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PAUL READMAN

The State of Twentieth-Century British Political History

To mark its one-hundredth issue, the prestigious journal *Past and Present* commissioned Jacques Le Goff to carry out a survey of the articles it had published between 1959 and 1982. Based on the subject-matter of these articles, Le Goff concluded that the attention of the journal—Britain’s equivalent of *Annales*—had been overwhelmingly focused on the sixteenth- to nineteenth-century period. As with antiquity and (to a lesser extent) the Middle Ages, the twentieth century had been “somewhat neglected,” accounting for just over 7 percent of all articles, with the years after 1945 being especially underrepresented.¹ This reflected the persistence of a disdainful attitude toward the study of the recent past among professional historians, including historians of modern British politics. Citing temporal proximity to the subject matter and unavailability of still-to-be released archival sources, scholars appeared content to surrender the field to political scientists and journalistic amateurs.

Happily things have since changed, and the historiography of twentieth-century British politics can now be described as flourishing. There are a number of reasons for this, but key enabling factors have been the advances made in the study of oral history, the waning of the narrow-minded “cult of the archive,” and the growing realization that there is not necessarily any positive correlation between historical “objectivity” (assuming this is possible or desirable) and temporal distance. One notable indicator of the growing interest in twentieth-century political history has been the success of the Institute

I am grateful to Arthur Burns for his comments on an earlier draft of this article.

of Contemporary British History (ICBH) in promoting the historical study of government and policy. Another is the establishment of specialist journals such as Oxford University Press's *Twentieth Century British History* and the ICBH's *Contemporary British History* (first published as *Contemporary Record*). The syllabi of History departments in universities now pay far more attention to twentieth-century political history, including that of the post-1945 period. This has helped stimulate and sustain scholarly activity, and there is now a very respectable body of monographic literature.

The explosion of interest is not surprising: the political history of twentieth-century Britain has big stories to tell. As in other European countries, the development of the welfare state and the process of democratization—especially as regards the incorporation of women into the political nation—are among the biggest of these, and are staple features of the scholarship. Arguably, however, it is the party political stories that have posed the most complex questions and spawned the best work. The debate on the rise of Labour and the concomitant decline of the Liberal party has now reached an advanced level of sophistication, with historians turning away from deterministic class-based “sociological” explanations and toward more fashionable “textual” approaches that place emphasis on the transformative impact of political language. But perhaps the most interesting question of all is why the Right—so fearful of democratization and the rise of the central state—became the dominant force on the twentieth-century political scene. Between 1900 and 2000, the Conservative party was in office either alone or as the principal element of a coalition for sixty-eight years, a statistic that lends justification to the idea of a “Conservative century.”²

In addressing these questions, historians have often taken an Anglo-centric approach, focusing attention on Whitehall, Westminster, and London-based party political institutions. Recent years, however, have seen at least some historians adopt a wider British perspective.³ This has been stimulated by the “four nations” methodology famously expounded by J. G. A. Pocock and Hugh Kearney, but also by the efflorescence of high-quality scholarship on the history of Wales and Scotland, which the revived nationalist movements and the associated devolution processes in those two countries have done much to foster.⁴

To begin with Scotland, Christopher Harvie's *No Gods and Precious Few Heroes: Scotland since 1914* (new ed., Edinburgh University Press, 1993) provides a concise and stylish introductory account, situating twentieth-century Scottish politics in their wider cultural, social, and economic contexts. There are also the convenient overview essays in T. M. Devine and R. J. Finlay, eds.,

Scotland in the Twentieth Century (Edinburgh University Press, 1996) and Harvie's essay "Scottish Politics," in *People and Society in Scotland, vol. III, 1914–1990*, ed. Tony Dickson and J. H. Treble (John Donald, 1992). While somewhat dry and methodologically unadventurous, I. G. C. Hutchison's *Scottish Politics in the Twentieth Century* (Palgrave, 2001) gives a thorough account of parliamentary politics, and also includes a very useful bibliographical survey. As Hutchison points out, writing on Scottish parliamentary politics has tended to pay more attention to nationalism and the Left than the Right.⁵ The history of the Scottish Labour party may be approached via the essays in Ian Donnachie et al., eds., *Forward! Labour Politics in Scotland, 1888–1988* (Polygon, 1989); this can be supplemented by such works as Iain McLean, *The Legend of Red Clydeside* (John Donald, 1983).⁶ As for the Scottish nationalist movement, the pioneering accounts were provided by A. C. Turner and H. J. Hanham in the 1950s and 1960s.⁷ These have since been followed up by diluvial quantities of scholarship, much of it impressive, some rather less so. Christopher Harvie's *Scotland and Nationalism* remains the best treatment of the whole period since the 1707 Act of Union; insightful and provocative, it is more about ideas and debates than factual detail.⁸ More detailed and focused on the twentieth century is R. J. Finlay's *A Partnership for Good? Scottish Politics and the Union Since 1880* (John Donald, 1997). Not only does this book provide an excellent account of Scottish nationalism, but it situates it in the wider context of British politics, aiming to explain why Scottish national feeling was contained within the Union for so long, and why in recent years tensions have increased markedly. One of Finlay's most telling points is that some varieties of Scottish patriotism and even nationalism were not incompatible with unionism, an observation that helps to explain why the Conservative party retained an important presence in Scots politics for most of the twentieth century. Despite Finlay's work, the history of Tory Scotland still cries out for further study, although C. M. M. Macdonald's recent collection of essays by younger scholars, *Unionist Scotland, 1880–1997* (John Donald, 1998), augurs well for future research in this area.⁹

The academic study of Welsh history has a shorter pedigree than its counterpart in Scotland: while the *Scottish Historical Review* was founded in 1903, it was not until 1960 that the *Welsh History Review* came into being. Yet under the energetic editorship of Kenneth O. Morgan between 1965 and 2003, the *Welsh History Review* did much to revitalize Welsh history, particularly the political history of modern Wales, of which Morgan himself was the preeminent practitioner. Morgan's *Rebirth of a Nation: Wales, 1880–1980* (Clarendon Press, 1981) remains the standard account for the twentieth century,

covering much political ground, while his seminal *Wales in British Politics, 1868–1922* (3rd ed., University of Wales Press, 1980) is invaluable for the early history of the Welsh nationalist and Labour movements. Indeed, as in Scotland, nationalism and the Labour party have provided the main areas of focus for political historians, with Conservatism being neglected.¹⁰ For an introduction to Welsh national identity, nothing compares to the *longue durée* treatment offered in Gwyn A. Williams's sparkling *When Was Wales?* (Penguin, 1985); for detail on the modern nationalist movement, a good starting point is still Kenneth O. Morgan, "Welsh Nationalism: The Historical Background," *Journal of Contemporary History* 6 (1971): 153–72. Turning to Labour historiography, Duncan Tanner et al., eds., *The Labour Party in Wales, 1900–2000* (University of Wales Press, 2000), offers up-to-date scholarship.¹¹ So too does *Llafur*, a journal launched in 1972 as the organ of the Welsh Labour History Society (since 2001 the Welsh People's History Society), which has published much methodologically innovative work on women's history, popular political culture, and ethnic history.

