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Like another Chouannerie

What was Whig history?

October 16, 2019 by Nulle Terre Sans Seigneur

The “Whig interpretation of history” is all too often framed as the view that history follows a progressive arc from backwardness and superstition to liberty and equality, and hence with a set end goal that allows one to differentiate between a “right” and “wrong” side of history. Although this is doubtlessly a common viewpoint, it does a disservice to actually understanding the 19th-century Whig historiographic tradition that Herbert Butterfield was reacting to in his famous 1931 essay (which he later repudiated, funnily enough) on *The Whig Interpretation of History*. Whig history was patriotic, nationalist, upheld a vision of parliamentary sovereignty and the common law tradition, and extolled the virtues of a primitive Anglo-Saxon liberty that either the Norman yoke crushed and then had to be revived (Macaulay’s view), or that it was a character trait so strong not even the Normans could extinguish (E.A. Freeman’s view, also of Bishop Stubbs). Hence, “What *was* Whig history” because I maintain it was a past-tense school of thought that no longer genuinely exists, and indeed many of its tropes were adopted by latter-day right-wing nationalists who didn’t even recognize its original pedigree and assumed that they were actually anti-Whiggish tropes, since the march of progress continued on with multiculturalism. Books like Michael H. Hart’s *Understanding Human History* and Arthur Kemp’s *March of the Titans: A History of the White Race* — both attempts at writing a racially aware history targeted at white advocates — are very much Whiggish in the original sense. Above all though, Whig history is specifically English, which is why it is Whig history and not “progressive history” more generally.

What Butterfield dreaded the most about “Whig history” wasn’t even the idea of progress, but rather its anachronism and presentism. Indeed, Butterfield’s essay is often brought up as a warning against “present-centric history” which was his main concern. A secondary one was the tendency to overdramatize and treat history like a stage play with heroic protagonists and menacing antagonists. In place of the conflict of future against past, Butterfield instead suggested “a clash of wills out of which there emerges something that probably no man ever willed.” The Whig view was not limited to people with Whig sympathies, but a more general fallacy of pathos:

The whig interpretation of history is not merely the property of whigs and it is much more subtle than mental bias; it lies a trick of organization, an unexamined habit of mind that any historian may fall into. It might be called the historian's "pathetic fallacy". It is the result of the practice of abstracting things from their historical context and judging them apart from their context and judging them apart from their context – estimating them and organizing the historical story by a system of direct reference to the present.

Butterfield also acknowledged the limitations of his own case, in that asking people to write history for its own sake without reference to the present is an unrealistic and stifling demand. Most of the time people are interested in history precisely due to the promise of illuminating the present, and in that quest there are inevitable dangers of overestimating the modernity of what was long ago. Which is why Butterfield made his peace with Whig history.

(https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Herbert_Butterfield#The_Whig_Interpretation_of_History), saying that "it had a wonderful effect on English politics... in every Englishman there is hidden something of a whig that seems to tug at the heart-strings."

Some practical examples of what Whig historiography looked like are in order.

For instance, this is how Bishop Stubbs describes the outcome of the Magna Carta in his *Constitutional History of England* (1874), vol.1:

Even within the reign of John it became clear that the release of the barons from their connexion with the Continent was all that was wanted to make them Englishmen. With the last vestiges of the Norman inheritance vanished the last idea of making England a feudal kingdom. The Great Charter was won by men who were maintaining, **not the cause of a class, as had been the case in every civil war since 1070, but the cause of a nation**: From the year 1203 the king stood before the English people face to face; over them alone he could tyrannise, none but they were amenable to his exactions: and he stood alone against them, no longer the lord of half of France, or of a host of strong knights who would share with him the spoils of England. The royal power and the royal dignity that had towered so haughtily over the land in the last two reigns was subjected to a searching examination : the quarrels of the next few years revealed all the weakness of the cause which had lately been so strong, and the strength of the nation which had so lately been well contented to sustain the strength of its oppressor.

Thomas Babington Macaulay, who is widely regarded as *the* archetypal Whig historian, said this of the English national character in the preface to the *History of England from the Accession of James II* — it's a widely quoted excerpt for a good reason:

The sources of the noblest rivers which spread fertility over continents, and bear richly laden fleets to the sea, are to be sought in wild and barren mountain tracts, incorrectly laid down in maps, and rarely explored by travellers. To such a tract the history of our country during the thirteenth century may not unaptly be compared. Sterile and obscure as is that portion of our annals, it is there that we must seek for the origin of our freedom, our prosperity, and our glory. Then it was that the great English people was formed, that the national character began to exhibit those peculiarities which it has ever since retained, and that our fathers became emphatically islanders, islanders not merely in geographical position, but in their politics, their feelings, and their manners. Then first appeared with distinctness that constitution which has ever since, through all changes, preserved its identity; that constitution of which all the other free constitutions in the world are copies, and which, in spite of some defects, deserves to be regarded as the best under which any great society has ever yet existed during many ages. Then it was that the House of Commons, the archetype of all the representative assemblies which now meet, either in the old or in the new world, held its first sittings. Then it was that the common law rose to the dignity of a science, and rapidly became a not unworthy rival of the imperial jurisprudence. Then it was that the courage of those sailors who manned the rude barks of the Cinque Ports first made the flag of England terrible on the seas. Then it was that the most ancient colleges which still exist at both the great national seats of learning were founded. Then was formed that language, less musical indeed than the languages of the south, but in force, in richness, in aptitude for all the highest purposes of the poet, the philosopher, and the orator, inferior to the tongue of Greece alone. Then too appeared the first faint dawn of that noble literature, the most splendid and the most durable of the many glories of England.

Edward Augustus Freeman, in *The Growth of the English Constitution from the Earliest Times* (1873), regards the English constitution to have been perfected in the 13th century: "Thus we may say that, in the time of Edward the First, the English Constitution definitely put on the same essential form which it has kept ever since. The germs of King, Lords, and Commons we had brought with us from our older home eight hundred years before. But, from King Edward's days onwards, we have King, Lords, and Commons themselves, in nearly the same outward shape, with nearly the same strictly legal powers, which they still keep. All the great principles of English freedom were already firmly established. There is indeed a wide difference between the political condition of England under Edward the First and the political condition of England in our own day. But the difference lies far more in the practical working of the Constitution than in its outward form."

More forcefully again, in Chapter III:

The movements and revolutions of former times, as I have before said, seldom sought any acknowledged change in the Law, but rather its more distinct enactment, its more careful and honest administration. This was the general character of all the great steps in our political history, from the day when William of Normandy renewed the Laws of Edward to the day when William of Orange gave his royal assent to the Bill of Rights. But, though each step in our progress took the shape, not of the creation of a new right, but of the firmer establishment of an old one, yet each step was marked by some formal and public act which stands enrolled among the landmarks of our progress.

