

## INTRODUCTION

This book is a narrative of the debate about oppositional Whig language as it unfolded in British periodical literature from 1802 to 1830. The recurring figures in this argument over liberty and patriotism include Francis Jeffrey, William Cobbett and George Gordon Byron, but also prominent are Henry Brougham and George Canning, known at the time as the great ‘literary’ personalities of the Whig and Tory groups. In offering this account, the challenge has been to steer between two disciplines: literary criticism and political history. For literary scholars, I hope to show how such events as Walcheren or the retreat of the British army from Corunna affect our understanding of the prose of writers such as Coleridge and Wordsworth. For historians, I propose to demonstrate the importance of language in the growing political involvement of the middle and lower classes, something that culminates in the quarto publication and duodecimo piracies of *Don Juan*.

Because of Napoleon and the protracted war on the Continent, it was an era of unprecedented commercial and ideological activity. In the late eighteenth century, government military supply contracts meant increased newspaper advertising, more business in the law courts and new baronets and lawyers in Parliament. The mass mobilization involved in the volunteer militia movement, especially after 1803, meant that ordinary people who normally regarded politics as a hobby for rich landowners became involved in the discussion of Britain’s fate. These things increased literacy and press activity, something of which Napoleon himself was well aware, for he too read the British newspapers. The persistent threat of invasion and the glamour of Napoleon’s military feats in themselves made a democracy of newly fledged readers in Britain. Complaints of nepotism, which had primarily interested only the opposition Whigs in the late 1780s, became a street commonplace after 1808 and military failures abroad. One cannot understand this expanded discourse without having some awareness of events on the Continent, the battles and treaties, and the parliamentary debates – this is the era when *Hansard* took shape out of Cobbett’s detailed note-taking.

However, it remains difficult to speak precisely of the complicated distinctions of party at a time when the prime minister thought himself a Whig while his former colleagues called him a Tory, and there is no such entity as *the* Whig party. In attempting to understand these labels, I can only acknowledge my debt to such scholars as A. Mitchell, H. T. Dickinson, J. G. A. Pocock, J. C. D. Clark and J. E. Cookson. At the same time, Romantic literary criticism has produced a number of well-researched studies discussing the relationship between literature and politics, and serious contextual initiatives to recover the public discourse of the period. My work necessarily touches on the excitement of the period of radical writing and publishing from 1816 to 1821, but I consider that this area has already been expertly handled by such scholars as J. Ann Hone, James Chandler, Paul Keen, Iain McCalman, James Epstein and Kevin Gilmartin.

This project began as an anthology of excerpts from the magazine and quarterly writers of the day giving these writers' own words on a number of literary and political topics. 'Whiggism' only gradually emerged as a recurring preoccupation, as the work moved from a narrowly literary study into a more interdisciplinary realm. The urgent challenge faced by all commentators at the time was to find a safe language, when for reasons of national security the government war effort demanded repression. It can hardly be coincidental that the *Edinburgh Review* emerged from a provincial capital in the single year of peace afforded by the treaty at Amiens and that its first article was devoted to a self-consciously apolitical understanding of the French Revolution. 'Whiggism', which has been used as a label for so many programmes since the 1680s, may thus stand during this period as the collective label for the effort to talk about liberty with safety.

The *Edinburgh Review* can be seen as the key repository of intellectual Whiggism at this time. However, the quarterly itself was not initially affiliated with any parliamentary faction nor did it maintain organized contact with the All Talents government of 1806–7, which is commonly called Whig. Other languages of opposition emerge, Cobbett's *Political Register* being the most obvious example. The great flood of oppositional language occurs after 1816, when 'radical' becomes a noun and 'Tory' is accepted as something other than a term of abuse. These are defined against the background of 'Whiggism', which since 1802 had been the only respectable language of opposition. After 1821, a new language of freedom emerges, neither eighteenth-century nor exclusively British, which is called 'Liberalism' and confounds all party distinctions.

My perspective originated in literary studies, which is why, although this monograph depends heavily on historical references, my ultimate concern is to offer an exploration of language. From 1802 to 1816, Cobbett's direct conversational idiom stands out above all others as the language of independent opposition. The language of the quarterlies, by contrast, is self-consciously edu-

cated and exclusive. The politicians themselves read both Cobbett and Jeffrey. Between 1816 and 1830, besides the new logical terminology of Utilitarianism, and blue-book liberalism, there also emerges the charismatic Tory language of male badinage, seen most spectacularly in *Blackwood's Magazine* and *Don Juan*. This literature, satirical and libertine, was ultimately submerged in the more socially correct humour of the 1830s, when the 'cant' of Liberalism superseded the vocabulary of Whiggism.