Of all the "Celtic" nations of the British Isles, Ireland has the most well developed historiography—as is unsurprising, given the existence of the Irish Free State after 1921 and the Irish Republic from 1948. Because of the remit of this article, it is only possible to consider the "British" elements of Irish history—in other words, that pertaining to Ireland before independence and Northern Ireland after 1921. With regard to the former, the importance of R. F. Foster's *Modern Ireland, 1600–1972* (Allen Lane, 1988) cannot be overstated. A hugely controversial piece of revisionism, Foster's account questioned some of the teleological pieties of traditional nationalist historiography, debunking descriptions of late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century nationalism as the culmination of a centuries-long struggle for the satisfaction of an immemorial sense of Irish nationhood.¹² Foster's book covered nearly four hundred years; a more detailed account of Irish politics before independence can be found in F. S. L. Lyons's compendious and still-valuable *Ireland since the Famine* (Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1971).¹³ Charles Townshend's *Easter 1916: The Irish Rebellion* (Allen Lane, 2005) and Alvin Jackson's *Home Rule: An Irish History, 1800–2000* (Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2003) provide new insights into various dimensions of Irish nationalism in the early twentieth century. As Jackson wryly observes, the Ulster Unionists—who had resisted home rule so strongly before World War I—ended up with home rule themselves, in the form of the devolved government established in 1921 in the six counties of Northern Ireland.¹⁴ This government now has its own historiography, as does Northern Irish politics more generally. The opening of the Northern Ireland

state archives in the 1970s provided material for the seminal Paul Bew et al., *The State in Northern Ireland, 1921–1972: Political Forces and Social Classes* (Manchester University Press, 1979),¹⁵ and there are now a number of good overview accounts of Ulster politics.¹⁶ The complex history of the nationalist/unionist conflict in Northern Ireland—the so-called Troubles, which began in the late 1960s—can be approached through Thomas Hennessey, *Northern Ireland: The Origins of the Troubles* (Gill & Macmillan, 2005), and Paul Arthur and Keith Jeffrey's introductory but usefully thematic *Northern Ireland since 1968* (2nd ed., Blackwell, 1996). Richard English's *Armed Struggle* (Macmillan, 2003) provides a balanced history of the Irish Republican Army.

The work done on Ireland, Scotland, and Wales has helped to inform study of the twentieth-century constitution, particularly in relation to the question of devolution, which, given the establishment of independent Welsh and Scottish executives, is now a subject of considerable contemporary relevance. Probably the most cogent analysis of historical and contemporary issues surrounding devolution is Vernon Bogdanor's *Devolution in the United Kingdom* (2nd ed., Oxford University Press, 2001), which covers the whole period from 1880 to the present day.¹⁷ Yet despite this work on devolution, the larger subject of the modern British constitution remains somewhat understudied. As Keith Robbins complained in his *Bibliography of British History, 1914–1989* (Clarendon Press, 1996), modern-day historians have proved remarkably reluctant to attempt overarching constitutional histories.¹⁸ Bogdanor's recent British Academy–sponsored collection of essays, *The British Constitution in the Twentieth Century* (Oxford University Press, 2003), does something to fill the gap, but it is significant that the editor is a political scientist rather than a historian. Perhaps the only major book of relevance to have been written by a historian is Brian Harrison's *The Transformation of British Politics, 1860–1995* (Oxford University Press, 1996).¹⁹ Harrison's volume is full of information about a great variety of topics, from elections to the workings of parliament and the civil service, but the sweeping range of its thematic structure makes it somewhat unwieldy and difficult to use. Moreover, whatever the merits of Bogdanor's and Harrison's work, whole fields of modern British constitutional history remain largely unplowed. The history of local government is surely the outstanding example here. Perhaps because of the late twentieth-century centralization of the British state, which has made local government seem increasingly irrelevant (witness the tiny turnout in most local elections today),²⁰ the subject is a deeply unfashionable one. This is a great shame, not least because whatever the depredations of recent years, local government institutions were of considerable political importance

throughout much of the century. This is amply illustrated by the work done by J. M. Lee, G. W. Jones, and Ken Young in the 1960s and 1970s, but their excellent, careful scholarship never drew the attention it deserved, nor was it followed up by more research of comparable quality.²¹

Yet if the history of state structures has been neglected, the same certainly cannot be said about that of party politics. General accounts of twentieth-century British politics are not hard to come by, but three volumes stand out as exceptionally good. Peter Clarke's *Hope and Glory, Britain, 1900–2000* (2nd ed., Penguin, 2004) is a commendably concise synoptic account by a leading scholar, with a strong political emphasis. Martin Pugh's *The Making of Modern British Politics, 1867–1945* (3rd ed., Blackwell, 2002) and Kenneth O. Morgan's *Britain Since 1945: The People's Peace* (3rd ed., Oxford University Press, 2001) provide excellent detailed coverage of the pre- and post-1945 periods, respectively. Much information can also be gleaned from biographies of leading figures, political biography being a flourishing genre in Britain. In addition to excellent coverage in the peerless *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*,²² most twentieth-century prime ministers now have good scholarly biographies, and some of these—such as John Grigg's volumes on Lloyd George or Martin Gilbert's on Churchill—have achieved the status of magnum opuses.²³

