



IDEAS IN CONTEXT

# Victorian Visions of Global Order

Empire and Relations in Nineteenth-Century  
Political Thought



Edited by Duncan Bell

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## VICTORIAN VISIONS OF GLOBAL ORDER

This wide-ranging and original collection analyses some of the diverse visions of global politics that circulated during a pivotal era in the history of the British empire. A distinguished group of contributors explore topics including: the evolution of international law; the ways in which the world was imaginatively divided into the 'civilised' and the 'barbarian'; the role of India in shaping conceptions of civil society; grandiose ideas about a global imperial state; the emergence of an array of radical critiques of empire; the varieties of liberal imperialism; and the rise and fall of the ideology of free trade. Spanning canonical figures (including Bentham, Cobden, Marx and Mill) as well as many important but neglected figures (including J. R. Seeley, Henry Maine and James Fitzjames Stephens), this collection is a significant contribution to the study of political thought and intellectual history.

DUNCAN BELL is a University Lecturer in International Relations in the Centre of International Studies, University of Cambridge, and a Fellow of Christ's College, Cambridge. He has previously published *The Idea of Greater Britain: Empire and the Future of World Order, 1860–1900* (2007) and was editor of *Memory, Trauma, and World Politics: Reflections on the Relationship Between Past and Present* (2006).

Victorian Visions of Global Order

## IDEAS IN CONTEXT

*Edited by* Quentin Skinner and James Tully

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# VICTORIAN VISIONS OF GLOBAL ORDER

*Empire and International Relations in Nineteenth-Century  
Political Thought*

EDITED BY  
DUNCAN BELL



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## CHAPTER I

# *Victorian visions of global order: an introduction*

*Duncan Bell*

## I. INTRODUCTION

For much of the nineteenth-century Britain, standing at the heart of a vast and intricate network of power and patronage, dominated global politics. The Victorian empire was the largest that the world had ever known, spanning all the continents and oceans of the planet, and shaping the lives of hundreds of millions of people. The political, cultural, and economic dynamics of our own age bear the imprint of this tangled history.

The British empire is the subject of a vast scholarly literature.<sup>1</sup> In recent years a fertile, and rapidly expanding, subfield has investigated the multiple ways in which empires have been theorised – imagined, explained, justified, and criticised.<sup>2</sup> This dovetails neatly with a strand of scholarship that explores the development of international thought, analysing how thinkers of previous generations conceived of the nature and significance of political boundaries, and the relations between discrete communities.<sup>3</sup> The spatial reorientation of intellectual history has been catalysed by two broader developments: a fixation, ranging across the social sciences and humanities, on the dynamics and normative status of globalisation, and more recently, a concern with the revival of empire, driven primarily by American foreign policy.<sup>4</sup> As well as highlighting the richness of past thinking about empire and international relations, scholars have demonstrated that much of what has been greeted as exhilaratingly original in current thinking about global politics, has roots deep in the history of western political reflection. As Istvan Hont argues, for example, there is little that is conceptually novel in contemporary accounts of globalisation, and issues such as the complex and potentially destabilising relationship between international commerce and state sovereignty were staple topics in eighteenth century political discourse.<sup>5</sup>

Yet despite the surge of interest in the history of imperialism over the last quarter of a century, the array of arguments addressing the Victorian

empire, and the practices of nineteenth-century international politics more generally, have received surprisingly little sustained attention from historians of political thought. *Victorian Visions of Global Order* seeks to help fill a significant gap in both intellectual history and the history of political theory, through exploring some of the most prominent and interesting ways in which thinkers based in Britain imagined the past, present, and future of global politics during the long years of Queen Victoria's reign (1837–1901).

In *The Expansion of England* (1883) J. R. Seeley lambasted 'our childish mode of arranging history'.<sup>6</sup> He was referring to the common tendency to partition, label, and judge the past according to which monarch happened to be sitting on the throne, whether Elizabeth, George III, or Victoria. In so doing, he suggested, the historical imagination was constrained, the identification of long-term patterns of continuity and change obscured. This charge carries considerable weight, and the authors of the following chapters do not stick rigidly to the exact span of Victoria's rule, sometimes reaching further back in time to trace connections with the intellectual worlds of preceding decades, even centuries, and sometimes moving forward into the early twentieth century. A case can nevertheless be made for examining the Victorian period as a distinctive era, both politically and intellectually. The 1830s saw the end of what J. G. A. Pocock, following Reinhart Koselleck, refers to as the 'sattelzeit', an era of disruption and transformation in patterns of discourse, conceptions of temporality, and understandings of the political universe, which began in the mid-eighteenth century and intensified over the revolutionary period and during the Napoleonic wars. Pocock argues that this period witnessed the end of 'early modernity' and the birth of 'the modern'.<sup>7</sup> Liberalism was its most significant progeny. In Britain the Roman Catholic Relief Act (1829) and the Reform Act (1832) ushered in a new era, marked above all by the rise of liberalism, the slow gestation of democracy, the increasing importance of ideas about nationality and 'national character', and the move from mercantilism to free trade.<sup>8</sup> The 1830s also witnessed a distinct break in the *dramatis personae* of theoretical debate. The decade saw the death of Jeremy Bentham (1832) and Samuel Taylor Coleridge (1834), intellectual polestars of their generation, whilst Thomas Macaulay, F. D. Maurice, Thomas Carlyle, and John Stuart Mill, to name only some of the more influential, rose to prominence.<sup>9</sup> Mill's celebrated 'reaction' of the nineteenth century against the eighteenth, while exaggerated, was not completely illusory. The 1830s likewise signalled the end of what C. A. Bayly labels the 'first age of global imperialism'. He argues that the European drive for overseas empire

can be divided into three main epochs. If the first saw the European states beginning their brutal march across the globe between 1520 and 1620, and the third, stretching through much of the nineteenth-century and reaching its pinnacle in the 'Scramble for Africa' from the 1880s onwards, saw them fight over the remaining unoccupied territories, it was the middle epoch, reaching from 1760 to 1830 and driven by the imperatives and might of the 'fiscal military state', that saw the greatest 'percentage of the world's resources and population seized and redistributed'.<sup>10</sup> It was also the first that was truly global in reach, encompassing territories in south and southeast Asia, North America, Australasia, much of the middle east, and southern Africa. Victorian imperialism deepened and extended these foundations.