During the Revolutionary and Napoleonic wars, oppositional Whiggism, unlike the Whiggism of Pitt's government, was forced to explain its place in the British constitution, as Parliament grappled with the intellectual and practical questions posed by liberty in the context of 'the People'. In the 1790s, Edmund Burke, who had distinguished himself by his advocacy of public opinion during the 1770s, rebuked fellow parliamentary Whigs for not speaking in the ideas or language of 1688. The 1790s rhetoric of the People was antithetical to the meaning of the Whig heritage, and the 'Rights of Man' was a popular misinterpretation of the events in France, said Burke, because the philosophical discussion of political rights did not apply to the People: in any eighteenth-century discussion of legal rights in Britain, the People constitutionally speaking did not exist. When Burke published these arguments in an anonymous pamphlet, *An Appeal from the Old to the New Whigs* in 1791, the price (three shillings) indicated that his audience was not populist. If the Whigs went on prating about the 'Rights of the People', they had broken with the original meaning of Whiggism – which was to preserve the Protestant constitution of balance between King, Church and Parliament. James II had sought to destroy this constitution, and it was the Whigs who had prevented him from doing so, notably without executing him. But their descendants, the 'New' Whigs, were now, with their talk of the People, encouraging the violation of this heritage of specifically parliamentary liberty.

As the war progressed, the Whigs who went along with Burke and the government's policy of repression came to be called 'Tories' – a term of factional abuse that historically had been associated with resistance to the Hanoverian constitution. It was this 'Tory' side of the party that directed the war and after 1793 called all others unpatriotic.<sup>1</sup> J. C. D. Clark remarks that Fox did not consistently use the term 'Tory' as an 'ideological' description of his governmental opponents until the 1790s, and also argues that before the 1830s, 'Tory' was 'an empty category', Jacobitism having been constitutionally renounced. Technically all governments at this juncture were Whig or Hanoverian.<sup>2</sup> The term 'Whig' was also being redefined in terms of party.<sup>3</sup> In fact, Pitt's government was a coalition that included the Portland Whigs, and after the 1760s, opposition was being defined ideologically rather than dynastically. For twenty-two years the Foxite Whigs toiled as oppositionists to the 'King's Friends' and the government policy of war with France, but even on the government side there

had been a 'New Opposition' that disagreed with the Peace of Amiens signed in 1802.<sup>4</sup> The unity of the various and shifting groups that made up 'government' was pragmatically structured by administrative duties, as can be seen in the cordial relationship that evolved between Henry Dundas and Lord Spencer during the 1790s.

When Pitt came back into government in 1804, he attempted to form a coalition with Fox, but this was not to be countenanced by George III. When Pitt died in January 1806, amid news of Austria's defeat and prosecution by the Foxites of the former Home Secretary, Henry Dundas, Lord Melville, the King finally acceded to an administration under Fox. However, this government necessarily involved a number of 'parties' besides the Foxites, including among others the Windhamites, who advocated vigorous prosecution of the war: this bundling together of former oppositionists was familiarly called the 'Ministry of All the Talents.'

The private appeal of Walter Scott to the All Talents government in February 1806, as he moved from amateur verse-making to professional authorship, illuminates the relationships between Whig and Tory at the end of the epoch of Pitt and Fox. When the *Lay of the Last Minstrel* began to make a national poetic reputation for Scott in 1805, the thirty-four-year-old poet was looking for ways to retire from the daily practice of law, for ten years at the Scottish bar had not achieved the national distinction bestowed on him by the *Lay* in as many months.<sup>5</sup> Political favour was crucial to Scott's plan to become a Clerk of the Court of Session, and Pitt had indicated a willingness to offer Scott some kind of official advancement.<sup>6</sup> Scott approached George Home, a Clerk of the Court of Session for thirty years, who formally agreed that Scott would take over all the active duties of the post, while the full salary would continue to go to Home, on condition that in the event of his retirement or death, the post would fall to Scott. However, there was one slight error made in the drafting of their contract, and just as this omission was discovered, Pitt died on 23 January 1806.

