

Roundtable II: Twentieth-Century British History in Western Europe

Introduction: the editors

This is the second in the series of roundtables on the current state of twentieth-century British history. The first, on North America, was published in *TCBH* vol. 21 no. 3 (2010). Here contributors from France and Germany offer a variety of perspectives on teaching, institutional and intellectual structures, careers, academic culture, and historiography.

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Modern Britain and European Modernity: German Readings of Twentieth-Century British History

German historians have thought and written about British history from the very beginning of the modern academic profession in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Leopold von Ranke's 'Englische Geschichte' (1859–68) is only the most famous of a lengthy stream of books, testifying to the Germans' interest and fascination with the history of their North Western neighbour, unbroken until today.¹ A substantial number of PhD dissertations and 'Habilitationsschriften',² collected volumes and textbooks are published every year and are testimony to a thriving research field. While in the context of modern history the 1970s and 1980s witnessed considerable research efforts to

¹ See S. Berger et al., eds, *Historikerdialoge. Geschichte, Mythos und Gedächtnis im deutsch-britischen kulturellen Austausch 1750–2000* (Göttingen, 2003); B. Stuchtey and P. Wende, eds, *British and German Historiography 1750–1950: Traditions, Perceptions, and Transfers* (Oxford, 2000).

² The *Habilitation*, which follows the PhD, is the highest academic qualification in the German university system and is required for applications for a university chair. It involves the writing of a professorial thesis (which usually is equivalent to the 'second book'), known as *Habilitationsschrift*, its defence in front of an academic committee and further examinations.

understand the nineteenth century, from the early 1990s onwards the history of the twentieth century moved in the centre of scholarly interest with research first concentrating on the period up to 1945, but now reaching out far into the 1980s.

The direction that German research on British history had taken cannot be understood without taking into account the history of both countries in the twentieth century: history and historiography were and are inextricably linked. This entangled history, which contained highly conflict-laden and adversary situations, escalating in two world wars, as well as cooperative, entangled structures, influenced German writing on British history in three ways: first, and most obviously, in the themes and topics, chosen by German historians. For a long time research concentrated on the relations of both countries with each other: the history of diplomatic relations, British perceptions of Imperial, Weimar or Nazi Germany, appeasement or occupation policy, economic cooperation, cultural transfers or exchange between actors of civil society were and still are fruitful fields of enquiry.³ Secondly, after 1945 this troubled history influenced deeply the perspectives on and consequently the interpretations of British history of generations of historians. Thirdly, research and teaching of British history at German universities was nourished by contacts between historians of both countries, often originating in exile experiences or in re-education policies; it was equally encouraged by German endeavours from the 1950s to open up the country to international academic exchange. The institutional structure of research therefore is itself part of the two countries' history and this still holds true today.

³ This literature is extensive. See e.g. M. Görtemaker, ed., *Britain and Germany in the Twentieth Century* (Oxford/New York, 2006); K. Bayer, 'How Dead is Hitler?' *Der britische Starreporter Sefton Delmer und die Deutschen* (Mainz, 2008); J. P. Schmied, *Sebastian Haffner: Eine Biographie* (München, 2010); C. Haase, *Pragmatic Peacemakers: Institutes of International Affairs and the Liberalization of West Germany 1945–1973* (Augsburg, 2007); F.-T. von Gräfe, *Die deutsche Vergangenheit in der britischen Öffentlichkeit: Staatsbesuche und der Wandel des Deutschlandbildes in Großbritannien 1958–1972* (Augsburg, 2009); H. Philippe, *The Germans Hold the Key: Anglo-German Relations and the Second British Approach to Europe* (Augsburg, 2007); S. Berger and N. LaPorte, eds, *The Other Germany: Perceptions and Influences in British-East German Relations, 1945–1990* (Augsburg, 2005); A. Bauerkämper, ed., *Britain and the GDR: Relations and Perceptions in a Divided World* (Berlin/Wien, 2002); C. Haase, ed., *Debating Foreign Affairs: The Public and British Foreign Policy since 1867* (Berlin/Wien, 2003); F. Bösch and D. Geppert, eds, *Journalists as Political Actors: Transfers and Interactions between Britain and Germany since the late 19th Century* (Augsburg, 2008); J. Noakes et al., eds, *Britain and Germany in Europe 1949–1990* (Oxford, 2002); A. Bauerkämper and C. Eisenberg, eds, *Britain as a Model of Modern Society? German Views* (Augsburg, 2006); M. Schramm, *Das Deutschlandbild in der britischen Presse 1912–1919*, (Berlin, 2007); T. Wittek, *Auf ewig Feind? Das Deutschlandbild in den britischen Massenmedien nach dem Ersten Weltkrieg* (München, 2005); J. Später, *Vansittart: Britische Debatten über Deutsche und Nazis 1902–1945* (Göttingen, 2003).

This contribution to the roundtable discussion will introduce this institutional setting of teaching and research, and then focus on comparative history published in the course of the last few years, surely one of the defining features of German historiographical reflection about twentieth-century British history. For this it is necessary to reflect on the legacy of the notion of a German 'Sonderweg' ('special path') that had occupied comparative research from the 1960s to the 1980s. Naturally, other areas have to be omitted: I can only allude at this point to research on German–British relations and transfers, some important recent contributions focused on British history,⁴ and the thriving research on the history of the British Empire, which is an established and clearly defined research area with its own institutional setting.⁵ In the end, we will find a distinctly European Britain emerging from German reasoning about Europe, modernity, and the twentieth century.

British History in Germany: the institutional structure of teaching and research

With the *Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst* (German Academic Exchange Service) and the *Alexander von Humboldt-Stiftung* (Alexander von Humboldt Foundation) dedicated to supporting international exchange among historians, as well as the *Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft* (German Research Foundation) and other foundations providing generous grants for research abroad, the study of British history in the Federal Republic of Germany operates at a much wider internationally oriented culture of research. The centre of study and research on British history outside Germany is certainly the German Historical Institute London (GHIL), part of the *Stiftung Deutsche Geisteswissenschaftliche Institute im Ausland* (Foundation of German Humanities Institutes Abroad). Founded in 1976 by a circle of German and British historians, its aims are threefold: to support and conduct research on British history in the UK and in Germany, to support historians working on Germany in Britain, and to provide a forum for the exchange of German and British historians from medieval to

⁴ See T. Mergel, *Großbritannien seit 1945* (Göttingen, 2005); G. Altmann, *Abschied vom Empire: Die innere Dekolonisation Großbritanniens 1945–1985* (Göttingen, 2005); N. Braun, *Terrorismus und Freiheitskampf: Gewalt, Propaganda und politische Strategie im Irischen Bürgerkrieg 1922/23* (München, 2003); D. Geppert, *Thatchers konservative Revolution: Der Richtungswandel der britischen Tories (1975–1979)* (München, 2002); and P. Itzen's forthcoming book *Die Macht der Propheten: Die Church of England in Krisen der britischen Nachkriegsgeschichte*.

⁵ The most recent German textbook on the history of the British Empire is P. Wende, *Das britische Empire: Geschichte eines Weltreichs* (München, 2008).

contemporary history.⁶ Inside Germany, historians and political scientists working on the 'British Isles, the Empire and the Commonwealth'⁷ are organized in the *Arbeitskreis Deutsche England-Forschung* (ADEF; *German Association for the Study of British History and Politics*). A second forum offers the *Prinz-Albert-Gesellschaft* (*Prince-Albert-Society*), which is, inspired by the nineteenth-century relations between the aristocratic families Sachse-Coburg-Gotha and Hanover, dedicated to the study of German–British political, cultural and economic relations.⁸

While German historians working on British history are therefore supported by a strong institutional structure, the situation of research and teaching at German universities is rather different. The *Centre for British Studies* at the Humboldt University in Berlin, the only one of its kind in the Federal Republic, follows an interdisciplinary rationale; consequently history is besides law, economics, political science, cultural studies and literature, part of a wider research and teaching agenda. Due to the way history as subject is organized at German universities (apart from the chair in the *Centre for British Studies*), there exists no chair explicitly dedicated to British history; British history is either integrated in the framework of West European or transatlantic history or with regard to the history of the British Empire in global history or area studies. Most of the teaching and research on British history is therefore conducted at Chairs whose focus is modern history, usually concentrated on German history and, dependent on the individual interests of the historians situated there, complemented by the history of other countries. This structure mirrors the current demands of the German qualification system: for the individual historian is very unlikely to advance with expertise on the history of one non-German country only and without a research record on

⁶ The GHIL publishes a monograph series on British history with Oldenbourg (*Publications of the German Historical Institute London*), with Oxford University Press the series of collected volumes *Studies of the German Historical Institute London*, and now newly with Berghahn the series *Monographs in British History* focused on English translations of monographs on British history originally published in German; its 'Bulletin' appears twice a year and is particularly focused on reviews of books on British history published in Germany and vice versa. The GHIL awards grants for PhD students and post-doctoral students to work in British and Irish archives, organizes conferences, workshops, lecture series, and colloquia, annually awards a prize for the best PhD in British history written in Germany or German history written in Britain, respectively, and its fellows conduct their own research in British history. See <www.ghil.ac.uk>.

⁷ ADEF was founded in 1981, holds annual meetings and workshops, has its own publication series (*Beiträge zur England-Forschung*) for conference volumes and monographs, notably PhD dissertations, on British history, and every second year it awards a prize for the best PhD in the fields of British history or political science. See <<http://adef-britishstudies.de>>.

⁸ The Prince-Albert-Society organizes student seminars and conferences, and publishes its proceedings in the series *Prince Albert Studies*. See www.prinz-albert-gesellschaft.uni-bayreuth.de.

German history. This situation is multiplied by the big research clusters or post-graduate programmes funded by the *Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft* and other funding institutions: British history is integrated in several of them, but always as part of a wider research setting with European or global perspectives. The striking diversity of German research on British history is in large part due to these structural preconditions.

Comparative history and the legacy of the German 'Sonderweg'

In the course of the last 20 years, the diversity in German approaches to modern British history was additionally greatly increased by the pluralization of historiography in theoretical and methodological terms. Notably, the flourishing of cultural approaches in Germany has left its mark on the reasoning about British history. However, the most far-reaching consequence for a German reading of British history, which the cultural turn with its de-constructivist agenda as well as the new political situation after 1989–90 brought about, was the dissolution of former certainties about the course of German history in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. For decades, German historians had been certain about a German 'Sonderweg', a 'special path' to modernity, in order to explain the National Socialist dictatorship and its politics of mass murder and racial war – be it based on persuasions about particular social developments or on geopolitical considerations about the positioning of the country in the centre of continental Europe.⁹

Yet, from the late 1970s, historians increasingly began to doubt the validity of the approach. Essentially, this re-consideration was driven by interventions of British historians—and this was no coincidence. The 'Sonderweg' thesis needed a normative counter-model at which the German aberrations could be contrasted: whereas Germany ended up in barbarity in the 1930s and 1940s, 'the West' triumphed in liberty and democracy, and Britain figured as its epitome. Fundamentally, the roots of the 'special path' were thought to lie in the nineteenth century: in Germany's alleged lack of political liberalism, in the 'feudalization' of the bourgeoisie, the dominance of agrarian East-Prussian interest, in its militarist and authoritarian culture, and a strong state-centred bureaucracy. In short, the highly explosive combination of high industrialization and socio-economic modernization with pre-modern political structures, characteristic of Imperial Germany, it was argued, led to

⁹ For the debate about the German 'Sonderweg', see e.g. J. Kocka, 'German History before Hitler: The Debate about the German *Sonderweg*', *Journal of Contemporary History*, 23 (1988), 3–16; J. Kocka, 'Asymmetrical Historical Comparison: The Case of the German *Sonderweg*', *History and Theory*, 38 (1999), 40–50; *Deutscher Sonderweg – Mythos oder Realität?* (München/Wien, 1982).

strong inner tensions that resulted in authoritarian government and an aggressive foreign policy.¹⁰ This dominant version of the ‘special path’ interpretation was theoretically and methodologically based on social history, developed in the 1960s and 1970s, and on modernization theory. It is obvious, how closely the ‘special path’ narrative was connected to that of British ‘exceptionalism’.¹¹ When the ‘Whig interpretation of history’ lost its credibility, it was therefore no surprise that (apart from Thomas Nipperdey¹²) two British experts on German history should challenge the ‘special path’ interpretation—among other things directing attention to the rose-tinted image of Britain on which it was based. Geoff Eley’s and David Blackbourn’s ‘The Peculiarities of German History’, published in German in 1980, was in this sense a product of the entanglement of the two countries and an intense historians’ dialogue.¹³ It led to a still-on-going re-evaluation of Imperial Germany that changed interpretations profoundly, stressing the ambiguities of its political culture and the openness of its development.¹⁴

With the ‘special path’ having lost its persuasiveness in the early 1990s, Bernd Weisbrod and Hermann Wellenreuther turned the argument upside down in identifying an English ‘special path’ to modernity.¹⁵ Yet their argument did not resonate very much in research. It would not be very productive to proclaim a multitude of national ‘special paths’, it was counter-argued. Franz-Josef Brüggemeier’s new textbook account of twentieth-century British history, however, takes up this idea in a modified form and applies it to the twentieth century: Britain, Brüggemeier argues, was the pioneer of ‘modernity’, and therefore experienced characteristic socio-economic and cultural developments earlier than the other European countries. Conflicts therefore

¹⁰ For the classical example of this interpretation see H.-U. Wehler, *Das Deutsche Kaiserreich: 1871–1918* (Göttingen, 1973).