The end of Victoria's reign is less clearly defined; the customary terminal date for the long nineteenth century is 1914. Nevertheless, the South African War (1899–1902), which acted as such a shock to British publics and elites alike, was a significant point of rupture, and can act as a convenient point to frame the volume. Victoria had been buried before it reached its bitter conclusion. At the century's end, Britain had entered the democratic age, albeit partially and often grudgingly, attacks on the shibboleth of free trade were on the rise, socialism in its diverse forms was gaining some adherents and more enemies, and organic and welfarist theories of state and society dominated debate. Liberalism was on the retreat, its recrudescence in the wake of Chamberlain's tariff reform campaign imminent but not yet discernable.<sup>11</sup>

The term 'visions of global order' captures something important about many of the positions covered in this book.<sup>12</sup> It signifies both the ambition and the prophetic mode of enunciation that characterised much of the thinking about empire and international politics during the century, highlighting the all-encompassing nature of many Victorian theoretical projects. This was an age of grand (and grandiose) theorising. It was also an age in which intellectual generalists thrived, and the crossing of what in the twentieth century many would come to regard as sturdy disciplinary walls was the norm. It is very hard to separate 'the political' (or 'political theory') from other domains of nineteenth-century thought – it was embedded in, and shaped by, political economy, theology, jurisprudence, the emerging social sciences, especially anthropology, literature, and the writing of history.<sup>13</sup> Much of the most influential and interesting political thinking was articulated, moreover, in registers and formats that often escape the eye of historians of political theory, who have tended to focus on canonical figures even as they seek to locate them in their multifarious

contexts. This is a valuable exercise, but when applied to the Victorians, and especially when probing the history of international and imperial thought, it can lead to omission and distortion. There are few 'canonical' figures to examine, which has meant, in practice, that a great deal of attention has been lavished on John Stuart Mill.<sup>14</sup> Whilst this has led to a much fuller understanding of the centrality of empire in his political vision, Mill has frequently, and usually implausibly, stood in as representative of his time, and in particular of liberal attitudes to conquest and imperial rule. Consequently, wider patterns of thought and contrasting political and theoretical tendencies have often been elided.<sup>15</sup> It is important to avoid basing sweeping generalisations about a vibrant and conflict-strewn intellectual environment on a very limited range of sources; and it is also essential to recognise the different registers, outlets, and modes of systematic political reflection that shaped the intellectual life of the time.<sup>16</sup> Any comprehensive exploration of Victorian imperial and international thought must traverse both sophisticated theory and more mundane forms of speculative, reflective or prescriptive political discourse. Following this injunction, the chapters in this volume range from detailed historical reconstructions of public policy debates to analyses of some of the most complicated political theorising of the era, in doing so encompassing figures as diverse as W. E. Gladstone, Frederic Harrison, L. T. Hobhouse, J. A. Hobson, H. M. Hyndman, James Lorimer, Henry Maine, Karl Marx, John Stuart Mill, D. G. Ritchie, Wilfred Scawen Blunt, J. R. Seeley, Herbert Spencer, Travers Twiss, and John Westlake.

The languages used to theorise world order have an extensive and intricate history; much of our own vocabulary emerged or assumed its current meanings during the long nineteenth century. Jeremy Bentham coined the term 'international' in 1789 to replace the 'law of nations' as an appellation for law that extended beyond the state, governing the 'mutual transactions of sovereigns'.<sup>17</sup> Today it is so commonly employed that its genealogy is often forgotten, as is its problematic formulation, which stresses 'nation' where it invariably refers to 'state'.<sup>18</sup> The terms associated with empire (including imperialism, imperial, colony, and colonisation) also have highly complex histories, some stretching back millennia, others of far more recent provenance. Here is not the place to chart these histories, but it is worth indicating that the meaning of empire was not fixed during the nineteenth century, connoting as it did an assortment of different, and sometimes contradictory, processes and political forms. During the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the term 'empire' signified the lands

comprising the Three Kingdoms of Britain and Ireland, and it was only in the second quarter of the eighteenth century that it became popular as a designation for the totality of the British state and its overseas territories, principally lands in the Caribbean and North America.<sup>19</sup> Although its terms of reference varied, it was widely employed throughout the Victorian age. For some, it meant simply the full array of British possessions throughout the world; for others, it was used in a more differentiated sense, referring, for example, to the British empire in India, the empire of settlement, and so forth.<sup>20</sup> Whilst acknowledging that Britain possessed an empire in India, Africa, and the Caribbean, Seeley denied that the colonies in Australia, New Zealand, the Cape, and Canada constituted an empire 'in the ordinary sense of the word', preferring to see them as an integral part of a British 'world-state'.<sup>21</sup> Differentiation often followed from the conflicting lessons the Victorians drew from ancient Roman and Greek modes of foreign rule, although it also frequently expressed the semantic vagueness that characterised much political discourse at the time.<sup>22</sup> 'Imperialism', meanwhile, was a term used for much of the Victorian period to characterise the purportedly despotic municipal politics of France; it was only in the 1870s that it entered mainstream usage to refer to aggressive policies of foreign conquest, and even then confusion over its meaning was rife.<sup>23</sup> These definitional conflicts continue to this day, most conspicuously in the emotive debates over whether or not the United States should be classified as an empire, and if so, whether it represents a depressing continuation of western imperial history, or a significant break from it. The history of political thought provides ample ammunition for all sides, replete as it is with diverse and sometimes incongruous accounts of the character of empires, colonies, and imperialism.

## II. POLITICAL AND INTELLECTUAL CONTEXTS

Historians conventionally divide the Victorian period into early, middle and late, although they often differ over the precise demarcation points.<sup>24</sup> In this short introduction it would be foolhardy to attempt either a comprehensive account of the manifold social, political, economic, and intellectual, developments spanning the era or an exhaustive synthesis of recent scholarship.<sup>25</sup> It is useful, however, to briefly outline some of the basic features that historians have identified as shaping the character of British political life in the decades under discussion in this book, both to establish the general historiographical context and to highlight the ways in which the following chapters conform with and challenge these lines of interpretation.