All of the three main political parties have attracted their fair share of scholarly attention. In terms of the quantity of literature, the Conservative party is probably best served. John Ramsden's *An Appetite for Power: The Conservative Party since 1830* (HarperCollins, 1998) is a reliable if rather unexciting overview. Livelier and more opinionated if perhaps less reliable surveys are provided by John Charmley's *A History of Conservative Politics, 1900–1996* (Macmillan, 1996) and Robert Blake's celebrated Ford Lectures, *The Conservative Party from Peel to Churchill* (Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1970).²⁴ To these may be added Anthony Seldon and Stuart Ball, eds., *Conservative Century* (Oxford University Press, 1994), a collection of essays containing masses of factual material and a helpful bibliography, but which is somewhat uneven in terms of quality, good work jumbled together with the mediocre. Still more detail can be garnered from the semiofficial Longman "History of the Conservative party" series of research monographs, the three twentieth-century volumes of which have all been written by Ramsden.²⁵ Meticulously researched, these books constitute an invaluable resource. However, while undoubtedly being careful and rigorous works of scholarship, their methodology is of a traditional high political kind and in common with much of the older literature is not overmuch concerned with the explication of Conservative ideology. This is

not to say that no innovative work has been done on Toryism. The late E. H. H. Green has been instrumental in promoting the scholarly study of the ideological content of Conservative party discourse from Salisbury to Thatcher, and Philip Williamson's recent work on Stanley Baldwin has emphasized the doctrinal dimension of that statesman's leadership—not least by highlighting the importance of religious influences on his politics.²⁶ These developments in the scholarship attest to a growing dissatisfaction with traditional explanations of Conservative political success in the last century, which were apt to emphasize the efficiency of the Tory organizational machine or the “deference” and “false consciousness” of a normatively leftward-leaning working-class electorate. Resisting such interpretations, which seem inadequate as factors behind Conservative dominance, approaches like those of Green and Williamson acknowledge the importance of political language in the construction of electoral appeals and the mobilization of mass support.

The scholarly literature on the Liberal and (from 1988) Liberal Democratic parties is less extensive, largely because of the interwar realignment of British politics around the twin poles of Labour and Conservatism. The history of the twentieth-century Liberal party is therefore a melancholy one of decline into third-party status, and while recent years have seen an upturn in electoral fortunes, this status seems unlikely to change any time soon. The most recent overview is Roy Douglas, *Liberals: A History of the Liberal and Liberal Democratic Parties* (Hambledon Continuum, 2005). While rather stolid, it is at least a reliable account and is in any case superior to the plodding narrative offered in Chris Cook's *Short History of the Liberal Party, 1900–2001* (6th ed., Palgrave, 2002), a work that even in its sixth edition fails to engage with much of the scholarship published since the 1970s. But if there is as yet no twentieth-century equivalent to works like Jonathan Parry's magisterial *Rise and Fall of Liberal Government in Victorian Britain* (Yale University Press, 1993), a number of impressive monographs have appeared. The vast majority of these have focused on the pre-1945 period, with the vexed issue of the party's decline being a key topic of study. Reacting to George Dangerfield's famous view that the Edwardian period saw “the strange death of Liberal England,” Peter Clarke's hugely important *Lancashire and the New Liberalism* (Cambridge University Press, 1971) argued that the Liberal party remained in fairly good health until World War I.²⁷ In particular, Clarke claimed, the party's social reform program—inspired by a collectivist ideology of “new Liberalism”—was crucial in containing the emergent challenge of Labour by winning the support of increasingly class-conscious workingmen voters. Clarke's work helped spur academic interest in the early

twentieth-century Liberal party, with the ideology of new Liberalism coming in for special attention.²⁸ Many of the findings of this work are summarized in G. R. Searle's excellent short survey, *The Liberal Party: Triumph and Disintegration, 1886–1929* (2nd ed., Palgrave, 2001).

Thanks to Clarke's research, the general consensus is that the pre-1914 Liberal party was not in terminal decline. At least in the sphere of parliamentary politics (local politics were perhaps somewhat different), Labour made little progress compared to its counterparts in other European countries. This consensus is shared by many historians of Labour politics. While Duncan Tanner's major *Political Change and the Labour Party* (Cambridge University Press, 1990) concluded that Clarke might have overestimated Liberal electoral strength somewhat, it insisted that relative to Labour, "the Liberals were in a powerful position" in the years before the Great War. In doing so, Tanner's book provided a corrective to accounts arguing for the vitality of the prewar Labour party, and the inevitability of its replacement of the Liberals as the Conservatives' main opponents.²⁹ One of Tanner's main findings was that before 1914, local identities—"the politics of place"—were still a crucial feature of electoral politics, being arguably more important than the still only emergent politics of class.

Indeed, the rise of class politics has often been accorded a central place in explaining the Labour party's own rise to prominence. In a famous essay, three Oxford dons argued that the crucial moment came in 1918, when the introduction of universal male suffrage gave the vote to poor working-class voters—Labour's natural supporters—who had previously been excluded from the franchise.³⁰ This argument, however, has been criticized both for underestimating the proletarian character of the prewar electorate and for assuming political allegiance to be a function of class identity.³¹ Such sociologically determinist assumptions were once a staple feature of textbook surveys of Labour party history.³² Yet, given the impact of "postmodernism" in its various guises, they are now very much out of favor. Up-to-date overviews are offered by Andrew Thorpe's chronological *History of the British Labour Party* (2nd ed., Palgrave, 1997) and the series of thematic essays in Duncan Tanner et al., ed., *Labour's First Century* (Cambridge University Press, 2000). As for more specific studies, while there is no equivalent to the Longman "History of the Conservative Party," Labour historiography has been well served by a number of outstanding monographs. These include the works by Duncan Tanner and Ross McKibbin on the party's early history,³³ David Howell's *Macdonald's Party* (Oxford University Press, 2002) for the interwar period, and Martin Francis's *Ideas and Policies under Labour, 1945–1951* (Manchester University Press, 1997)

for Clement Attlee's governments—which many see as the architects of the modern welfare state. Finally, Tony Blair's "New Labour" project has already attracted serious historical study, most notably in the contrasting works of Steven Fielding and James Cronin. While Fielding argues that many of the policies pursued in the 1990s—on unemployment, for example—accord with traditional Labour goals, Cronin has stressed the discontinuities between Blair's party and its predecessors, claiming instead that "transcending the past" was central to the New Labour agenda.³⁴

It is often said that Britain's first-past-the-post electoral system made it difficult for fringe parties to gain much of a foothold in Westminster. Yet the question as to why political extremism made so little an impact on parliamentary politics remains one worth asking. This is particularly true of the interwar period, which saw the efflorescence of powerful left- and right-wing extremist movements in many other European countries, but not in Britain, where fascism and communism remained relatively weak. It is tempting to conclude that this was because these movements were perceived as "alien" by a patriotic British public. This may be true of the Soviet-funded British Communist party, which has attracted some good work in recent years.³⁵ However, it is certainly not true of Oswald Mosley's British Union of Fascists (BUF), revisionist research into which has argued that fascism and its ideology was closer to the political mainstream than is usually imagined. Robert Skidelsky's groundbreaking *Oswald Mosley* (Macmillan, 1975) was the first major book to take BUF ideology seriously, and has in recent years been followed up by a slew of publications, a number of which have stressed the native character of British fascist thought. Dan Stone and in particular Martin Pugh have argued convincingly for the ideological overlap between the politics of British fascism and those of traditional Toryism.³⁶ Acknowledgment of this overlap problematizes conventional explanations of the BUF's failure, over which there is considerable scholarly debate.³⁷

