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*The Strange Death of the Public Intellectual:
Liberal Intellectual Identity and the
'Field of Cultural Production' in England,
1880-1920*

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In 1908, the progressive London weekly *The Nation* published an anonymous article entitled 'The Dearth of Genius'. According to the article, this scarcity reflected a dramatic decline in the quality of intellectuals between the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. 'Geniuses' and 'prophets' of the Victorian age such as John Stuart Mill, Charles Darwin, John Ruskin, and Matthew Arnold were noticeably absent in contemporary culture:

The great men of the 'seventies' carried a certain real distinction of personality, an inspiration of expression, which no body of men of similar influence and authority carry now. Poets, artists, essayists, scientists were in large measure the conscious prophets or interpreters of new, large transforming ideas, the quick fruitage of recent discovery and audacious speculations in fifty new fields.

According to the article, their absence and the failure of a new generation of publicly-oriented intellectuals to replace them had grave consequences for the public culture of the nation and the entire era: 'such oracles are now dumb, and it is their trumpet notes we miss, not only among the poets of our time, but among our statesmen, scientists and reformers'.¹

Almost a century later in the closing decades of the twentieth century, critics again proclaim a similar dearth of intellectuals with grave consequences for public culture. In the preface to his 1987 book, *The Last Intellectuals*, Russell Jacoby has argued that a 'last generation' of American 'public intellectuals', born in the first decades of the twentieth century, is passing from the scene.² Unfortunately, these public intellectuals have not been replaced in contemporary culture: 'they possessed a voice and presence that younger intellectuals have failed to appropriate'. And like the *Nation* critic a century earlier, Jacoby

interprets this dearth of public intellectuals as having the ‘unnoticed and profoundly damaging’ consequence of the ‘impoverishment of public culture’.³

Jacoby is not alone in his observations of the decline of public intellectuals and the corresponding impoverishment of public culture during the last century. Since the 1962 publication of German critical theorist Jurgen Habermas’ seminal study, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*, an ideologically diverse group of American and European critics and scholars have examined aspects of the ‘decline and fall’ of the public sphere.⁴ Christopher Lasch, Michael Sandel, Jean Bethke Elshtain, John Keane, Terry Eagleton, and Jean Francois Lyotard – from very divergent viewpoints and with very different interpretations of the meanings of this decline – have all fundamentally confirmed Habermas’ original insights that the structural and normative features of the public sphere, including public intellectuals and public culture, have declined within western democracies.⁵ This particularly has been the case with the decline of public intellectuals and their influence on culture, society, and politics. As one modern scholar on the subject observed, there is an ‘unsettling consensus’ among left and right critics that authentic public intellectuals no longer exist.⁶

What is the meaning of this recurring claim of the decline of public intellectuals and their influence on public life? Is it, as many past and contemporary critics argue, an accurate representation of a *real* historical phenomenon with roots in the cultural, social, and political changes of the late-nineteenth and twentieth centuries? Or is it, as Bruce Robbins and others have countered, a recycled *discourse* or ‘usefully mobilizing fiction’ used by past and contemporary critics or public intellectuals themselves to legitimate certain intellectual, cultural, and social values and marginalize others?⁷ Or finally, as this article argues, are both of these interpretations alone insufficient to account for both the historical *and* discursive aspects of the decline of public intellectuals?

In order to evaluate these opposing interpretations and create viable alternative explanations, we need to examine the perceived decline of public intellectuals within a specific historical context. The *Nation* and the circle of intellectuals writing in this Edwardian weekly provide an excellent historical locus in which to engage these questions. Between the founding of the *Nation* in 1907 by its editor, H.W. Massingham, and his replacement as editor in 1923, the weekly gathered together some of Edwardian England’s most celebrated intellectuals and published their work before the public. The ‘*Nation* group’, as the circle became known, included social scientists L.T. Hobhouse and Graham Wallas,

radical economist J.A. Hobson, novelist H.W. Nevinson, politician and cultural critic C.F.G. Masterman, historians and scholars J.L. Hammond and Gilbert Murray, and political journalists and reformers such as H.N. Brailsford and W.D. Morrison. In addition, a host of national and international intellectuals gravitated to the *Nation* and its circle.⁸ Leading British social critics and writers including George Bernard Shaw, H.G. Wells, G.K. Chesterton, Arnold Bennett, John Galsworthy, and Roger Fry published regularly in the *Nation* and were frequent guests of the *Nation* group at their weekly 'lunches' (intellectual gatherings) at the National Liberal Club.⁹

The *Nation* group crystallised around the mission of transforming and adapting the Liberal party and English liberalism to the intellectual, social, cultural, and political changes of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Their 'New Liberalism' had many dimensions, but the most well known was their marriage of socialist theory to traditional liberalism resulting in the creation of what can best be labelled 'progressivism'.¹⁰ These New Liberal intellectuals were responsible for initiating welfare reforms in unemployment, housing, and health care in England. Individual members of the *Nation* group actually drafted many of the proposals that were incorporated into the 1909 welfare budget and the 1911 National Insurance Act. With their proximity to the sitting Liberal government and their wide-ranging intellectual ability, the New Liberals of the *Nation* group emerged as the 'serious Left' of English liberalism.