¹¹ See A. Bauerkämper, ‘Geschichtsschreibung als Projektion. Die Revision der “Whig Interpretation of History” und die Kritik am Paradigma vom “deutschen Sonderweg” seit den 1970er Jahren’, in Berger/Lambert/Schumann, *Historikerdialoge*, 383–438.

¹² See T. Nipperdey, ‘Wehlers “Kaiserreich”. Eine kritische Auseinandersetzung’ (orig. 1975), in T. Nipperdey, *Gesellschaft, Kultur, Theorie: Gesammelte Aufsätze zur neueren Geschichte* (Göttingen, 1976), 360–89.

¹³ See D. Blackbourn and G. Eley, *Mythen deutscher Geschichtsschreibung: Die gescheiterte bürgerliche Revolution von 1848* (Frankfurt am Main, 1980); revised English edition: D. Blackbourn and G. Eley, *The Peculiarities of German History: Bourgeois Society and Politics in Nineteenth-Century Germany* (Oxford, 1984).

¹⁴ See C. Torp and S. O. Müller, ed., *Das Deutsche Kaiserreich in der Kontroverse* (Göttingen, 2009); M. Jefferies, *Contesting the German Empire: 1871–1918* (Malden, MA, 2008).

¹⁵ See B. Weisbrod, ‘Der englische “Sonderweg” in der neueren Geschichte’, *Geschichte und Gesellschaft*, 16 (1990), 233–52; H. Wellenreuther, ‘England und Europa. Überlegungen zum Problem des englischen Sonderwegs in der europäischen Geschichte’, in H. Wellenreuther and N. Finzsch, eds, *Liberalitas: Festschrift für Erich Angermann* (Stuttgart, 1992), 89–123.

were not as violent, the historical development much more consensual than on the continent. Brüggemeier's account is methodologically based on traditional notions of social history and a normative model of modernity.¹⁶ As we will see, it stands solitary in current German research on Britain.

A lasting legacy of research influenced by the 'special path' interpretation, however, is comparative history, famously considered by Hans-Ulrich Wehler as historiography's 'royal path'.¹⁷ German-British comparisons were an established field in this context, based on an analytical and theoretically informed understanding of historiography. What is striking, when one looks at German research on British history in the last 12 years, though, is the attractiveness comparative history still enjoys. This is certainly due to the particular placing of British history in the structure of German historiography, as shown above: apart from Empire history, which is a field in itself, it is understood in the framework of European or transatlantic history; the attractiveness of comparative history is certainly also due to the requirements of the German career structure. But what pictures of British and German history emerge from these comparative studies, without British exceptionalism functioning as a kind of brace to bind them together? And how do they approach the history of the twentieth century?

Even if the characteristic diversity of German research on modern British history is apparent in the field of comparative history too, four main research areas crystallize: (1) the First World War and its impact on society and politics in the 1920s; (2) the Second World War in its social history dimension; (3) the welfare state; and (4) the transformation of society and politics in the 1970s and 1980s. The reasons historians give for the choice of a comparative approach are very similar: the respective national developments become much clearer, their contours get sharper and a wider explanatory dimension is opened up which otherwise would remain hidden.¹⁸ Comparing

¹⁶ F.-J. Brüggemeier, *Geschichte Großbritanniens im 20. Jahrhundert* (München, 2010).

¹⁷ H.-U. Wehler, ed., 'Einleitung', in *Geschichte und Soziologie* (Köln, 1972), 11–31, here 24. The translations from German texts in this article are all mine.

¹⁸ For the methodological discussion see a.o. H. Kalble and J. Schriewer, eds, *Vergleich und Transfer: Komparatistik in den Sozial-, Geschichts- und Kulturwissenschaften* (Frankfurt am Main/New York, 2003); J. Kocka and H.-G. Haupt, eds, *Comparative and Transnational History: Central European Approaches and New Perspectives* (New York, 2009); J. Kocka and H.-G. Haupt, eds, *Geschichte und Vergleich: Ansätze und Ergebnisse international vergleichender Geschichtsschreibung* (Frankfurt am Main/New York, 1996); D. Cohen and M. O'Connor, eds, *Comparison and History: Europe in Cross-National Perspective* (New York/London, 2004); H.-Gerhard Haupt, 'Historische Komparatistik in der internationalen Geschichtsschreibung', in G. Budde et al., ed, *Transnationale Geschichte: Themen, Tendenzen und Theorien* (Göttingen, 2006), 137–49; T. Welskopp, 'Stolpersteine auf dem Königsweg. Methodenkritische Anmerkungen zum internationalen Vergleich in der Gesellschaftsgeschichte', *Archiv für Sozialgeschichte*, 35 (1995), 339–67.

Germany and Britain is considered a 'classical' design,¹⁹ because of the fascinating mixture of striking similarities and fundamental differences of the two countries in the twentieth century. They are seen as marking the respective ends of one spectrum: market-oriented versus state-centred; individualized versus collectivized; liberal versus authoritarian; inclusive versus exclusive, and other classic categories. What interpretations do the studies bring forward?

The impact of the First World War and the crisis of modernity

The first group of studies is concerned with the impact of the First World War, and for them the discussion of the 'special path' theory is crucial. Sonja Levsen's book on university cultures in Cambridge and Tübingen between the turn of the century and 1929 shows how similar German and British students of the social elites lived their daily lives, made sense of the world and defined themselves in pre-1914 Europe; Thomas Weber's parallel study of students at Oxford and Heidelberg stresses the similarities between these 'cosmopolitan nationalists' even more, rejecting Levsen's findings that German students were gradually more militaristic than their British counterparts, and emphasizing Heidelberg's liberal outlook in questions of sexuality and gender relations.²⁰ Both studies belong to a larger research field on the history of Imperial Germany and late Victorian and Edwardian Britain that has changed established interpretations about the distinctions between the two countries considerably.²¹ Both Weber and Levsen stress the impact of the First World War, and Levsen is able to give empirical substance to her interpretation. Victory and defeat decided upon the development of student identities after 1918–9, not long-term continuities rooted in the political culture of the nineteenth century as 'special path' historians claim. Certainly, long-established patterns of perception and order influenced the way German students dealt with defeat; but they were not specifically German, but present in English culture as well. Individualization enabled by new opportunities of consumption, distancing from the Edwardian ideal of militaristic masculinity combined with the testing out of new forms of masculinity and

¹⁹ H. G. Hockerts and W. Süß, eds, *Soziale Ungleichheit im Sozialstaat: Die Bundesrepublik Deutschland und Großbritannien im Vergleich* (München, 2010), 15.

²⁰ T. Weber, *Our Friend "The Enemy": Elite Education in Britain and Germany before World War I* (Stanford, CA, 2008).

²¹ See a.o. D. Geppert and R. Gerwarth, eds, *Wilhelmine Germany and Edwardian Britain: Essays on Cultural Affinity* (Oxford, 2008); F. Bösch, *Öffentliche Geheimnisse: Skandale, Politik und Medien in Deutschland und Großbritannien 1880–1914* (München, 2009); D. Geppert, *Pressekriege: Öffentlichkeit und Diplomatie in den deutsch-britischen Beziehungen, 1896–1912* (München, 2007); A. Rose, *Zwischen Empire und Kontinent: Britische Außenpolitik vor dem Ersten Weltkrieg* (München, 2011).

gender relations, critique of militarism, and pacifist attitudes, the containment of nationalism, a fierce generational conflict between ex-servicemen and the post-war generation, a pluralistic political culture, and an optimistic outlook for the future characterized the student culture at Cambridge in the 1920s. In Tübingen, in contrast, defeat, revolution, and economic collapse fostered a climate in which militarism, racial-biological nationalism, authoritarianism, a cult of militaristic masculinity and of 'community', as well as destructive utopianism could flourish, providing fertile ground for National Socialism.²²

Whereas Weber vehemently insists on the similarities of the elite cultures of Edwardian Britain and Wilhelmine Germany and rejects all notions of exceptionalism on both sides of the Channel, other studies are more cautious in their claims, even if they agree on the fundamental importance of the First World War. Weber is right in his observation, that these accounts give a cultural twist to the old 'special path' argument.²³ However, they offer an alternative reading of German and British history alike, which is very different from that of the historians of the 1960s and 1970s.

Indicative are two books dealing with nationalism and the construction of national identities during the First World War, and although they differ in their approach, they reach the same conclusions. Sven Oliver Müller understands 'nation' as a result of communication and is interested in the impact of interpretative patterns associated with it, the creation of legitimacy, and the way conflicts were dealt with in the German and British war societies. Apart from 'intriguing parallels'²⁴ Müller sees important differences: the extent of state repression, the degree of nationalistic exclusion, the chances of opposition, and the willingness to reform. Although the interpretative patterns prevalent during the war in both societies were almost identical, the structural framework in which they were dispersed determined their impact in a decisive manner. Crucially, in Britain the military, social, and economic conditions during the war were much more advantageous than in Germany and provided stability; its liberal political tradition was used to tolerate deviance, social exclusion was averse to the logic of the democratic political system, and the British war objectives were not expansive as in Germany, but by promoting national self-determination, strengthened a more pluralistic concept of the nation. In Germany, in contrast, the concept of nation was profoundly ethnicized during and

²² See S. Levsen, *Elite, Männlichkeit und Krieg: Tübinger und Cambridger Studenten 1900–1929* (Göttingen, 2006), 355–65.

²³ See Weber, *Our Friend*, 6.

²⁴ S. O. Müller, *Die Nation als Waffe und Vorstellung: Nationalismus in Deutschland und Großbritannien im Ersten Weltkrieg* (Göttingen, 2002), 32.

after the First World War. Yet, it was the outcome of the war that had far-reaching consequences for the respective fashion 'the nation' was understood. Whereas the German defeat delegitimized established images of the 'nation', brought anti-semitic, anti-Socialist, and anti-liberal notions to the fore, and with the end of the monarchical system strengthened the belief in the 'German *Volk*', the British victory confirmed both the national narratives and the political system that had led the 'nation' successfully through total war.²⁵ This was the precondition for the successful 'taming' of militarism, nationalism, and a violent political culture by British civil society in the 1920s.²⁶ Notably, Müller's argument is in line with interpretations recently brought forward by Philip Williamson, Jon Lawrence, Susan Kingsley Kent, and others.²⁷

Aribert Reimann concentrates on the semantics of war in Germany and Britain, both in the media and in private field letters. He shows striking similarities, but gives also evidence of 'subtle, but significant' differences.²⁸ In both countries, the language of war was shaped by social Darwinism, the discourse on nervousness, a romantic and vitalistic imagery of nature, religious models, ideas of localism, complementary depictions of the enemy, the stigmatization of profiteers and politically unreliable elements, mythical history legends, and the interpretation of war as a crisis of modernity. Yet, in Britain with the notion of 'the defence of democratic liberties' a consensual formula was established that provided the political system with legitimacy; a distinct moralization supported the idea of evolutionary progress as a process of civilization; and the victory gave enough confirmation to the history, morality and the socio-economic order of society to enter into a period of controlled reform. Reimann sees the course of war and its outcome as crucial for the countries' adverse development in the 1920s, and again he stresses the importance of a long-established liberal political culture and a consolidated national self-assurance for the British mastering of the inter-war period.

An interesting contribution to this debate is Christiane Reinecke's work on the politics and practices of migration control in Britain and Germany from 1880 to 1930. She analyses Britain and Germany as two examples of modern states, and migration as an element of the

²⁵ See Müller, *Die Nation als Waffe*, 358–60.

²⁶ See Müller, *Die Nation als Waffe*, 364–5.

²⁷ See P. Williamson, *Stanley Baldwin. Conservative Leadership and National Values* (Cambridge, 1999); J. Lawrence, 'Forging a Peaceable Kingdom: War, Violence and the Fear of Brutalisation in Post-First World War Britain', *Journal of Modern History*, 75 (2003), 557–89; S. Kingsley Kent, *Aftershocks: Politics and Trauma in Britain, 1918–31* (Basingstoke, 2009).