Scott worried that a new government formed from opposition Whigs would refuse to ratify his appointment because of his known Dundasite and Pittite affiliations. He was fully cognizant of all the patronage demands that would press on a new administration and immediately made plans to travel to Westminster. His suit went forward, and by the second week of February 1806, Lord Spencer, the new Home Secretary, had given his approval.<sup>7</sup> Inasmuch as Spencer (1758–1834) possessed what is usually described as the greatest private library in Europe at this time, it seems natural that he would have been responsive to the author of the *Lay of the Last Minstrel*.

In his triumphant letter written from London on 11 February 1806 to Dalkeith, Scott apologized for including some political 'effusions', in particular, speculations about who would be given the management of Scotland in the

new All Talents cabinet.<sup>8</sup> There is little doubt that his visit to London in February 1806 made something of a politician out of Scott and led eventually to his involvement in the *Quarterly Review*. Scott's bid for professional security was made at one of the most critical junctures of Westminster politics, because when he went to London it was not clear to him, or to anyone around Whitehall, exactly who was in charge of Scotland or indeed Britain. The account of Spencer's approval in fact masks a substantial networking behind the scenes.

Before he had ever set out for London, Scott contacted, among others, George Ellis (1753–1815), Lord Somerville (1765–1819), one of the few Scottish peers at Westminster and a Lord of the King's Bedchamber since 1799, and the Earl of Minto (1751–1814). Somerville had talked about Scott to the Queen, and with her, read the *Lay of the Last Minstrel* aloud to George III. But in late January 1806, while he was listening to the *Lay*, George III was also urgently involved in negotiations to form a new government, after Pitt's cabinet, his preferred leaders, had declared themselves unable to continue in office.<sup>9</sup> Over the following fortnight a cabinet was cobbled together, mainly out of various parties of the old Opposition, including the Foxites. This could not be regarded as a government congenial to either George III or Scott. However, the offer of an introduction to Spencer had come not only from Somerville but also from the Earl of Minto, who had known Fox since the 1770s, and with the change of government had been offered the presidency of the Board of Control (India).

Nor were other English connections besides Ellis wanting. Before he left Edinburgh, Scott also contacted William Stewart Rose (1775–1843), mainly known now as a minor poet and translator, who had been reading clerk to the House of Lords since 1800 and one of the conduits of Pitt's praise for the *Lay*. Scott, in his first appearance in the *Edinburgh Review* in October 1803, had reviewed Rose's rhymed translation of *Amadis de Gaul*. Rose was the son of George Rose (1744–1818), one of Pitt's closest friends and a confidant of George III. William Stewart Rose, in turn, asked William Sturges Bourne to look for the paperwork concerning Scott's appointment. Sturges Bourne (1769–1845), an MP since 1798, was, like George Ellis, a close friend of George Canning.<sup>10</sup> After the disbandment of Pitt's ministry, Bourne was at this time informally working as 'a kind of press agent' for the out-of-office ministers and acolytes known as 'Pitt's Friends'.<sup>11</sup> At William Stewart Rose's behest, Bourne before his resignation from the Treasury at the end of that month evidently went through all the files in the office, as he was entitled to do, for he had been patronage secretary to the Treasury since 1804. It was Rose who told Scott that Spencer was the minister to approach and who reassured Scott that his father thought he should go ahead.<sup>12</sup> Rose's letter was written while affairs in Westminster hung fire – during the first ten days there were daily urgent interviews of potential Cabinet nominees com-

ing and going, for it was still not decisively clear that 'Pitt's Friends' would not be forming a government.<sup>13</sup>

Meanwhile, in the Westminster lobbies, as Scott travelled down from Edinburgh, hourly bulletins concerning the disposition of Scotland's affairs were emerging. Had Scott's crisis arisen at any time during the previous two decades, he would have had no need to travel south, for the answer would have been comprised in the person of Henry Dundas, Lord Melville.<sup>14</sup> However, the *Lay of the Last Minstrel* had been published in the very year Melville was being investigated for financial negligence by the Tenth Inquiry into the Navy, and by June 1805 impeachment proceedings had been set in motion. Melville's fall was one of a number of political catastrophes of Pitt's last few months, and it is important when considering the uncertainty in which Scott was making his professional way, to realize how much the conditions of Scottish patronage were in flux.