One of the most interesting books on the British extreme right is Julie Gottlieb's admirably well-researched *Feminine Fascism: Women in Britain's Fascist Movement* (I.B. Tauris, 2000), which explored female activity in the British fascist movement between the 1920s and the 1940s. Not the least part of this volume's interest is what it says about the current vitality of research into women's engagement with twentieth-century political life. The important role women played in politics of all kinds is now recognized. Martin Pugh's *Women and the Women's Movement in Britain, 1914–1999* (2nd ed., Macmillan, 2000) provides a valuable overview of female involvement in politics as voters, activists, and politicians, while stimulating articles by Jon

Lawrence, Pat Thane, and others can be found in Amanda Vickery, ed., *Women, Privilege, and Power: British Politics, 1750 to the Present* (Stanford University Press, 2001). That said, however, there do still remain areas of scholarly neglect. The subject of women and the Conservative party is remarkably under-researched, yet is important not least because of the strength of female support of the Tories across the twentieth century.³⁸ G. E. Maguire's *Conservative Women: A History of Women and the Conservative Party, 1874–1997* (Macmillan, 1998) attempts to fill the gap, but promises more than it delivers and more detailed studies are certainly needed.³⁹ Predictably enough, one topic that has certainly seen a good deal of scholarly attention is the story of women's struggle for the vote. In this field, the productive Martin Pugh and a number of other scholars have recently aroused controversy with claims that the militant tactics of the Suffragettes did not advance the cause of female enfranchisement, but rather alienated the support of otherwise sympathetic (or at least persuadable) male politicians.⁴⁰ For Pugh, the Victorian suffragists had essentially won the intellectual argument before 1900, with the campaign waged by the Pankhursts' Women's Social and Political Union (WSPU) in the Edwardian period only delaying what was inevitable anyway. Needless to say, this perspective has not found favor with all scholars, not least those such as June Purvis who have advanced strong arguments for viewing the WSPU campaign as doing much to advance the cause of women's enfranchisement.⁴¹ Although Pugh's rigorous research does not merit the hostility it has received in some quarters, there remains something in the argument that suffragette militancy did much to give publicity, drama, and a sense of urgency to the question of votes for women.

In an important challenge to the scholarship, Nicolleta Gullace has argued that women's espousal of patriotic languages of citizenship and involvement in activities such as recruiting campaigns were crucial in the achievement of female enfranchisement (it having previously been suggested that they were of little importance).⁴² Gullace's book is just one of a number of recent publications on gender, politics, citizenship, and warfare in twentieth-century Britain.⁴³ The impact of world war on politics more generally has also attracted significant scholarly attention in late years, having previously been somewhat neglected—perhaps because of an erroneous assumption that the wartime truces between the major parties placed politics in abeyance. For World War I, the standard account is John Turner's monumental *British Politics and the Great War* (Yale University Press, 1992). Turning to 1939–45, monographs by Kevin Jefferys and Stephen Brooke give detailed accounts of wartime politics from the perspective of the Churchill government and the Labour party,

respectively.⁴⁴ Yet despite these and other recent works, Paul Addison's *The Road to 1945: British Politics and the Second World War* (London: Cape, 1975) remains a key point of reference. This book argued that the welfare state resulted from the spirit of cross-party "consensus" over social issues. Consensus, according to Addison, was a function of the spirit of national solidarity engendered by the experience of total war; it persisted into the postwar period, informing the welfare policy of both parties until the advent of Thatcherism. Yet while Addison's views have been influential, the idea of consensus both during and after the war has been subjected to damaging criticism, with many scholars now questioning its purchase, and even suggesting it to be a myth.⁴⁵ These findings have had an impact on the writing of political history, as evident from publications such as Steven Fielding et al., *England Arise: The Labour Party and Popular Politics in the 1940s* (Manchester University Press, 1995). In an important article, E. H. H. Green has even suggested that the postwar Conservative party's support for the mixed economy of "Butskellism" was not a function of any ideological commitment to consensus politics, but was conditional on the continuation of relative economic prosperity. When the economy faltered badly in the 1970s, Conservatism reverted to free-market type.⁴⁶

Unluckily, the economic disasters of the 1970s came hot on the heels of British entry into the EEC, a sequence of events that did much to dampen initial enthusiasm for the European project, which had been misrepresented to the British public as primarily economic in its rationale. Hugo Young's *This Blessed Plot: Britain and Europe from Churchill to Blair* (Macmillan, 1998) is an excellent account of Britain's relationship with Europe since 1945, usefully highlighting the contradictions, misapprehensions, and willful misunderstandings that have characterized British policy on European integration from the Treaty of Rome onward. Moving away from policy on Europe to foreign policy generally, David Reynolds's *Britannia Overruled* (2nd ed., Harlow: Longman, 2000) remains the best single-volume survey of the whole twentieth century. This may be supplemented by Paul Kennedy's wide-ranging and essayistic study of the "background influences" on British foreign policy, a book that challenges narrowly *Primat der Aussenpolitik* interpretations.⁴⁷ Strangely, however, Kennedy's approach has made relatively little impact on the specialist monographic literature, much of which adheres to the archive and official document-based approaches of traditional diplomatic historians. Some of this literature, of course, includes work of outstandingly high quality, such as Zara Steiner's studies on British policy before World War I, or R. A. C. Parker's work on appeasement in the 1930s.⁴⁸ Yet there remains

scope for further research into the interrelationship between domestic and foreign politics: the latter was not as insulated from the influence of public opinion or party debate as is sometimes assumed.⁴⁹

Any study of British external policy in the twentieth century must take account of empire and decolonization. Edited by leading historians, the monumental *British Documents at the End of Empire Project* provides a wealth of previously unpublished primary source material gleaned from official archives.⁵⁰ As regards the secondary literature, J. M. Brown and W. R. Louis, eds., *The Oxford History of the British Empire IV: The Twentieth Century* (Oxford University Press, 1999) is a good starting point, giving a comprehensive survey of the topic as a whole. While global in scope, this volume includes chapters on the domestic politics of empire and imperialism, subjects that have produced their fair share of book-length studies.⁵¹ The party political dimension to decolonization has been well dealt with in the work of Philip Murphy, Stephen Howe, and others.⁵² Finally, mention must be made of P. J. Cain and A. G. Hopkins's radical reconceptualization of the modern history of British imperialism since 1688, which pays considerable attention to the twentieth century.⁵³ While Cain and Hopkins's thesis that finance-based "gentlemanly capitalism" was the engine of British imperialism has certainly proved controversial, their work did much to revitalize the scholarship. Not the least of its impact derived from its insistence—in contrast to the ex-centric and "area-studies" focus of much research—that the advance and contraction of British imperium could not be understood without acknowledging the crucial importance of domestic, indeed metropolitan, economic and political factors.