²⁸ A. Reimann, *Der große Krieg der Sprachen: Untersuchungen zur historischen Semantik in Deutschland und England zur Zeit des Ersten Weltkriegs* (Essen, 2000), 283.

standardization and rationalization processes that they implemented. Two lines of development intersected in their efforts to control migration: the ordering ambitions of modern bureaucracies and the homogenizing tendencies of nationalistic thought. In the early twentieth century, both societies, she concludes, decided for an increasingly nationalist or racist strategy of exclusion; the German first, the British following suit. This process was reinforced by mutual observation and orientation at each others' policies. Interestingly, it was the First World War that enhanced the convergence of the two migration regimes. For Britain it meant a real break with pre-war policies, whereas in Germany continuity marked the field. Yet, the logics of inclusion and exclusion differed: while from the 1880s immigration was primarily regarded as 'threat to the national wellbeing' in Germany, in Britain it was discussed as social problem, albeit with 'marked xenophobic undertones'. Even if an ethnic-exclusionary orientation was evident in the migration politics of both countries, in Germany it developed a 'more aggressive dynamic', giving testimony to an ethnically defined concept of nation as well as anti-semitic motivations. In inter-war Britain, the racist demarcation line ran along the colour bar and the distinction between colonizers and colonized.²⁹ Looking at the practice of migration control and the limits of state action, Reinecke finds a more liberal approach in Britain, where limited resources, strong British-Jewish associations and the judiciary ensured a climate that was much more friendly towards immigrants than in Germany, where migration politics was not based on a law, but on decrees and therefore resulted in a much more strict and publicly less controllable administrative practice.³⁰ Thus, the disparities between Germany and Britain are to be found in the construction and practice of nationhood, as well as in the cultures of bureaucracy.

In the control of the public though, German practices during the First World War were much more intrusive and authoritarian than the British ones, Florian Altenhöner suggests in his study of rumours in the context of state-controlled communication. The rigid censorship regime exercised in Germany, unleashed a 'spiral of control',³¹ which in the end led to a further increase in rumours and the loss of trust in the political leadership. Although in both countries the military was in control of public opinion, in Britain at least the 'fiction of civil society' was maintained. This was to a high degree due to the fact that 'the

²⁹ C. Reinecke, *Grenzen der Freizügigkeit: Migrationskontrolle in Großbritannien und Deutschland, 1880–1930* (München, 2010), 385.

³⁰ Reinecke, *Grenzen der Freizügigkeit*, 385–7.

³¹ F. Altenhöner, *Kommunikation und Kontrolle: Gerüchte und städtische Öffentlichkeiten in Berlin und London 1914/18* (München, 2008), 318.

public as medium of self-understanding of society remained largely intact'.³² Altenhöner reverts to 'specific Prussian-German special paths' in order to explain these German-British differences, yet rejects the notion of British exceptionalism.³³

All these studies agree that it was the victory in war that gave stability to state and society in inter-war Britain, and in comparison with Germany Dirk Schumann additionally illustrates the importance of the, albeit precarious, economic stability of the early 1920s, with the crisis of 1920–1 hardly affecting the middle classes.³⁴ In fact, the expectations generated by the war were in both countries high, and their origin in the war situation framed perceptions and the debate after its end, Thomas Koinzer's comparative work on housing policy between 1914 and 1932 shows; but while in the 1920s Britain was distinguished by an intra-party consensus and an optimistic expectation in society that the targets could be achieved, in Germany the promises of war times laid an even greater burden on the young Weimar Republic that sought desperately to find legitimacy through social policy.³⁵

The decisive impact of the First World War is aptly demonstrated by Stefan Grüner's analysis of the political systems of France, Germany and the UK in the 1920s and 1930s, which offers a much wider interpretative framework for understanding the divergence of European societies after the First World War. His starting point is the observation that all over Europe, but especially in the countries of Western Europe, the 1920s were marked by a fundamental politicization of societies, witnessing broad parts of society to eventually gain a voice in politics—and the First World War had a cataclysmic effect in this respect. Grüner distinguishes three historic phenomena crucial in the development of modern European societies: the development of parliamentarism, the formation of modern parties and the process of democratization. The Weimar Republic had to cope with the fact that the processes of full parliamentarization and democratization struck at the same time, with inexperienced parties refusing to accept their responsibilities in a democratic system, and a population predominantly averse or distanced towards democracy. The stability of the British political system in the inter-war period can from this perspective be explained

³² Altenhöner, *Kommunikation und Kontrolle*, 320.

³³ Altenhöner, *Kommunikation und Kontrolle*, 319.

³⁴ D. Schumann, 'Einheitssehnsucht und Gewaltakzeptanz. Politische Grundpositionen des deutschen Bürgertums nach 1918 (mit vergleichenden Überlegungen zu den britischen *middle classes*)'. In H. Mommsen, ed., *Der Erste Weltkrieg und die europäische Nachkriegsordnung: Sozialer Wandel und Formveränderung der Politik* (Köln, 2000), 82–105.

³⁵ See T. Koinzer, *Wohnen nach dem Krieg: Wohnungsfrage, Wohnungspolitik und der Erste Weltkrieg in Deutschland und Großbritannien (1914–1932)* (Berlin, 2002).

by its long-established parliamentary tradition and by parties that were ready to play their role therein. The fundamental democratization process after 1918 could thus be absorbed by a stable political system as well as a political culture accustomed to compromise, integration, debate, and pragmatism. Further, both inside and outside parliament the political system was buttressed by experienced and convinced supporters.³⁶

Andreas Wirsching draws attention to another long-term factor for explaining the respective stability or instability of European societies in the inter-war period: the nation-building processes of the nineteenth century. Since in Western Europe the identity of state and nation seemed to be predominantly ensured, the identity of citizenship was based on the cultural contents of democracy, and the war experience could be positively integrated; in other parts of Europe in contrast, and especially in Germany and Italy, after 1918–9 the non-identity of nation and state increased even more and moved to the centre of a revisionist, aggressive, and anti-democratic notion of citizenship. So, Wirsching concludes, the crisis of nation building struck Germany simultaneously with the crisis of democratization and parliamentarization, whereas in Britain and France ‘these two big modernization crises’ took place independently of each other in different historical eras.³⁷

The interpretation that emerges from post-‘special path’ comparative research on the First World War and the 1920s therefore is distinguished by four features. First, the impact of the First World War on the further development of European societies is stressed and its outcome seen as decisive. Secondly, British history is integrated in the history of European modernity, characterized by its ambiguity, and the inter-war period seen as profoundly shaken by the different crises of modernity. As Gunter Mai claims in his history of Europe between 1918 and 1939, ‘the struggle over modernity, for or against it, was the crucial conflict of the inter-war period’.³⁸ The discourse on crisis, prevalent all over Europe after the First World War, was an indication for the crises of modernity, as well as a part of modernity itself.³⁹ Recently, Richard Overly has shown its dynamics in the British example,⁴⁰ and a comparison with Weimar Germany would surely be very fruitful and

³⁶ S. Grüner, ‘Probleme des Weimarer Parteiensystems im Vergleich’, in A. Wirsching, ed., *Herausforderungen der parlamentarischen Demokratie: Die Weimarer Republik im europäischen Vergleich* (München, 2007), 111–28.

³⁷ A. Wirsching, ed., ‘Einleitung’, in *Herausforderungen*, 9–19, here 11–12.

³⁸ G. Mai, *Europa 1918–1939: Mentalitäten, Lebensweisen, Politik zwischen den Weltkriegen* (Stuttgart, 2001), 10.

³⁹ Mai, *Europa 1918–1939*, 11.

⁴⁰ R. Overly, *Morbid Age: Britain and the Crisis of Civilization, 1919–1939* (London, 2009).

could be based on new studies on the discourse on crisis there.⁴¹ Bernd Weisbrod's observation that in both countries a 'Formwandel der Politik' (literally 'change of form of politics') took place after the First World War, produced by crisis and being perceived as a crisis itself, would be a good starting point for such an enterprise.⁴²

Crucially, historians emphasize the ambiguities inherent in inter-war societies, and this is also true for the British case: while the migration regime got more rigid and exclusive in the years after the First World War, the individual situation for working migrants improved;⁴³ hand in hand with a growing internationalism at Cambridge went an increase of anti-semitic language, racist colour prejudice and exclusionary practices;⁴⁴ English social clubs and leisure societies conserved established inequalities, cemented the class structure, and were certainly not a driving force of democratization; but by dismissing politics and therefore shielding leisure from politicization, they contributed to the stabilization of the parliamentary system, as Klaus Nathaus in comparison with the contrary German case convincingly argues;⁴⁵ while the state provided social benefits for war veterans only on a very limited scale—compared with Germany, where they were much more generous—they became successfully reconciled with society (again in contrast to Germany), due to the considerable involvement of privately organized charity;⁴⁶ on the one hand the British inter-war system of unemployment benefits enabled the recipients to sustain 'relative normality' in their lives, on the other they had to endure weekly means of testing that intruded their privacy seriously;⁴⁷ radical 'Neo-Toryism' at the very right fringes of the Conservative Party flourished in the inter-war period and was part of a European network of the new right, while its impact in Britain remained very limited, as Bernhard Dietz's work demonstrates.⁴⁸ Taking into account these

⁴¹ See R. Graf, *Die Zukunft der Weimarer Republik: Krisen und Zukunftsaneignungen in Deutschland 1918–1933* (München, 2008); M. Föllmer and R. Graf, eds, *Die "Krise" der Weimarer Republik: Zur Kritik eines Deutungsmusters* (Frankfurt am Main, 2005); W. Hardtwig, ed., *Ordnungen in der Krise: Zur politischen Kulturgeschichte Deutschlands 1900–1933* (München, 2007).

⁴² See B. Weisbrod, 'Die Politik der Repräsentation. Das Erbe des Ersten Weltkrieges und der Formwandel der Politik in Europa', in Mommsen, *Der Erste Weltkrieg*, 13–41.

⁴³ See Reinecke, *Grenzen*, 381.

⁴⁴ See Levsen, *Elite*, 332–5.

⁴⁵ K. Nathaus, *Organisierte Geselligkeit: Deutsche und britische Vereine im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert* (Göttingen, 2009), 249–50, 296, 298.

⁴⁶ G. Metzler, 'Die sozialstaatliche Dimension der parlamentarischen Demokratie im Europa der Zwischenkriegszeit', in Wirsching, *Herausforderungen*, 223–4.

⁴⁷ See M. Reiß, 'Staat, Arbeitsmarkt und Arbeitslosigkeit in Deutschland und Großbritannien in den 1920er und 1930er Jahren', in Wirsching, *Herausforderungen*, 169–204.

⁴⁸ B. Dietz, 'Gab es eine "Konservative Revolution" in Großbritannien? Rechtsintellektuelle am Rande der Konservativen Partei 1929–1933', *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte*, 54 (2006), 607–38.

ambiguities should be reason enough for avoiding falling in the old trap of an idealization of liberal Britain.

A third feature of these post-‘special path’ comparative studies is their emphasis on the history of political culture: they draw our attention to the influence of concepts of nation, of imagined orders, of myths, rites and social practices, of language, cultures of remembrance, and time horizons. The stability of France and Britain in the inter-war period seems primarily to stem from its long-established democratic political cultures, and this is also the main result of a ground-breaking research project comparing France and Germany.⁴⁹ And fourthly, the studies on the whole abstain from claiming a German ‘special path’. But they do emphasize national long-term particularities which proved decisive in the years after 1918–9, because they were reinforced by the outcome of the war and its immediate consequences. Accordingly, historians avoid speaking of continuities, but prefer the terminology of ‘path dependencies’.

European societies in the Second World War

A second and still evolving field of comparative research is the Second World War, and it is Diemar Süß’s very recent study on the social history of the bombing war in Germany and Britain that opens up a bundle of new perspectives. He is interested in how different political systems—democracy and National Socialist dictatorship—dealt with total war, how industrial societies coped with unlimited violence, how they changed in the confrontation with it and how it determined their politics. Central for the crisis management in Britain and Nazi Germany was the concept of ‘morale in warfare’ (‘Kriegsmoral’), Süß observes, and uses it as *tertium comparationis* on which he builds his argument. His wider interpretative framework is the concept of crisis-ridden modernity, as presented above.