In early February, Melville's son Robert Dundas was also involved in the thick of negotiations at Westminster, particularly as they involved the disposition of Scotland – these were the subject of Scott's 'political effusions' mentioned to Dalkeith. In Dundas's letters to his father, it appears during the first week of February, that with the change of ministers Scotland had been given to a Whig, the Earl of Moira (1754–1826), an Irishman who had acted as commander-in-chief of Scotland since 1804. With Moira in place, things were essentially to remain as they were, with some offices to be given to the 'Prince's Friends', since Moira's greatest ally was the Prince of Wales.<sup>15</sup> Dundas adds that this arrangement had been ratified by Lord Grenville (1759–1834), Spencer, and Fox, who were to be the Prime Minister, Home Secretary and Foreign Secretary respectively.<sup>16</sup>

All this would have been reassuring to Scott, who had socialized with Moira in Edinburgh, but Melville himself anticipated complications.<sup>17</sup> It became clear that the new administration would be heavily weighted towards conciliation of the Foxites, in a coalition of four different 'Whig' parties, all of whom had some expectation of office.<sup>18</sup> The Dundases did not wish to risk any overtly public commitment to Moira, until it became clear how much power he would hold. His greatest rival within the opposition Whigs (to be differentiated from the Grenvillite Whigs), was Lord Lauderdale (1759–1839), a Foxite, the key point that Scott had mentioned in his letter to Dalkeith, because when he arrived in London, the dilemma facing him was whether to approach Moira or Lauderdale.<sup>19</sup> Because of Lauderdale's role in Melville's impeachment, neither the Dundasites nor Scott could treat with Lauderdale, hence their urgency in attempting to determine Moira's strength within the All Talents government. The frantic exchange of correspondence between Dundas and Melville during the first few days of February 1806 over the power struggle between Lauderdale and Moira was of direct relevance to Scott, since on his arrival in London he had to guess where the management of Scotland lay.

However in the end, Moira bowed out, the reason avowed to Dundas being that he did not wish 'to be the Instrument of a System of dispossession', a remark that hints at the Foxite eagerness to rejoice in their newfound riches of office. Moira's remark particularly highlights Scott's happy fortune in arriving in London during these few days while government arrangements remained unsettled.<sup>20</sup> At the same time Dundas was able to comfort his father on 13 February with the news that 'Grenville's friends' had made it clear that Lauderdale would not be given Scotland.<sup>21</sup> Moira and the Dundasites had won that much – or perhaps it was the King, also a Lauderdale-hater, who had triumphed. Meanwhile old George Home, a Dundasite, and Francis Horner, a Whig, had heard that Scott had been granted his favour by Moira.<sup>22</sup> The management of Scotland was ultimately shared between Grenville and Spencer. In the correspondence of George III, the official date of Spencer's appointment is 5 February 1806, and it would appear that Scott had seen him by 6 February.<sup>23</sup>

Ultimately, in a letter of advice written to Scott too late to reach him before his journey, George Ellis said, like commentators on both sides at this time, he was doubtful of this government's durability, and argued that with such a disparate cabinet, there are 'consequently as many seeds of dissention, of which His Majesty, it is probable will not lose much time before he avails himself'.<sup>24</sup> And so it proved.

What this Whig government meant for the *Edinburgh Review*, who might have enjoyed a direct conduit to official policy, remains mostly speculative, because within the year the members of the All Talents cabinet were abruptly to find themselves once again sitting opposite the Treasury bench.<sup>25</sup> Fox died in September 1806, and after an election called by Grenville, a new parliament opened in December 1806, but it too dissolved only a few months later, in March 1807, when Grenville and Grey, the new leaders of the Whigs, pressed the king too hard on the question of Catholic emancipation, and he exercised his prerogative of changing the government. At the same time, a vote went against the Whigs, who were about to reveal the results of a committee investigation into the previous Tory government's sinecures.<sup>26</sup>

It is with oppositional language that this study is concerned. Austin Mitchell has written that 'All opposition writers were part-time soldiers in an army generalised and largely manned by whigs'.<sup>27</sup> Whether or not one agrees, this makes explicit the central role of the statement of principles, and the formulating of an ideology that was not dynastic or aristocratic. Hence the shifting relationships formed with the press and the waxing and waning of clubs under the rubric of Pittite or Foxite, and the importance of popular speakers such as Samuel Whitbread and Henry Brougham in the Commons. Probably for the government itself the most problematic accommodations arose out of the relationships, often jealous, that had to be sustained between the few good administrators available, particularly in their conduct of the war – one thinks of Canning, Castlereagh

and Perceval. For the opposition Whigs, who sometimes declined any attendance in the House at all, the most sensitive relationships came out-of-doors, in the partnerships made with the radicals and in rising lower-class literacy, which was bolstered by the new interest in national politics.