More work needs to be done on the British experience of decolonization after 1945. One vexed and as yet incompletely answered question is why the retreat from empire did not occasion so much in the way of nationalistic political turbulence (as it did in countries such as France). This presents an interesting scholarly conundrum, given the healthy flourishing of research on empire and British national identity in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, much of which has argued for the predominance of imperial varieties of Britishness. There is no doubt, after all, that imperialist patriotism could enter into politics, as at the general election of 1900, which swept the Conservatives to victory on a tide of jingoism occasioned by the Boer War in South Africa.⁵⁴ But notwithstanding the documentation of such periodic surges of patriotic excitement, the normative significance of the empire and commonwealth in the day-to-day and popular politics of twentieth-century Britain requires further attention.⁵⁵

Central to the study of popular politics, of course, is the study of elections, and this has proved to be a particularly fruitful and methodologically innovative area of research. Thanks to the Herculean efforts of F. W. S. Craig, scholars now have an admirable body of quantitative data on which to base their psephological analyses, conveniently available in a series of invaluable reference books.⁵⁶ Unsurprisingly, given the quantitative dimension to the study of electoral history, political science methodologies have made a considerable impact. Indeed, political scientists have been at the forefront of much of the research on twentieth-century elections, particularly those of the post-1945 period. The work of David Butler, based for many years at Nuffield College Oxford, has been especially important, and his *Electoral System in Britain Since 1918* (Oxford University Press, 1963) is still useful.⁵⁷ But Butler's main contribution has been through the famous "Nuffield" monographs on individual general elections, many of which he authored or co-authored.⁵⁸ With the books being published in the immediate aftermath of the relevant election, this series began with R. B. McCallum and Alison Readman's volume on the 1945 Labour landslide and continues up to the present day.⁵⁹ Crammed with factual information and statistical analysis, these works are of lasting use to historians. The approach they pioneered has also helped inspire the study of early twentieth-century electoral politics, and while the prewar period lacks a systematically organized series akin to the Nuffield volumes, the independent work of a number of historians provides satisfactory coverage.⁶⁰ In part because of its debt to political science, much of the earlier historiography of electoral politics accorded social class a key role in the explanation of patterns of political change and party alignment. With the decline of the significance of religion in politics, voter choice, it was routinely argued, was under normal circumstances a function of sociological factors: the rise of Labour and the decline of the Liberals correlated with the rise of working-class consciousness, itself a consequence of industrial modernity. This perspective is now distinctly unfashionable, with historians tending to emphasize the part played by language and rhetoric in the construction of political identities; electors had to be won over by political appeals, and to a previously underappreciated extent issues and ideologies decided elections.⁶¹

The current popularity of "linguistic" interpretations in the field of electoral politics should come as no surprise, reflecting as it does wider trends in the writing of modern history. And while it is often said that British historiography is disdainful of explicit engagement with "theory," there is no doubt that it has been affected, and affected profoundly, by the impact of the linguistic turn and the postmodernist dispensation more generally.⁶² Gareth

Stedman Jones's work has been crucial here. Using the nineteenth-century example of the Chartist movement as a case study, Stedman Jones has insisted that politics are not determined by social conditions, even claiming that "politics occurs wholly within discourse."⁶³ It is true that not all scholars would go so far as this, but it is certainly the case that the "relative autonomy of the political" from that of the social is now widely assumed in much writing on British political history, which is increasingly focused on the recovery and analysis of rhetoric, language, and ideology.

As a number of scholars have pointed out, the new "linguistic" approach bears some similarity to older traditions of scholarship, not least that of "high political" history as represented by works like those of Maurice Cowling, leading light of the so-called Peterhouse School, a historiographical dispensation that was rightward-leaning in ideological orientation and concerned with "the politicians who mattered" (in Cowling's phrase).⁶⁴ Yet while high political historians like Cowling have often emphasized the significance of backstairs tactical maneuvering by elites, many such scholars have also stressed the crucial role played by political language, ideology, and doctrine in the public as well as the private sphere.⁶⁵ Indeed, some of the best recent research in the high political tradition concentrates on public political discourse, particularly the speeches of politicians. Philip Williamson's biographical study of the Conservative Prime Minister Stanley Baldwin offers an outstanding example. Offering a nuanced reading of the meaning and effectiveness of Baldwin's ideology, Williamson's book relies mainly on its subject's public utterances.⁶⁶

If historians' current concern with political language might not be as novel as some might claim, it is nevertheless a largely welcome development. Ideology is now taken much more seriously than previously in work on party politics, and although still occasionally erected as a straw man by scholars keen to assert the radically "revisionist" character of their approaches, the sociological determinism that disfigured some of the earlier literature is now happily a thing of the past. Yet preoccupation with the linguistic brings its own dangers. The poststructuralist assault on older epistemological certainties is the crucial factor behind the tendency of much of today's scholarship, whether theoretically aware or not, to eschew agency and causation in favor of the recovery and analysis of discursive forms. As Adrian Jones has pointed out, the skeptical epistemology of the linguistic turn ("there is nothing beneath the text") can serve to inhibit proper evaluation of discourses' significance, what Peter Mandler has in another context termed their weight and "throw."⁶⁷ This poses particular problems for political history, as even if one

regards reality as a linguistic construct, it cannot be denied that the exercise of political power has had real consequences for real people.⁶⁸ Research on the modern welfare state, for example, is now much concerned with the meanings that attached to welfare policies; it is rather less concerned with assessing the impact of these policies on private individuals. Explaining such things requires more than recovering the various discourses of welfarism; it demands that historians pay attention not only to what politicians said, but also to what they did.⁶⁹

Studying political deeds as well as political words involves acceptance that “structural context” and material “reality” still constitute legitimate factors of consideration for the serious historian. To recognize this is not to reject discursive notions of “the actual,” as some have done.⁷⁰ Language, rhetoric, myths, and images were as much a part of reality as anything else. But adopting this position does involve acknowledging the merit of the powerful critique of postmodernism’s philosophical foundations offered by John Searle and others: discourse does not constitute all of reality.⁷¹ The conclusion for scholars of modern Britain is that the social and material context of politics should not be lost sight of completely.⁷² The relationship between what politicians said and what they did, between platform oratory and policymaking, propagandist promises and legislative impact, must remain central to the project of writing twentieth-century political history, now and into the future.