‘Morale in warfare’, Süß argues, referred to many things at once: it was ‘an object for contemporary research, an effective propaganda formula, a military goal, and after 1945 both a historical reference point and a blueprint for future warfare’.⁵⁰ For Britain the unleashing of war constituted a much deeper caesura than for Germany, where the

⁴⁹ See A. Wirsching, ‘Krisenzeit der “Klassischen Moderne” oder deutscher “Sonderweg”? Überlegungen zum Projekt Faktoren der Stabilität und Instabilität in der Demokratie der Zwischenkriegszeit: Deutschland und Frankreich im Vergleich’, in H. Möller and U. Wengst, eds, *50 Jahre Institut für Zeitgeschichte: Eine Bilanz* (München 1999), 365–81; M. Kittel and H. Möller, eds, *Demokratie in Deutschland und Frankreich 1918–1933/40: Beiträge zu einem historischen Vergleich* (München, 2002).

⁵⁰ D. Süß, *Tod aus der Luft: Kriegsgesellschaft und Luftkrieg in Deutschland und England* (München, 2011), 17.

preparation for war had been on the top of the agenda since the Nazi seizure of power in 1933. The legal and administrative order established in Britain in 1939 stayed by and large intact until 1945, whereas in Germany a steady process of radicalization unfolded. Both countries witnessed the mobilization of society in the wake of evacuations, which everywhere entailed a growing number of cultural and social conflicts, in Britain above all about solidarity and 'Britishness', about citizens' rights and duties or about social inequality. In both countries, medical and psychological research was quick to take up 'morale in warfare' as a concept and pathologize deviant behaviour; although in Germany in its language and consequences more extreme, the direction taken was the same. The invention of 'morale in warfare', Süß concludes, was not specific to democracy or dictatorship, but was a precondition for modern societies in order to fight a war, in which the distinction between combatant and non-combatant was basically abolished. The bunker became a central space in both societies, in which power was exerted and social conduct disciplined, and which in itself was perceived as harbinger of a new social order. The strategies for solving crises, therefore, were not only specific to the respective political system, but were 'to a certain degree also part of the dynamic of socialization brought about by industrial warfare'.⁵¹

Yet, the order of war established in Britain was, in contrast to Germany, characterized by the preservation of public spaces, in which decisions had to find legitimization and were controlled. Established 'rules of consensual negotiation processes' were not challenged,⁵² and growing anti-semitism and xenophobia were not allowed to enter into the state-controlled system of social security or to find expression in violent exclusionary practices. While the individual appropriation of the experiences of the bombing war was very similar in Germany and Britain, the way death and mourning were publicly dealt with differed considerably. State and churches in Britain did not collectivize or sacralize death—in marked contrast to Nazi Germany. The British churches took, however, great effort to ascribe a religious dimension to the 'people's war', which was propagated as reference point for a new beginning after the war, in which the churches demanded to play an important role. The perceptions and interpretations during the war prepared the memorization of the bombing war after 1945, which became an important legitimizing pillar for the new welfare state, and, as it were, in compensation for the loss of the Empire provided an arsenal of memories of a heroic epoch in the nation's history.⁵³

⁵¹ Süß, *Tod aus der Luft*, 568.

⁵² Süß, *Tod aus der Luft*, 570.

⁵³ See Süß, *Tod aus der Luft*, 579.

As a matter of fact, the German and British cultures of remembrance of the bombing war were as closely interconnected.⁵⁴

In the situation of total war, democratic and dictatorial politics of 'morale of warfare', Süß concludes, shared the 'pressure that resulted in ritualized forms of community building and the standardization of social behaviour'. The decisive differences were marked by National Socialism's radical, racist willingness to use violence and the loss of all normative bonds in nazified German society.⁵⁵ Süß's impressive study is, for the German side, indicative for a changed perspective in research on the Nazi regime, which in recent years has increasingly focused on social history and specifically on the way National Socialist ideology, politics and everyday practices affected and changed German society.⁵⁶ Its interpretations are controversial, and the need for comparative research has many times been underlined.⁵⁷

The modern welfare state

To better understand the long-term developments of twentieth century history is the essential aim of a third field of comparative German-British history, concentrated on the history of the modern welfare state. It can draw on the paradigms, concepts and models of sociological welfare state research, whose structural approaches have an established transatlantic and European outlook. Comparative historical research today is mainly concentrated on the post-1945 period, when the German and British welfare states went, along with their counterparts, through a stage of rapid expansion, before they experienced massive crisis and structural reconfiguration from the 1970s onwards. Characteristically, the welfare state evolved in a national framework, so that comparative history methodologically corresponds with the actual historical development, although increasingly attention is given to international transfers and the power of supra-national institutions.

⁵⁴ This is also true for other areas of German coping with the Nazi past, see e.g. J. Friedemann and J. Später, 'Britische und deutsche Kollektivschuld-Debatte', in U. Herbert, ed., *Wandlungsprozesse in Westdeutschland: Belastung, Integration, Liberalisierung 1945-1980* (2nd edn, Göttingen, 2003), 53-90.

⁵⁵ Süß, *Tod aus der Luft*, 580-81.

⁵⁶ See J. Steuwer, 'Conference Report: German Society in the Nazi Era. "Volksgemeinschaft" between Ideological Projection and Social Practice', *German Historical Institute London Bulletin*, 32 (2010), 120-8, and the forthcoming collected volume: B. Gotto and M. Steber, ed., *A Nazi 'Volksgemeinschaft'? German Society in the Third Reich* (Oxford, 2012).

⁵⁷ A notable exception is A. Sudrow, *Der Schuh im Nationalsozialismus. Eine Produktgeschichte im deutsch-britisch-amerikanischen Vergleich* (Göttingen, 2010), which puts the multi-dimensional history of the shoe in Nazi Germany in a comparative perspective by analysing production and consumption cultures in Germany, Britain, and the USA in the 1930s and 1940s, and shows how the development of the consumer product shoe was determined by the racial, war-centred, and exterminational policies of the regime.

Mostly, these comparisons are embedded in a European framework of analysis.⁵⁸

The German and British welfare states are often seen as opposite poles, based on the structural differences of the two welfare state models, the distinct political and socio-economic parameters they are set in and the specific values prevalent in the respective welfare cultures. These views are supported by theoretical modelling, be it in the context of the debate on 'varieties of capitalism' or with regard to welfare state typologies. In the latter, and first and foremost in Gøsta Esping Andersen's famous triadic model, Britain is regarded as representing the 'liberal' type, Germany the 'conservative' one.⁵⁹ Comparative historical research, however, shows how problematic these simple categories are and how complex the European development of the welfare state had been in the course of the twentieth century, without neglecting the differences between the countries.

Ulrike Lindner's comparison of health policy in Germany and Britain from the 1940s to the 1960s emphasizes national path dependencies and systemic reasons for the disparities, but highlights also similar developments like the increasing power of medical doctors, the trend to a health system dominated by medical and clinical services, or the limits that the evolving internationalization set to national policies.⁶⁰ The cultures of welfare, though, varied significantly, and Lindner sees here Britain's liberal tradition with its respect of individual rights contrasted with a German emphasis of the common good, resulting in an easy acceptance of coercive measures, that compromised the freedom of the individual and lay bare the continuities between the Nazi regime and the early Federal Republic. A decisive change occurred only in the 1960s, when a new generation of medical practitioners entered the system and a democratized public sphere allowed newly formed patients' groups to find a political audience.⁶¹

Hans Günter Hockerts and Winfried Süß scrutinize in their recently published, important collected volume the interdependency of welfare states (originally based on the promise of social security) and social

⁵⁸ See H. Kaelble, 'Historischer Vergleich und Wohlfahrtsstaat – Ein Essay', in U. Becker et al., eds, *Sozialstaat Deutschland: Geschichte und Gegenwart* (Bonn, 2010), 163–70; G. A. Ritter, *Der Sozialstaat: Entstehung und Entwicklung im internationalen Vergleich* (3rd rev. edn, München, 2010).

⁵⁹ See the summary in H. G. Hockerts, 'Einführung', in Hockerts and Süß, *Ungleichheit*, 9–18, here 16–8.

⁶⁰ U. Lindner, *Gesundheitspolitik in der Nachkriegszeit: Großbritannien und die Bundesrepublik Deutschland im Vergleich* (München, 2004); see also U. Lindner and M. Niehuss, eds, *Ärztinnen – Patientinnen: Frauen im deutschen und britischen Gesundheitswesen des 20. Jahrhunderts* (Köln, 2002).

⁶¹ Lindner, *Gesundheitspolitik*, 517–8.

inequality, thereby testing the claim that they are an instrument for social levelling. Their five case studies—of poverty, education, gender, provision for the old age, and concepts of fairness—all show that the 1970s in both countries marked an important departing point from earlier policies.⁶² It is indicative that current comparative research concentrates on the last quarter of the twentieth century, when the end of the post-war boom, further internationalization and global entanglements, the breakthrough of the service economy, a challenge of the traditional family, and the demographic shift profoundly affected the foundations, on which the European and American welfare states were built.⁶³ The thematic annual issue of the journal *Archiv für Sozialgeschichte* in 2007 analysed the 'crisis of the welfare state' in Germany in an international context and was a vital contribution to an evolving research field.⁶⁴

A 'turning point in contemporary history'? The 1970s and 1980s

Currently, German comparative work on British history is concentrated on a fourth field of research: the history of the 1970s to the 1980s, and it is no coincidence that the studies of the welfare state aim to contribute to this much wider debate about the significance of this period for the history of the twentieth century as a whole. Historians agree that they are confronted with times of remarkable change on an international scale. Be it Britain, the USA, France, or West Germany, to understand national transformations, processes of an overarching nature have to be taken into account, it is claimed. The end of the post-war boom, the transition from industrial to post-industrial society, a new consumer capitalism, individualization, and pluralization of lifestyles, the challenge of traditional value orders, the re-composition of class structures, the breakdown of established time horizons, politicization and new forms of politics, the formation of new political languages and the recasting of political ideologies, internationalization—all these processes overlapped, influenced, shaped, and propelled each other, and set free an extraordinary dynamic that since then has transformed Western societies profoundly. In this perspective, the origins of processes that shape our present times lie in the 1970s and 1980s, and

⁶² Hockerts and Süß, *Ungleichheit*.

⁶³ See H. G. Hockerts, 'Vom Problemlöser zum Problemerzeuger? Der Sozialstaat im 20. Jahrhundert', *Archiv für Sozialgeschichte*, 47 (2007), 3–29.

⁶⁴ See *Archiv für Sozialgeschichte* 47 (2007), Rahmenthema: Der Sozialstaat in der Krise. Deutschland im internationalen Vergleich.

they have not yet come to an end.⁶⁵ A recent forum in the *Journal of Modern European History* on this period consequently identifies a 'turning point in contemporary history'.⁶⁶

An important strand of this debate combines these observations with concepts of modernity, and in this way incorporates the 1970s and 1980s in wider reaching interpretations of the twentieth century. In this respect, Ulrich Herbert's paradigm of 'high modernity' is crucial.⁶⁷ According to him, from 1890 to the late 1960s, the 'economically advanced countries of Central and Western European' were shaped by the consequences of modern industrialism that affected the 'entire population' and all areas of life.⁶⁸ The ambiguous, often catastrophic developments are seen as 'reactions to this explosion of modernity, as a kind of challenge and response'.⁶⁹ As in the aforementioned studies, the First World War plays a prominent role in explaining the divergence of ways in inter-war Europe. Only in the 1960s, Germany liberalized and 'westernized' (Anselm Doering-Manteuffel) and therefore converged with the civil societies of Western Europe, which became 'increasingly similar to each other' anyway by adapting to the 'burgeoning consumer society'. However, at exactly the point when the societies seemed to eventually be at ease with themselves, the 'foundations of the capitalist-industrial economy began to change', leading to new challenges that demanded new responses.⁷⁰ In his profound critique of Herbert's model, Lutz Raphael brings forward an alternative way to integrate the change of the 1970s and 1980s into interpretations influenced by concepts of modernity. Obviously inspired by Bourdieu, he suggests that the cultural revolution of the late 1960s and the economic change of the early 1970s represented events that for a short period of time cut through the logics and inherent time frames of development in the pluralistic 'fields' and 'systems' of modern societies and established rare synchronicity that promoted substantial change and heralded a

⁶⁵ See A. Wirsching, ed., 'Forum: The 1970s and 1980s as a Turning Point in European History?', *Journal of Modern European History*, 9 (2011), 8–26; A. Doering-Manteuffel and L. Raphael, *Nach dem Boom: Perspektiven auf die Zeitgeschichte seit 1970* (Göttingen, 2008); T. Raithel et al., eds, *Auf dem Weg in eine neue Moderne? Die Bundesrepublik Deutschland in den siebziger und achtziger Jahren* (München, 2009); K. H. Jarausch, ed., *Das Ende der Zuversicht? Die siebziger Jahre als Geschichte* (Göttingen, 2008).

⁶⁶ See Wirsching, 'Forum'.