Indeed at one point he proclaims that "the growth of English institutions has thus gone on almost in obedience to a natural law." Any changes were really rehashes: "at once conservative and progressive — conservative because progressive, progressive because conservative." This is despite the fact that he openly admits that "No ancient record gives us any clear or formal account of the constitution of [the Witan]," i.e. of Anglo-Saxon assemblies. He goes so far as to say that England never even had a true

nobility and that the peerage is just some meritocratic order without special political privilege, but at the same time he attributes Henry VIII's "despotism" to the Lords being weakened after Townton and Barnet, i.e. the great battles of the Wars of the Roses.

Henry Hallam, in his own *Constitutional History of England: from the accession of Henry VII to the death of George II* (1850), affirms that (<https://archive.org/details/constitutionalhi01halluoft/page/520>), the Long Parliament didn't really bring in any major changes to the English constitution from time immemorial, but merely restored it to balance from Charles I's "usurpations," i.e. the ship-money acts and Archbishop Laud's attempts at religious uniformity among other things.

Albert Venn Dicey, the foremost legal theoretician of parliamentary sovereignty, expresses similar sentiments in *Lectures on the Relation between Law and Public Opinion in England during the Nineteenth Century* (1917):

The Whig Revolution of 1689, and even the Puritan Rebellion of 1642, were from one point of view conservative movements. Their aim was to preserve the law of the land from either innovations or improvements introduced by arbitrary power. Coke was the legal hero of the Puritans, and Coke was the stiffest of formalists. A devotee of the common law, he detested the reforming ideas of Bacon fully as much as the despotic arbitrariness of James. The Revolution of 1689 was conducted under the guidance of Whig lawyers; they unwittingly laid the foundations of a modern constitutional monarchy, but their intention was to reaffirm in the Bill of Rights and in the Act of Settlement, not the innate rights of man but the inherited and immemorial liberties of Englishmen. This is the basis of truth which underlies the paradox exaggerated by the rhetoric of Burke that the statesmen who carried through the Revolution of 1689 were not revolutionists. They assuredly believed that the liberties of Englishmen were bound up with the maintenance of the common law.

Finally, I will quote a Frenchman, Francois Guizot, who was very much Whig-adjacent, telling a story of particular communities and estates abandoning their particular interests in order to become a general public, a nation undivided by class boundaries, in his *General History of Civilization in Europe* (1828):

We have discovered among the ruins of the Roman empire, all the essential elements of modern Europe; we have seen them separate themselves and expand, each on its own account, and independently of the others. We have observed, during the first historical period, the constant tendency of these elements to separation, and to a local and special existence. But scarcely has this object appeared to be attained; scarcely have feudalism, municipal communities, and the clergy, each taken their distinct place and form, when we have seen them tend to approximate, unite, and form themselves into a general social system, into a national body, a national government. To arrive at this result, the various countries of Europe had recourse to all the different systems which existed among them: they endeavored to lay the foundations of social union, and of political and moral obligations, on the principles of theocracy, of aristocracy, of democracy, and of monarchy. Hitherto all these attempts have failed. No particular system has been able to take possession of society, and to secure it, by its sway, a destiny truly public. We have traced the cause of this failure to the absence of general interests and general ideas; we have found that everything, as yet, was too special, too individual, too local; that a long and powerful process of centralization was necessary, in order that society might become at once extensive, solid, and regular, the object which it necessarily seeks to attain.

What one gleans from these passages and the sentiments they express, is that the Whig view though in a sense progressive is also assuredly *primordialist*, fusing both. Many Whig historians favored the idea that the English constitution was shaped not by revolution but by a very long continuity from an

independence-loving Teutonic germ as described by the likes of Tacitus, ostensibly confirmed in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicles and from then on not created but only elucidated in greater depth. Despots and tyrants are only a transitory phenomenon who are quickly and solidly rebuked by the guardians of true Englishness in the Lords and Commons. Although the story they tell is anachronistic, its emphasis on a form of predestination and election was indispensable to a reinvigoration of English patriotism and keenly aware of national and ethnic distinction. Whig historians were generally not universalists in the least, they gloried in their own people's exceptionalism.

If Kant defined Enlightenment as "man's emergence from his self-incurred immaturity," then Whig history was the English nation's emergence from self-incurred immaturity.

The view of ancient English constitutionalism has a long pedigree of course, with one of the most notable examples being the English barrister William Petyt, Esq. and his pamphlet *The antient right of the Commons of England asserted* (<http://tei.it.ox.ac.uk/tcp/Texts-HTML/free/A54/A54633.html>) (1680) where he embarked in the sloppy endeavor of mining as many charters as he could for references to words like "concilium" and extrapolating a grand narrative of undisturbed parliamentary government. In 1681, the royalist attorney Robert Brady would tear apart his whole case (<https://books.google.com/books?id=tZCAQAAMAAJ>), in what remains a very solid work of history over 330 years later, which of course in no way contributed to winning the war of "hearts and minds" so-called.

All this being said, we must give the Whig his due. Because there is yet another anachronistic and hence Whiggish temptation that their enemies do engage in, namely the attempt to derive a coherent left-right spectrum from the English Civil War and the subsequent deposition of the Stuarts after the Restoration of 1660. To make the Whig a leftist and the Tory a rightist. That is to say, to take the Whig's own narrative but invert the value judgments he inscribes.

The Whig was not a parliamentary sovereigntist and the Tory was not a royal absolutist. Both of these doctrines were quite rare in Stuart England. The England of the Stuarts was also a Reformed England where the Elizabethan religious settlement was in place, where the Act of Supremacy made the monarch the Supreme Governor of the Church with a prerogative of investiture, where the submission of the clergy renounced the creation of canons without royal assent and vested many ecclesiastical court powers into the Court of Chancery and the Court of High Commission, where the Act of Uniformity mandated at least occasional conformity to Church of England services done under the Book of Common Prayer. Both Whigs and Tories for the most part shared a common consensus against "popery and presbytery," especially against popery. Both were part of a common law culture, with the common law itself being a creation of the royal prerogative and working in the king's name. Much of sovereign lawmaking power had been lawfully delegated to the Chancery, with the limitations on the royal prerogative being debated in depth since at least the 1490s when Henry VII's attempt to revive various feudal wardships and reliefs as extraordinary revenues of the Crown led to much acrimony when he appointed such infamously meddling financial agents as Sir Edmund Dudley and Sir Richard Empson. Sir John Fortescue, in *De laudibus legum Angliæ* written in the 1460s, advised the king that "It will not be convenient, by severe study, or at the expence of the best of your time, to pry into nice points of law; such like matters may be left to your judges and counsel, who in England are called Sergeants at Law, and others well skilled in it, whom in common speech we call Apprentices of the law" — in other words, though law emanates from the king's justice, the specific application of it is due to his lawyers. This quite naturally gave common lawyers a good bit of leeway. King James I years later would also say that "for though the common law be a mystery and skill best known unto yourselves, yet if your interpretation be such, as other men which have logic and common sense understand not the reason, I will never trust such an interpretation." A mystery and skill it was — some of the earliest explicit limitations on the royal

