

Editors' Introduction

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This is the last issue of the *Journal of British Studies* published by the University of Chicago Press. Beginning with volume 52, the North American Conference on British Studies will be working instead with Cambridge University Press, and Cambridge will accordingly become the journal's new publisher. The editors remain deeply appreciative of the stellar work of the Chicago team, even as we also look forward to our collaboration with Cambridge. The editorial board for the journal remains the same, and new submissions to the journal should continue to be sent through the same internet portal: <http://www.editorialmanager.com/jbritstudies/mainpage.html>.

This issue begins with an article that sits at the intersection between economic and social history. Patrick Wallis's "Labor, Law, and Training in Early Modern London: Apprenticeship and the City's Institutions" demonstrates that contract dissolution between apprentices and their masters in early modern London was more commonplace between the later sixteenth century and the early eighteenth century than previous scholarship has generally assumed. Wallis describes the formal processes by which apprenticeship could be dissolved through the City of London's Lord Mayor's Court. The legal system actually often facilitated dissolution in response to suits brought by apprentices, who sought dissolution more often than did masters. His article demonstrates that the court played an important role in enforcing and adjudicating apprenticeship contracts in the early modern era. Both masters and apprentices often had good reasons for wanting to allow for the potential dissolution of their relationships, and rulings by the Mayor's Court could result in mutually desirable resolutions to apprenticeship contracts that were no longer working for either party. The system was indeed more flexible in practice than it might appear in theory. In Wallis's view, local courts and legal processes as well as the better studied trade guilds are crucial to understanding early modern labor history.

Our next early modern article reevaluates the process of political radicalization that transformed the English civil war into a revolution through an examination of the attempts by the Westminster parliament to reinstitute press controls in 1643. In "Print, Censorship, and Ideological Escalation in the English Civil War," David R. Como examines the circumstances that led to the publication of John Milton's famous attack on prepublication censorship, the *Areopagitica* (1644). He brings to light the print work of Gregory Dexter, a London stationer involved in pub-

lishing numerous unlicensed, heterodox works in the 1640s whose career came to a crashing halt when his press was seized by the Stationers' Company in early 1644. Dexter published the second edition of Milton's *The Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce* not long before his press was shut down, and Como argues that this relationship is of particular significance for understanding the ideological context in which his *Areopagitica* was composed. By understanding the circles in which he operated in the early 1640s, we may better comprehend the reasons for Milton's subsequent and "intense theological radicalization, in which he repudiated a relatively conventional puritanism for a mode of religious heterodoxy that was extreme even for the day" (844).

Why did so many in the eighteenth century become preoccupied with the way people sounded when speaking English? In "Spectacular Speech: Performing Language in the Late Eighteenth Century," Daniel John DeWispelare examines the late eighteenth-century craze for elocution lessons and then links this phenomenon in turn to the Romantic enthusiasm for imitating accents on the stage. Both elocution lessons and theatrical displays of linguistic difference were part of a wider movement to recognize and react to linguistic diversity among English speakers across common imperial spaces. The class and cultural differences enshrined in pronunciation could be erased, promised the teacher of "correct" speech; speech difference would remain, on the contrary, a key marker of identity, retorted the comedic actor. The period saw a key shift overall: "Suddenly, valorized speech forms were learnable, rehearsable, and reproducible" (860). Speech could thus potentially be reconfigured as a temporary condition, rather than a permanent marker of identity. Speech was still crucial, however, to organizing hierarchies, and most could not (or would not) shed their accents. It is no surprise, then, that speech difference became a focus of attention in a world of circulating people and daily intimate reminders of status difference.