⁶⁷ See U. Herbert, 'Liberalisierung als Lernprozess. Die Bundesrepublik in der deutschen Geschichte – eine Skizze', in Herbert, *Wandlungsprozesse*, 7–49; U. Herbert, 'Europe in High Modernity. Reflections on a Theory of the 20th Century', *Journal of Modern European History*, 5 (2007), 5–20.

⁶⁸ Herbert, 'Europe in High Modernity', 10.

⁶⁹ Herbert, 'Europe in High Modernity', 11.

⁷⁰ Herbert, 'Europe in High Modernity', 18. For "Westernization" see A. Doering-Manteuffel, *Wie westlich sind die Deutschen? Amerikanisierung und Westernisierung im 20. Jahrhundert* (Göttingen, 1999).

new phase of 'modernity'.⁷¹ While Herbert and Raphael doubt the validity of philosophical and sociological models of 'postmodernity' or 'second modernity' for contemporary history, Andreas Rödder argues for their further historiographical development.⁷²

Against this background current comparative research projects are set and most of them are still in the making. The complex mix of national, transnational, and international developments, obviously a distinct feature of the 1970s and 1980s, encourages historians to comparative work, which is now regularly combined with the analysis of exchange and transfer. Although German comparative research is based on the assumption of European and transatlantic assimilation processes after 1945, it does not neglect persisting national differences and path dependencies. Thereby, West Germany and Britain figure again as two distinct cases, with the UK being distinguished by its political system, the structure of the economy and the organization of industrial relations, its early popular mass consumer culture, its developing multi-culturalism, its adaptation of neo-liberalism, and its close relationships and interchange with the USA, to name but some. Karen Schönwälder's extensive comparison of immigration politics from the 1950s to the 1970s was an early contribution from the point of view of a political scientist,⁷³ and Olaf Blaschke's comparison of historiographical publishing cultures accents the 1960s as time of crucial change, closing an era that had begun at the turn of the century.⁷⁴ Research now tackles several aspects: the influence of experts and expert cultures on political decision making,⁷⁵ concepts of time and

⁷¹ L. Raphael, 'Ordnungsmuster der "Hochmoderne"? Die Theorie der Moderne und die Geschichte der europäischen Gesellschaften im 20. Jahrhundert', in U. Schneider and L. Raphael, eds, *Dimensionen der Moderne: Festschrift für Christof Dipper* (Frankfurt am Main, 2008), 73–91.

⁷² A. Rödder, 'Moderne – Postmoderne – Zweite Moderne. Deutungskategorien für die Geschichte der Bundesrepublik in den siebziger und achtziger Jahren', in Raithel et al., *Auf dem Weg*, 181–201.

⁷³ See K. Schönwälder, *Einwanderung und ethnische Pluralität: Politische Entscheidungen und öffentliche Debatten in Großbritannien und der Bundesrepublik von den 1950er bis zu den 1970er Jahren* (Essen, 2001).

⁷⁴ See O. Blaschke, *Verleger machen Geschichte: Buchhandel und Historiker seit 1945 im deutsch-britischen Vergleich* (Göttingen, 2010).

⁷⁵ See e.g. the research projects of E. Seefried (University of Augsburg) on future studies in Britain and Germany, and R. Graf (University of Bochum) on "petro knowledge" in Western industrial societies in the 1970s; for experts of the consumer society see K. Brückweh, ed., *The Voice of the Citizen Consumer: A History of Market Research, Consumer Movements, and the Political Public Sphere* (Oxford, 2011).

time horizons,⁷⁶ education in various perspectives,⁷⁷ economic structures, and the impact of economic change on societies of work,⁷⁸ political movements and parties, and the transformation of political languages.⁷⁹

Obviously, the notion of a German 'special path' does not play a direct role in this research, Heinrich August Winkler's argument about the 'long way West' with Germany's eventual arrival in 'the West' only after re-unification in 1990,⁸⁰ is too strictly developed in a national narrative to be persuasive in a European or transatlantic context. It remains to be seen, how these studies will frame the (West) German and British trajectories from the 1970s besides the trodden interpretative paths of 'neo-liberalism' versus 'social market economy' and what particular contour they will attribute to Britain in the 1970s and 1980s.

German perspectives on European Britain

So, is there a distinct German reading of twentieth-century British history? Those who expect a cohesive overarching narrative will surely

⁷⁶ See the conference *From Planning to Crisis Management? Time, Futures, and Politics in West Germany and Britain from the 1960s to the 1980s*, GHIL March 2011, conference report forthcoming in *German Historical Institute London Bulletin*, 33 (2011).

⁷⁷ See e.g. S. Kröper's (University of Trier) project on the foundation of campus universities in West Germany and Britain, and Wilfried Rudloff's comparative works on education politics, e.g. W. Rudloff, 'Ungleiche Bildungschancen als sozialpolitische Herausforderung', in Hockerts and Süß, *Ungleichheit*, 43–63.

⁷⁸ See e.g. T. Raithel and T. Schlemmer, eds, *Die Rückkehr der Arbeitslosigkeit: Die Bundesrepublik Deutschland im europäischen Kontext 1973 bis 1989* (München, 2009), and the conference *European Societies of Work in Transformation: Comparative and Transnational Perspectives on Great Britain, Sweden and West Germany during the Seventies*, GHIL, December 2009, conference report by B. Rieger, in *German Historical Institute Bulletin*, 32 (2010), 171–3. See also the research projects of W. Wiede (University of Trier) on discourses about the 'unemployed subject', of K. Priemel (Humboldt University of Berlin) on employers, the employed and the unions in the graphic industries, both in German–British comparison, and N. Kramer (ZZF Potsdam) on old age policies in Germany, Britain and Italy.

⁷⁹ See A. Saupé's (Zentrum für Zeithistorische Forschung Potsdam) work on the semantics of 'security' and 'law and order' in Britain and West Germany, my own project on political languages of Conservatism in the two countries, and the panel at the Historikertag, which I co-organized with Elke Seefried on semantic shifts in the political languages of Britain and the Federal Republic in the 1960s and 1970s, see the conference report: HT 2010: Grenzverschiebungen. Historische Semantik der 1960er- und 1970er-Jahre im deutsch-britischen Vergleich. 28.09.2010–01.10.2011, Berlin, in *H-Soz-u-Kult*, 08.01.2011, <<http://hsozkult.geschichte.hu-berlin.de/tagungsberichte/id=3491>>. For comparative research on the new political movements see e.g. H. Nehring, 'Sicherheitskrisen. Religiöse und moralische Semantiken des Friedens in den britischen und westdeutschen Protesten gegen Atomwaffen, 1957–1983', in H. Stadtland, ed., *"Friede auf Erden": Religiöse Semantiken und Konzepte des Friedens im 20. Jahrhundert* (Essen, 2009), 231–54.

⁸⁰ See H. A. Winkler, *Germany: The Long Road West*, 2 vols (Oxford, 2006–07), orig.: *Der lange Weg nach Westen*, vol. 1: *Deutsche Geschichte vom Ende des Alten Reiches bis zum Untergang der Weimarer Republik*, vol. 2: *Deutsche Geschichte vom "Dritten Reich" bis zur Wiedervereinigung 1933–1990* (München, 2000).

be disappointed. For this, German research on British history is too diverse and individualistic. But there are indeed certain perspectives characteristic for German historians that let British history appear in a slightly different light than in works by British historians. First and foremost, Britain is situated in Europe: in the German example its entanglement with the countries on the Continent is shown, and in comparison with Germany its history is depicted as specific part of European history. Then, British history in the twentieth century is interpreted as part of a wider history of modernity, ambiguous, and crisis-ridden. This perspective cuts through the established periodization of British history, introducing a period from the 1890s to 1960s, in which the caesurae of 1918–9 and 1945 nevertheless mark turning points, but are not of an epoch-making nature and quality. The interpretation of the 1970s and 1980s points in the same direction. And finally, German research on British history is situated in the methodological debate of German historiography, and therefore naturally introduces new approaches to British twentieth-century history. This is especially true for the German brand of a history of political culture or cultural history of politics, which shares some propositions with the British ‘new political history’, but nonetheless follows a different agenda in its accent on perception, concepts of order, and constructions of meaning.⁸¹ This holds also true for comparative history and the history of cultural transfer. Yet on the other hand the intensive encounter with not only British history, but also the writing of British history, has left and still leaves its mark on those German historians, who seriously engage with it, and to a certain degree shapes their interpretations. The writing of German and British history has always been and indeed still is a steady process of dialogue and exchange.

⁸¹ For the German approaches and the controversial debate about them see U. Frevert, ‘Neue Politikgeschichte’, in J. Eibach and G. Lottes, eds, *Kompass der Geschichtswissenschaft: Ein Handbuch* (Göttingen, 2002); A. Landwehr, ‘Diskurs – Macht – Wissen. Perspektiven einer Kulturgeschichte des Politischen’, *Archiv für Kulturgeschichte*, 85 (2003), 71–117; B. Stollberg-Rilinger, ed., *Was heißt Kulturgeschichte des Politischen?* (ZHF, Beiheft 35) (Berlin 2005); T. Mergel, ‘Überlegungen zu einer Kulturgeschichte der Politik’, *Geschichte und Gesellschaft*, 28 (2002), 574–606; A. Rödder, ‘Klios neue Kleider. Theoriedebatten um eine Kulturgeschichte der Politik in der Moderne’, *Historische Zeitschrift*, 283 (2006), 657–88; T. Nicklas, ‘Macht – Politik – Diskurs. Möglichkeiten und Grenzen einer Politischen Kulturgeschichte’, *Archiv für Kulturgeschichte*, 86 (2004), 1–25. For an attempt to link the German and British discussions see K. Brückweh and M. Steber, ‘Aufregende Zeiten. Ein Forschungsbericht zu Neuansätzen der britischen Zeitgeschichte des Politischen’, *Archiv für Sozialgeschichte*, 50 (2010), 671–701.

The State of French Studies on Contemporary British History

Many readers will no doubt be familiar with the 'Roundtable on Twentieth-century British History in North America' that appeared in a recent issue of *Twentieth Century British History*.⁸² It will be remembered that the Editors intended it as: 'the first in a projected series that will take global soundings of the present state of twentieth-century British history, consciously pushing away from the shores of the British Isles to involve scholars not based institutionally in the UK'.⁸³

The state of French studies on contemporary British history is in fact a difficult subject, because the study of British history in France can be likened to a tree with three major branches, each of them branching out into sub-branches. And each of these sub-branches has its own traditions, its own methods of work, its own channels for publication, and its own procedures of access. Fortunately, there is some convergence, but it is a constant theme for lament that the major branches and sub-branches too often lead an autonomous life. Some conferences and some publications manage to federate efforts between all partners, but this is perhaps a less common occurrence than in North America. Yet, paradoxically, it should be easier to gather French scholars engaged in British Contemporary Studies since they are less numerous than their North American counterparts. But things seem to be slowly moving towards a rapprochement between all those who work on Britain.

H-Albion⁸⁴ publishes statistics on its membership from time to time and they make it obvious that the non-UK subscribers come overwhelmingly from the USA, with a substantial number from the 'Old Commonwealth'. I seem to remember that the Germans come first outside the English-speaking world and the French second—but far behind the USA, which in fact justifies what the Editors say in the *Twentieth Century British History* Roundtable, namely:

To start in North America is not an unthinking reflex or a paean to some kind of intellectual 'special relationship', but rather an

⁸² L. E. Nym Mayhall *et al.*, 'Roundtable: Twentieth Century British History in North America', *Twentieth Century British History*, 21 (2010), 375–418.

⁸³ Mayhall, 'Roundtable', 375.

⁸⁴ H-Albion, hosted by Michigan State University, is the H-Net discussion network for British and Irish History. <<http://www.h-net.org/~albion/>>

acknowledgement of the importance of the research and teaching about Britain traditionally carried out in the USA and Canada.⁸⁵

Unsurprisingly, it was of course historians who ‘naturally’ took an interest in Britain—its distant or recent past and the light it could throw on current affairs. The first famous name that springs to mind is that of Hippolyte Taine (1828–93), who founded serious academic study of ‘England’, as French historians persist in calling the UK, at least in private conversations.

Several observations on his personality seem relevant in the context of today’s situation. First he is typical of the French academic élite after the reforms introduced under Napoleon and kept ever since. That élite did not attend the Sorbonne, still less the old-established provincial universities like Montpellier or Bordeaux, but the new creation of the Napoleonic period: the *École normale supérieure*, admittedly located in the Latin Quarter, a stone’s throw from the old Sorbonne. The purpose was openly élitist: to detect the best brains and to turn them into the best teachers that a generation could produce. The implied model was one of a self-perpetuating élite, the best teachers teaching the best pupils, declared to be so after a rigorous process of academic selection based on a succession of stiff competitive examinations: in other words, a ‘meritocracy’ before the word—in French, ‘*l’élitisme républicain*’.