While most historians have understandably examined the ideological and political dimensions of the *Nation* group and their relationship to liberalism in the pre-war era, until very recently their abundant writings on intellectual and cultural life have been overlooked.¹¹ However, as intellectuals consistently engaged in the public sphere, these New Liberals were particularly sensitive to the public role of intellectuals and any social and cultural changes transforming that role in the early twentieth century.

Central to their writing was the idea of a decline of authentic intellectuals and intellectual life in England. From their pre-*Nation* days in London's radical clubs and societies of the 1880s and 1890s to their years as members of the *Nation* group, New Liberal intellectuals consistently claimed that their contemporary age suffered from the loss of great Victorian men of letters. This appeal to Victorian ideals seems contradictory given their earlier rejection of Victorianism. During the late 1880s and 1890s, future *Nation* group intellectuals such as Hobhouse, Hobson, Wallas and Nevinson joined many of their generation in rejecting Victorian notions of politics, culture, economics,

sexuality and psychology.¹² However, their common educational experience at Oxford and their embrace of T.H. Green's Idealist philosophy and notions of political and moral obligation, led them away from any broad assault on Victorian moralism. Unlike the intellectuals and artists of the Bloomsbury Group or those gathering around A.R. Orage's *New Age* who were publicly attacking accepted notions of morality, the New Liberals of the *Nation* group called for a new infusion of morality into the political, economic, and social fabric of England.¹³

New Liberals made great intellectuals responsible for such moral leadership in the public sphere. In their writings, the 'Great Lights' of the Victorian age, Dickens, Tennyson, and Browning in literature, Arnold, Morris, and Ruskin in social and cultural criticism, Darwin, Spencer, and Huxley in science, and Bentham, Mill, and Green in liberal political theory, were credited with guiding their age through unprecedented change. The youngest member of the *Nation* group, C.F.G. Masterman, perfectly captured this Edwardian sense of admiration when he wrote that while the Victorian age was a period of 'profounder transformation than had been effected by all the preceding centuries', its great writers, essayists, scientists, and politicians had met the challenge.¹⁴ In other words, Victorian men of letters had succeeded where contemporary intellectuals had failed. In an age of Edwardian 'crisis' – waves of industrial strikes, political organisation of the working classes, increasing militancy of the suffragettes, intransigence of the House of Lords, and open rebellion in Ireland – contemporary England needed another assemblage of guiding 'oracles' in the form of a new generation of Mills, Ruskins, and Arnolds.¹⁵

In the writings of the *Nation* group, therefore, Victorian men of letters represented a set of *normative ideals* that defined authentic intellectual, cultural, and moral leadership in the public sphere. When Masterman published his award-winning book on Alfred Tennyson in 1900, he selectively singled out these qualities: 'tired of vain wandering, like children gone astray, his (Tennyson's) people are seeking guidance ... And to this newer generation, regarding with strange awe and reverence one who had survived the storm and emerged unbeaten from the conflict, he asserts his steadfast adherence to the beliefs that alone had rendered endurable the arduous struggle'.¹⁶

However, the *Nation* group did not simply resurrect these Victorian ideals of intellectual leadership unchanged or reclaim them without reference to contemporary life. They could not and did not construct a usable past in a vacuum. They formulated their ideals within the contemporary environment of Edwardian England and used them to meet what they perceived to be the particular social and cultural challenges

of that era. As Pierre Bourdieu theorised, all creative projects are subject to and produced within a complex grid of real social and cultural forces. This 'field of cultural production' as he labelled it, constitutes the parameters for defining and presenting an intellectual or cultural ideal before the public. It also shapes the available sources of cultural authority that can be mobilized to legitimate or 'consecrate' this ideal or create viable alternatives.¹⁷

New Liberals issued their normative ideals in the social and cultural context of a perceived 'age of the masses'. In sheer numbers, it seemed as if a new mass democracy had emerged during the course of the late-nineteenth century. Between 1867 and 1884, a combination of national franchise reform acts and a series of local electioneering acts resulted in an increase of the registered electorate of the United Kingdom of over 300% from 1,359,000 to 5,700,000.¹⁸ While historians such as Ross McKibbin and Donald Read have rightly emphasized the continuities of elite political culture during this expansion of the electorate, intellectuals and writers perceived it as the harbinger of a dramatic new age.¹⁹ In the words of James Baldwin Brown, a leading Congregationalist minister writing in 1871, the expansion of the vote to the masses was 'the revolution of our times'.²⁰

