French goldsmiths in the early seventeenth century. Consequently, many English goldsmiths lost capital and commissions and blamed it on the influx of this famously talented group of provincial Huguenot goldsmiths.⁴⁵ The Goldsmiths’ Petition of 1616 provides insight into the sense of powerlessness and conspiratorial presence felt by certain members of the majority of London’s guilds. They inveighed against the octopuslike qualities of this clandestine network of “aliens and strangers,” who usurped English enterprise with alarming ease: “the said aliens and strangers in their habitations are dispersed in many lanes and remote places of this city and suburbs, working in chambers, garrets and other secret places where the wardens of this company may not have convenient access and recourse to search.”⁴⁶ And in 1622, the Goldsmith’s Company pursued this inquest into the subterranean world of artisanry to its logical conclusion, accusing 183 Huguenot goldsmiths of using alchemy to counterfeit jewels.⁴⁷

In guild petitions to Elizabeth and James in 1583 and 1616, London’s guild wardens represented their dismay at Huguenot middlemen’s access to elite English households and political patronage. Long accustomed to maintaining surveillance over native craftsmen clustered openly along the streets of the city’s traditional artisan neighborhoods, London guild wardens failed even to *locate* (or perceive) the covert, “dispersed” sources of their “secret” competition. A dread of counterfeiting and radical expansion of the license accorded professional informers to spy on their neighbors resulted.

Opportunity directed the attention of this expanding group of spies to the artisanal activities of immigrants, and their income grew accordingly. Informers ostensibly pursued information that concerned Huguenot violation of many craft ordinances restricting specific sorts of manufacturing by immigrants. By law, in the event of conviction, informers were awarded one-half the stranger’s fine as a reward. However, there was considerable slippage in the system. The obvious potential for blackmail and extortion from the refugees was commonly exploited. Clearly, informers were interested in any information that might find a buyer.⁴⁸ This tended to be political or religious in nature, and at times there were even allegations of conspiracies between the

French monarchy and "fraudulent" Huguenots who immigrated to England to form a praetorian guard. The role of urban informer was certainly not restricted to Tudor-Stuart England. A similar pattern developed in colonial New York at the height of the Huguenot response to the Boston leather chair. In 1707–8, a Dutch informer charged the Rochelais upholsterer Benjamin Faneuil with conspiring to subvert the colony's defenses by providing secret information on its fortresses and militia to invading "French compatriots."

Questions of being and appearance pervasive in the British-American perception of refugee Huguenot artisanal culture makes Lawrence Klein's work on the third earl of Shaftesbury, and in particular his reading of the anglicization of *politesse* through the material culture of commercialization and the consumer society in seventeenth-century England, of great interest to historians of the early modern transatlantic world. Shaftesbury adapted for England the functional essence of the French absolutist notion that politeness was not merely a political instrument, but rather "a total cultural condition . . . [that] amounted to civilization."⁴⁹ Shaftesbury's anglicization project was holistic: to reconcile French courtly theatricality (*politesse*) with what he took to be native English "sincerity." To understand, master, and encourage the links between the domains of form ("of style and fashion, of 'air' and manner") and of morals ("the substance of things: nature, reason, virtue").⁵⁰ "What are all those Forms & Manners wch come under the notion of good-breeding?" Shaftesbury asked rhetorically, "the affected smiles, the fashionable Bows, the Tone of Voice, & all those supple carressing & ingratiating ways? what is this but Embroidery, Guilding, Colouring, Daubing? . . . [its Huguenot purveyors] talk of nothing but Ease, Freedome, Liberty, Unconcernedness."⁵¹

Still, natural philosophy was the knot that integrated this superficial world of form with substance. "Shaftesbury embraced the word 'politeness' and the concern with sociability that it raised," Klein explains, "but he sought to avoid its moral turbidity by anchoring it in philosophy. . . . Where polite learning was 'ornamental', 'philosophy' was 'solid' or 'useful.'" Such knowledge was extended to consumers, who were expected to perform an active critique of materials in the marketplace; and of artisans as well, who were judged by their competence in negotiating the proper balance of ornament with utility. As a "total cultural condition," this process had powerful resonance among English and anglicizing French artisans in creating a world of interactive things appropriate to elite comportment in social contexts where civic discourse took center stage. Mirroring larger social and cultural processes, metropolitan British artisans and elite patrons worked together with exiled Huguenot artisans, designers, and patrons to domesticate the material culture of *politesse*. Making it "polite" meant facilitating the integration of things into the total culture of polite performance.