In very general terms, the early years of Victoria's reign, up until the 1850s, were marked by pessimism and apprehension. Emerging victorious from over a decade of war against Napoleonic France, the country was soon riven by internal discord and unrest. Indeed the first half of the century was characterised, argues Boyd Hilton, by 'a constant sensation of fear – fear of revolution, of the masses, of crime, famine, and poverty, of disorder and instability, and for many people even fear of pleasure'.<sup>26</sup> Apocalyptic visions of bloody revolution alarmed and energised the ruling elite, leading to harsh punitive legislation and then, following an acrimonious struggle, to limited franchise reform. All of this took place in the context of rapid industrialisation and urbanisation, which simultaneously re-calibrated the economy and uprooted many traditional ways of life. Aside from the Reform Act, the other key piece of legislation was the repeal of the Corn Laws in 1846, a defining moment in British history, and one that was to play a pivotal role in the political imagination for the remainder of the century. As a result of constitutional reform, the crushing of dissent, the strength of popular conservatism, the flexibility of the governing elite, increasing affluence, and, argues Miles Taylor, the existence of an imperial system that lowered the tax burden on the middle classes and simultaneously provided a 'safety valve' for the removal of political agitators and excess population, Britain escaped an eruption of revolutionary fervour in 1848.<sup>27</sup> The mid-century years saw the flowering of a more optimistic mood; the 1851 Great Exhibition, a paean to British confidence, economic dynamism, and political power, symbolically inaugurated a new era. The period stretching from the early 1850s to the late 1870s is often seen, indeed, as an 'age of equipoise' characterised by 'stability, optimism, social solidarity, relative affluence, and liberality'.<sup>28</sup> 'Old corruption' was defeated; a popular monarch sat on the throne.<sup>29</sup> The previous social discord receded into the background, partly through exhaustion and partly through clever government intervention, whilst the economy flourished. Despite occasional invasion 'scares', there was no serious threat to the territorial integrity of the United Kingdom.<sup>30</sup>

This optimism was soon to falter: during the closing years of Victoria's reign, and especially from the 1880s onwards, the horizon once again darkened, although not to the degree seen earlier in the century. Global competition, both economic and geopolitical, seemed more intense and threatening. The swift rise of a unified Germany flaunting its imperial ambitions, the post-Civil War dynamism of the United States, the perception of a menacing Russian threat in the East: all generated consternation. Such concerns triggered the publication of numerous popular novels and

short stories envisaging the outbreak and trajectory of future wars that the British would fight against a variety of enemies, most commonly Germany.<sup>31</sup> This was also the period of the rapacious 'Scramble for Africa', as the European powers sought to divide up the remaining territories of that vast continent.<sup>32</sup> Domestic political clashes turned increasingly bitter, especially over the extension of the franchise, the prospect of Irish Home Rule, and then the war in South Africa. The economy was thought to be in free-fall, whilst the 'social question' once again raised its head.<sup>33</sup> Individuals across the political mainstream feared the perfidious march of 'socialism', a term vague even by the prevailing standards of political argument, seeing it as a potential threat to all that had been achieved during the century. When Victoria died in 1901 the political elite of the country was deeply divided.

The chapters in this volume offer considerable support to this tripartite historical narrative. The repeal of the Corn Laws generated, as Anthony Howe argues in his contribution, an outbreak of optimism about the pacific effects of international trade, which was (partly) extinguished in the closing two decades of the century by a bleaker assessment of the international situation, and a loss of confidence in the powers of free trade to overcome dangerous rivalries. Casper Sylvest highlights how the mid-century years witnessed the blooming of international law, regarded by many of its proponents as a key agent for fostering moral progress in world politics. Likewise, as I examine in my own chapter, during the last three decades of the century international competition and domestic unease intensified interest in the settler colonies, for many people saw the immense expanses of land across the Atlantic and in the South Pacific as a means of guaranteeing British power and prestige, as well as spaces in which to foster a new breed of rugged imperial patriots.

But a number of chapters also complicate the standard picture. In particular, the view of the mid-Victorian era as an age of equipoise needs to be balanced by a recognition of the existence of widespread anxiety over Britain's place in the world. Arrogance and pride co-existed with apprehension and frustration. Looking back on the early 1850s, Henry Maine told his Cambridge audience in 1888 that the 'generation of William Whewell may be said to have had a dream of peace', exemplified by the atmosphere surrounding the Great Exhibition, but the 'buildings of this Temple of Peace had hardly been removed when war broke out again, more terrible than ever', and he pointed to the Crimean War (1854–6) as inaugurating a new period of conflict. To believers in the possibility of peace this represented 'a bitter deception'.<sup>34</sup> The campaign in the Crimea

demonstrated the ineptness of the British Army, whilst the Sepoy Rebellion (1857–8) and the prolonged controversy that followed Governor Eyre's brutal repression of the Morant Bay rebellion in Jamaica (1865) highlighted the precarious hold of the British over their subject populations, challenged (as Karuna Mantena argues in her chapter) the very foundations of the liberal imperial mission, and served to harden racial attitudes.<sup>35</sup> British failure to help the Danish, as had been promised, over Schleswig-Holstein in 1864, the devastating Prussian victory over Austria at Königgrätz in 1866, and increasing unease at the potential bellicosity of Napoleon III, all fuelled fears that British power was eroding dangerously. This does not mean that the equipoise was illusory – and it is important to remember that many commentators at the time thought that international and imperial affairs, aside from moments of high drama, such as wars, resonated little with the public<sup>36</sup> – but rather that the relationship between domestic and foreign affairs needs to be conceived in a more nuanced and dynamic manner.<sup>37</sup>

The political languages that the Victorians drew on and developed were constantly evolving. Most prominent of all was liberalism, the subject of many chapters in this volume. Analysing the development and structure of liberalism is a formidably difficult task. This is mainly because it is what Raymond Geuss terms a 'Janus-faced historical phenomena', simultaneously comprising a constantly shifting abstract theoretical structure, 'a collection of characteristic arguments, ideals, values, and concepts', and a complex 'social reality, a political movement that is at least partially institutionalized in organized parties'. Such an amalgam presents difficulties for 'traditional forms of philosophy' – and, it might be added, traditional forms of the history of philosophy – which tend to focus on the 'analysis and evaluation of relatively well-defined arguments', not on the dynamics of political contestation, and the interweaving of principled argumentation, rhetorical ploys, tactical manoeuvre, and power.<sup>38</sup> The term liberal was first used in Spain *circa* 1810 to refer to a political party demanding the circumscription of royal power and the creation of a constitutional monarchy modelled on that in Britain.<sup>39</sup> It was employed in Britain increasingly from the 1830s onwards.<sup>40</sup> Drawing on a variety of different (and sometimes conflicting) intellectual positions, including Benthamite utilitarianism, classical political economy, the historical sociology of the Scottish enlightenment, civic humanism, and long-standing whiggish organicism, liberalism in its diverse and competing forms shaped the political thought (if not always the political practice) of much of the Victorian age. It underwent constant adaptation and reinvention: at

various junctures its proponents drew on, reacted against, or incorporated numerous influences, including evolutionary theories (both pre- and post-Darwinian), continental political thought, especially Comte and Saint-Simon, the marginalist revolution in economics, and various shifts in the philosophical current, particularly the rise of idealism, to name only a few of the more significant.<sup>41</sup> The Liberal party, which had emerged from the shell of the Whigs, and also incorporated Peelite Tories and a miscellaneous collection of Radicals, dominated parliamentary politics for much of the mid-Victorian era, until it fragmented over Home Rule in the 1880s.<sup>42</sup> Even after this parliamentary collapse, however, liberal thought remained vibrant, mutating as its advocates wrestled with the lessons taught by the idealists who, following the inspirational example of T. H. Green, had come to dominate British philosophical debate.<sup>43</sup>