prerogative included the case of George Ferrers in 1543, which granted immunity of members of the Commons from civil arrest while the House was in session. But the common law was also a good aid to the king's own aims, a notable instance being that of Calvin's Case in 1608 which naturalized Scotsmen born after the Union of the Crowns in 1603, thus establishing the modern doctrine of birthright citizenship in the process. As a descendant of a Norman Scots dynasty, King James was quite pleased even as many representatives of the Commons were not.

In general, as Alan Cromartie pointed out in a [1999 essay \(https://www.jstor.org/stable/651170\)](https://www.jstor.org/stable/651170), on the subject, the debate over the royal prerogative among common lawyers had three sides: "1. that the king had a discretionary power to disregard the positive law of the land (all parties were agreed of course, that monarchs must obey the law of nature); 2. that positive law was binding on the king and all-encompassing; the king's discretionary powers had therefore to be construed as legal powers; 3. that positive law was binding on the king, but there were government activities that it did not encompass; in certain extra-legal spheres of action the monarch had non-legal discretionary power." By 1611 with the Case of Proclamations, Sir Edward Coke had largely secured the victory of the position that "the King hath no prerogative but that which the law of the land allows him."

Hence why in 1678, a High Tory like John Nalson (1638-1686) would place the counsel and court-like features of English Parliament as an essential institution of the monarchy though otherwise asserting that the royal power is self-sufficient (from Ch V of [The Common Interest of King & People \(https://books.google.com/books?id=zmAKAQAAAMAJ\)](https://books.google.com/books?id=zmAKAQAAAMAJ)):

From this bounty of our Princes, and for the advantage of Counsel, and that all Estates and Conditions who are under the obedience of this happy Monarchy may receive such ample satisfaction as they can rationally desire, the King is pleased, according as in his wisdom he judges it expedient, and the necessity of publick affairs requires it, to call together Nobility of the Realm, the great Lords both Spiritual and Temporal (who are two of the three Estates of Parliament) to sit in common consultation, and to advise about the weighty and difficult affairs of State. And by their prudent deliberations and suffrages to discharge that duty they owe to their Prince and the Publick, by preparing wholsom Bills in order to their passing into Laws by the Royal Assent, for the good, safety and prosperity of the Community: As also to remonstrate to Royal Authority what former Laws are by experience found to be useless or inconvenient, in order to their alteration, repealment or abrogation.

That the parliament sits at the king's pleasure no Tory denied, but that a good king convened parliaments frequently enough as warranted was an old maxim, as was the right of Commons to impeach or order the expulsion of wicked counselors before proceeding with further counsel of their own. Both Edward II and Richard II were deposed in earlier English history for this latter reason among others.

King James held Parliament in high esteem as the highest court and counsel of the land in his *Basilikon Doron*, though he suggested infrequent conventions owing to the virtue of legal simplicity: "For as a Parliament is the honourablest and highest iudgement in the land (as being the Kings head Court) if it be well vsed, which is by making of good Lawes in it; so is it the in-iustest Iudgement-seat that may be, being abused to mens particulars: irreuocable decreits against particular parties, being giuen therein vnder colour of generall Lawes, and oft-times th'Estates not knowing themselues whom thereby they hurt. And therefore hold no Parliaments, but for necessitie of new Lawes, which would be but seldome: for few Lawes and well put in execution, are best in a well ruled common-weale."

Sir William Blackstone himself regarded (<https://www.jstor.org/stable/2639147>), the Cavalier Parliament under Charles II as an apogee in the development of the English constitution.

MPs in the Restoration era (<https://www.jstor.org/stable/3679013>), with less wealth frequently had a localist and 'mittelstand' view that gave them a certain skepticism of court patronage and a sense that they were a 'country party' serving more general interests; whereas others chased after sinecures. Parliamentary service was of course unpaid, and the travel and lodging expenses could be quite significant. The real meat was in gaining posts like justice of the peace:

Both Sir Richard Temple and Sir Edward Dering emerged from the civil wars heavily in debt: office was a financial necessity. Both became commissioners of the customs but in very different ways. Temple persistently criticized the king's administration, hoping to be bought off with a place. Having gained office (ironically, after abandoning his opposition) he became the most reliable of 'court' spokesmen. Dering continued to support ministerial policy even after losing office in 1673 and was rewarded for his loyalty in 1676. Such examples may suggest that most MPs were really after office. Most of those who spoke regularly probably were, but among the large majority who spoke rarely or never were many self-sufficient squires who had few ambitions outside their locality and valued their seats for the prestige they conferred; they might also solicit local patronage to enhance their local standing.

One such was Sir John Reresby. He became governor of Bridlington and later of York, but refused the offer of a share in the Yorkshire excise farm because 'no man was beloved in his country' who farmed such revenues. He was convinced that 'a middle estate was ever the best, not so low as to be trodden upon, nor so high as to be in danger to be shaken with the blast of envy, not so lazy as not to endeavour to be distinguished in some measure from men of the same rank by one's own industry, nor so ambitious as to sacrifice the ease of this life and the hopes of happiness in the next to climb over the heads of others to a greatness of uncertain continuance.'