New Liberals shared this perception of a dramatic new age of the masses. Some of their major pre-war works, including Hobhouse's *Democracy and Reaction* (1904), Wallas' *Human Nature and Politics* (1908), and Hobson's *The Crisis of Liberalism: New Issues of Democracy* (1909), explored the implications of this change. They saw it in cultural terms. All three concluded that the extension of the franchise had created an unprecedented new type of mass public, which Hobhouse labelled 'the man-on-the-top-of-the-bus', Hobson 'the mob-mind' and Wallas 'the crowd' (building on the work of French sociologist Gustave Le Bon).²¹ This new public, they argued, was more volatile, irrational, and impressionistic than in the past. More importantly, it was open to the emotional appeals of demagogues and the sensationalism of the 'yellow journalism' represented most dramatically by appearance and success of the *Daily Mail* (1896).²²

The New Liberals' focus on public 'guidance' or leadership of the people and appeals to past intellectual ideals only make sense within this transformed intellectual and cultural field. As Christopher Kent demonstrates in his *Brains and Numbers*, English social theorists and artists struggled throughout the nineteenth century to formulate the relationship of intellectuals to the masses.²³ From Coleridge's conservative 'clerisy' to the Oxford Comtists' 'intellectual priesthood' to J.S. Mill's progressive 'libertarian' elite, mid-Victorians promoted a vast

array of ideas for this relationship. Therefore, the New Liberals' search for an ideal of intellectual leadership was part of a longer tradition in England. However, their particular Edwardian search emerged in a very different context than previous projects. New Liberals issued their ideals in the years *after* the expansion of the franchise in the 1880s and *after* their direct, even personal experiences with the enfranchised 'jingoistic' masses during the Boer War at the turn of the century. For most liberals, from the burgeoning New Liberals of the *Nation* group to established liberals such as Bryce and Morley, the context of the Boer War dramatically transformed their perspectives of the possible relationship of intellectuals to the masses.²⁴ While mid-Victorians still envisioned a potential 'alliance of brains and numbers' in the future, Edwardian liberals were more pessimistic about this alliance and more conservative in their expectations. New Liberals claimed that this alliance had already failed at the end of the century and that this failure was one of the most pressing contemporary 'problems' facing England. Masterman's 1910 *Nation* article entitled 'Our "Educated" Classes' put the problem in dramatic present terms:

A certain timidity, bred of lack of sympathy and understanding of the people, commonly prevails in intellectual castles and coteries, precluding our great intellectuals from exercising that powerful and direct influence over the popular mind and movement which is visible in such countries as Russia, France and even America ... Such fruitful and inspiring leadership is not common here, and we have some reason to complain of the too persistent severance which persists, in which we call an age of popular education, between the advanced intellect of the country and the awakening populace.²⁵

Masterman's complaint revealed some important dimensions of this perceived crisis of contemporary intellectual leadership. He was concerned that without the necessary 'inspiring leadership', the enfranchised masses were an unpredictable and volatile force. There was a veiled sense of fear and threat in Masterman's notion of an 'awakening populace' without proper guidance or control. However, unlike mid-Victorian thinkers, New Liberals resisted formulating an ideal oligarchy or select class of intellectuals to lead the masses. They instead formulated a particular *type* of intellectual and a certain kind of *intellectual authority* that would empower thinkers to guide and educate an already existing and unpredictable mass public.

In order to make these ideals relevant to the needs of their own Edwardian society and culture, New Liberals had to identify and theorise the authority of intellectuals to lead the masses. They did this by representing certain Victorian men of letters as ideal intellectuals. In

doing so, New Liberals legitimised a traditional, but very powerful normative idea of intellectuals as carriers of knowledge and truth. As they went to great lengths to explain, Victorian men of letters gained the authority to lead the public through their ability to appeal to a universal human subject through common humanistic truths. As J.A. Hobson explicitly argued in his 1901 work on modern social theory, 'the great work of the world has been done by hard workers but not by close specialists, even in the nineteenth century. Kant, Goethe, Wordsworth, Browning, Mill, Darwin, Spencer, Ruskin – the greatness of the work of such men depends upon the *quality of universality* (my emphasis)'.²⁶

This particular interpretation of intellectual authority claimed what Zygmunt Bauman labels a 'legislative' function and authority for intellectuals.²⁷ According to Bauman, this traditional legislative role 'consists of making authoritative statements' on controversial subjects that are then seen as correct and binding. Therefore, he continued, the legislative intellectual was legitimised 'by superior (objective) knowledge to which intellectuals have a better access than the non-intellectual part of society'.²⁸ Most importantly, this knowledge rested on *universal* validity. Their knowledge and authority was 'extraterritorial', that is, not bound to localized traditions or specific disciplines. As Bauman and others rightly emphasized, during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, men of letters' social duty was to locate universal 'truths' and legislate these truths to a larger public, marking the path toward the goals of freedom, progress, and enlightenment.