Hippolyte Taine passed the last but one hurdle in 1848, when he successfully entered the *École normale supérieure*, reading philosophy, the king of all disciplines at the time. But he was somewhat of a non-conformist and he failed in his last competitive examination—he did not pass the *agrégation*, the highest and most prestigious qualification in French academic life, as it still is today. That he became a successful *littérateur* is of course not surprising for a young man with his background, but it is not known why he took an interest in what we would now call British Studies. In 1863–6 he published five volumes on Anglophone literary history, *Histoire de la littérature anglaise*. Apparently this brought him an invitation to Oxford, where he taught in 1871. He came back with ideas on the country, which resulted in his *Notes sur l’Angleterre* (1872)—but more importantly he became impregnated with Burke’s views as expressed in his *Reflections on the Revolution in France* of 1790. In 1872, he also published *Une Anglaise témoin de la Révolution française (1792–95)*, and the first volume of his *magnum opus*, *Les origines de la France contemporaine* quickly followed: *L’ancien régime* (1875) [La Révolution: I—L’anarchie (1878); La Révolution: II—La conquête jacobine (1881); La Révolution: III—Le gouvernement révolutionnaire (1883); Le Régime moderne (1890–3)]. In other words, Taine’s interest in recent British history was of a kind that would be frowned upon today,

⁸⁵ Mayhall, ‘Roundtable’, 375.

since he evidently did not have the necessary detachment that we would now expect—he had an axe to grind, using British history as a tool to fight the French ‘progressives’ of his time and contrasting, like Burke, the wisdom of the British moderates with the folly of the French Revolutionaries.

The next in line should be Élie Halévy (1870–1937)—the exact opposite of Taine on the political spectrum, but with exactly the same academic background, the *École normale supérieure*, reading philosophy, followed by the *agrégation*, which he passed, unlike Taine. His interest for Britain first manifested itself openly in his doctor’s degree of 1901, on ‘La formation du radicalisme philosophique’, which concentrated on Jeremy Bentham and utilitarianism, and was published in three volumes in the following months.⁸⁶

Another interesting aspect of his career, which throws light on today’s fragmentation of British Studies in France, is that he started to teach at the *École libre des sciences politiques*, founded in 1872—the French equivalent of the later London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE, 1895)—and the ancestor of what is now (since 1945) the *Institut d’études politiques de l’Université de Paris*, still called *Sciences Po* in academic jargon. His first course, taught from 1892, was entitled ‘L’évolution des idées politiques dans l’Angleterre au XIXe siècle’—very recent history in the 1890s, before even the century was over. His teaching led to the monumental *Histoire du peuple anglais au XIXe siècle*, published over 20 years (1912–32).⁸⁷ Halévy had another characteristic: between 1901, when he published the first volume of *La formation du radicalisme philosophique*, and 1932, when the second and last *Épilogue* (on the period 1895–1914) of his *Histoire du peuple anglais au XIXe siècle* appeared, all his publications were on Britain—something for which it is difficult to find an equivalent among French historians today.

Finally, among the great ancestors, one must mention Paul Mantoux (1877–1956), best known for a book first published in 1906, now a classic which is still apparently in print in its English translation, *La révolution industrielle au XVIIIe siècle: Essai sur les commencements de la grande industrie moderne en Angleterre*.⁸⁸ Needless to say, Mantoux also

⁸⁶ *La formation du radicalisme philosophique*. Vol. 1: *La jeunesse de Bentham, 1776–1789*. Vol. 2: *L’évolution de la doctrine utilitaire de 1789 à 1815*. Vol. 3: *Le radicalisme philosophique* (Paris, 1901–04). Nouvelle édition dirigée par Monique Canto-Sperber. Postface de Jean-Pierre Dupuy. Traduction des textes anglais et latins par Jean-Pierre Cléro. Références aux œuvres de Bentham révisées par Mary Sokol. Annotation revue par Sophie Jallais (Paris, 1995). English translation by M. Morris, *The Growth of Philosophic Radicalism* (London, 1928 [New Editions: 1952, 1972]).

⁸⁷ *A History of the English People in the Nineteenth Century*. Translated from the French by E. I. Watkin and D. A. Barker. Introduction by G. Wallas. 4 vols (London, 1924–47 [New edition. Introduction by A. Briggs, 1987]).

⁸⁸ P. Mantoux, *The Industrial Revolution in the Eighteenth Century: An Outline of the Beginnings of the Modern Factory System in England* (new and rev. edn, London, 2005).

came from the *École normale supérieure*, but this time with a difference: he was not *agrégé de philosophie*, but *agrégé d'histoire* (1897), an indirect indication that history was catching up in prestige with philosophy among the brightest students.

But there was a new development in that some of these élite students now also opted for the *agrégation d'anglais*. The best known of them, at least among people of my generation, is Louis Cazamian, born the same year as Paul Mantoux (1877), also a graduate of the *École normale supérieure*, but then passing the *agrégation d'anglais*. Cazamian is or was best known for his *Histoire de la littérature anglaise*, but his interest in contemporary British History was shown in his first book, *L'Angleterre moderne et son évolution*, published in 1911.

So, we can now easily perceive the three branches which I outlined at the beginning: the History of Political Ideas, dominated in the past by the *agrégés de philosophie*, but now the preserve of the Sciences Politiques scholars, those who would teach in the LSE in Britain; General History, with the *agrégés d'histoire* in Departments of History; and what we call in French jargon *civilisation britannique*—general British Studies, in Departments of English. A further French refinement in the diversity of branches and sub-branches is that all the candidates for the *agrégation d'anglais* have a common core curriculum for the written papers, but they must choose between three options for the oral part (which takes place in English—a major difference of course with the *agrégation d'histoire*): literature, linguistics, and 'civilisation', which includes primarily the study of Britain and the USA, but occasionally countries from the Old or New Commonwealth. The *agrégés d'anglais* who took the 'civilisation' option are usually called 'civilisationnistes' as opposed to the 'littéraires' and 'linguistes'. This is a fairly recent development: the 'civilisation' option was only introduced in the late 1970s—in the past the *agrégation d'anglais* was almost entirely dominated by literature. And from next year the President of the *agrégation* jury (they serve for 4 years) will be a true 'civilisationniste'—for the first time, showing recognition of the growing importance of British and American Studies vis-à-vis English Literary Studies in the world of Departments of English.

If we now concentrate on historians—the *agrégés d'histoire*—we can say that there was a second generation, after Halévy and the other pioneers, which mainly wrote on British History, and often very recent British History. Two names spring to mind: François Bédarida (1926–2001) and François Crouzet (1922–2010), both alumni of the *École normale supérieure*.

Bédarida taught at the *Institut d'études politiques de Paris (Sciences Po)* from 1971 to 1978, before founding the *Institut d'histoire du temps présent*,

which he directed until 1990.⁸⁹ He is the author of *La bataille d'Angleterre* (The Battle of Britain, 1985) and of two contrasting biographies. The first is a curiosity, published in 1987 in a French series intriguingly entitled *Les inconnus de l'histoire* (the unknown names of history): *Will Thorne: la voie anglaise du socialisme* (Will Thorne: The English Way to Socialism). Will Thorne (1857–1946), one may remember, was the leader of the Gasworkers' Union. In total contrast he also wrote a copious biography of 'the most famous Englishman', Winston Churchill, in 1999. His *La société anglaise, 1851–1975* (1976) was updated in 1990, becoming *La société anglaise du milieu du XIXe siècle à nos jours*. Both editions were published by Methuen, as *A Social History of England, 1851–1975* in 1979, and *A Social History of England, 1851–1990* in 1991. The cover blurb of the 1991 edition is perhaps worth quoting here:

In this, the second edition of *A Social History of England*, François Bédarida has added a new final chapter on the last fifteen years. The book now traces the evolution of English society from the height of the British Empire to the dawn of the single European market. Making full use of the *Annales* school of French historiography, Bédarida takes his inquiry beyond conventional views to penetrate the attitudes, behaviour and psychology of the British people.

Now, it does not appear that Bédarida had any disciples in the field of British Studies, unlike François Crouzet, who did his thesis on the Continental System. It became a bestseller when published in two volumes as *L'économie britannique et le blocus continental (1806–1813)* in 1958. He later wrote *L'économie de la Grande-Bretagne victorienne* (1958), published by Routledge in 1982 as *The Victorian Economy*. His conventional label is that of an economic historian, but he also wrote *Le conflit de Chypre, 1946–1959* (The Conflict in Cyprus, 1946–59) in 1973.

It can be mentioned in passing that the title of Crouzet's 1985 book, *De la supériorité de l'Angleterre sur la France: l'économique et l'imaginaire, XVIIe-XXe siècles*⁹⁰ sometimes led to misunderstandings in France. Those who had not read the book saw 'On the superiority of England over France' as an offensive phrase which made him an unpardonable traitor, but this was in fact a quotation, taken from a report written by a deputation of French businessmen sent on an official visit of British manufactories in the nineteenth century.

⁸⁹ During the 2011 25th Anniversary Conference of the Centre for Contemporary British History (CCBH) at King's College, London, Anthony Seldon (one of the co-founders) remarked that the Institute of Contemporary British History, as it was then called, partly took its inspiration from the *Institut für Zeitgeschichte München* and Bédarida's *Institut d'histoire du temps présent* in Paris.

⁹⁰ Published as F. Crouzet, *Britain Ascendant: Comparative Studies in Franco-British Economic History* (Cambridge, 1990).

In 2000, his former doctoral students organized a conference at the Sorbonne, whose proceedings—in fact a *Festschrift*—were published in 2001 as *Histoires d'outre-Manche: Tendances récentes de l'historiographie britannique*. The list of contributors forms the nucleus of the third generation, the current one, of French *agrégés d'histoire*, often graduates of the *École normale supérieure*, teaching British History in French Departments of History. Some of the names will no doubt be familiar to many readers: Frédérique Lachaud, now at Metz University, on Medieval History; François-Joseph Ruggiu, of Bordeaux, on English Early Modern Urban History; Charles Giry-Deloison, of Arras, on English Early Modern Diplomatic History; Edmond Dziembowski, of Grenoble, on eighteenth-century Anglo-French relations; Jean-Pierre Dormois, of Strasbourg, on the Industrial Revolution; Pascal Dupuy, of Rouen, on British caricatures of the French Revolutionaries and Napoleon; Philippe Chassaingne, of Bordeaux, on Crime in the Victorian Era; Isabelle Lescent-Giles, of the Sorbonne, on Twentieth Century British Economic History and finally Bertrand Lemonnier, teaching the special course for the competitive examination of the *École normale supérieure*, on the Swinging Sixties in Britain.

Now, contrary to the lucky position of some of our colleagues in English Departments who are able to concentrate their teaching on British History, most of these friends have to teach general history courses, with Britain only one of the geographic areas covered. Traditionally, in France, History Studies are divided into four great periods: Antiquity (until the fall of the Roman Empire), the Middle Ages (until 1453), what we call *la période moderne*, until 1788, and *histoire contemporaine*, since 1789. This periodization dictates recruitment profiles, with chronological eras prevailing over geographic areas, so a medievalist who specializes in Medieval Britain would be expected to teach general courses on the Middle Ages all over Europe.

Specialists of British History come into their own, however, when a British topic forms part of the syllabus of the *agrégation d'histoire*, which constitutes a large part of the teaching at the highest level, since until recently doctoral students did not receive formal lecturing as such. It must be said straight away, however, that this is an uncommon occurrence. Since secondary school teachers will have to teach the history of the world since Antiquity, it is felt by the President of the jury (François Crouzet was one in his time) that only comprehensive topics, often with a comparative dimension, are suitable. A good example is that of the *histoire moderne* topic in the late 1990s: 'La terre et les paysans en France et en Grande-Bretagne aux XVIIe et XVIIIe siècles' (Land and countrymen in Britain and France, seventeenth to eighteenth centuries). In the last 2 years, however, the *histoire contemporaine* topic bore only on British History, admittedly in its

world-wide dimension, with 'Le monde britannique, 1815–1931' (The British World, 1815–1931).

One characteristic of the nation-wide importance given to the *agrégation* competition is that many colleagues have thereby an opportunity to rise to the occasion and write advanced textbooks on their specialism, commissioned by a number of academic publishers. This was the case for 'Le monde britannique, 1815–1931', with many of the names quoted before contributing to collections with essays written specifically to express their informed views on the question. The downside is that these *ad hoc* publications are often accused of stifling or cannibalizing original research. The fact remains, however, that without the prod of the *agrégation* competition far fewer books would appear on British History, or any other historical topic, for that matter.

Another incentive to the dissemination of knowledge of British History was that a fair number of conferences and lectures were specifically organized to cover the field, with again the same specialized colleagues asked to perform their own version of the Tour de France.