Now there is one point about religion in England that needs to be stressed quite heavily, because this is something people routinely get wrong and it leads to serious misjudgment of the situation in the 17th century. Namely: mainline Church of England orthodoxy was Calvinist until the rise of Archbishop Laud and the attempt to impose Arminianism in the 1620s. The mainline Anglicans and the nonconformists and dissenters had a Calvinist soteriology in common, though they did disagree on ecclesiology, rites and ceremonies — but Calvinism itself was *not* a distinguishing factor in being a Puritan. The seminal work on this remains Nicholas Tyacke's "Puritanism, Arminianism and Counter-Revolution" (1973) which ought to be cited in detail:

At the beginning of the seventeenth century, a majority of the clergy from the Archbishop of Canterbury downwards were Calvinists in doctrine, and the same was probably true of the more educated laity. So Puritanism in this Calvinist sense was not then seen as a political threat. Only when predestinarian teaching came to be outlawed by the leaders of the established church, as was the case under Archbishop William Laud, would its exponents find themselves in opposition to the government. Any doubts that the Church of England was doctrinally Calvinist, before Laud took control, can be resolved by reading the extant doctoral theses in divinity maintained at Oxford University from the 1580s to the 1620s. There, year after year predestinarian teaching was formally endorsed, and its opposite denied. The following are a representative selection of such theses, translated from the original Latin and listed in chronological order: 'No one who is elect can perish' (1582); 'God of his own volition will repudiate some people' (1596); 'According to the eternal predestination of God some are ordained to life and others to death' (1597); 'Man's spiritual will is not itself capable of achieving true good' (1602); 'The saints cannot fall from grace' (1608); 'Is grace sufficient for salvation granted to all men? No.' (1612); 'Does man's will only play a passive role in his initial conversion? Yes' (1618); 'Is faith and the righteousness of faith the exclusive property of the elect? Yes' (1619); and 'Has original sin utterly extinguished free will in Adam and his posterity? Yes' (1622). The licensed publications of the English press tell the same Calvinist story, albeit in a more popular vein, as do many religious preambles to wills where the testator confidently affirms belief in his divine election. A good example of this type of Calvinist will is that made by Lord Treasurer Dorset, who died in 1608; George Abbot, future Archbishop of Canterbury, was so impressed by Dorset's claim to be an elect saint that he quoted the will verbatim when preaching his funeral sermon in Westminster Abbey. **Calvinism at the time was clearly establishment orthodoxy, and contemporaries would have found any suggestion that Calvinists were Puritans completely incomprehensible.**

Consequently, there were many Anglican clerics who favored Puritan toleration and considered the question of rites and ceremonies to be matters pertaining "things indifferent," a latitudinarian position that reached its peak in the 1610s after the death of John Whitgift who was Archbishop of Canterbury from 1583 to 1604 and embarked on an anti-Puritan campaign but was also a staunch doctrinal Calvinist, being the one to draw the Lambeth Articles.

Since Calvinism *and* episcopalianism were orthodoxy, there was absolutely such a thing as Calvinist royal absolutism, the most notable example being Archbishop James Ussher of Ireland (https://pure.qub.ac.uk/portal/files/16705284/Calvinist_Absolutism.pdf). Indeed, the Calvinist doctrine of total depravity led to a greater skepticism of eudaimonic and natural law theories of government, making absolutism a much easier position to defend.

A Puritan martyr like John Bastwick who had his ears cropped off under Archbishop Laud's tenure for attacking the episcopacy, nonetheless was as firm a believer in the divine right of kings as many Englishmen of the time, as quoted from a 1637 pamphlet of his: "And as kings are gods in respect of health, safety, government and wisdom, so they are likewise in respect of invocation only to be sought to and called upon of their subjects in all times of calamities of oppression next after God himself; we are not to go in our troubles and oppressions to wizards of state, the king's enemies that bewitch men with presents, or rebels, or take indirect courses of insurrection and tumulation; this is a remedy worse than the disease and more displeasing to God, and dishonorable to the subject, and deserves a greater yoke of servitude; but we must continue our humble petitions to the king and tell his majesty how the matter stands."

There was a sense in which the English Civil War was about sovereignty (<https://www.jstor.org/stable/24427467>), but not so much that of kings as of bishops. The principle of royal supremacy was not generally in dispute (after all, it was the primary bulwark against papal claims of supremacy), but the institutional mode of exercising it was. Was it through Convocation and the Court of High Commission, or through Parliament? In a devoutly Protestant society, the question of who issues legitimate church canons was of immense importance. The act for the submission of the clergy of 1534 stipulated that 'the King's most royal assent and license' was needed to promulgate a canon, but whether this was the king alone or the king-in-parliament was never definitively established for the first century. Controversies about clerical vestments date back to the 1540s and such liturgical issues remained controversial even if there was generally a common Calvinist soteriology. For people like John Pym, Oliver St John and Sir John Maynard, passing canons without parliamentary approval was tantamount to popery.

When Archbishop Laud was tried in 1642, the accusation was that he was a royal usurper by challenging the king's ecclesiastical supremacy, that he "traitorously assumed to himself a Papal and tyrannical power, both in Ecclesiastical and temporal matters, over his Majesty's subjects in this realm of England, and other places; to the disinherison of the Crown, dishonour of his Majesty, and derogation of his supreme authority in ecclesiastical matters. And the said Archbishop claims the King's ecclesiastical jurisdiction, as incident to his episcopal and archiepiscopal office in this kingdom; and doth deny the same to be derived from the Crown of England; which he had accordingly exercised, to the high contempt of his royal majesty, and to the destruction of divers of the King's liege people in their persons and estates."

Puritans and nonconformists tended to the Erastian position that church canons and religious uniformity should be pursued by civil magistrates through the instrument of king-in-parliament more specifically, and that bishops should only have an advisory role just as the Commons in earthly affairs. In a sense such a position is more thoroughly absolutist than the older idea that clergy have a right *iure divino* from apostolic succession. Hence the Long Parliament's measure to exclude bishops from sitting in the House of Lords. (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Clergy_Act_1640).

The Root and Branch Petition of 1640 (<https://history.hanover.edu/texts/ENGref/er97.html>) against episcopacy too reiterated those complaints, as in art.19: "The multitude of canons formerly made, wherein among other things excommunication, ipso facto, is denounced for speaking of a word against the devices abovesaid, or subscription thereunto, though no law enjoined a restraint from the ministry without subscription, and appeal is denied to any that should refuse subscription or unlawful conformity, though he be never so much wronged by the inferior judges. Also the canons made in the late sacred Synod, as they call it, wherein are many strange and dangerous devices to undermine the Gospel and the subjects' liberties, to propagate popery, to spoil God's people, ensnare ministers, and other students, and so to draw all into an absolute subjection and thralldom to them and their government, spoiling both the king and the parliament of their power,";
 art.25: "Yea further, the pride and ambition of the prelates being boundless, unwilling to be subject either to man or laws, they claim their office and jurisdiction to be Jure Divino, exercise ecclesiastical authority in their own names and rights, and under their own seals, and take upon them temporal dignities, places and offices in the commonwealth, that they may sway both swords";
 art.26: "Whence follows the taking commissions in their own courts and consistories, and where else they sit in matters determinable of right at common law, the putting of ministers upon parishes, without the patron's and people's consent."