Mirroring the general influence of liberalism, much of the international thought of the mid- and late-Victorian periods can be seen as composing a species of 'liberal internationalism'. Encompassing figures as diverse as Cobden, Mill, Maine, Sidgwick, Spencer, Hobson, and Hobhouse, liberal internationalism was powered by the twin engines of international law and international commerce, its adherents (often adopting the mantle of prophets) believing that when combined and properly directed the two could generate a transformation in international 'morality', ushering in a new, more harmonious age. The international domain, so it was argued, need not be governed by the ruthless logic of militaristic competition and incessant conflict. There were, of course, many different strains of this loose (and often imprecisely articulated) cluster of beliefs, and it spanned intellectual and sometimes even party political divides.<sup>44</sup> There were also assorted positions that stood in opposition to it – including pacifism, promoted with varying degrees of enthusiasm by the more radical members of the energetic peace movement, a plethora of socialist and Marxist visions of world order, the pragmatic realism of Lord Salisbury, forms of jingoistic imperialism, as well as the glorification of war, albeit quite rare in Britain, that Karma Nabulsi has helpfully labelled 'martialism'.<sup>45</sup> Nevertheless, liberal internationalism was probably the most widespread mode of thinking about global politics during the closing decades of the century, at least among the intellectual elite. Its influence lasted well into the twentieth century, and continues to this day.<sup>46</sup>

One of the main fault-lines running through nineteenth-century British visions of global order concerned the role of the empire. Victorian thinkers tended to divide the world into different imaginative spheres, each generating radically diverse sociological accounts and competing ethical

claims. The most important divide separated the ‘civilised’ and the ‘non-civilised’ (savage or barbarian) spheres, and it was argued that the relations between civilised communities should assume a very different form from those governing the relations between the civilised and non-civilised. This distinction did not preclude the existence of considerable variation within each category – it allowed, for example, the construction of elaborate hierarchies of civilised states, as well as differentiation between types of ‘savage’. But there was no consensus on how or where to draw the lines, on the actual content of civilisation, or over how deeply ingrained the distinctions were. Levels of civilisation could be assessed in relation to the socially dominant modes of theology, ascribed racial characteristics, technological superiority, political institutions, the structure of family life and gender relations, economic success, individual moral and intellectual capacity, or (as was typically the case) some combination of these. This bifocal, though fluid, conception of global order provided the theoretical foundations for justifying empire: it simultaneously deprived ‘non-civilised’ communities of the protective sovereign rights that were held to govern relations between the ‘civilised’ states while legitimating conquest in the name of spreading civilisation.<sup>47</sup>

Most nineteenth-century British political thinkers supported empire in one form or another, but this allowed for significant variation in the intensity of their support, the types of arguments offered in its defence, and the actual shape, size, and purpose of the empire envisaged. There were also notable critics of empire and imperialism, most famously Richard Cobden and Herbert Spencer, and the various positivist and socialist writers examined by Gregory Claeys in his contribution to this volume.<sup>48</sup> Sweeping claims about the political thought of the time – for example, about the inescapable connections between liberalism and empire, often generated by a reading of Mill’s work – neglect much of the theoretical and political diversity of the era. The following chapters seek to paint a far richer picture of the time, one that stresses the variability, conflict, and dissonance, as well as the continuities, in conceptions of empire and international politics.

### III. STRUCTURE OF THE BOOK

The book opens with Anthony Howe’s panoramic account of the ‘rise and fall’ of the ideology of free trade. The Repeal of the Corn Laws, combined with the 1847 Repeal of the Navigation Acts, propelled the British state into a new political and economic age, a transition that was to have profound

consequences for both domestic and international politics. Alongside the scale and prestige of the empire, free trade came to define Britain's role, as well as the sources of its power, on the global stage. It also formed, as Howe has written elsewhere, an essential element in popular political identity.<sup>49</sup> Howe traces the emergence of the ideology, noting its roots in the eighteenth century and stressing the way in which following 1846 the argument over the potential costs and benefits of free trade was largely supplanted by conflict over its scope and consequences. For moderate advocates, free trade was primarily an instrument for re-calibrating Britain's economic relations with other countries, creating increased prosperity and, it was hoped, more friendly political interaction. For other, more ambitious devotees, including Cobden and Spencer, free trade would help to erase the scourge of war, undermine the feudal passions of patriotism, and help to dissolve the bonds of empire. After reaching a peak of optimism in the 1860s, there followed, contends Howe, a period of retrenchment, vigorous nationalism, neo-mercantilism, and military aggression – a time, that is, of 'imperial globalisation'. Thus, contrary to many recent accounts, the apogee of free trade was to be found not in the years immediately preceding the First World War, but rather forty years beforehand.

The following two chapters chart the evolution of international law. Focusing on the character and foundations of international law, Casper Sylvest revises the standard narrative that describes the gradual, but inexorable, defeat of natural law by positivism.<sup>50</sup> This whiggish story, implying a simple linear progression, occludes as much as it illuminates. As Sylvest demonstrates, naturalism was never fully supplanted, and indeed positivism and naturalism co-existed – sometimes comfortably, sometimes in tension – within British conceptions of international law well into the twentieth century. He argues that British international legal thought can be divided into three periods. Between 1835–55 international law began to emerge as a self-contained subfield, albeit one that tended to anchor jurisprudence in theology. Between 1855–70 international lawyers became increasingly confident, securing new institutional respectability, and secular accounts of law and morality began to displace theological arguments. Finally, after 1870 the role of evolutionary theories (coupled to the idea of civilisation) provided authoritative new foundations for legal reasoning. Throughout the century British lawyers battled the 'spectre of Austin', the argument by the Benthamite theorist that 'laws properly so called' rested on a command theory of sovereignty, requiring a determinate and identifiable source, and that international law was consequently merely a tissue of custom and convention, a moral rule not a law.<sup>51</sup> The ultimate

resolution to this problem, argues Sylvest, was to be found in the idea of legal evolution, of 'international law as law in the making', which 'obtained a standing in international legal argument that was not far removed from that formerly occupied by "natural law"'.<sup>52</sup>