There is a great analogy with the situation among '*civilisationnistes*'—those who teach British Studies in English Departments. A lot of our efforts also concentrate on the *agrégation*, a lot of the older '*civilisationnistes*' are the disciples of one person, whether they did their thesis under her supervision or they simply adopted the methodology that she introduced into British Studies. That great researcher and teacher is Monica Charlot (1933–2005), who received her education in Britain. The best concise account of her importance is probably to be found in the *Guardian*, in the obituary written by its former correspondent in Paris, Anne Corbett, on Monday 13 June 2005:

Monica was the key figure in getting *la civilisation britannique*, as it is called in French, over the hurdles which frequently block university change in France. One is the university teacher qualification, the *agrégation*, the other the national research institution (CNRS), for public funding. She worked with French and British academics drawn from different social sciences, and from all over France. They created the Centre de Recherche et d'Études de Civilisation Britannique (CRECIB) to promote research and to develop the academic content, much of it derived from a research programme of British electoral studies. These efforts caught the mood of the time in favour of contemporary studies. In the best cases, original work on the media, immigration, Ireland, religion and the position of women fed back into mainstream disciplines.

Though there are no formal demarcation lines, Anne Corbett put her finger on a *de facto* one: French historians of Britain tend to cover past

centuries while *'civilisationnistes'* tend to concentrate on the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. As she suggests, subjects like 'the media, immigration, and the position of women' are almost exclusively the preserve of *'civilisationnistes'* and we could add the main political parties and their ideological evolution since 1945. In the 1980s, a fair number of *'civilisationnistes'* worked on the Trade Unions, the Welfare State or the educational system since 1945, but these fields of research and commentary seem less popular today, with many younger colleagues observing the progress of the extreme right or the growing Euroscepticism of the British electorate. A continuing theme of interest—largely established by Monica Charlot—remains the Gender Studies dimension of British Studies: many if not most *'civilisationnistes'* are women, which may explain this difference with historians, where the reverse holds true.

The Centre de Recherche et d'Études de Civilisation Britannique—invariably shortened to CRECIB—is alive and well. One of the long-retired veterans reminisced in the *Festschrift* which the CRECIB published after the death of Monica Charlot that she first mooted the proposal during the annual conference of *anglicistes*—that is those who teach in English Departments—at Rennes in 1970. After several seminars devoted exclusively to *civilisation britannique*, held at the Sorbonne, the CRECIB officially drafted its statutes in 1973. This was a capital decision. Nobody would claim that the CRECIB in France has the prestige of the Conferences on British Studies in the United States—but at last there was an academic organization solely devoted to British Studies in France. Soon, another capital step was taken: it was decided to launch a journal, with two issues per year. The first issue of *Revue française de civilisation britannique* appeared in 1980, at a time when British society was in turmoil following Margaret Thatcher's 'revolution', thus conveniently providing potential contributors with ample material for their articles. Initially, it was a journal that published on British Society and British History in the widest sense, including the Empire and Commonwealth. Very soon, however, the *agrégation* also affected editorial policy. The General Editor and Editorial Committee periodically entrusted a Guest Editor with the task of putting together a special issue devoted to the *agrégation* syllabus. Here again, therefore, it can be said that the *agrégation* largely dictates the editorial agenda of the *Revue française de civilisation britannique*. Guest Editors usually gather an Anglo-French team of contributors, with articles in both languages, though contributions in English always tend to be in a minority. Nowadays, the *agrégation* syllabus changes every other year, which means that the theme of one issue in four is in fact chosen by the President of the *agrégation* jury, who in practice always consults senior *'civilisationnistes'* privately before opting for a topic. Three issues in four

are consequently issues whose themes are chosen by the Editorial Committee.

Recent themes have included: in 2006 *Art & Nation* (mostly devoted to eighteenth-century paintings) and the *agrégation* topic for the next 2 years, *La dévolution des pouvoirs à l'Écosse et au pays de Galles* (Scottish and Welsh Devolution); in 2007, *Les usages du temps libre* (leisure activities) and *Le défi multiculturel* (the multicultural challenge); in 2008, *L'histoire sociale en mutation* (the recent historiography on social history) and the *agrégation* topic for the next 2 years, *Aspects du débat sur l'abolition de l'esclavage en Grande-Bretagne, 1787–1840* (the British debate on the abolition of slavery, 1787–1840); in 2009, *Les syndicats britanniques: déclin ou renouveau* (the decline or revival of British Trade Unions) and *La pratique référendaire dans les îles Britanniques* (the usage of referenda in the British Isles); and in 2010, *Aspects de la jeunesse britannique* (aspects of British youth) and a more theoretical issue on Presentations, Representations and Re-presentations of British social and political questions. The first issue for 2011 was on the General Election of 2010—we always have a post-election issue, the autumn issue being devoted to the current *agrégation* topic, 'The Triumph & Decline of the Liberal Party, 1906–1924'. CRECIB also gives a subsidy of 450 euros to conferences in which at least half the total number of speakers are members, which is often the case for conferences on contemporary British Studies. Usually two or three conferences are subsidized in this way every year.

The last great field is that now largely covered by *Sciences Po* people. Outside Paris, two *Instituts d'études politiques* are particularly active in the field of contemporary British Studies: Bordeaux, where a lot of conferences took place in the late 1990s and early 2000s, and Lille, which has always had a number of CRECIB members. But the *Instituts d'études politiques* also have a strong part of their teaching devoted to Economic History and the History of International Relations. One of our younger colleagues, Christophe Le Dréau, who lectures at the Paris *Institut d'études politiques*, has launched a website called 20/50,⁹¹ because it covers European History from 1920 to 1950. He is a specialist of the debate on European Integration in Britain in these years, and the bibliographies and lists of new books which he regularly gives on his site naturally reflect his interest in 'Britain and Europe'. His site also provides a remarkable coverage of conferences, including those from another field, Military History, with frequent conferences at the *École militaire* which directly or indirectly allude to twentieth-century British history, if only because twentieth-century military and diplomatic

⁹¹ There is no website as such, but one can subscribe to the list by sending a message to vingtcinquante@cines.fr.

French history is often indissolubly linked with British history. The two best examples that spring to mind are the conferences on Suez in 2006, in which for instance Sue Onslow of the LSE talked of Julian Amery and that on Foch in 2008 in which Bill Philpott of King's College, London, talked of his reputation in Britain. A climax in these co-operative efforts was of course the celebration of the centenary of the Entente Cordiale in 2004, with many bi-lingual conferences and subsequent books published with the financial backing of the Foreign Office and Quai d'Orsay.⁹² A prominent name must be introduced here, that of Robert Frank, Professor of the History of International Relations at the Sorbonne, who has supervised many theses on Anglo-French relations in the twentieth century. He is always on the advisory board of these conferences at the *École militaire* and publications on Anglo-French relations in the twentieth century.

Meanwhile the old tradition of the *agrégés de philosophie* taking a keen interest in the history of British political ideas is kept alive in a number of Universities and *Instituts d'études politiques*. A remarkable collaborative effort is that of the nation-wide *Centre Bentham*, launched 5 years ago and financed by a direct grant from the Ministry. As the name indicates, it is devoted to the study of Bentham, including his legacy. Thus one of its mainstays is an *agrégé de droit*, now Professor of Law at the Paris *Institut d'études politiques*, Guillaume Tussaud, who works almost exclusively on the mark that Bentham has imprinted and continues to imprint on the thinking behind the contemporary British penal system.

Like the LSE in London, the Paris *Institut d'études politiques* federates a wide range of disciplines, many of which have a link with contemporary Britain. Their latest initiative is the launching of a website with an electronic journal entitled *Histoire@Politique: Politique, culture, société*. Needless to say, they published a theme issue devoted to 'Le Monde britannique' in 2010—one of the contributors was Robert Boyce of the LSE ('The Significance of 1931 for British Imperial and International History') and most were members of the CRECIB, showing the constant blurring of the lines between historians (*agrégés d'histoire*) and 'civilisationnistes' (*agrégés d'anglais*) when it comes to discussing recent British history. This cross-fertilization is in fact encouraged by the current job market in French Universities, in which there are reasonable opportunities for recruitment in English Departments, and almost none in History Departments. So any young *agrégé d'histoire* who did his PhD on British History has a fair chance of finding a job in an English Department—and many in fact do so. Our

⁹² The Royal Historical Society Bibliography gives full details of over eighty books and articles published in 2004 in Britain and France if one enters 'Entente Cordiale' in the 'title' window. By comparison, none had appeared in 2001–03, and only one in 2000.

American colleagues in their Roundtable make the point that very few American specialists of contemporary Britain have the possibility of concentrating their teaching around their specialism. But a French *agrégé d'histoire* in an English Department would be able to give all his teaching on British History, most of it contemporary British History which paradoxically would not be the case, far from it, in a History Department.

As in Britain, there seems to be a shift away from 'traditional' themes of social and economic history like the Trade Unions. It appears instead that there has been a growing fascination for 'Multicultural Britain'—especially among colleagues with a '*Sciences Po*' training, who tend to adopt a comparative approach. Behind this, it is arguable that one can sense the age-old 'lessons of history' syndrome—the idea being that recent experience/recent history in Britain may provide models or warnings across the Channel. The colleagues from all three backgrounds sharing a strong training in 'Old' Labour history, there has also been a lot of attention devoted to 'New Labour', especially Tony Blair's social policy (notably the phrase 'tough on crime and tough on the causes of crime') and electoral tactics (once again often with a definite fascination for the 'British model' at a time when the French Socialist Party was losing election after election, at least at national level).

In other words, it is clear that what has united French scholars working on Contemporary British History is their fascination vis-à-vis what they perceived (since, say, 1979—possibly with the exception of the 'Major years') as a society in accelerating transformation—for better or for worse, depending on their own initial preconceptions, which can of course no more be erased in France than they can in the UK.

We may perhaps conclude by paraphrasing Susan Pedersen's own conclusion in the Roundtable, when she says 'I wish to preserve the study of British history (including its domestic history) in the USA.'⁹³ Simply substitute *France* for *the USA*. For this, I would argue that much depends on the perpetuation of the *agrégation*—whether in History or in English—because as we saw it acts as a constant incentive to keep abreast with what is going on across the Channel. Alas, this Napoleonic institution is now threatened. This is perhaps the only cloud in what could otherwise be described without undue complacency as the fairly satisfactory situation of contemporary British Studies in France.

⁹³ Mayhall, 'Roundtable', 393.

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The Importance of Being Foreign

A playlet in one act on British history in France

British studies in France is characterized by a weak institutionalization and a lack of implantation in departments of history in French universities. Even if there are some historians working on Britain in history departments in France, they remain few and far between. Most historians of Britain and Ireland work in departments of English and Anglophone studies where they teach 'British civilization' in the pluri-disciplinary context of area-based cultural studies, but they remain isolated from their fellow historians. This situation began to change towards the end of the 1990s, but in ways that have not yet altered the institutional landscape in any decisive manner. For this reason it is difficult to write an essay on British studies in a single voice, for the changes over the past 10–15 years have anchored British history in a more or less precarious fashion in a number of locations outside programmes in English and Anglophone studies. For these reasons we have chosen a format that may seem surprising—that of a dialogue among four characters who, as you will see, are ideal types: the fresh-faced student Candide; the Professor of French History whose tropism towards the hexagon (as France is sometimes known) exaggerates only slightly what is, alas, a national scandal; the big star in British history who's travelled from the USA to give a keynote address and cannot understand why things are so complicated in France; and the Professor of British Civilization whose lack of methodological rigour invites the contempt of her reluctant colleague in French history. Nonetheless, it is she (of the four) who is most aware of the changes that are occurring in the world of British studies. Our ideal types render explicit the divisions and tensions provoked by recent movements in the field of British studies and British history. The caricatured postures they sometimes adopt also allow us to unpack the complex institutional context in which British history is struggling to establish itself in France today.

Characters:

- (1) Candide, the eternal optimist (post-graduate student in search of a thesis topic)

- (2) Professor Kalnikoff, British Professor of British History (Department of History). She's a big star who left Britain 20 years ago to take up a highly prestigious job in the USA.
- (3) Professor Garnier, French Professor of French History (Department of History).
- (4) Professor Lesieur, French Professor of British Civilization (Department of Anglophone studies).

Location:

Amphithéâtre Richelieu in the Sorbonne, Paris.

End of the first day of an international symposium on 'The State of British Studies in France'. Professor Kalnikoff has just given her keynote address on 'Globalisation, environment and gender in a post-post-modern world' to an eager public and everyone is headed, imaginations ablaze, for the drinks table.

Clutching to his chest a sober tumbler of *jus de tomate*, the hopeful young doctoral student, Candide, sidles nervously up to Professor Garnier.