In light of all this, the attempt to make Puritanism a “left wing” against a crypto-Catholic Anglican “right” is wrong.

Another subject that needs to be cleared up is the divine right of kings. It is frequently conflated with absolutism in our day, but it was not so back then. The divine origin of temporal authority is manifestly clear from Romans 13, Proverbs 24:21 and many other passages, which almost no Christian denied. The rhetorical purpose of divine right was to encourage submission, obedience, to remind the King of his higher calling, and secondarily to disqualify the pretensions of inferior magistrates by investing a self-sufficient right in the king himself, which as stated previously after the Reformation had the added supremacist purpose of condemning papal jurisdiction. Glenn Burgess’ “[The Divine Right of Kings Reconsidered](https://www.jstor.org/stable/574219)” (1992) is seminal here. The absolutist thesis — that royal proclamations carry superior force over statutes and common law — was rare.

William Wilkes, the Chaplain Ordinary to James I, thus said in *Obedience, or Ecclesiastical Union* (1605) that “the Lawe is the worke of the King, to whose regall dignitie it appertaines to make Lawe,” while at the same time marshaling the authority of Sir John Fortescue to add further that “the King cannot alter and change the lawes of this Realm at his pleasure, because the rule of his government is not onlie royall, but pollitick.” Peter Heylyn, an anti-Puritan polemicist (1637) conceded that “the liberties, possessions, and estates of the kings leige people, are, if you will, confirmed by the lawes of the land; not the kings authoritie” — point being that the existence of an independent kingly authority was not incompatible with liberties of subjects that the king binds himself to uphold. King James I: “Every just King in a settled Kingdome is bound to observe that paction made to his people by his Lawes.” A popular distinction at the time was between kingship *in abstracto* and *in concreto* — the former a general statement of monarchical primacy whereas the latter being a particular monarchy in specific legal conditions, i.e. the one relevant to practical governance.

The exceptions — those who tried to exact specific statutory or common law concessions from a general principle of divine right — were controversial, as in the cases of Roger Maynwaring and Robert Sibthorpe, who were both impeached by the House of Commons in 1628.

The idea of England as a mixed monarchy is an idea with a long lineage of its own, the most famous statement of it probably being that of Sir Thomas Smith, an eminent Elizabethan counselor. In his *De Republica Anglorum: the Maner of Gouvernement or Policie of the Realme of England*, written in the 1560s and published in 1583, treats prince and parliament as independent but codeterminate powers: “Now that we have spoken of the parliament (which is the whole universall and generall consent and authoritie aswell of the prince as of the nobilitie and commons, which is as much to say of the whole head and bodie of the realme of England) and also of the prince, (which is the head, life and governor of this common wealth)...” also saying that the “most high and absolute power in realm of England” lies in Parliament, but not as a modern statement of parliamentary sovereignty, rather as a reassertion of the traditional maxim that ‘the king has his court in his council in his parliaments.’

The [Titulus Regius](https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Titulus_Regius) (https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Titulus_Regius), a 1483 parliamentary statute confirming the royal title of Richard III, is also a very striking statement of pre-modern parliament’s role as high court and council:

Albeit that the Right, Title, and Estate, whiche oure Souveraigne Lord the Kyng Richard the Third, hath to and in the Crown and Roiall Dignite of this Reame of Englund, with all thyngs therunto within the same Reame, and without it, united, annexed and apperteynyng, been juste and lawefull, as grounded upon the Lawes of God and of Nature, and also upon the auncien Lawes and laudable Customes of this said Reame, and so taken and reputed by all suche persounes as ben lerned in the abovesaid Lawes and Customes. Yit neverthesse, forasmoche as it is considred, that the most parte of the people of this Lande is not suffisantly lerned in the abovesaid Lawes and Customes, wherby the trueth and right in this behalf of liklyhode may be hyd, and nat clerely knowen to all the people, and thereupon put in doubt and question. And over this, howe that the Courte of Parliament is of suche auctorite, and the people of this Lande of suche nature and disposicion, as experience teacheth, that manifestacion and declaration of any trueth or right, made by the Thre Estates of this Reame assembled in Parliament, and by auctorite of the same, maketh, before all other thyngs, moost seith and certaynte; and, quietyng mens myndes, remoeveth the occasion of all doubts and seditious langage.

There are also two medieval documents that were quite influential on the common law conscience, especially to Sir Edward Coke, the Great Man of the English common law tradition, who regarded both as authoritative. One was the Modus Tenendi Parliamentum (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Modus_Tenendi_Parliamentum), a 14th century text on parliamentary procedure, and the other was the Mirror of Justices (<https://www.brepolonline.net/doi/abs/10.1484/J.VIATOR.1.103789?journalCode=viator>), a late 13th-to-early-14th century work, simultaneously an Anglo-Norman law code and moral allegory which featured a very striking passage about the “original constitutions of King Alfred,” a very early statement of the ancient English constitution and Saxon liberty. Although not of great historical veracity, its influence was not insubstantial.

Hence, by the time we get to the Solemn League and Covenant, it was met with a long line of precedent.

Let us now get to the terms “Whig” and “Tory” themselves. Their origins as political factions are widely accepted to be contemporaneous with the Exclusion Crisis from 1679 to 1681, occurring simultaneously with the popish plot hysteria. “Whig” is shortened from “whiggamore” and referred to Scottish Covenanters, whereas a “tory” was an Irish Confederate outlaw. Implication being Whigs are presbyterians and regicides whereas the Tories are papists.

There’s a strong oppositional turn among the Commons after 1672, owing to Charles II’s Royal Declaration of Indulgence, the Duke of York (future James II)’s conversion to Catholicism and the conduct of the Franco-Dutch War. Worth noting is that Sir Orlando Bridgeman refused to apply the Great Seal to Charles II’s indulgence declaration despite his royalist loyalties during the English Civil War earlier, demonstrating the wide importance of confessional loyalties over royal ones. Indeed, the Cavalier Parliament passed the so-called Clarendon Code which tightened penal laws so as to enforce Anglican conformity among officeholders. Earlier still, Thomas Wentworth, Charles I’s own favorite vacillated in his support for the Petition of Right. Another bizarre case: Edward Nicholas (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edward_Nicholas), Charles I’s Secretary of State and privy councilor, was in favor of readmitting the Jews into England. Another fun fact is that Prince Rupert of the Rhine, the archetypal Cavalier, developed an anti-French and anti-Catholic platform that was proto-Whig (<https://www.jstor.org/stable/4048186>) to a degree. Come Charles II’s reign, parliament was forming independent commissions to scrutinize royal accounts on the basis that “the king has no prerogative that he may be cheated.”