It was this type of legislative authority that New Liberals projected onto Victorian men of letters and represented as necessary for their own age. In doing so, they constructed a highly idealised version of nineteenth-century intellectuals. According to the New Liberal interpretation, select men of letters had successfully formulated universal principles to meet the modern political and social conditions of their age. In his *Crisis of Liberalism* (1909), Hobson argued that despite their differences, Carlyle, Mill, Ruskin, Kingsley, Maurice, Dickens, and Disraeli shared a 'mission' in providing 'a new general plan of life'. This plan required a totality between the arts, politics, and social reform or a 'vision of some new harmony of life'.²⁹

Hobson's interpretation of nineteenth-century intellectuals was a useful fiction. In fact, as Raymond Williams argued in *Culture and Society*, it was precisely this universalist authority and generalist intellectual identity that was breaking down throughout the nineteenth century. New market conditions, a changed relationship between the writer and the public, and the increasing specialization of intellectual production undermined the authority of universal knowledge and made it increas-

ingly difficult for men of letters to legislate universal truths to a receptive public. According to Williams, nineteenth-century artists and intellectuals responded to this modernity by creating and promoting a defensive ideal of the 'romantic genius'. This ideal sought to protect the threatened notions of universal truth and autonomous intellectual production. In the romantic imagination, the idealized genius operated 'above' the demands of the market and specialized knowledge to create an integrative and universal culture that claimed to represent the true needs and tastes of humanity.³⁰

New Liberals took versions of this myth of the independent genius and ideal of universal knowledge and represented it as a worthy, and more importantly, necessary ideal for intellectual leadership in their own contentious age. They did this by reintroducing certain men of letters to the Edwardian public and then interpreting their lives and projects in a contemporary context. Not surprisingly, their focus was on generalist literary intellectuals or social critics whose work encompassed universalism and moralism. The earliest publications of the members of the *Nation* group were often biographies and commentaries on some of the most well known moralists and men of letters of the late-eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.³¹

Hobson's writing on Ruskin was characteristic of this interpretation of past intellectuals in a contemporary context. While Hobson discounted many of Ruskin's Victorian prejudices, he emphasized Ruskin's viability as an ideal for modern intellectuals. In *John Ruskin, Social Reformer*, he celebrated Ruskin's ability to see the totality or universal connection between all aspects of thought. In the words of Hobson, Ruskin saw life 'steadily and (saw) it whole'.³² According to Hobson, it was precisely this unifying quality that was necessary for the contemporary leadership of social reform.³³

H.W. Nevinson, himself an emerging literary artist, represented Tolstoy as another such ideal intellectual. In his 1912 *Nation* article, 'The Teaching of Tolstoy', Nevinson argued that among living writers Tolstoy best represented the heroic qualities of the authentic intellectual. He argued that unlike many contemporary intellectuals, Tolstoy's deep questioning of modern life did not lead him to despair or sceptical withdrawal from creative life. On the contrary, it led him, like many nineteenth-century men of letters, on a new search for the shared ideals of human experience. According to Nevinson: 'it is in this search for *unity* in modern life, and for the simplicity of habit which alone can make it possible, that Tolstoy reaches out after the *most vital desire of our age* (my emphasis)'. He then connected Tolstoy's qualities to a broader nineteenth-century tradition: 'it is the aim, more or less conscious, of

the best literature of the last century, of Wordsworth, Hugo, Ruskin, Dickens, Arnold'.³⁴

This selective use of the past and interpretation of a crisis-ridden present created a self-fulfilling role for the intellectuals of the *Nation* group. As Bourdieu emphasized, the 'consecration process', which includes identifying intellectual or cultural norms and creating an image of great predecessors, 'provide(s) the terms for *self-definition* (my emphasis)'.³⁵ In many places and through multiple forms of expression, the intellectuals of the *Nation* group defined and presented *themselves* as contemporary legislators fulfilling the urgent leadership role in modern England. They did this through a complex process of association and self-promotion. First, by making themselves responsible for the memory and meaning of these past intellectuals, and second, by claiming for themselves an up-to-date inheritance of the legislative tradition.

New Liberals accomplished this complex process of association and inheritance through implicit and explicit means. One of the most important and innovative means was the use of festivals or celebrations. As Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger have illustrated, festivals were a common yet extremely effective means to 'reinvent' the authority of tradition during the late-Victorian and Edwardian eras.³⁶ Contemporaries used festivals, commemorations, and popular representations of past people and ideas to support specific political positions or broader ideological agendas. As Eugenio Biagini demonstrated, commemorations of the life and work of Richard Cobden played an important role in the defence of free trade during the late-Victorian and Edwardian eras.³⁷

Throughout the first decades of the twentieth century, the *Nation* group was responsible for producing, advertising, and leading a series of festivals commemorating 'great' nineteenth-century men of letters. Nevinson's diary gives a clear account of the preparation for these festivals as well as the events themselves. For example, in March of 1908, Nevinson began organizing a 'Tolstoy Celebration' in London.³⁸ A few years later, Nevinson and Hobson led in the preparations of a weeklong commemoration of the life and work of John Ruskin.³⁹