Jennifer Pitts explores the debate amongst the emerging international legal community over the boundaries of civilisation, and hence over the legitimate membership of international society.<sup>52</sup> There was no consensus on the exact criteria for and scope of membership, and jurists and public commentators adumbrated a wide variety of arguments. Most believed in the dualistic nature of global politics, stressing the moral and hence juridical superiority of the civilised over the barbarous, although there were a few dissenters, located mainly outside the professional ranks of the lawyers, who challenged this myopic arrogance. Pitts argues that international lawyers placed the idea of civilisation at the centre of their conception of law, and in particular she illustrates how they focused on the notion of 'capacity as reciprocity', 'rendered variously as an ethical notion particular to certain religions, or as a capacity of cognition or will', to determine which states should be granted the prized membership of civilisation. The Ottoman empire, the Indian princely states, African kingdoms, as well as Native American regimes, were usually excluded for reasons including 'civilizational backwardness, a lack of sufficiently abstract notions of justice [and] the hostility of Islamic states to infidels'. The Ottoman empire generated the most heated debate, while the standing of Asian commercial states, and in particular China, was also a topic of intense deliberation. Pitts highlights the tensions inherent in, and also the occasional opposition to, jurisprudential attempts to delineate the civilised from the barbarian, and she traces the role of such debates in legitimating the ideas and practices of international law, noting the role that legal positivism played in challenging universalism, and suggesting, ultimately, that the Victorian boundaries of international law were often less fluid and open than those of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.

Sandra den Otter and Karuna Mantena both concentrate on India. Den Otter analyses the attempt by reformers, mainly utilitarians, to codify Indian law. In doing so she highlights how shifting ideas about colonial law were bound up with justifications of imperial legitimacy and understandings of the foundations and evolution of social order. 'Victorian political thinkers were a pivotal part of a trans-national exchange in the ideas and practice of civil society and government.' Law, 'the gospel of the English', as James Fitzjames Stephens called it, was often considered both a gift of the civilised to the barbarian and a key to the efficacy of British



imperial administration.<sup>53</sup> The 1860s and 1870s saw the most ambitious period of law-making, as much Hindu and Muslim customary law was codified with the intention of rendering it 'rational, lucid and intelligible to all', usually with negative consequences: 'Colonial interventions distorted indigenous law and then, rather than interjecting dynamic growth, tended to ossify the distortions.' From the 1860s onwards, various currents of evolutionary thinking led to a greater emphasis on comparative accounts of social development, and this emphasis served both to strengthen and destabilise universalism. Den Otter demonstrates the methodological imperative of interweaving analyses of theory and practice, arguing that an actual engagement with Indian policy-making led many theorists to modify their thinking about the universality of law, Henry Maine foremost amongst them. As Maine wrote, in the light of experience the scholar of India does not completely reverse 'his accustomed political maxims, but revises them, and admits that they may be qualified under the influence of circumstance and time'.<sup>54</sup> Den Otter argues that this modification was not simply the product of the practical difficulties encountered in colonial administration, but of ambiguities in underlying theories of legislation and civil society that were emphasised and exacerbated by an immersion in Indian policy-making.

Casting her eye over the century, Mantena argues that the optimistic missionary zeal of the liberal imperialists reached its climax in the middle decades of the century, before gradually losing intellectual plausibility and political support in the face of a number of challenges. A series of events, especially the Sepoy Rebellion, the Eyre controversy, and the Ilbert Bill crisis (1883), combined to undermine the belief of the earlier liberal reformers (most notably John Stuart Mill) that subject populations could be transformed, through a combination of incentives and coercion, into a civilised people fit for self-government. It no longer looked so straightforward, and a reconsideration of the sociological and anthropological foundations of the civilising mission led to a shift in the justification of empire and the type of imperial government advocated. Under the influence of the 'comparative approach', an anthropological turn in imperial thought stressed the immense difficulty, the potential dangers, and even the ethical problems, of uprooting 'traditional' ways of life and forms of community.<sup>55</sup> It was this mode of thinking, which had been pioneered by Maine, that helped to legitimate the policy of 'indirect rule'.<sup>56</sup>

Georgios Varouxakis examines a neglected topic that was of considerable importance during the nineteenth century, namely the role of 'greatness' in political thought. This was a debate mainly about status within the



'civilised' world. In particular, he focuses on the ways in which liberal thinkers of various stripes – principally John Stuart Mill, Walter Bagehot, J. R. Seeley, John Robertson, Lord Acton, James Fitzjames Stephens, and Matthew Arnold – conceived of the conditions necessary for characterising a state as 'great'. Varouxakis outlines the competing conceptions of the ideal configuration of territoriality, nationhood, and the state. Emphasising the variability of the proposed conditions of greatness, he notes that for most Victorian thinkers greatness was equated with size, and as such they challenged both the viability of an international system characterised by massive asymmetries in scale and also the value of living in a small state. Great states, it was proclaimed, bred great individuals. Others, however, had a more complex attitude towards greatness. Small states could, it was countered, be great – think only of Athens or Florence. In such units, political debate was vibrant, civil society strong, and virtue could flourish along with power. John Stuart Mill argued that the key lay in the level of 'civilisation' that had been reached, and the prestige that others assigned to the state. For Arnold, greatness was 'a spiritual condition', excellence that attracted the 'love, interest, and admiration' of mankind.<sup>57</sup> Large states, in this reading, often displayed torpor, sluggishness, and, that great source of Victorian apprehension, 'stagnation' and decay. Varouxakis concludes by suggesting that as the century drew to a close the dominant mid- and late-Victorian equation between size and greatness was beginning to loosen, with thinkers such as Robertson lambasting those (notably Seeley) who denigrated small countries and basked in the hubristic glory of vast territorial extent.

One of the main gaps in both the 'new imperial history' of the last twenty years and the more recent interest in the history of imperial thought concerns the role of the settlement empire (spanning what we know now as Canada, Australia, and New Zealand, as well as parts of South Africa). From the 1870s onwards these colonies played an increasingly important role in the British imperial imagination. This period witnessed the flowering of the idea of Greater Britain, a vision in which the 'mother country' and the colonies were conceived of as a single political community.<sup>58</sup> The debate over Greater Britain was driven by a combination of two mutually reinforcing anxieties: fear over the potentially deleterious consequences of domestic political reform, especially in light of the world-historical rise of democracy; and fear about the increasing levels of international competition, both political and economic. This resulted in numerous calls for the creation of a globe-spanning British polity, encompassing the rapidly expanding colonial communities. This polity would act as a bulwark

against the encroaching threats, deterring potential competitors whilst simultaneously providing an outlet that, through a proposed system of systematic emigration, would deflate the danger of political revolt or degeneration at home and populate the colonies with increasing numbers of imperial patriots. In my own contribution to the volume, I examine the ambitious vision of Greater Britain as a global state. Most of the proponents of Greater Britain were less adventurous, advocating a variety of proposals for drawing the colonies and the 'mother country' into closer relations, including the construction of non-legislating Advisory Councils and the election of colonial representatives to parliament. A few, including some of the most prominent, went further, and I examine the genealogy of their ideas and the forms that the global state was supposed to assume.