In Whig history, the Glorious Revolution represented the triumph of the 'Protestant' monarchical constitution. In the 1770s the American Revolution had brought into play another innovation – the possibility of a constitution that was not monarchical. The French Revolution brought republicanism closer still, but the unpredictability of events in France made a coherent policy impossible to sustain. F. O'Gorman outlines the questions that were canvassed:

What was to be declared policy of the [Whig] party towards the French Revolution and towards reform at home? Beneath this, there lay the most crucial question of all. What was the nature of the British constitution? In short was that constitution which it was the party's purpose to defend 'founded upon the wisdom of antiquity, and sanctioned by the experience of time,' or was it, as Fox said on 6 May [1791], founded upon the doctrine of the rights of man?<sup>28</sup>

Burke's literary talent lent eloquence to the disapproval of popular agitation, and his *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (1790) caused the Foxites to cast about for their own formula in retaliation – this led to a 'campaign which had for its aim the adoption of Paine's principles as the creed of the party.'<sup>29</sup> However, even though the main oligarchy of the party were to shun the Paineite ideology and turn to Pitt after 1794, in the House they continued to sit with Fox. Physically, the split was signalled by Fox's codifying of 'the buff and the blue', originally the colours of George Washington's regiment, which had been taken up by the Rockinghams.<sup>30</sup> With Fox, Whiggism became the language of Opposition, yet still within the context of a constitution traditionally known overall as Whig, that is to say, loyal to the Hanoverians. The closest thing to a manifesto among the Foxites was his *Letter to the Electors of Westminster* (26 January 1793). Those Whigs who stressed loyalty to the Crown and were willing to accept repression after the declaration of war in February 1793 instead became part of the coalition under the Duke of Portland that supported Pitt as wartime leader.

It was the Foxites who were to keep the name Whig, until it disappeared altogether, whereas the Pittites were increasingly labelled Tories, a name they could hardly at first recognize as applying to them, given the original meaning of Toryism inherited from 1688, which denoted loyalty to the Stuarts rather than the Hanoverians. In 1793, these Tories or Pittites were still Whigs, in the sense of seventeenth-century constitutionalists – but they were Whigs who happened to support the war against France: 'Many a man means, by a Tory, him who supported Mr Pitt in his anti-Gallican wars. Those wars, it *happened* that the Tories supported, and the Whigs opposed. What then? The Tories did not

support them *as* Tories, nor the Whigs oppose them *as* Whigs.<sup>31</sup> The French war did not, by this argument, define Whiggism, nor initially were the Tories hostile to the overthrow of Bourbon despotism.

Confusing these debates at the same time was the emergence of a body of popular opinion in print as the Foxites became alienated from the Pittite Whigs.<sup>32</sup> Whiggism as an oppositional force and radicalism as an extra-constitutional popular protest therefore emerge together during the 1790s.<sup>33</sup> Burke wished to distinguish between them, and it was in the name of Whig constitutionality that he wrote *Reflections on the Revolution in France*, and in the attempt to direct the Whigs away from Foxite enthusiasm for the Revolution, the *Appeal*.<sup>34</sup> Much like the Puritans in the seventeenth century, British Jacobins were to be seen as enthusiasts, if secular ones, and the Whigs were the members who had restored order to a country threatened by civil war.

However, opposition parties in the seventeenth century had generally lost their heads, a point that confusingly resembled what was going on in France, and so distorted the development of late eighteenth-century opposition. In this context, the Whigs remain, even as oppositionists, within the governmental arena. Since this is before any understanding or use of the term 'His Majesty's Loyal Opposition', the Whigs of the 1790s could only conceive of opposition formulated as dependent on the Prince of Wales and his court.<sup>35</sup> Fox himself, except inasmuch as he was the charismatic focus of these men and women, had little sense of party as an ideological concept and remained 'uninterested in the refinements of speculative doctrine'.<sup>36</sup>