These public gatherings, usually held in one of London's many public meeting halls, brought together men and women of the middle classes, eclectic socialites, and a smattering of the aristocracy. According to Nevinson's diary, these afternoon and evening celebrations and gatherings drew, on occasion, over 500 participants.⁴⁰ Most of the audience knew each other or of each other from the various organizations, reform societies, and dinner groups that dominated middle-class

London social life. Memorial celebrations drew some of the leading writers and intellectuals of the period to lecture on the importance and significance of these past and living 'great men'. For example, Nevinson convinced George Bernard Shaw to participate in the Tolstoy celebration he was organising.⁴¹

These festivals and celebrations were bridges between past and contemporary intellectuals. This was particularly the case with the memory of John Ruskin. When Nevinson and Hobson organised the celebration of this quintessential Victorian man of letters, they brought together Ruskin's students at Oxford (including Nevinson himself) to recall personal memories and conversations with the master. Through such personal recollections, these contemporary intellectuals served as apostles to the word and life of Ruskin with the authority of having known and spoken with him directly. Through this master-apostle relationship – celebrated publicly – the continuity and authority of Ruskin was forged between generations of intellectuals.⁴²

The *Nation* helped to publicize these events and to prepare public interest in them.⁴³ Usually one of the regular staff wrote a 'middle' (topical article following the political news in the *Nation*) or a series of middles on the particular intellectual being celebrated. One illustrative example is timing of Nevinson's 'The Teaching of Tolstoy' published on 12 September, 1908 just weeks before the Tolstoy celebration. In articles such as this, the *Nation* authors interpreted the significance of the lives and works of the selected intellectuals to their Edwardian middle-class readership. Or to put it in Bourdieu's terms, these celebrations and the associated *Nation* commentary consecrated a particular type of authority before the public and within the contemporary field of cultural production. In particular, they consecrated men of letters' enduring qualities as legislative intellectuals. For Nevinson, through legislative intellectuals such as Tolstoy, 'the man of our times, in spite of all his social divisions, of the materialism with which his whole life seems bound up, begins to feel the desire to be at one with his kind'.⁴⁴

This connection between the legislative intellectuals of the past and the *Nation* group was also forged through more direct, explicit means. Through reviews of each other's published work, New Liberal intellectuals represented themselves, and by association the *Nation* Group as a circle, as authentic heirs to this authoritative tradition. They cast their colleagues in the role of modern legislators, responsible for reformulating underlying universal ideas to meet contemporary social and intellectual needs. By 1910, the members of the *Nation* group were confident enough to make this inheritance explicit. In a review of Hobson's *Crisis of Liberalism* (1909) published in the *Nation*, L.T. Hobhouse articulated

the tradition and function of the universal legislator through the life and intellectual project of his associate Hobson:

In truth, in proportion as he (Hobson) can grope his way toward some of those great underlying conceptions, which once clearly grasped and proclaimed 'make all things new', he is exercising a deeper and more lasting influence on the destinies of the race than the 'able editor' who popularizes bits of his teaching or the cabinet minister who is ultimately destined to embody some fragment of it in a Bill. It is true that the progressive idea of one age is often worn out and perhaps a destructive formula in the next. *The greater the need for an apostolic succession of thinking men who will constantly re-state political principles in terms of the living needs of each generation.* Liberalism in our day has suffered not from a lack of a Gladstone than from the lack of a Mill (my emphasis).⁴⁵

Hobhouse then connected Hobson with this 'apostolic' tradition through the symbolic intellectual figure of John Stuart Mill: 'the task of Mill is that which Mr. Hobson takes up anew in a spirit worthy of the master'.⁴⁶

This direct inheritance from the past legislative tradition, however, needed to be formulated and modernised within the *Nation* group's own contemporary field of cultural production. As Hobhouse made clear in the extended passage above, publicly oriented intellectuals such as Hobson had to restate their ideas 'in terms of the living needs of each generation'. For this generation of intellectuals, it meant restating their ideas and principles through an emerging professional social science. As Reba Soffer, Eileen Janes Yeo, and other historians of social science have argued, the authority and label of 'science' was becoming necessary for legitimacy before the reading public during and after the 1880s.⁴⁷ The public, as well as social theorists themselves, increasingly demanded that research be conducted by educated and trained social investigators skilled in gathering reliable information and able to interpret it scientifically.⁴⁸

New Liberals, therefore, needed to formulate their traditional ideal of intellectuals and intellectual authority within this changing context. This placed their representation of intellectuals, particularly the legitimacy of legislative men of letters and their attachment to this ideal, at the centre of a growing tension between amateur and professional knowledge. Young socialist intellectuals and theorists, led by Sidney and Beatrice Webb and fellow Fabian H.G. Wells, were actually defining themselves and their scientific social theory *against* 'outdated' Victorian men of letters and what they represented.⁴⁹ The same Victorian values celebrated by the *Nation* group – universalism, moralism and anti-

specialization – were an anathema to socialist intellectuals who represented themselves and their work as objective, scientific, and specialised. In fact, these socialist intellectuals were busily attacking the *Nation* group specifically because of their association with outdated Victorian ideals. In a very public exchange of harsh words after J.A. Hobson's scathing review of H.G. Wells' *A Modern Utopia* (1905), Wells accused the intellectuals of *Nation* group of being too attached to past ideals and outdated political parties to meet the needs of a 'new generation' of socialist thinkers.⁵⁰

