

Editors' Introduction

Brian Cowan and Elizabeth Elbourne

With this issue, we begin our joint editorship of the *Journal of British Studies*. We will be ably assisted by a local board of associate editors, consisting of Jeffrey Collins, Brian Lewis, Sandra den Otter, Shannon McSheffrey, Nancy Partner, Robert Tittler, and Faith Wallis, as well as by a distinguished international advisory board. The new book reviews editors are Amy M. Froide (University of Maryland Baltimore County) and Gail Savage (Saint Mary's College of Maryland). We would like to thank our editors and our advisors for their willingness to assist with the work of the journal, and we look forward to working with them in the years to come.

Our board of associate editors consists of several medievalists, early modernists, and modern historians, with wide-ranging research specialties, ranging from the social history of medicine through political theory, urban history, gender and sexuality, and the British imperial presence in India. Our conception of British studies is ecumenical, and we encourage submissions from historically minded scholars of British studies working on any aspect of the field from the early medieval to the contemporary. We also have a broad conception of the geographical boundaries of British studies, and we welcome work on imperial and transnational history.

We take over in medias res and thus are publishing a number of articles that were first developed under the editorship of Anna Clark at the University of Minnesota. In consequence, we would like to acknowledge the work that she and her editorial team have done on several of these articles and to thank them for it.

This issue begins with a lively and provocative essay on early modern conceptions of "moderation" by Ethan Shagan. In his essay "Beyond Good and Evil: Thinking with Moderates in Early Modern England," Shagan argues that historians have too often conceived of the early modern period in terms of binary opposites, both as a starkly different "other" world distinct from our modern worldviews and as a culture that understood itself in binary terms. He builds a case for recognizing the relative and shifting places that moderation and moderates played in early modern thought, and particularly the rhetorical role and advantage that moderation played in early modern conceptions of religious and political order. The rhetoric of "moderation," he adds, need not be understood as moderate in and of itself, and still less as a lukewarm or watered-down mode of discourse; it could be just as coercive as any other ideal of early modern governance.

Stephen Moore's article, "'A Nation of Harlequins'? Politics and Masculinity in Mid-Eighteenth-Century England," examines the controversies that surrounded

the British loss of Minorca in 1756 from the perspective of a combined history of masculinity, war, and politics. Challenging previous accounts of a mid-eighteenth-century “crisis of masculinity” that has been ascribed to the period, Moore argues that the Minorca debates can best be understood not in terms of a general crisis of masculinity but as the product of rhetorically specific attempts to undermine the reputations of two figures thought to be most to blame for the debacle: Admiral John Byng and Thomas Pelham-Holles, the duke of Newcastle.

In “‘That sash will hang you’: Political Clothing and Adornment in England, 1780–1840,” Katrina Navickas studies the history of political culture and the political meanings attributed to clothing in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. She contributes to an ongoing reinvigoration of political history through the investigation of often-neglected media for the communication of political ideas, allegiances, and symbolism. She does so here by examining how clothing and objects of personal adornment were imbued with political significance in the age of the French Revolution and the debates about the desirability of British political “reform” that followed in its wake. The political “languages of class” that emerged in this period are thus shown to have had a sartorial dimension as well as a linguistic one.

Holger Hooch addresses a different aspect of political culture in the same period in his article on art collecting, patriotism, and national identity, “‘Struggling against a Vulgar Prejudice’: Patriotism and the Collecting of British Art at the Turn of the Nineteenth Century.” Hooch explains the growing interest in and social status of collecting British (as opposed to continental “grand master”) paintings in the early nineteenth century as an expression of cultural patriotism rather than the product of class identity formation or socioeconomic concerns. In so doing, he demonstrates how the history of art and collecting is intertwined with traditional historical concerns about state formation and the construction of national identity.

The theme of masculinity and military culture that emerges in Stephen Moore’s work recurs in the article by Michael Brown, “‘Like a Devoted Army’: Medicine, Heroic Masculinity, and the Military Paradigm in Victorian Britain.” In his analysis of the rhetoric of medical heroism in the Victorian period, Brown shows how struggles over professional status were played out through the use of military metaphors and struggles over different modes of masculinity. Throughout this discussion, he also illustrates tensions over the extent to which Britain could or should be understood as a military nation, and whether the army was a worthy model for medicine, as doctors fought to gain status. While making a contribution to the social history of medicine, this article is also a significant addition to new approaches to the military culture of Victorian Britain.

The final two articles explore aspects of linked political and social change in early to mid-twentieth-century Britain. In “Kitchen-Sink Laughter: Domestic Service Humor in Twentieth-Century Britain,” Lucy Delap offers an innovative reading of the history of laughter, in the context of servant keeping and the uncertainty that domestic service aroused in the democratizing climate of early twentieth-century Britain. She suggests that people laugh at what makes them anxious, and that to think about the history of laughter is in part to think about the history of social change. Delap argues convincingly that mockery could serve as a means to maintain social hierarchy and power relations, even as the laughter of the servant might begin to undermine the assumptions on which hierarchy rested. Her work

incorporates the history of laughter into the burgeoning field of the history of emotion.

In "Winston Churchill's 'Crazy Broadcast': Party, Nation, and the 1945 Gestapo Speech," Richard Toye explores the infamous speech given by Winston Churchill in the election campaign of 1945 in which Churchill claimed that a socialist government would be unable to function without a "Gestapo" and would inevitably introduce one. Toye looks at the rhetoric, political context, and fallout of this speech to argue that Churchill was struggling to reinvent himself in a changed political world, drawing on fairly well-established rhetorical conventions. He was, however, trapped by his very position as a symbol of national unity, set on a pedestal from which he could only fall. Toye thus takes this speech as a jumping-off point for interrogating the political position of Churchill in 1945 and, by extension, the shifts in public mood that anticipated the critical Labour victory of that year. Here Toye makes an argument for the value of studying rhetoric, an aspect of political history that he feels has been ignored to the detriment of the field.

Future issues will include Barbara Harris's presidential address to the 2009 meeting of the North American Conference on British Studies, along with articles on the religious thought of Algernon Sidney; the early eighteenth-century English charity-school movement; Irish nationalism in the mid-nineteenth century; women and conservative activism in the early twentieth century; and modernism and urban planning in mid-twentieth-century Bradford.

We are also mindful of the approaching fiftieth volume and anniversary of the *Journal of British Studies*. While we have begun to make plans to mark the occasion, we invite our readers to communicate additional suggestions to the editors of the journal.