Gareth Stedman Jones's chapter traces Karl Marx's views on the character of empire and imperialism. Both deeply embedded in Victorian society and alienated from it, Marx wrote on imperial questions over an extended period of time, although as Stedman Jones highlights, his views changed significantly towards the end of his life. Initially Marx held fast to the same assumptions of the superiority of European civilisation that were so widespread amongst nineteenth-century thinkers, drawing much of his understanding of non-western societies from literature published during the 1810s and 1820s. His views on Eastern despotism, and on the caste-bound nature and 'passive immobility' of Indian society, helped generate his ambivalence about the British empire in India. In the 1850s he criticised the motivations and many of the consequences of British rule, while insisting nevertheless that in bringing advanced technologies, industry, and bureaucratic rationality to a backward society, the British were helping to lay the foundations for a necessary social revolution. They were serving as the 'unconscious tool of history' by releasing the potential energies of the Indian people.<sup>59</sup> Stedman Jones argues, however, that during the 1870s Marx's position shifted, and that this was part of a general theoretical reorientation. In moving from a 'post-capitalist' to an 'anti-capitalist' stance, and utilising newly published ethnological writings, Marx began to see capitalism as entirely destructive, rather than as the Promethean agency that he had previously imagined. Modelling a socialist future on a primordial past, he saw no role for capitalism (and hence capitalist empires) in positively transforming the world, instead preferring to seek inspiration in a romantic view of ancient and uncorrupted primitive communities.<sup>60</sup>

Peter Cain examines the fervent debate over Disraeli's imperial policy. This is a study in the manipulation of political language and in the politics

of unintended consequences. He argues that Disraeli was defeated by a coalition of two normally distinct political groups, and that both, in this instance, employed a long-standing anti-imperial language of 'popular radicalism'. This language stretched back to Thomas Paine and remained in circulation on the radical fringe of liberalism in the late Victorian era, where its most sophisticated advocate was Herbert Spencer. The first, and most consistent, proponents of this view were radicals who regarded imperialism as a throwback to a feudal age – a 'militant' society in Spencer's terminology – and as a bar to progress. 'They came to see it as nothing less than an attempt to set in reverse the long march towards liberty and constitutionalism that . . . they saw as the great and glorious achievement of English history, the foundation of its commercial vigour, of its opulence, and of its standing in the world.'<sup>61</sup> However Gladstone, strongly influenced by his devout Christianity, also drew on this language, utilising it to great effect in his assault on the foreign and imperial policy of Disraeli's Tory party during the famous Midlothian campaign in 1879–80. When directed at Disraeli, this critique was often tinged with anti-semitism. The temporary alignment between the radical and Whig wings of the Liberal party proved decisive in defeating Disraeli's ambitions, but the political cost to the Liberals was very high. The vitriol with which Gladstone attacked Disraeli served to mask their many points of agreement, and painted the liberal mainstream in an anti-imperial light that was misleading, and which as a result lost the party considerable support and haunted it over the following years.

Gregory Claeys explores some of the most powerful lines of 'anti-imperialist' thought that emerged among the diverse elements of the British 'left' during the closing decades of the nineteenth century, and onwards into the twentieth. He shows how the proponents of a number of distinct visions came together from the 1860s onwards, in a powerful 'coalescence of views', to offer a systematic and (relatively) sophisticated critique of the economic, political, social, and psychological roots of imperialism. He explores three 'interrelated paths to an ideal of humanitarian foreign policy': positivism, represented forcefully by Frederic Harrison, which came to prominence during the 1860s; the idiosyncratic Pan-Islamism of the (inappropriately) self-styled 'conservative nationalist' Wilfred Scawen Blunt; and the revival of socialism in the 1880s, represented especially by H. M. Hyndman, the leading British interpreter of Marx. Drawing on a variety of different sources, both religious and secular, these thinkers fashioned a 'cosmopolitan humanitarian' critique of imperialism centring on the pernicious influence of finance capital. As Claeys argues, in

so doing they prefigured J. A. Hobson's hugely influential account of *Imperialism* (1902) by over two decades. They were also, he shows, sympathetic to calls for national self-determination by non-western peoples, as a result of which they tended to support nationalist movements throughout the empire. Some even supported violent resistance to western occupation. Although they failed to win over the mainstream of public opinion, Claeys argues that this group provided a vital source of opposition to empire. They also generated ideas that fed into radical liberalism and the development of the early Labour party, especially in the wake of the South African War.

The concluding chapter, by David Weinstein, focuses on 'consequentialist cosmopolitanism'. Weinstein identifies important elements of the political theories of a number of key late Victorian thinkers, especially L. T. Hobhouse, J. A. Hobson, and D. G. Ritchie, and traces the continuities and shifts in their thought in the early twentieth century. He argues that in order to grasp fully the meaning of specific and carefully elaborated political theories, it is essential to understand the wider philosophical systems in which they are embedded and from which they are derived. 'Political theory and moral philosophy typically come fastened together.' In this chapter he shows how Hobhouse, Hobson, and Ritchie anchored their 'cosmopolitan' visions of international politics in consequentialist foundations and theories of social evolution. Their cosmopolitanism, he argues, lay in the belief that individual 'self-realisation', rather than the prioritisation or valorisation of communal (especially national) attachments, was the ultimate good. For all three, this cosmopolitanism found institutional expression in the conviction that grand federations of civilised states would help to secure global harmony. Weinstein also demonstrates, however, that similar philosophical foundations can generate contrasting political positions. Whilst Hobson and Hobhouse offered some stinging criticisms of empire and imperialism, and while all three thought that human rationality could eventually overcome the passion for war and aggression, Ritchie argued, also in consequentialist terms, that the empire was of great benefit to humanity.

In combination, the chapters in this volume explore some of the cross-cutting currents of Victorian international and imperial thought. In so doing they illuminate the complexity and variety of intellectual and political debate during the period, and the differences separating thinkers as well as the many assumptions they shared. At a time when visions of empire are once again resurgent, and when ideas about globalisation and the rights and obligations of 'civilisation' have assumed a central place in the western geopolitical imagination, understanding the ways in which previous

generations of thinkers conceived of the dynamics of global politics, and the prejudices, contradictions, and ambiguities, permeating their arguments, is a timely endeavour.