As Stefan Collini asserts, it was common during this era for English intellectuals in search of authority before the public to label an opposing group of intellectuals either as too amateur and outdated or too specialized and professional.⁵¹ However, such labelling by intellectuals themselves obscures the complexities inherent in the formation of intellectual identity. What makes the New Liberals of the *Nation* group unique and important to rethinking public intellectual identity was their attempt to *synthesize* a modern specialized, professional knowledge with past Victorian ideals of universal, legislative knowledge. In doing so, individual New Liberal thinkers and the *Nation* group as a circle created a unique source of intellectual authority before the public and a powerfully redefined role for public intellectuals at the turn of the century.

This synthesis of traditional and modern authority was made possible by the particular formulation of social science and the role of the professional social scientist in the writings of L.T. Hobhouse. During the first decade of the twentieth century, Hobhouse emerged as England's most prominent professional sociologist.⁵² The publication of his two related studies *Mind in Evolution* (1902) and *Morals in Evolution* (1906) led to his appointment to the Martin White chair of sociology at the University of London in 1907 and the first editorship of the *Sociological Review*, the official publication of the newly founded Sociological Society (1903).⁵³

With this professional and institutional status, Hobhouse devoted himself to formulating the foundations of a new 'general sociology' and rethinking the public role of the professionally trained sociologist.⁵⁴ Central to both of these was the theorisation of the complex relationship between social ethics and social science. This relationship was the theme of Hobhouse's inaugural lecture to the Sociological Society in 1907, where he argued, 'but the very terms of the protest show how *impossible* it is to keep Sociology – especially the broader investigations of general Sociology – in permanent separation from all ethical considerations. On the one side if right conduct is truly social conduct the

results of sociology cannot be indifferent to the moral philosopher (my emphasis)'.⁵⁵

Discovering the actual relationship between 'ethical considerations' and general sociology became the central concern of Hobhouse's professional thought and work. He explored this relationship in his major pre-war works: *Mind in Evolution*, *Morals in Evolution*, and the tremendously influential *Development and Purpose* (1913). In all these works, he developed a systematic study of morals and social life through a particular conception of evolution. Put simply, Hobhouse argued that there was an evolution of the human mind *and* human morality over time. Following the methodology of natural science, he set out to identify, measure, and analyse this 'orthogenic' evolution. As a scientist, he insisted that this evolution could be scientifically analysed through a study of actual historical social environments and specific moral relations. However, unlike some British idealists and neo-Hegelians, Hobhouse refused to see the goal or the 'purpose' of this evolution as existing outside of society and its specific moral and social relations.⁵⁶ He rejected as unproven and unscientific the simple concepts of progress and development found in both idealist and positivist theories. In *Development and Purpose*, Hobhouse argued that moral development and social purpose were actually 'adaptations' to human society and not the product of some *a priori* teleology. Progress, social development, moral evolution, and even purpose were only possible and understandable as human constructions emerging out of historically existing social relationships. In other words, humanity and human intelligence did not evolve through Darwinian biological mutations or Hegelian world-historical ideals: they evolved through social interaction and socially-produced 'consciousness' of shared ideals, social goals, and channels of 'harmonic' relations. According to Hobhouse, development and purpose evolved through these shared social and ethical ideals or what he aptly termed 'universals'. Social order, Hobhouse argued, 'only arises as these universals, which previously operate unconsciously, emerge into explicit objects of consciousness, and are thus capable of correlation. With their aid it arranges masses of experience in ordered groupings and forms general rules for the guidance of action'.⁵⁷

Identifying these universals and analysing them as guides to moral and mental evolution became the legitimising function of the scientifically trained general sociologist. Following Hobhouse's logic, if modern sociologists could identify and evaluate the universals of society, they could also suggest the best social forms, the most harmonic social institutions, and the most correlated universals for moral evolution and social progress. If mind and morality *adapted* to the social

order, it made sense that a proper social order would foster mental and moral progress. In other words, progress and moral evolution were not simply moral universals (philosophic idealism) or scientific laws (positivism), but consciously created universals that could be encouraged and fostered if society were properly arranged and controlled. With this sociology, Hobhouse, like Talcott Parsons (who studied under him), insisted that a harmonic social environment, including proper social-ethical relations and carefully constructed social institutions, could form a reconstructed totality in which the individual could develop mentally, morally, and socially. As Hobhouse told an eager American audience composed of the new political science faculty at Columbia University in 1912, 'we ought to inquire whether underlying the diffused mass of social effort there is discoverable any coherent scheme of social betterment or progress as a whole'.⁵⁸