One shouldn't underestimate the level of fear at the height of the popish plot (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Popish_Plot), circa 1680, with the stationing of militiamen throughout London and townsmen buying clubs and maces en masse for self-defense. The Green Ribbon Club, a popular coffeehouse association and de facto Whig meeting point, patronized by the likes of the Earl of Shaftesbury, fanned the flames (<https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/3b47/8aa0cbb0e23337ab75385fe3185a624c30f5.pdf>) of an incoming papist-incited calamity:

Too "No Popery, No Slavery" cry of the Green Ribbon Club reinforced the belief that a popish successor would have to rule by force. As early as 1675, Shaftesbury said in a public speech: "If ever there should happen in future ages (which God forbid) a King governing by an army without Parliament, it is a government I own not, am not obliged to, nor was born under." "No Slavery" also referred to property rights. Whig pamphlets constantly threatened that a popish king would repossess old church lands, or any the king fancied, to re-establish Catholic orders. Whig literature pointed out every possible pessimistic extreme that could take place under a popish king. William Lawrence wrote in 1680 that popery was characterized by kings who exercised "lawless arbitrary power" against their subjects "to dispose of their lands, goods, persons, liberty and property, at their [the king's] pleasure." Pamphlets on Exclusion argued with history, law, scripture, nature and reason in their efforts to persuade. Shaftesbury made it clear as he could, short of treason, that James' exclusion would mean a complete change in the way England would be governed. By his vagueness in what this change would entail, he could be all things to all people. Republicans, monarchists, and all types of revolutionaries, if not on his side, were sympathetic to his efforts in the hope that their preference of government might be adopted.

The Earl of Shaftesbury was a patron of John Locke, and widely regarded as one of the first identifiable Whigs (well, after the Devil, anyway). Yet an analysis of Shaftesbury's philosophy (<https://www.jstor.org/stable/191131>) shows that he rejected contractualism, the state of nature and both the Hobbesian and Lockean viewpoints in favor of a form of organic communitarianism, which raises the question of whether his "Whiggery" was but a matter of circumstance. His career was also not much different from flip-flopping Tories like Lord Danby, as well as George Villiers, 2nd Duke of Buckingham, the latter also attending the Green Ribbon Club.

Take for instance the CABAL ministry (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cabal_ministry), of five eminent peers under Charles II. It does not at all resemble anything like a high-church royalist faction fighting a low-church nonconformist Commons. The Lord Clifford of Chudleigh (C) was a Catholic, the Earl of Arlington a crypto-Catholic who in public supported Anglican conformity (A), the Duke of Buckingham was a staunch Protestant who favored some degree of nonconformist toleration and was very active in disseminating the Popish Plot (B), the Lord Ashley a.k.a. Shaftesbury we just addressed as a fierce anti-Catholic and patron of Locke even if his own views were not so inclined (A), the Duke of Lauderdale was originally a Presbyterian who later became a conformant Anglican and an enforcer of the Test Acts after his closer relations to court (L). In short: the royal favorites were a rather religiously diverse bunch.

The Immortal Seven (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Invitation_to_William) who sent the invitation to William of Orange in 1688 pose a similar conundrum. The Bishop of London and Lord Danby are safely in the "Tory" camp. The Viscount Lumley was prominent in suppressing the Monmouth rebellion, which was done under a devoutly Protestant banner. The Duke of Shrewsbury is an absolutely fascinating case — a Catholic until 1679, then a loyal Anglican and member of Charles II's court before becoming a conspirator in the overthrow of the Stuarts, and subsequently flirting with Jacobitism in the 1710s as if regretful. There is no coherent Whig-Tory, Court-Country, High Church-Low Church split

here, either, but a wide array of motivations that are irreducible to the common narrative of a Whig revolution against crypto-Catholic royalist absolutism. Indeed, the list of deserters (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_deserters_from_King_James_II_to_William_of_Orange) from James to William is considerable and filled with a wide background of men.

A lesser known fact is that James II presided over a large-scale purge of JPs, aldermen, bailiffs, recorders and other magistrates in the winter of 1686-7 as recounted in p.27 here (<https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/1394200.pdf>). As mentioned in that essay, there were people who actually welcomed these purges as an assault *against* Toryism, that is against the “old, mercenary Tories that have sold the Kingdome, Religion and Civill Interest” — apparently demonstrating James II’s relative independence from faction, even ones that were in principle quite conservative. But this no doubt helped embitter and lead to many country gentlemen turning a blind eye and passively accepting the Orangist invasion.

The English Restoration was also the time of ribald and risque Restoration comedy, as well as infamous rakes ([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rake_\(stock_character\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rake_(stock_character))), womanizers and libertines like the Earl of Rochester and the Duke of Buckingham, in a sort of backlash against Puritanism that many regarded as being too excessive on the flip side of laxity and permissiveness.

By December 1688, the provisional government of the Glorious Revolution had essentially established a consensus even if in principle the succession issue was still an open question. The Declaration of the Lords Spiritual and Temporal, December 11, 1688 stated:

We doubt not but the world believes that, in this great and dangerous conjuncture, we are heartily and zealously concerned for the Protestant religion, the laws of the land, and the liberties and properties of the subject; and we did reasonably hope that, the King having issued his proclamation and writs for a free parliament, we might have rested secure under the expectation of that meeting; but, His Majesty having withdrawn himself, and, as we apprehend, in order to his departure out of this Kingdom, by the pernicious counsels of persons ill-affected to our nation and religion, we cannot, without being wanting to our duty, be silent under these calamities, wherein the Popish counsels, which so long prevailed, have miserably involved these Realms.

We do, therefore, unanimously resolve to apply ourselves to His Highness, the Prince of Orange, who, with so great kindness to these Kingdoms, so vast experience, and so much hazard to his own person, hath undertaken by endeavouring to procure a free parliament to rescue us, with as little effusion of Christian blood as possible, from the imminent dangers of Popery and slavery.

And we do hereby declare that we will with our utmost endeavours assist His Highness in the obtaining such a parliament with all speed, wherein our laws, our liberties and properties may be secured, the Church of England in particular, with a due liberty to Protestant Dissenters, and in general the Protestant religion and interest over the whole world may be supported and encouraged to the glory of God, the happiness of the established government in these Kingdoms, and the advantage of all princes and states in Christendom, that may be herein concerned.