The oxymoronic notion of a 'legitimate' or governmental opposition developed only gradually during these years from the 1790s till the 1820s and not until well after the personal domination by the figures of Pitt and Fox was gone. In 1826, when the Whigs were still casting about for a strong direction, George Tierney, leader in the House (1817–21) and formerly one of the Whigs who had joined the Tories in the Portland government, urbanely remarked 'though the gentlemen opposite are in office, we are in power. The measures are ours, but all the emoluments are theirs'.<sup>37</sup> The term 'emoluments' indicates the continuation of the eighteenth-century concept of what it meant to hold office. It was the 'radical' Whig John Cam Hobhouse who first used the term 'his majesty's opposition' in this debate, as a witty play on the conventional way of referring to the government, 'his majesty's ministers', and Canning in replying had taken it up, to general laughter.<sup>38</sup>

The question of legal opposition remains one of language for both the Whigs in parliament and the public out-of-doors. True radical discourse remains undeveloped until the nineteenth century, in part because of the extreme repression of the 1790s, and also as Olivia Smith and Edgar Rickwood argue, because publishing had to catch up to developments in working-class literacy. For example,

Rickwood remarks that because of the change in copyright laws in 1774, William Hone, born in 1780, had the canon of literature made available to him in a way that his parents' generation, subsisting on a diet of chap-books, the Bible and *Pilgrim's Progress*, did not.<sup>39</sup> Hone was able to read English poetry in the cheap collected editions of Cooke: 'His generation was the first to have the genre of refined poetry readily available.'<sup>40</sup> At the same time, the allusions used in his trials in 1817 remain an example of the old Protestant dissenting culture: 'Because few texts were written in a vernacular language after the Restoration, books by protestant Dissent occupied a dominant place in the literature of Hone's class.'<sup>41</sup> E. P. Thompson argues that,

*Pilgrim's Progress* is, with the *Rights of Man*, one of the two foundation texts of the English working-class movement: Bunyan and Paine, with Cobbett and Owen, contributed most to the stock of ideas which make up the raw material of the movement from 1790–1850.<sup>42</sup>

Early nineteenth-century Whig language was not of the Dissenting vernacular. J. G. A. Pocock discusses how both radical and Tory criticisms of Whiggism – such as, for example, Cobbett's *History of the Protestant Reformation* (1824), Coleridge's *Constitution of the Church and State* (1830) and Southey's *Colloquies* (1830) – commonly advert to the sixteenth-century dissolution of the monasteries and dispersal of the medieval clerisy as illustrating the ill effects of Whiggish modernism.<sup>43</sup> In these accounts, Whiggism stands for the secularization of discourse and learning since the Reformation. But the Whigs could also point to the peaceful effects of modernism. The dissolution of the monasteries and the arbitrary bequeathal of all the Church's wealth to Henry VIII's friends, represented merely the last action of a recalcitrant feudal monarch rather than the emergence of a new oligarchy. Whig culture, Pocock argues, is the product of an urban commerce that shunned ideology: 'The ideal of politeness had first appeared in the Restoration, where it formed part of the latitudinarian campaign to replace prophetic [Puritan] by sociable religiosity.'<sup>44</sup> The town thus usurped the sociability of the Court: in Edinburgh we see 'a series of evidently Addisonian societies, dedicated to the furtherance of sociability, conversation, and moral and economic improvement.'<sup>45</sup>

This preference for sociability over ideology marks 'the ethic of limited strife.'<sup>46</sup> The ousting of Robert Walpole from office in 1742, for example, had marked a historical innovation because it had not required to be accomplished by assassination, execution, exile or impeachment, and this shows 'the extent to which loss of political office was coming to be regarded as both normal and tolerable, rather than as evidence of fundamental constitutional differences requiring resolution by force.'<sup>47</sup> Periodic alternation of government and opposition parties, of course, remained some distance in the future, after the time of Tierney

and his interpretation of 'his majesty's loyal opposition', but conflict remained contained within the freedom of Parliament.<sup>48</sup> In this parliamentary arena, the Whigs were the only party, and the term itself was used to denote the factions of Whiggism as they variously manoeuvred to catch the monarch's eye. But it would appear that the language and ideology of party were only developed by those not presently enjoying government patronage, and the *Edinburgh Review* offered an important innovation in the development of this ideology because it attempted to explicate the outlook of a 'rational patriot'.<sup>49</sup>