In Hobhouse's sociology, therefore, the scientifically informed general sociologist became at once the progressive moral philosopher and active social reformer. He was professionally trained to identify past universals and empowered to judge which societies, institutions, and relations fostered social progress and moral evolution. To return to his inaugural address to the Sociological Society:

... to discover one of the conditions of human association is not all one with discovering an element in the ethical ideal. But there are circumstances in which the two come very nearly to the same thing. For if the condition is a vital and unalterable condition of social life, if science proves that the social life cannot subsist without it, and if moral philosophy regards the maintenance of the social life as a necessary part of its ideal then the *scientific truth is at once translatable into a moral command* (my emphasis).⁵⁹

This translation of the sociologist from a passive scientific investigator into an active participant in the ordering of social relations was a major methodological step. However, as Reba Soffer has observed, progressives and political activists such as Hobhouse, as well as his *Nation* colleagues Graham Wallas and J.A. Hobson, saw the step from scientist to reformer as logical, even imperative.⁶⁰ After all, their primary motivation for undertaking social investigation was to reform the moral order of society. Even after their scientific, professional specialization, they remained committed to their Oxford roots, especially to T.H. Green's ideas of active citizenship and political obligation.

With these commitments, Hobhouse became one of the leading proponents for the idea that intellectuals should be actively engaged in practical social reform. In *Morals in Evolution*, he explicitly identified

the moral and social-scientific foundations for practical social action. He used language that combined sociological and religious metaphors to explain more fully the role of the authentic intellectual in guiding modern society: 'humanity is a growing organism, and the problem of the thinker is to understand the laws of its growth and adjust the code of conduct which his disciples are to preach to the needs of the present phase'.⁶¹

This passage from *Morals in Evolution* had important implications for New Liberal ideas concerning the identity, authority, and function of intellectuals in modern society and culture. In Hobhouse's notion of the general sociologist or 'thinker' who understands 'laws' and 'adjust(s) the code of conduct' there was simultaneously a *continuation and modernization* of their earlier legitimation (consecration) of the legislative man of letters. In Hobhouse's theory, general sociologists still functioned as nineteenth-century legislators making authoritative universal statements on social relations, morality, and politics. However, with general sociology, they could now make those universal statements with the certainty and legitimacy of modern science. Therefore, intellectuals retained their authority to lead and guide society through privileged insights into 'truth'. More than ever, the (scientific) intellectual had better access to knowledge than the (unscientific) non-intellectual part of society.⁶²

The New Liberal synthesis of social science and moral universalism constructed a *mediating* role for intellectuals between the world of knowledge and everyday practical or political applications. As Hobson argued in *Crisis of Liberalism*, 'not, indeed, that social reform requires that the majority of citizens shall become expert social scientists; but such a social science must be in their midst in such a way that the practical statesmen, the journalists, preachers, teachers, and other leaders of public opinion, may be deeply informed by it, so that sound information and sound modes of thinking may in various degrees, by many channels, percolate into the general mind'.⁶³

In their individual publications and in the *Nation*, New Liberals increasingly envisioned the modern professional sociologist in this activist public and political role. According to Hobson, to deny these thinkers, 'whose knowledge and training particularly qualify them to give light and leading to their fellow-citizens', an active role in political movements was, '... moral and intellectual mutilation, as degrading to those who are curtailed in their citizenship, as it is injurious to the public'.⁶⁴ With this public dimension and vision of political responsibility, the *Nation* group formulated a type of 'public intellectual' who engaged contemporary social and political issues in the public sphere

with the authority of privileged universal knowledge and the legitimacy of professional social science.

The *Nation* group attached themselves to this synthetic ideal of the public intellectual and used it as a powerful source of intellectual legitimacy and cultural authority before the Edwardian reading public. In the *Nation* and elsewhere, they represented themselves, individually and collectively, as public intellectuals mediating between the world of privileged knowledge and practical political action. This mediating claim, however, was only possible because of the unique social position of the *Nation* group and the particular political situation in pre-war England.

After the Liberal victory in 1905-6, Massingham, Masterman, Nevinston, Hammond, Brailsford, Hobson, Wallas, and Hobhouse had direct contact with the ruling Liberal party. They also had a direct input and influence in the programmes it sought to enact. As faithful followers and supporters of liberalism and the Liberal party, the *Nation* group served as a type of 'ginger group' to the Liberal government.⁶⁵ In fact, the new Prime Minister, Henry Campbell-Bannerman outlined his foreign policy in the *Nation* while the young rising stars of the party, most notably Lloyd George and Winston Churchill, were close to the *Nation* group and frequent guests at the weekly *Nation* lunches.⁶⁶ Through these personal contacts and via articles or leaders in the *Nation*, New Liberals could hope to 'guide' the 'party of progress' with the larger principles developed out of social science.⁶⁷