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NOTES

1. Jacques Le Goff, “Later History,” *Past and Present* 100 (1983): 14–28, esp. 22–23.
2. Anthony Seldon and Stuart Ball, eds., *Conservative Century: The Conservative Party since 1900* (Oxford, 1994).
3. One notable recent example of such work is the Economic and Social Research Council–funded volume, Duncan Tanner et al., eds., *Debating Nationhood and Governance in Britain, 1885–1945: Perspectives from the “Four Nations”* (Manchester, 2006).
4. J. G. A. Pocock, “British History: A Plea for a New Subject,” *Journal of Modern History* 47 (1975): 601–28; Hugh Kearney, *The British Isles: A History of Four Nations*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge, 2006).
5. Hutchison, *Scottish Politics*, 176–78.
6. For more on “Red Clydeside,” see Robert Duncan and Arthur McIvor, eds., *Militant Workers: Labour and Class Conflict on the Clyde, 1900–1950* (Edinburgh, 1992).

7. A. C. Turner, *Scottish Home Rule* (Oxford, 1952); H. J. Hanham, *Scottish Nationalism* (London, 1969).

8. Christopher Harvie, *Scotland and Nationalism: Scottish Society and Politics 1707 to the Present*, 3rd ed. (London, 1998).

9. See also, for the later twentieth century, James Mitchell, *Conservatives and the Union: A Study of Conservative Party Attitudes to Scotland* (Edinburgh, 1990).

10. Extremely little has been published on twentieth-century Welsh Conservatism, although there has recently been some pioneering work by Matthew Cragoe on the nineteenth-century Right. See his *An Anglican Aristocracy: The Moral Economy of the Landed Estate in Carmarthenshire, 1832–1895* (Oxford, 1996).

11. For the distinctive left-wing politics of the heavily unionized South Wales coal-fields, see Chris Williams, *Democratic Rhondda: Politics and Society, 1885–1951* (Cardiff, 1996).

12. See also Foster's brilliant collection of essays, *Paddy and Mr Punch: Connections in Irish and English History* (London, 1993). Foster has since updated his treatment to the turn of the twenty-first century with *Luck and the Irish: A Brief History of Change, 1970–2000* (London, 2007).

13. See also Lyons's Oxford University Ford lectures, published as the prize-winning *Culture and Anarchy in Ireland, 1890–1939* (Oxford, 1979).

14. Jackson, *Home Rule*, 200.

15. Recently updated as *Northern Ireland, 1921–2001: Political Forces and Social Classes* (London, 2002).

16. See, for example, Thomas Hennessey, *A History of Northern Ireland, 1920–1996* (Dublin, 1997), and the discussion in Henry Patterson's excellent *Ireland Since 1939: The Persistence of Conflict* (Dublin, 2006).

17. See also Tanner, *Debating Nationhood*.

18. Robbins, *Bibliography*, 14, 18–19.

19. Peter Hennessey's "insider" perspectives on the workings of the governmental machine are also useful for the post-1945 period, but his approach is sometimes a little too anecdotal and journalistic. See Peter Hennessey, *The Cabinet* (Oxford, 1986), his massive *Whitehall*, rev. ed. (London, 2001), and also *The Prime Minister: The Office and Its Holders Since 1945* (London, 2001).

20. In the 1998 local elections in England, turnout was 28.8 percent: *Turnout at Local Elections* (London, 2002), 3.

21. J. M. Lee, *Social Leaders and Public Persons: A Study of County Government in Cheshire Since 1888* (Oxford, 1963); G. W. Jones, *Borough Politics: A Study of Wolverhampton Town Council, 1888–1964* (London, 1969); Ken Young, *Local Politics and the Rise of Party: The London Municipal Society and the Conservative Intervention in Local Elections, 1894–1963* (Leicester, 1975).

22. *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, ed. H. C. G. Matthew and Brian Harrison (Oxford, 2004); online edition, ed. Lawrence Goldman, <http://www.oxforddnb.com>.

23. Notable volumes include Michael Bentley, *Lord Salisbury's World: Conservative Environments in Late-Victorian Britain* (Cambridge, 2001); R. J. Q. Adams, *Balfour: The Last Grandee* (London, 2007); John Wilson, *CB: A Life of Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman* (London, 1973); John Grigg, *The Young Lloyd George* (London, 1973); Grigg, *Lloyd George: The People's Champion, 1902–1911* (London, 1978); Grigg, *Lloyd George: From*

Peace to War, 1912–1916 (London, 1985); Grigg, *Lloyd George: War Leader, 1916–1918* (London, 2002); Robert Blake, *The Unknown Prime Minister: The Life and Times of Andrew Bonar Law, 1858–1923* (London, 1955); David Marquand, *Ramsay Macdonald* (London, 1977); Philip Williamson, *Baldwin: Conservative Leadership and National Values* (Cambridge, 1999); David Dilks, *Neville Chamberlain, vol. I: Pioneering and Reform, 1869–1929* (Cambridge, 1984); Martin Gilbert, *Churchill: A Life* (London, 1991); David Dutton, *Anthony Eden: A Life and Reputation* (London, 1997); Alistair Horne, *Macmillan*, 2 vols. (London, 1988–89); Ben Pimlott, *Harold Wilson* (London, 1992); John Campbell, *Edward Heath* (London, 1993); Campbell, *Margaret Thatcher*, 2 vols. (London, 2000–3).

24. Later editions appeared as *The Conservative Party from Peel to Thatcher* (London, 1985) and *The Conservative Party from Peel to Major* (London, 1997).

25. John Ramsden, *The Age of Balfour and Baldwin* (London, 1978), *The Age of Churchill and Eden, 1940–1957* (London, 1995), and *Winds of Change: Macmillan to Heath, 1957–1975* (London, 1996).