In the early nineteenth century, 'Scientific Whiggism' as a literary discipline showed the way forward for Whigs such as Palmerston, Russell and Lansdowne. Henry Brougham, one of the key *Edinburgh Review* contributors, also turned out to be a talented publicist for the Whig party, when he finally fluttered onto the Foxite branch held out by Grey, but had he received any encouragement from the Pittites in 1804, he could equally as well have joined them. Thus, where American and French radical discourse ended in republicanism and warfare, Pocock argues, British Whiggism, in its response to the two constitutional revolutions in those societies, turned instead on a much more complicated discussion of Liberty and Opposition: '... English and Scottish critics and conservatives – Hume, Smith, Paine, Bentham, Burke, Coleridge, Mill and Macaulay – engaged through sixty years of mingled repression and debate in a radical transformation of several of the sciences of society.'<sup>50</sup> Whiggism as it struggled to understand all the changes of government on the Continent developed the idea of constitutional and principled opposition in the early nineteenth century using the intellectual resources of its own historical vocabulary of liberty. In that sense all of these writers are Whigs.

The first chapter of this study sets out the place of the *Edinburgh Review* as it emerged during the Peace of Amiens (1802–3) and attempted under the guise of 'Scientific Whiggism' to offer an economic explanation of the French Revolution. Four years later, in 1806, when the Foxite Whigs were included in a government for the first time since 1783, Charles James Fox and Henry Brougham produced a pamphlet entitled *Inquiry into the State of the Nation at the Commencement of the Present Administration*. Dwelling almost entirely on foreign policy, its analysis of what was wrong with Britain was read by commentators as a manifesto of Whiggism and reinforces the perception that the key points of policy for the country at this juncture were comprehended in the war with France. The Whigs under Fox had always been synonymous with civil liberty, but there was little place for this stance in a society governed by Fox's former colleagues, now denominated 'Tories', who saw all talk of freedom in time of war as a jacobin threat to national security. It was characteristic of Brougham that he energetically went on in the same month to review the pamphlet himself in the *Edinburgh Review* and print copious extracts. A year later, during the election of

1807, he would attempt to set up a press campaign for the Whigs. The chapter also considers a controversial article written by Jeffrey in 1807, where he singles out William Cobbett as the most influential journalist of the day: ‘Cobbett’s *Political Register*’ marks a milestone in the press’s effort to speak of opposition to the government’s wartime policy. The *Political Register* had its own rejoinder, published in October 1807, when Cobbett, having judged that the Whigs’ moment of power had passed, wrote an article on the ‘Edinburgh Reviewers’ and offered his own assessment of the Whig government’s mistakes.

The second chapter looks at the re-emergence of the characteristic Whig terminology of liberty, when Napoleon’s relentlessly victorious army was unexpectedly routed by the Spanish peasantry. British public opinion was immediately electrified by this victory of the people, and there was widespread clamour for troops to be sent to the Peninsula. Coincident with the fervour over Spanish liberty, Fox’s history of the Glorious Revolution was posthumously published, and there was general talk about freedom and ‘Whig principles’. However, the Whigs themselves continued to hold out in parliament for a negotiated peace, and Jeffrey and Brougham in the *Edinburgh Review* argued against the British war effort in Spain, predicting certain defeat. Paradoxically, it was left to the Tory government under the Duke of Portland – who had headed the coalition ‘Portland Whigs’ during the 1790s – to advocate principles of Spanish liberty: one of the results of the *Edinburgh Review*’s anti-Peninsular stance was the establishment of the *Quarterly Review* as a government propaganda vehicle. Spain, however, was crucial in providing the British public with an up-to-date ideology of freedom that was neither French nor Whiggish – while the Whigs, accustomed to being hailed as the champions of 1688, found themselves wrongfooted in the popular media that they had dominated since 1802. This chapter discusses articles about Spain and liberty published in the *Edinburgh Review* during the years 1807–10 and considers the terminology of freedom as used in Coleridge’s *Friend*, Wordsworth’s *Convention of Cintra* and Cobbett’s *Political Register*.