## NOTES

1. For a sampling of perspectives on the history of (mainly) British imperialism, see Antoinette Burton (ed.), *After the Imperial Turn: Thinking With and Through the Nation* (Durham, NC, 2003); P. J. Cain and A. G. Hopkins, *British Imperialism, 1688–2000* (Harlow, 2001); Linda Colley, ‘What is Imperial History Today?’ in David Cannadine (ed.), *What is History Today?* (Basingstoke, 2002), pp. 132–47; Wm. Roger Louis (ed.), *The Oxford History of the British Empire*, 5 vols. (Oxford, 1998–9); Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (New York, 1993); and Kathleen Wilson (ed.), *A New Imperial History: Culture, Identity, and Modernity in Britain and the Empire, 1660–1840* (Cambridge, 2004).
2. See, for examples, David Armitage, *The Ideological Origins of the British Empire* (Cambridge, 2000); Duncan Bell, *The Idea of Greater Britain: Empire and the Future of World Order, 1860–1900* (Princeton, 2007); Andrew Fitzmaurice, *Humanism and America: An Intellectual History of English Colonisation, 1500–1625* (Cambridge, 2003); Sankar Muthu, *Enlightenment Against Empire* (Princeton, 2003); Peter Miller, *Defining the Common Good: Empire, Religion, and Philosophy in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (Cambridge, 1994); Anthony Pagden, *Lords of all the World: Ideologies of Empire in Spain, Britain and France, c.1500–c.1850* (London, 1995); and Jennifer Pitts, *A Turn to Empire: The Rise of Imperial Liberalism in Britain and France* (Princeton, 2005).
3. See also David Armitage, ‘The Fifty Years’ Rift: Intellectual History and International Relations,’ *Modern Intellectual History*, 1 (2004), pp. 97–109; Duncan Bell, ‘International Relations: The Dawn of a Historiographical Turn?’ *British Journal of Politics and International Relations*, 3 (2001), pp. 115–26; and Chris Brown, Terry Nardin, and Nicholas Rengger, ‘Introduction’ in Brown, Nardin, and Rengger (eds.), *International Relations in Political Thought: Texts from the Ancient Greeks to the First World War* (Cambridge, 2002), pp. 1–17. For examples, see David Boucher, *Political Theories of International Relations: From Thucydides to the Present* (Oxford, 1998); Jonathan Haslam, *No Virtue Like Necessity: Realist Thought in International Relations since Machiavelli* (London, 2002); Istvan Hont, *Jealousy of Trade: International Competition and the Nation-State in Historical Perspective* (Cambridge, MA, 2005); Beate Jahn (ed.), *Classical Theory in International Relations* (Cambridge, 2006); and Richard Tuck, *The Rights of War and Peace: Political Thought and the International Order from Grotius to Kant* (Oxford, 1999).
4. On the latter, see for example, Andrew Bacevich, *American Empire: The Realities and Consequences of U. S. Diplomacy* (Cambridge, MA, 2002);

- Craig Calhoun, Frederick Cooper, and Kevin Moore (eds.), *Lessons of Empire: Imperial Histories and American Power* (New York, 2006); and Charles Maier, *Among Empires: American Ascendancy and its Predecessors* (Cambridge, MA, 2006).
5. Hont, *Jealousy of Trade*, pp. 1–156.
  6. Seeley, *The Expansion of England: Two Courses of Lectures* (London, 1883), p. 26.
  7. Pocock, 'Political Theory in the English-Speaking Atlantic, 1760–1790: (2)' in Pocock, Gordon J. Schochet and Lois G. Schworer (eds.), *The Varieties of British Political Thought, 1500–1800* (Cambridge, 1993), pp. 310–17. In general, see Pocock, *The Discovery of Islands: Essays in British History* (Cambridge, 2005). See also, Koselleck, *Futures Past: On the Semantics of Historical Time*, trans. Keith Tribe (Cambridge, MA, 1985).
  8. The most radical, though thoroughly overstated, case for a break in British politics is made in J. C. D. Clark, *English Society, 1688–1832* (Cambridge, 1985). On the rise of the idea of the nation, see Peter Mandler, *The English National Character: The History of an Idea from Burke to Blair* (London, 2006); and H. S. Jones, 'The Idea of the National in Victorian Political Thought,' *European Journal of Political Theory*, 6 (2006), pp. 12–21. It is even arguable that between 1810 and 1840 there was a 'reorganization of the visual', a shift in the multiple ways in which the world was catalogued and imaginatively ordered. Jonathan Crary, *Techniques of the Observer: On Vision and Modernity in the Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge, MA, 1990).
  9. H. S. Jones, *Victorian Political Thought* (Basingstoke, 2000), pp. 1–2.
  10. Bayly, 'The First Age of Global Imperialism, c.1760–1830,' *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, 27 (1998), p. 28. See also Bayly, *Imperial Meridian: The British Empire and the World, 1780–1830* (London, 1989).
  11. For various perceptions of the retreat of liberalism, see L. T. Hobhouse, *Liberalism* [1911] in *Liberalism and Other Writings*, ed. James Meadowcroft (Cambridge, 1994), p. 103; John Morley, *On Compromise*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn. (London, 1886 [1874]), p. 29; and A. V. Dicey, *Lectures on the Relation between Law and Public Opinion in England During the Nineteenth-Century*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn. (London, 1914 [1905]), p. 444. For the general intellectual context, see Stefan Collini, *Public Moralists: Political Thought and Intellectual Life in Britain, 1850–1930* (Oxford, 1991).
  12. For various conceptions of 'order' pertaining to political thought and global politics, see N. J. Rengger, *International Relations, Political Theory and the Problem of Order: Beyond International Relations Theory?* (London, 2000), pp. 1–33.
  13. See also the introduction to Gregory Claeys and Gareth Stedman Jones (eds.), *The Cambridge History of Nineteenth-Century Political Thought* (Cambridge, 2007); and Martin Daunt (ed.), *The Organization of Knowledge in Victorian Britain* (Oxford, 2005). In recognition of this issue, Quentin Skinner has recently observed that 'We need to replace it [the 'history of political thought'], I would now contend, with a more general form of intellectual

history in which, even if we continue to centre on 'political' texts, we allow the principle of generic expansiveness the freest rein.' Skinner, 'Surveying the Foundations' in Annabel Brett and James Tully, with Holly Hamilton-Bleakley (eds.), *Rethinking the Foundations of Modern Political Thought* (Cambridge, 2006), p. 244.