26. E. H. H. Green, *The Crisis of Conservatism: The Politics, Economics, and Ideology of the British Conservative Party, 1880–1914* (London, 1995); Green, *Ideologies of Conservatism: Conservative Political Ideas in the Twentieth Century* (Oxford, 2002); Williamson, *Baldwin*.

27. Cf. George Dangerfield, *The Strange Death of Liberal England* (London, 1936).

28. See, for example, Peter Clarke, *Liberals and Social Democrats* (Cambridge, 1978); Michael Freedon, *The New Liberalism: An Ideology of Social Reform* (Oxford, 1978); G. L. Bernstein, *Liberalism and Liberal Politics in Edwardian England* (Boston, 1986).

29. Tanner, *Political Change*, 426.

30. H. C. G. Matthew et al., “The Franchise Factor in the Rise of the Labour Party,” *English Historical Review* 91 (1976): 723–52.

31. The seminal critique being Duncan Tanner, “The Parliamentary Electoral System, the ‘Fourth Reform Act,’ and the Rise of Labour in England and Wales,” *Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research* 134 (1983): 205–19.

32. See, for example, Keith Laybourn, *The Rise of Labour: The British Labour Party, 1890–1979* (London, 1988), which argues that “the Labour party’s growth in the early twentieth century was inevitable given the social and economic issues of the time, that the association with the working class reached its high-point during the inter-war years but that the post-war years have necessitated that the Labour party meet the changing economic and social environment—and this is has failed to do” (5).

33. Tanner, *Political Change*; Ross McKibbin, *The Evolution of the Labour Party, 1910–1924* (Oxford, 1974).

34. Steven Fielding, *The Labour Party: Continuity and Change in the Making of New Labour* (Basingstoke, 2003); James E. Cronin, *New Labour’s Pasts: The Labour Party and Its Discontents* (Harlow, 2004).

35. Henry Pelling’s *The British Communist Party* (London, 1958) is the classic work. For more recent studies, see Matthew Worley, *Class Against Class: The Communist Party in Britain Between the Wars* (London, 2002), and Andrew Thorpe, *The British Communist Party and Moscow, 1920–1943* (Manchester, 2000). For interesting work on the patriotism of the British Left, see Paul Ward, *Red Flag and Union Jack: Englishness, Patriotism, and the British Left, 1881–1924* (Woodbridge, 1998).

36. Martin Pugh, *"Hurrah for the Blackshirts!": Fascists and Fascism in Britain Between the Wars* (London, 2005); Dan Stone, "The English Mystery, the BUF, and the Dilemmas of British Fascism," *Journal of Modern History* 75 (2003): 336–58.

37. See, for example, the debate between Pugh and Jon Lawrence on the significance of fascist violence in the movement's decline. Jon Lawrence, "Fascist Violence and the Politics of Public Order in Inter-War Britain: The Olympia Debate Revisited," *Historical Research* 76 (2003): 238–67; Martin Pugh, "The National Government, the British Union of Fascists, and the Olympia Debate," *Historical Research* 78 (2005): 253–62; Jon Lawrence, "Why Olympia Mattered," *Historical Research* 78 (2005): 263–72.

38. In 1969, a secret internal Conservative party report estimated that if women had not been given the vote, Labour would have been in power almost continuously since 1945: G. E. Maguire, *Conservative Women: A History of Women and the Conservative Party, 1874–1997* (Basingstoke, 1998), 2. The difficulties encountered by women activists in male-dominated Labour politics has been brought out well in P. M. Graves, *Labour Women: Women in British Working-Class Politics, 1918–1939* (Cambridge, 1994).

39. Some indication of the potential for future research in this area is given by David Jarvis, "The Conservative Party and the Politics of Gender, 1900–1939," in *The Conservatives and British Society, 1880–1990*, ed. Martin Francis and Ina Zweiniger-Bargielowska (Cardiff, 1996), 172–93; Jarvis, "'Behind Every Great Party': Women and Conservatism in Twentieth-Century Britain," in Amanda Vickery, ed., *Women, Privilege, and Power*, 289–314; Jarvis, "'Mrs. Maggs and Betty': The Conservative Appeal to Women Voters in the 1920s," *Twentieth Century British History* 5 (1994): 129–52.

40. Martin Pugh, *The March of the Women: A Revisionist Analysis of the Campaign for Women's Suffrage, 1866–1914* (Oxford, 2000). For a somewhat polemical and notably controversial treatment, see C. J. Bearman, "An Examination of Suffragette Violence," *English Historical Review* 125 (2005): 365–97.

41. See, for example, June Purvis, *Emmeline Pankhurst: A Biography* (London, 2002); June Purvis and Sandra Stanley Holton, eds., *Votes for Women* (London, 2000).

42. Nicoletta F. Gullace, *"The Blood of our Sons": Men, Women, and the Renegotiation of British Citizenship During the Great War* (New York, 2002).

43. Other notable recent examples include Susan R. Grayzel, *Women's Identities at War: Gender, Motherhood, and Politics in Britain and France During the First World War* (Chapel Hill, 1999); Susan Pedersen, *Family, Dependence, and the Origins of the Welfare State: Britain and France, 1914–1945* (Cambridge, 1993); Sonya O. Rose, *Which People's War? National Identity and Citizenship in Wartime Britain, 1939–1945* (Oxford, 2003); Penny Summerfield, *Women Workers in the Second World War*, 2nd ed. (London, 1989).

44. Kevin Jefferys, *The Churchill Coalition and Wartime Politics, 1940–1945* (Manchester, 1991); Stephen Brooke, *Labour's War: The Labour Party During the Second World War* (Oxford, 1992).

45. See, for example, Angus Calder, *The Myth of the Blitz* (London, 1991); Rodney Lowe, "The Second World War, Consensus, and the Foundation of the Welfare State," *Twentieth Century British History* 1 (1990): 152–82; Kevin Jefferys, "British Politics and Social Policy During the Second World War," *Historical Journal* 30 (1987): 123–44; Jose Harris, "Political Values and the Debate on State Welfare, 1940–45," in *War and Social Change: British Society in the Second World War*, ed. Harold L. Smith (Manchester, 1986), 233–63.

46. E. H. H. Green, "Thatcherism: A Historical Perspective," *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 6th ser., 9 (1999): 17–42.

47. Paul Kennedy, *The Realities Behind Diplomacy: Background Influences on British External Policy, 1865–1980* (London, 1981).