Candide:

Hello Professor Garnier, you probably don't remember me, I took your *agrégation* classes last year on the British world, which I found utterly fascinating.⁹⁴ Indeed, I've decided I would very much like to work on British history. Initially, I wanted to work on images of the king in the court of Louis XIV, but after following your classes and hearing this remarkable keynote, I've realized that what I really want is to work on Britain; that's clearly where the cutting edge in history is today.

Professor Garnier:

Of course I remember you! But you should know that I'm not really an expert on the British world. It's one thing to do a *cours d'agrégation*, it's another to supervise student research. As you know my real speciality is Golden Age Spain, which of course means that I read a great deal about the British world as well, but it's not my real area of interest. You'd have to go to a department of Anglophone studies, but I very much doubt your English is good enough for them. They're very picky about your syntax and your accent – indeed, they're much more interested in such things than in the actual content of what you say.

⁹⁴ The *agrégation* is a series of highly competitive national examinations, organized by discipline, in which candidates for positions in secondary schools or universities compete for a limited number of places each year.

In truth, I can't think of anyone in a History department in France who could really supervise your work, unless you wanted to do comparative history. Really your best bet would be to go abroad. The best specialists are in the USA, Britain and the Commonwealth/ex-colonies. But unfortunately we have no fellowships to send you there. American universities have long been expensive and British universities are now following suit. That neo-liberal turn, you see. Their whole university system is being corrupted by money, sold off to the banks. They have no concept of higher education as a public service. We on the other hand have a strong sense of public service, which we've defended in the streets; not very successfully I admit, but we shall overcome, as they say. *La lutte continue!*

Candide:

But, Professor Garnier, I'm ambitious. I want to do something new and France just seems, well, provincial to me. The *Annales* is no longer cutting edge. If you think about the current areas of historical research—race, abolitionism, colonialism, gender, subjects that have real relevance today—France is no longer setting the terms of the debate. Indeed, French historiography seems more and more isolated to me. It seems to have turned its back on the great questions produced by British and American historiography. The postcolonial turn is not taken seriously, the history of gender hardly more so, and this despite the creation of the Institut Emilie du Châtelet (IEC) in gender studies. They give out five to ten doctoral and post-doctoral allocations each year, which is great, but I don't see how the Institute has really changed the conversation, nor the culture inside French history departments. Even the contributions of Skinner and Pocock to reshaping intellectual history have found no echo here, though some of their most important work has in fact been translated.⁹⁵ And of course France has no equivalent to Britain's programmes in imperial studies. If you looked at a list of programmes in history and social sciences on offer in France you might be forgiven for thinking we'd never even had an empire!

Professor Garnier:

Now hold on a minute Candide I do think you're getting carried away here. Things are simply not so bleak in France as you portray them, especially as far as gender studies is concerned. The IEC's annual seminar series draws plenty of serious scholars each year, and the Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique (CNRS) has just organized a census of all researchers working on gender and/or women's studies.

⁹⁵ The demand for Pocock and Skinner has come mostly from philosophers and political scientists.

Besides which it's not clear to me it would be a good thing to go any further; even though I'm very sympathetic to feminism, as you know, I'm convinced that following the American and British example of free-standing gender studies programmes would simply balkanize history and the social sciences even further. But I digress. The issues surrounding British history in France are entirely different. And in this matter you simply must be realistic Candide. Even if you do find a job—and you might well do so, especially if you consent to work in a programme in language and civilization—how many people in France will actually read what you have to say? And it's not like the British will be clamouring to read you either, they've got their own ground covered. There's no way you can compete with the British on their own turf. If you're really so keen to go abroad, why not go to Italy? Think of the Ecole Française de Rome on the Piazza Navone, now this is an institution in the grand tradition: Braudel, les Annales, the dream of une histoire totale. This is so much more interesting. Really, what good can this cross-channel obsession bring you? The heart of history is located in the Mediterranean basin. Italy, Greece, North Africa, Alexandria, even Spain, and Portugal, why not? But England? Scotland? Ireland? What has that got to do with history?

Candide:

Oh Professor, it has everything to do with history! Think of the British Empire, one quarter of the world's surface, and 'regions Caesar never knew'⁹⁶ The policeman of the world, the biggest political organization in history! The entire Indian subcontinent speaks English! And what about Hong Kong? Australia? Canada? Or for that matter the original thirteen colonies of the USA? In order to grasp such a complex socio-political system, you need much more sophisticated tools than those developed by the Annales, besides which I've always felt it was crucial to integrate gender history into broader historical narratives. That'll never happen in France despite the best efforts of the IEC. But in the Anglophone world, they're already doing it! Isn't that what Prof. Kalnikoff was explaining to us today?

And I know I probably won't get a scholarship but I have a sister who lives in London. She works in a bank. I could go stay with her and work in the archives and meet British academics at the Institute of Historical Research (IHR) in London. That way perhaps I could eventually get a job in Britain, and later on maybe even in the USA. You know, they aren't so stuffy in 'les pays anglo-saxons'.

⁹⁶ W. Cowper, *Boadicea, an Ode* (1782 [London, 1905]).

Professor Kalnikoff wanders over and lends a curious ear:

Les Anglo-Saxons? Who's that? Surely not me. My grand-parents were Russian immigrants. But seriously, I'm surprised at your pessimism Professor Garnier. It seems to me that things are really changing here. I got a lot of interesting feedback this afternoon from young French scholars, doctoral students, and young professors, and I find their perspectives quite different from those heard in the USA and Britain. It's really quite stimulating. And your young colleagues from the departments of Anglophone studies speak the language so beautifully even if I don't always understand what it is they're trying to say. Is it really true that historians here work on nothing but France? Someone just told me that history departments in French universities rarely appoint scholars in areas outside of France. How then do you manage to teach the history of Germany or of Spain, to say nothing of China or Latin America? Is it really true that these histories are only taught in language departments?

Professor Lesieur, who has been hovering on the edges of this conversation for several minutes now, steps in to clarify things:

But Madame le Professeur, language has to come first. One cannot understand a country's history without first developing a strong cultural background. What do you know about England if you haven't read Shakespeare, Milton, John Donne, Jane Austen? To specialize in a foreign country means that you need to understand its culture generally before narrowing down your research to a specific topic. As French academics, we must first steep ourselves in British culture. It is simply not possible to go straight into the British archive, the students must first understand the larger cultural context. And this can only be done by studying the language and culture... Geoffrey Chaucer, Emily Brontë, George Eliot, Edmund Gosse, Tom Stoppard!

You know, there was a time when doing a PhD in 'British civilisation' meant working on contemporary issues from press archives. Have you ever read my colleague Michel Espagne, who is Professor of German at the Ecole Normale Supérieure? His book on the origins of area studies has described the emergence of the '*science de l'étranger*' in that field. He has conclusively demonstrated that this dates back to the late nineteenth-century institutionalization of foreign studies in French universities. But now things are different, now we have doctoral students who do proper historical research, and are fully conversant with current British historiography. And this is only the beginning. For British history is taking off in Anglophone studies departments. I strongly encourage you to apply to my department, Candide. That way I can support you in getting a scholarship so that you can spend a year at the Maison Française d'Oxford (MFO). (Ecole

Française de Rome be damned!, mocked Lesieur, half-jokingly under her breath)

Professor Garnier:

Now hang on just a minute Madame le Professeur, the MFO simply doesn't fulfil the same function as the *École Française de Rome* or the *Casa Velasquez*, or even the *École d'Athènes*, besieged as it is these days. For our Mediterranean antennae are fully integrated into the surrounding culture and have strong ties to the local universities. The MFO is far more cut off from the surrounding culture, perhaps in part because its tenants tend to be excellent specialists of French history rather than students of Great Britain. Beside which it has that hideous giscardo-pompidolien façade...

Professor Lesieur:

Oh come off it, cher collègue, the MFO has a real potential once you can get over the décor. But it's completely under-utilized! There are great scholars there, they put on terrific conferences and colloquia. But no one seems to know about it!

Professor Garnier:

But you and I both know that British studies will never take off in France on the sole basis of an Oxonian imitation of the *École Française de Rome*. It's really very curious, you know. For there is a tradition of great specialists of Britain in France: think of Élie Halévy, François Bédarida or François Crouzet, to say nothing of Taine. Whatever happened since the era of the great liberal anglophiles? I'm not really sure, *Candide*, but one thing is certain: until there is a chair in British history at the Sorbonne or a section of the CNRS devoted to British history, you will never be able to do a proper thesis in British history in France.⁹⁷

Professor Kalnikoff:

I just don't understand why you're being so pessimistic! You claim that British history has no institutional anchoring in France, but over the past 5 years, I've been invited to speak at various moments in three different seminars, all of which are specifically British history seminars, co-organized by departments of history and Anglophone civilization: one jointly organized by the *Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales* (EHESS) and the University of Paris Diderot; one jointly organized by the Sorbonne and by the University of Paris VIII, and one

⁹⁷ CNRS is a national research network created in 1939. A large percentage of French researchers are in fact employed by the CNRS and not by any university or research institute, which further contributes to the fragmentation and confusion.

at Sciences Po. Each of these seminars has a large student following and the numbers are clearly growing from one year to the next. There is a new journal on line, *Recherches Britanniques*. Moreover, I just evaluated a project to create an international and interdisciplinary research group, based in Paris, on the British world. I think it was actually based in that intriguing CNRS network you were talking about. This research group will bring together all the different British history seminars in Paris in hopes of creating a larger synergy. And this is of great interest to those of us working in Britain and America for as I said before, French scholars bring a unique perspective to the study of the British world. During this conference, I've heard excellent papers on cultural transfers, the history of science, labour history, intellectual history, the 'New political history', etc. . . . It's a real breath of fresh air for British history, which must constantly fight the temptation of insularity. So you see, Professor Garnier, I simply do not agree with you when you say that French specialists of the British world will never be read outside France. On the contrary, it is precisely the freshness of perspective that we find so enriching and exciting.

In the end, Candide signed on with Professor Lesieur in order to get the necessary scholarship to the MFO at Oxford. He was, of course, duly horrified by the architecture, but found the contact with colleagues most stimulating. And the proximity to archives encouraged him to great flights of originality; his thesis on images of Henry VIII at his court will be published soon by Cambridge University Press.

Conclusion

Despite the bright future that we predict for Candide as he sets out on his cross-Channel, journey, one could perfectly reasonably read the various tensions that cross-cut our fictional dialogue as portending an uncertain future, at best, for British studies and British history in France. But we think that this would be entirely too pessimistic a reading of the tea leaves, one that fails to take into account what look to be increasing fruitful exchanges between departments of history and those of Anglophone studies. One sign of the increasing density of such interchange is the rising number of seminars and programmes jointly organized by history and Anglophone studies departments as well as the number of students circulating between those departments. This shift is being facilitated by the rapid digitalization of a broad range of archival sources that students can identify and consult on line.

At the same time, departments of history are slowly inching away from their Franco-French, (or at best Mediterranean-wide) tropism. As a result, wider histories of Europe and beyond, including those of the

British world, are gradually finding their way onto the map. A process of mutual 'permeation' between Anglophone studies and History departments is thus transforming Anglophone studies via the implantation of trained historians, anthropologists, and sociologists within such departments. At the same time the wider resonance of British studies (along with other area studies) in departments of History in France are contributing to the gradual 'de-provincialization' of those departments through serious engagement with a broad range of historiographical 'others'.

These trends owe a great deal to something that the pessimists too often ignore, and that is the increasingly significant impact that international collaborations, often underwritten by European-wide, funding, are having on the shape of research within the national boundaries of Member States. Indeed, one might predict that the growing scarcity of such funding at the national level will lead scholars to further emphasize international and collaborative projects that place the emphasis on comparison, cultural transfers and the construction of new, transnational narratives. A veritable 'denationalization' of history is thus occurring at the level of historical research. At the same time, the vastly increased mobility of students, propelled by Erasmus and Marie Curie exchange programmes, is re-shaping student demand in such a way as to reinforce this 'denationalization' of historical practice. If starting from a programme in Anglophone studies was the only realistic way to envision Candide's progress towards earning a PhD in British history in the France of 2011, the ease with which he was then able to translate that training into a first-rate job in Britain is no less realistically grounded in the rapidly increasing capacity of Anglophone studies departments to deliver first-rate training to students of British history. But Candide's career trajectory also reflects the ever-widening reach of academic exchanges between scholars (and increasingly, doctoral students as well) across the increasingly notional divide of the British Channel. If the current shape of history departments in France makes it unlikely that British history will rapidly and easily take root in such departments over the next 10 years, the wider European context, in conjunction with the evolution of both history and Anglophone studies departments in France, are quite probably carving out new roads via which young scholars eager to work on the British world will find novel ways to pursue their chosen path.