Works discussed in the third chapter include William Cobbett’s *Grammar* and William Hone’s *Three Trials*, as well as James Mill in the *Edinburgh Review* on the liberty of the press. Inasmuch as the definition of libel was central to the debate about liberty during these years of wartime domestic repression, many writers became expert in the terms of libel law. The chapter also contains discussion of *The Times*’s relationship with the government. The *Examiner*, which had established itself in 1808 as a respected nonpartisan commentator, began to look ineffectual as its Whiggism was left behind by radicalism in 1816. On the government side at this time, Robert Southey wrote in the *Quarterly Review* against the unrestrained freedom of the press, which he argued had directly caused the post-war distress. This unrest culminated in 1820, in the agitation against George IV and his plans to divorce Caroline, when the queen made a

sensation with her 'Letter to the King' – ghostwritten by Cobbett. In response, the king bypassed both parliamentary parties and set out his own case in an open letter to the public. In this chapter, the Whigs are seen to be left behind in the popular discussion of liberty. There continued to be awkward attempts by the party to use the extraordinary agitation for Caroline out-of-doors in order to bring down the government, but in the end the Whigs' enlightenment rhetoric of freedom found few points of intersection with the legal challenges presented by radical journalists to the government judiciary. The chapter concludes with a *Blackwood's Magazine* article of 1821 that jeered at the 'State and Prospects of the Whigs'.

The apostasy of the Whigs is a theme of the discussion analysed in the fourth chapter, as the second generation of Romantic critics, exemplified by William Hazlitt, who had never known the darkest days of wartime repression and now accused the first generation of having betrayed their 1790s ideals of liberty. The Whig rhetoric of the Glorious Revolution was no longer adequate to the crises of 1816–21 and had been superseded by a new definition of liberty, seen in the growth of working-class publishing. Whereas radical writers directly took on the government in the courts and deism even reappeared, infighting among the literary classes (the 'Cockney School' squabble), as set against the background of significant political upheaval, seemed trivial. Amid all the radical clamour, the unexpected development was the rise of a new Tory voice. As *Blackwood's Magazine* argued, the Whigs no longer had all the jokes, and 'personality' became the new saleable commodity in periodical writing. The works of Byron, a Whig during the heyday of *Examiner* radicalism during 1812–15, were now co-opted by both the radicals and the Tories, and *Don Juan* and the new Tory magazines shared in the emergence of a new literary idiom of *banter* that crossed class boundaries. The fourth chapter thus contrasts the 'Cockney school' controversy over *Rimini* and Keats's polite Whiggism with *Blackwood's* response to *Don Juan* and *Life in London*, which emerged as the bestsellers of the 1820s.

The fifth chapter looks at the intellectual stocktaking that took place in a number of periodicals during the early 1820s. Articles such as John Gibson Lockhart's 'Periodical Criticism' (1818) in *Blackwood's* and William Hazlitt's 'The Periodical Press' (1823) in the *Edinburgh Review* undertook lengthy surveys of the periodical literature that had been such an outstanding feature of British life since the French Revolution – they theorized about the age's character as a *critical* one. Less politely, *Blackwood's* published its 'Historical Review' of the *Edinburgh Review*, professing to trace the quarterly's decline after 1821. The parliamentary Whigs remained out of office, and the question arose as to what the language of traditional Whiggism could usefully offer. In the post-Napoleonic world, this was complicated by the fact that continental Liberalism was emerging as the charismatic term of freedom in the rebellions of Greece and

Spain – and in Britain itself both the young Tories and Whigs were embracing this fashionable new ‘cant’ of safe revolution.

The sixth chapter opens with a consideration of the relationship between the old oppositional Whiggism and the new Liberalism, the preface to *Don Juan* standing as the key example of both together, and ends with contemporary testimony to the achievement of the *Edinburgh Review*. At its launch in 1824, the new *Westminster Review* set out an overview of the growth of public opinion during the Napoleonic era, and both the *Westminster Review* and *Blackwood's Magazine* offered retrospectives of what the *Edinburgh Review* had brought to literary and political criticism. In 1826, the *Edinburgh Review* published its own summary of the era and outlined a history of Whiggism in a review article on Thomas Moore's biography of Richard Brinsley Sheridan. Suddenly at the end of the decade, the parliamentary Whigs were called upon to form a government, and thus began the long delayed programme of electoral reform that Fox had projected in the 1780s. Nonetheless, all the developments of 1825–30 – the Whigs' accession to power, Francis Jeffrey's move to London to become Lord Advocate, the establishment of a chair of political economy at London (not Edinburgh), the wild success of the new Tory monthly *Fraser's Magazine*, and the publication of Moore's life of Byron – all these in fact marked the end of Whiggism's domination of British periodical literature.

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