When the Seven Bishops (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Seven_Bishops) dissented from distributing James II’s Declaration of Indulgence, they too invoked a parliamentary decision, claiming “that declaration is founded upon *such a dispensing power as hath often been declared illegal in parliament*, and particularly in the years 1662, 1672, and in the beginning of your Majesty’s reign, and is a matter of so great moment and consequence to the whole nation, both in Church and State, that your petitioners

cannot in prudence, honour or conscience so far make themselves parties to it as the distribution of it all over the nations." After all, James II was upsetting the Clarendon Code established in the reign of Charles II and the drift toward strict Anglican conformity via the penal laws.

The deposition of the Stuarts and the subsequent entrenchment of the Hanoverian settlement made the case of the nonjuring bishops who refused to swear the oath to the new dynasty an interesting one, with Whigs trivially employing a royal supremacist line to brand all of them as disloyal. The Bangorian controversy (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bangorian_Controversy), in the early 18th century was essentially a repeat of the dispute between Laudians and Puritans that occurred some 80 years earlier, with Benjamin Hoadly reiterating the same grievances of the Root and Branch petition but this time against the nonjurors.

What of Jacobitism? Although counterrevolutionary in the literal sense, the Jacobite cause was by no means a Catholic one at heart (as shown in the case of e.g. Charles Leslie ([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Charles_Leslie_\(nonjuror\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Charles_Leslie_(nonjuror)))) nor even that politically reactionary either. Chevalier Ramsay was a Jacobite peer and also a devout Freemason with quasi-liberal convictions. Jacobitism in general acquired a Country Party and semi-liberal character because it was used as a declaration of war against the Whig oligarchy of the Walpole and Pelham ministries, who secure in their power favored a "strong and stable executive, representing a Protestant monarch in parliament, a diminution of political competitiveness, compromised elections, a Septennial Act and a system of political control based on patronage and requiring an elaborate financial structure of banks and funds." (F.J. McLynn, *The Ideology of Jacobitism*). In contrast, the Jacobites often flocked to a country program of "frequent parliaments, exclusion of placemen and a qualification in landed property for all members of the House of Commons."

The same evolution applied to Toryism as a whole. The Viscount Bolingbroke was a rationalistic and irreligious peer adjacent to the early Whig ministries who became disgruntled over patronage and foreign policy issues, flocked to the Jacobite rising of 1715, then repudiated the cause, got a pardon and became a Hanoverian Tory who edited an opposition paper titled The Craftsman ([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Craftsman_\(newspaper\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Craftsman_(newspaper))), being close to Jonathan Swift. In his fight against the Walpole ministry, Bolingbroke ended up prefiguring the modern idea of party government (http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/68211/1/Skjonsberg_Lord%20Bolingbroke%27s%20theory_2016.pdf), with his *Dissertation upon parties* (1734):

In sharp contrast to the Court party, '[a] Country party must be authorized by the voice of the country'. Such a party had the potential to unite Whigs and Tories, as '[i]t must be formed on principles of common interest. It cannot be united and maintained on the particular prejudices, and more than it can, or ought to be, directed to the particular interests of any set of men whatsoever.' The Country party was an opposition party whose *raison d'être* was to defeat what was perceived as Walpole's system of corruption. Bolingbroke used corruption to denote executive influence over the legislature as well as in the Machiavellian sense of degeneration of civic virtù. The Country party had a distinct ideology that emphasized the importance of the independency of parliament from Crown influence, support of the landed and sometimes the traded interest in opposition to the moneyed interest, and a preference for a citizen militia and a strong navy as opposed to the standing army. Both the Whig and Tory parties had had Country elements since the Glorious Revolution, but they had usually only collaborated on specific issues, e.g. the standing army question in 1697-8. Bolingbroke wanted to turn this occasional Country coalition into a permanent political force and this was the aspiration of his joint enterprise with Pulteney.

Bolingbroke's proposed country party would emerge as the so-called Patriot Whigs (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Patriot_Whigs), among whom were many "Tories" as well, though the label had lost its significance by then. I believe Samuel Johnson's famous quip about patriotism was in reference to them.

It appears I have come full circle, for my attempt to rebut cliches about Stuart England has led me to minimize conflict and disruption in favor of emphasizing precedent and continuity. Trying to dislodge Whig history leads one to writing more Whig history. So it must be, for at the end of the day Whiggery and Englishness are inseparable. There is barely such a thing as a "Tory history" for this reason.

Eldred "E.M." Lowden had a great essay series over at The American Sun a while ago about "The Eternal Anglo," and particularly in the first installment (<https://theamericansun.com/2019/07/08/the-eternal-anglo-part-i/>), he elucidates a certain majority-minority dynamic in English history of conquering alien races ruling over dispersed natives:

The Anglo-Saxons had long contested the rule of the island they inhabited, but for the most part, the Anglo-Saxon throne of Wessex was uncontested between Alfred the Great and the last “King of the English”, Aethelred Unraed. The very title promotes a sense of comity – you are not subject to such a king unless you are English. The adoption by Canute the Great of the title “King of all England” was probably less contentious than the means whereby he acquired the Crown, but it nevertheless marked a shift in the behavior of the ruling class that would become thoroughly solidified by, and perhaps unfairly ascribed directly to, the Norman conquerors who made it their avowed mission to deprive the native Saxon nobility of England, and later the Gaelic nobility of Ireland, of every real power they possessed, supplanting them with Normans and creating an enduring national myth of a native ethnic majority ruled by and deeply contrasted with a foreign minority who neither understand nor particularly care for the customs, beliefs, and lifeways of the native-born. The myth is no fiction: English history instead is dominated by the rule of upper classes of decidedly foreign stock, be it Norman, Dutch, or German, over an English nation of various tribal factions defined by varying temperament and geography.

The pattern of conquest followed by divestment and extermination repeats itself four times in the course of British history: first, the aforementioned Norman Conquest, which includes the bloody and traumatic Harrying of the North; second, the Anarchy, whereby the more thoroughly French, and more ruthless, Angevins supplant the Normans as rulers of England and become the Plantagenets; third, the War of the Roses, culminating in the Tudor Period, a nearly uninterrupted stream of axe-happy, paranoid megalomaniacs who slaughter absolutely everyone they perceive as a threat to their rule from young children up to the old and frail Lady Margaret Pole, and which includes the total divestment of the monasteries and forced conversion of the English people to a uniquely worldly and political brand Protestantism; fourth, and finally, the Civil War and Glorious Revolution, a process that followed a brief period in which a morally ambiguous dynasty of Scotch dandies attempted to undo what the Tudors had done and found themselves exiled and their supporters massacred by the thousands in England, Scotland, and Ireland, ending with the final assertion of Parliament’s supreme right of rule and the end of an effective monarchy in the British Isles. The reign of Victoria, which itself saw a fifth remaking of England, was decidedly less bloody and chaotic, but nevertheless permanently upended the upper classes of great Britain and transformed the British Royal Family into one of the wealthiest single families in the entire realm, a consolation prize for their near complete neutering as a political force.