14. See, for example, Uday Singh Mehta, *Liberalism and Empire: A Study in Nineteenth-Century British Liberal Thought* (Chicago, 1999); Lynn Zastoupil, *John Stuart Mill and India* (Stanford, 1994); M. I. Moir, Douglas Peers and Lynn Zastoupil (eds.), *J. S. Mill's Encounter with India* (Toronto, 1999); Michael Levin, *J. S. Mill on Civilization and Barbarism* (London, 2004); Pitts, *A Turn to Empire*, ch. 5; Beate Jahn, 'Barbarian Thoughts: Imperialism in the Philosophy of John Stuart Mill,' *Review of International Studies*, 31 (2005), pp. 599–618; Eileen P. Sullivan, 'Liberalism and Imperialism: J. S. Mill's Defense of the British Empire,' *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 44 (1983), pp. 599–617; Carol A. Prager, 'Intervention and Empire: John Stuart Mill and International Relations,' *Political Studies*, 53 (2005), pp. 621–41; and Margaret Kohn and Daniel I. O'Neill, 'A Tale of Two Indias: Burke and Mill on Empire and Slavery in the West Indies and America,' *Political Theory*, 34 (2006), pp. 192–228.
15. See also the discussions in Bell, 'Empire and International Relations in Victorian Political Thought,' *Historical Journal*, 49 (2006), pp. 281–98; and Andrew Sartori, 'The British Empire and its Liberal Mission,' *Journal of Modern History*, 78 (2006), pp. 623–43.
16. For two exemplary studies that move away from the canon to illuminate major theoretical shifts, see Boyd Hilton, *The Age of Atonement: The Influence of Evangelicalism on Social and Economic Thought, 1795–1865* (Oxford, 1988); and Anthony Howe, *Free Trade and Liberal England, 1846–1946* (Oxford, 1997). See also the comments in Frank Trentmann and Martin Daunton, 'Worlds of Political Economy: Knowledge, Practices and Contestation' in Trentmann and Daunton (eds.), *Worlds of Political Economy: Knowledge and Power in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries* (Basingstoke, 2004), p. 10.
17. Bentham, *An Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation*, ed. J. H. Burns and H. L. A. Hart (London, 1970 [1789]), p. 296.
18. At the time Bentham was writing the two were used synonymously, but during the nineteenth century their meanings increasingly (although never completely) diverged. On the genealogy of 'nation' see Hont, *Jealousy of Trade*; for shifts in meaning in Britain, see Mandler, *The English National Character*; and Jones, 'The Idea of the National in Victorian Political Thought.'
19. Armitage, *The Ideological Origins of the British Empire*, pp. 7–8, 170–1.
20. The lack of precision in defining empire was widely noted during the Victorian era (and beyond). See, for examples, George Cornwall Lewis, *An Essay on the Government of Dependencies* (London, 1841); Arthur Mills, *Colonial Constitutions: An Outline of the Constitutional History and Existing Government of the British Dependencies* (London, 1856/1891); and Henry Jenkins, *British Rule and Jurisdiction Beyond the Seas* (Oxford, 1902), pp. 1–9.



21. Seeley, *The Expansion of England*, p. 51; and also my chapter, 'The Victorian Idea of a Global State,' in this volume.
22. On the conflicting uses of Rome and Greece, see, for example, Duncan Bell, 'From Ancient to Modern in Victorian Imperial Thought,' *Historical Journal*, 49 (2006), pp. 1–25; and more generally, Frank Turner, *The Greek Heritage in Victorian Britain* (New Haven, 1981); Richard Jenkyns, *The Victorians and Ancient Greece* (Oxford, 1981); and Norman Vance, *The Victorians and Ancient Rome* (Oxford, 1997).
23. Richard Koebner and Helmut Dan Schmidt, *Imperialism: The Story and Significance of a Political Word, 1840–1960* (Cambridge, 1964), chs. 5–7; Bruce Knox, 'The Earl of Carnarvon, Empire, and Imperialism, 1855–90,' *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, 27 (1998), pp. 48–67; and Peter Cain's chapter in this volume, 'Radicalism, Gladstone, and the Liberal Critique of Disraelian "Imperialism."'
24. An instructive way of periodising the long nineteenth century is provided by the three relevant volumes of *The New Oxford History of England*: Boyd Hilton, *A Mad, Bad, and Dangerous People? England, 1783–1846* (Oxford, 2006); Theodore K. Hoppen, *The Mid-Victorian Generation, 1846–1886* (Oxford, 1998); and G. R. Searle, *A New England? Peace and War, 1886–1914* (Oxford, 2004).
25. On some of the recent historiography of political history, see Philip Harling, 'Equipose Regained? Recent Trends in British Political History, 1790–1867,' *Journal of Modern History*, 75 (2003), pp. 890–918.
26. Hilton, *A Mad, Bad, and Dangerous People?*, p. 31. See also Edward Royle, *Revolutionary Britannia? Reflections on the Threat of Revolution in Britain, 1789–1848* (Manchester, 2000).
27. Miles Taylor, 'The 1848 Revolutions and the British Empire,' *Past & Present*, 166 (2000), pp. 146–80. See also Jonathan Sperber, *The European Revolutions, 1848–1851*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn. (Cambridge, 2005); and Robert Evans and Hartmut Pogge von Strandmann (eds.), *The Revolutions in Europe, 1848–9: From Reform to Reaction* (Oxford, 2000).
28. Lawrence Goldman, *Science, Reform and Politics in Victorian Britain: The Social Science Association, 1857–1886* (Cambridge, 2002), p. 59. See also, W. L. Burn, *The Age of Equipose: A Study of the Mid-Victorian Generation* (London, 1964); Martin Hewitt (ed.), *An Age of Equipose? Re-Assessing Mid-Victorian Britain* (Aldershot, 2000); and Harling, 'Equipose Regained?'
29. Philip Harling, *The Waning of "Old Corruption": The Politics of Economical Reform in Britain, 1776–1846* (Oxford, 1996); John Plunkett, *Queen Victoria: First Media Monarch* (Oxford, 2003), ch. 1; and Walter Arnstein, *Queen Victoria* (Basingstoke, 2003), chs. 4–6.
30. John Gooch, *The Prospect of War: Studies in British Defence Policy, 1847–1942* (London, 1982), ch. 1.
31. A variety of the most popular and interesting narratives are collected in I. F. Clarke (ed.), *The Tale of the Next Great War, 1871–1914* (Liverpool, 1995). They are analysed in I. F. Clarke, *Voices Prophesizing War*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn. (Oxford, 1992);