At the core of the performance of politeness, from the inner workings of the polite

mind to, by analogy, literary, artistic, and artisanal expression, and ultimately to polite physical comportment that facilitated commerce and conversation in the economic and social world, lay freedom of motion throughout the urban landscape, balanced by simplicity of expression. These skills were perceived as a counterweight to the growing consumption of artifacts of cultural elaboration and a way to help negotiate the ever-smaller and more complex spaces in the interstices between them. The enemies of politeness then, were privacy, ambiguity of intention, and life in the shadows. The comportment of politeness, unlike that of *politesse*, had to be functionally transparent. Shaftesbury's phenomenology of politeness proscribed disjunctions between being and appearance. Mere simulation or mimesis without grounding in a philosophy, potentially rampant in a consumer society, was attacked as subversive. Unethical behavior was a danger inasmuch as politeness was "*more sensibly to be perceived* [emphasis added], than described."⁵²

❁ Shadow Worlds ❁

It was precisely in the shadowy interstices between being and appearance that English Calvinist critiques of both Buckingham and Huguenot artisanal culture intersected and were harnessed together by polemicists in the decade before the favorite's assassination in 1628. The producer and consumer of exiled French courtly culture were both stigmatized and made to represent the counterfeit—or the uncertainty, fluidity, and social instability (and hence the potential tyranny) of undomesticated *politesse*. The subversive dangers of the wild man were thus inverted and applied to artifice and social polish; the pendulum swung too far in the opposite direction from rusticity. This was to become Benjamin Franklin's field of play in the late eighteenth century.

That Buckingham was counted the most "natural" performer in the Stuart masques was, of course, indicative of the threat to virtue by false transparency. Just as lines of demarcation over Buckingham and his status as favorite were drawn in the Commons, so too tensions remained in English political, artistic, and natural-philosophical culture in response to innovations in theatricality. Buckingham's Calvinist critics (who thought masques corrupt) and courtly friends (for whom masques were pleasurable and sometimes instruments of revenge) would both have confirmed—for different reasons—the validity of Arnold Hauser's reading of the masque's relevance to courtly cultures formed in the apocalyptic years of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries:

The frequency with which characters in drama masquerade as others and question their own identity, are [*sic*] only ways of expressing the fact that, while the objective world had grown unintelligible, the identity of the self had been shattered, had grown vague and

fluid. Nothing was what it seemed, and everything was different from what it purported to be. Life was disguise and dissimulation, and art itself helped to disguise life as well as to penetrate its masks.⁵³

Powerful English courtiers such as Buckingham were accused of being counterfeit—of only *seeming* to be what they apparently were—by conspiring to obscure transparent truth through theatrical dissimulation of their impure, un-English hearts. At the same time, beginning in the early 1560s, and peaking during the years 1628 and 1685, refugee artisans, as producers of the material culture of politeness and theatricality, were accused of artisanal *maleficium*. Huguenot artisans had thus made things that inverted the moral force of their clients' polite behavior. Interiority, stealth, cryptic modes of communication, secretly altered materials, alchemical counterfeiting, and hiding in the shadows to avoid detection were their insidious *modus operandi*. Exposure of this dangerously unstable dialogue between structures of being and appearance in the clandestine artisanal culture of the Huguenots was fundamental to critiques of the expansion of commercialism and consumerism in British-American material life through the end of the eighteenth century and beyond.