The final triumph of Parliamentarianism, mimicked in miniature by the triumph of Yankeeism across the pond, is the end result of an ongoing civil conflict that defined England from at least the Norman conquest, whereby the last vestiges of the Saxon, British, and Scotch personality were forced out of the halls of power in England by the totalizing Puritan/Yankee spirit which Spengler would identify as a properly English character in opposition to the Prussian. For his erudition, Spengler was unfortunately afflicted with a German distrust of perfidious Albion that perhaps blinded him to the complexities of the English national character; inasmuch as Europe might have chosen against what Alexander Dugin has called the Atlanticist powers as its future, England, too, might have chosen against the Parliamentary Yankeeedom that has come to make her the image-bearer of the WASP Progressive future we may yet all fall to.

Whig history as quoted above served to minimize these ethnic cleavages, but it is this majority-minority dynamic in conjunction with the immense issues of sovereignty and jurisdiction unleashed by the English Reformation (How does one govern the church canons of a people skeptical of all non-scriptural sources of religion, who are indifferent or hostile to an episcopal polity and a rich liturgy?) that was only resolved with parliamentary sovereignty and finally secularization.

Speaking of the way Butterfield defined the Whig view — judging an unfolding historical process by the end-state that could not have been known for sure by any of the contemporaneous actors — it's pretty endemic on the right. The Western converts to Eastern Orthodoxy blame the Enlightenment on Christian Aristotelian schoolmen, many on the manosphere insist the troubadours created feminism, segments of the alt-right cast blame on "Christian universalism" for ills that very strangely took a long and variable lag of some 1800 years to unfold, various Christian traditionalists abide by Leon J. Podles' influential argument that the feminization of modern Christian worship can be directly traced to medieval Bride of Christ theology, etc. etc. It's part of a wider fallacy that historians of ideas are susceptible to whereby they assume that because someone said something vaguely resembling a modern idea a long time ago, that there must have been a direct line of influence from that old writer to present tendencies.

This entry was posted in [Historical insights](#), [Liberalism](#). Bookmark the [permalink](#).

11 thoughts on "What was Whig history?"

1. Pingback: [What was Whig history? | Reaction Times](#)

2. A french reader says:

[November 1, 2019 at 8:14 pm](#)

Brillant article

Do you plan to write about the modernization of non-Western countries? Japan and China present early cases of absolutism and centralism that have been denounced by Catholic writers, including missionaries, after various rationalist authors praised the Confucian and Mandarin system (Voltaire, Diderot, Leibniz, Bayle)

[Reply](#).

◦ [Nulle Terre Sans Seigneur](#) says:

[November 3, 2019 at 6:36 am](#)

I can't say I know enough about them, and it isn't a priority. Though I did cover the thought of one eccentric S.N.H. Linguet, an Enlightenment rationalist defender of oriental despotism and unlikely influence on socialism.

[Reply](#).

3. P.T. Carlo says:

[November 2, 2019 at 11:21 pm](#)

Excellent content, good to see you're still in the game

[Reply](#).

◦ [Nulle Terre Sans Seigneur](#) says:

[November 3, 2019 at 1:36 pm](#)

Likewise. I've sent you a message.

[Reply](#).

4. [bannedhipster](#) says:

[November 23, 2019 at 2:08 am](#)

Very interesting article. I'm not sure of your intentions, but I have been a long time advocate for Anglo push back against the Judeo-NRx black legend against Albion started by Curtis Yarvin. Amazing to me that right-wingers have fallen, yet again, for more Jewish pilpul. I mean Yarvin himself all but admitted his entire beef is with "the international Liberal Protestant conspiracy" because liberal Presbyterians are boycotting Israel.

I'm a huge fan of E. Michael Jones, but he's engaging in the same black legend.

The MythOfThe20thCentury American Sun guys are great, but the one guy (Nick?) is anti-Anglo to a ridiculous degree, and it spoils their entire genre.

Reply

5. Christian Identity Australia says:

January 23, 2020 at 3:54 am

Kemp's deeply flawed work isn't what I would call pro-white since much of it is an attack on Christianity, which is the white man's religion.

Reply

o Nulle Terre Sans Seigneur says:

January 23, 2020 at 12:10 pm

Sure, if you're willing to write off an entire influential genre of pro-white advocacy which is unreservedly Nietzschean and Darwinistic. Suffice to say, that is where modern pro-white advocacy truly begins. It is when the white ethnies forget their tongues, their lands, their patron saints and all else that grounds them in favor of exalting their nutritive soul and physiology, i.e. that which they have common with plants and could hardly define them.

Reply

o collegereactionary says:

May 26, 2020 at 6:38 am

Heck, these days your nutritive soul & physiology is all that you have grounding you, aside from your "will" and your "reason" (i.e. how much money you have & what you can do with it).

I'm not happy to cast aside the patron saints and the like, but they're clearly vain idols at this point, and I have no doubt that they were equally vain back then. By 1900, everyone was an atheist on an esoteric level.

The history of ideas is hard to study because it's impossible to prove that authors has esoteric impulses that even they weren't aware of. Any yet, the esoteric ideas clearly had an influence on the course of history, leaving aside the mess of contradictory details that didn't really matter in the end. Their ideas implied regicide, regicide happened, and the institution of the monarchy is now extinct.

Esotericism is messy: the example I like to use is feminism. The explicit goal is female equality, the implicit goal is female supremacy (they signal this constantly), and the esoteric goal is to crush weak men so that strong men can invade, kill the weak men, ravish the headstrong women, and destroy feminism (a vague fantasy that no woman can put into words & remain a feminist). And the only reason this whole scheme is so easy to see through is because it originated in the minds of women.

Addendum: It's fascinating that the English were able to fight massive wars over minor constitutional details. Their political understanding is really quite subtle, one might even say autistic. Imagine if WWII were fought over whether overseeing the bishops was the duty of the King or the King-in-Parliament, and not over whether Hitler was a gross german meaniepants or not. You'd think that anyone would have the right to advise anyone else, as long as there's a consensus. And you'd think that if the monarchy was based on the comity of the English people, then the King's status would be respected regardless of whether or not he could provide justice. Likewise, if kingship was based on the king's justice, then it would be fine to replace him the moment he loses his position as guarantor by, I don't know, losing a war or something.

Reply.

6. Pingback: Why Post-Liberalism Failed | Carlsbad 1819

7. muunyayo says:

October 10, 2021 at 7:32 pm

Reblogged this on muunyayo.

Reply.

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