48. Zara Steiner, *The Foreign Office and Foreign Policy, 1898–1914* (Cambridge, 1969); Steiner, *Britain and the Origins of the First World War* (London, 1977); R. A. C. Parker, *Chamberlain and Appeasement: British Policy and the Coming of the Second World War* (Basingstoke, 1993); Parker, *Churchill and Appeasement* (London, 2000).

49. For a strident—probably too strident—defense of the "primacy of domestic policy," see Keith M. Wilson, *The Policy of the Entente: Essays on the Determinants of British Foreign Policy, 1904–1914* (Cambridge, 1985).

50. Full details of the project are available at <http://commonwealth.sas.ac.uk/british.htm#C>.

51. See, for example, Andrew S. Thompson, *Imperial Britain: The Empire in British Politics, c. 1880–1932* (Harlow, 2000); David Goldsworthy, *Colonial Issues in British Politics, 1945–1961* (Oxford, 1971); John Darwin, *Britain and Decolonization* (Basingstoke, 1988); Darwin, *The End of the British Empire* (Oxford, 1991).

52. See, for example, Philip Murphy, *Party Politics and Decolonization: The Conservative Party and British Colonial Policy in Tropical Africa, 1951–1964* (Oxford, 1995); Stephen Howe, *Anticolonialism in British Politics: The Left and the End of Empire, 1918–1964* (Oxford, 1993).

53. P. J. Cain and A. G. Hopkins, *British Imperialism 1688–2000*, 2nd ed. (Harlow, 2001).

54. Paul Readman, "The Conservative Party, Patriotism, and British Politics: The Case of the General Election of 1900," *Journal of British Studies* 40 (2001): 107–45.

55. Although see Andrew Thompson, *The Empire Strikes Back? The Impact of Imperialism on Britain from the Mid-Nineteenth Century* (Harlow, 2005), which provides an excellent if inevitably rather general overview.

56. F. W. S. Craig, *British Electoral Facts, 1832–1987*, 5th ed. (Dartmouth, 1989); Craig, *British Parliamentary Election Results, 1885–1918* (London, 1974); Craig, *British Parliamentary Election Results, 1918–1949* (Glasgow, 1969); Craig, *British Parliamentary Election Results, 1950–1970* (Chichester, 1971); Craig, *British Parliamentary Election Results, 1974–1983* (Chichester, 1984).

57. It is now complemented by works such as Pippa Norris, *Electoral Change in Britain Since 1945* (Oxford, 1997), which provides an accessible entrée into the study of postwar elections from a political science perspective.

58. Butler has authored or co-authored all the "Nuffield" studies of general elections since 1951. His first book was *The British General Election of 1951* (London, 1952); his latest is David E. Butler and Dennis Kavanagh, *The British General Election of 2005* (London, 2005).

59. R. B. McCallum and Alison Readman, *The British General Election of 1945* (Oxford, 1947).

60. A. K. Russell, *Liberal Landslide: The General Election of 1906* (Newton Abbot, 1973); Neal Blewett, *The Peers, the Parties, and the People: The General Elections of 1910* (London, 1972); John Turner, *British Politics and the Great War* (New Haven, 1991); Chris Cook, *The Age of Alignment: Electoral Politics in Britain, 1922–1929* (London, 1975); Andrew

Thorpe, *The British General Election of 1931* (Oxford, 1991); Tom Stannage, *Baldwin Thwarts the Opposition: The British General Election of 1935* (London, 1980).

61. For a good example of some recent work in this vein, as well as a helpful summary of the historiography, see Jon Lawrence and Miles Taylor, eds., *Party, State, and Society: Electoral Behaviour in Britain Since 1820* (Aldershot, 1997), esp. 1–26.

62. As Michael Bentley has suggested, postmodern ideas have “begun to nibble at, sometimes bite on, the assumptions of working historians whose conscious activity may betray no shadow of interest in theoretical matters.” See Michael Bentley, ed., *Companion to Historiography*, 2nd ed. (London, 2002), 489–90.

63. Gareth Stedman Jones, “Rethinking Chartism,” in Jones, *Languages of Class: Studies in English Working Class History, 1832–1982* (Cambridge, 1983), 90–178; Jones, “Anglo-Marxism and the Discursive Approach to History,” in *Was bleibt von marxistischen Perspektiven in der Geschichtsforschung?* ed. Alf Lüdtke (Göttingen, 1997), 204–5. According to Stedman Jones, the reception of political messages by their audiences can never be studied with reference to an extra-discursive reality, as “‘interests’ are only articulated through discourse. The potential number of ‘interests’ possessed by an individual is infinite. It is the dialogical form of the development of political discourse which creates (or fails to create) constituencies and brings this or that ‘interest’ to the fore” (ibid.).

64. See, for example, Jon Lawrence, “Political History,” in *Writing History: Theory and Practice*, ed. Stefan Berger et al. (London, 2003), 183–202; Susan Pedersen, “What Is Political History Now?” in *What Is History Now?* ed. David Cannadine (Basingstoke, 2002), 38; Paul Readman, “Speeches,” in *Reading Primary Sources*, ed. Miriam Dobson and Benjamin Ziemann (London, 2009), 209–25. Cowling’s works include *The Impact of Labour, 1920–1924: The Beginning of Modern British Politics* (Cambridge, 1971) and *The Impact of Hitler: British Politics and British Policy, 1933–1940* (London, 1975).

65. See, for example, Michael Bentley, “Politics, Doctrine, and Thought,” in *High and Low Politics in Modern Britain*, ed. Michael Bentley and John Stevenson (Oxford, 1983); Turner, *British Politics and the Great War*.

66. Williamson, *Baldwin*.

67. Andrew Jones, “Word and Deed: Why a Post-Poststructuralist History Is Needed, and How It Might Look,” *Historical Journal* 43 (2000): 517–41 at 528; Peter Mandler, “The Problem with Cultural History,” *Cultural and Social History* 1 (2004): 94–117.

68. For perceptive comments on this point, see Ronald P. Formisano, “The Concept of Political Culture,” *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 31 (2001): esp. 395–96, 418–22.

69. Cf. Pedersen, “What Is Political History?” 46–50.

70. See, for example, Lawrence Stone, “History and Post-Modernism,” *Past and Present* 131 (1991): 217–18, and *Past and Present* 135 (1992): 189–94.

71. John R. Searle, *The Construction of Social Reality* (New York, 1995), 149ff.; Searle, *Mind, Language, and Society: Doing Philosophy in the Real World* (London, 1999), esp. 12–37.

72. Lawrence, “Political History.”