In "Speed the Mahdi! The Irish Press and Empire during the Sudan Conflict of 1883–1885," Michael de Nie comments on at least two larger discussions about the British empire and its relationship with Ireland. He makes a case for the importance of newspapers in the late nineteenth century in informing high political debates about empire, representing what contemporary politicians took to be popular opinion, and generally indicating the possible parameters of debate. Systematic press analysis across a wide political spectrum has been neglected by new imperial historians more concerned with less influential aspects of popular culture, de Nie claims. At the same time, de Nie also argues that the new imperial history has failed to engage thoroughly with Irish attitudes to empire, in their full diversity and complexity. This essay looks at press attitudes to the Mahdist regime in the Sudan, led by a charismatic Islamic prophet; it innovates in particular by examining forty-seven papers across the spectrum of nationalist, conservative, and liberal opinion. De Nie argues in sum that "just as Irish imperial studies must expand beyond its focus on the nationalists and consider the diversity of Ireland's engagement with empire, so must the new imperial history more fully incorporate the popular press and particularly non-English voices in order to craft a more comprehensive and satisfactory account of British imperial sensibilities" (908).

Our remaining three articles also speak to ideas about the "nation," however differently conceived. In "Our Iberian Forefathers': The Deep Past and Racial

Stratification of British Civilization, 1850–1914,” Chris Manias investigates the significance of what were believed to be the ethnically diverse prehistoric origins of the British Isles for understanding conceptions of national identity. Manias places particular emphasis on the work of the late Victorian era geologist and archeologist William Boyd Dawkins, who popularized the idea of a pre-Celtic “Iberian” British population at the origin of British civilization. For Manias, Dawkins’s prehistorical thinking exemplifies the racialization of a sense of very long-term British nation-making through a theory of civilizational progress that was characteristic of its age. Examining subsequent debates over Dawkins’s theory, Manias asks: “Did acknowledging that the nation was ‘constructed’ preclude the idea that it had a ‘biological’ basis? And were ‘civilizational’ and ‘racial’ understandings really so opposed to one another?” (913). He argues that civilization and race were far from oppositional categories; indeed, the connections between both helped shape the late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century sense of British nationhood. His work draws our attention to the role of the deep time sciences—anthropology, archeology, biology, and geology—in the articulation of a sense of national history.

Jo Fox turns in contrast to visions of the nation at war. “Careless Talk: Tensions within British Domestic Propaganda during the Second World War” reexamines the so-called careless talk campaigns through which the Ministry of Information and other government agencies sought to restrain the potentially dangerous public discussion of military information, as well as, at times, to persuade the nation to eschew negative public talk about the war in general in order to maintain morale. As Fox shows, many aspects of these campaigns backfired. Unlike more positive campaigns, the careless talk campaigns thus had the unintended effect of undermining any master narrative of the “people’s war,” depicting a nation divided against itself, riddled by potential informers. Sensitivity around these propaganda campaigns proved all the greater because softer efforts at persuasion were in fact backed up by the possibility of prosecutions for “loose lips,” while the fear of government networks of informants aroused civilian unease. Fox argues that the full importance of these campaigns, including the ways in which they highlight alternative views of national identity, only becomes clear when diverse campaigns from 1939 to 1945 are examined together in a comprehensive manner, as they are here for the first time.

Finally, Paul Corthorn analyzes ways in which the Conservative politician Enoch Powell imagined the “British nation” and its relationship to Northern Ireland. After resigning from the Conservative party, the controversial Powell reinvented himself as an Ulster Unionist MP in 1974. “Enoch Powell, Ulster Unionism, and the British Nation” examines Powell’s views of “Ulster” (as he consistently termed Northern Ireland) as necessarily part of a unitary Britain, a view with significant implications for northern Irish politics. Corthorn’s careful intellectual history of Powell’s thought throughout his tenure as a Unionist MP shows the continuity between Powell’s views of Ireland and other aspects of Conservative thought, including the work of Michael Oakeshott. At the same time, Corthorn also positions Powell as a politician who, despite his influence on key Unionist politicians, was increasingly out of touch with the aspirations for local autonomy of his own Loyalist constituency, while resistant, conversely, to the emerging British consensus

that political solutions needed to include a role for the South. Powell's belief in a unitary nation with a single parliament was thus a path not taken, but it does illuminate both debates about the status of Northern Ireland and the wider history of Conservative political thought.