Not surprisingly, L.T. Hobhouse most clearly articulated the importance of public intellectuals to modern liberalism and the future of liberal England. He argued for the necessity of a group of publicly-oriented yet scientifically disinterested intellectuals: 'in so far as there is a real advance in public life, in so far as politics are a serious study designed towards the betterment of humanity, there must be principles guiding the actions of statesmen standing above mere self-interest and rooted in something deeper than party ...'.⁶⁸ In the *Nation*, he then identified certain liberal intellectuals who were 'above' the self-interest of politics, but still socially and politically situated to influence the principles of liberalism and practically direct the Liberal party. According to Hobhouse, his *Nation* group colleague J.A. Hobson was a clear example of this engaged intellectual: 'can the world be moved without ideas? To this question thinkers like Mr. Hobson reply with a clear negative. For them the thinker is no recluse but a man *with a living and practical function* (my emphasis)'.⁶⁹ After linking Hobson explicitly with this invaluable mediating function, he implied that liberalism and the Liberal party needed other such public intellectuals. He was clearly speaking of the New Liberal theorists that made up the *Nation* group

when he issued a wider call for publicly-engaged intellectuals: 'the hope for the future of the party of Progress must largely depend upon the efforts of thinkers – not thinkers of the study, but thinkers in close contact with the necessities of national life – to restate the fundamental principles of Liberalism in the form which modern conditions require'.⁷⁰

The linking of the *Nation* group and their project of New Liberalism with the ideal of the public intellectual also legitimated this circle of intellectuals within the larger world of *fin de siècle* intellectuals. Throughout the pre-war era, the *Nation* group asserted their newly established public intellectual authority against competing intellectual groups and alternative notions of social reform. In each case, they labelled competing groups and their projects as either 'over-professional' or outdated and 'amateur' in order to highlight the unique importance of their synthetic intellectual identity and their approach to contemporary social problems.

This helps explain the very public New Liberal attack on their former friends and colleagues of the Fabian Society. In one of the first issues of the *Nation*, L.T. Hobhouse published his now well-known 'Career of Fabianism'.⁷¹ What is most striking about this article is Hobhouse's use of the normative ideal of the public intellectual against the Fabians. He began the article by stating that the Fabians were 'an instructive lesson' in the trajectory and evolution of societies. At one time (presumably during Hobhouse's early association with them in the 1880s and 1890s), the Society was a legitimate middle-class intellectual circle charged with the 'task' of reinterpreting large ideals such as democracy and progressive liberalism under modern conditions. However, according to Hobhouse, the movement lost its legislative function and had become self-absorbed: 'a couple of decades brings most societies to the stiffness of old age; its officials become heavy with authority, its elected committees have passed into a virtually self-sustained autocracy, its proceedings are shrouded in mysterious importance, its work is slow, mechanical and insubstantial'. Hobhouse aimed specifically at the Fabians' abandonment of those disinterested universal ideas or 'larger concepts' that legitimated the lives and projects of Mill, Green, Morris, and Ruskin. Contemporary Fabianism was instead motivated by a calculated 'opportunism' and narrowly specialised 'fact-grubbing' research, which led only to 'disconnected sectional reforms'.⁷²

Strategically, at the same time that the New Liberals warned against Fabian 'scientism' and narrow professional 'expertise', they simultaneously condemned other reformist circles precisely for their *lack of* scientific and professional authority. The most obvious example of this was the *Nation* group's sustained assault on Bernard Bosanquet's

Charity Organization Society.⁷³ In a critical article, 'The Ways of the C.O.S.', the *Nation* argued that this organization's emphasis on individual responsibility and moral character to explain poverty and social distress 'reflect(ed) a false view of social life'.⁷⁴ According to the article, the C.O.S. was no longer a viable alternative to the new generation which 'saw through the old, obsolete, paralysing theories, in full force when the Charity Organization Society began, denying the power of society to deal with such evils as those of improper distribution of wealth, and sweated industries. These *new reformers* wanted to attack, not the incidental, but the capital evils of society' (my emphasis).⁷⁵ According to the social scientific 'new reformers' such as the *Nation* group, the vision of philanthropy was based on 'outdated' and 'unscientific' moralism that reflected an aristocratic interpretation of poverty and social reform. By 1914, the *Nation* had fully aligned itself with the authority and legitimacy of social science and related to its readership that: '... there is no atmosphere so deranging as the atmosphere of philanthropy'.⁷⁶

The writing in the *Nation* further defined the importance of this authoritative public intellectual identity that synthesised moral and social scientific leadership. Hobhouse's 1909 'Oxford and the People', argued that only a combination of modern social science and traditional moral leadership could provide democracy with a safe future. According to the article, young reformers and students should seek out and further this synthetic vision 'to bring about, not merely a reconciliation, but an alliance, permanent, heartfelt, and fruitful of good, between Science and Democracy, between the movement towards greater social equality and the new conception of intellectual duty that inspires modern students and thinkers'.⁷⁷

As Hobhouse's passage suggested, the *Nation* group began to represent itself as critical to the very future of democracy in liberal society and culture. Instead of the mid-Victorian alliance between 'brains and numbers', Hobhouse called for a contemporary alliance between 'Science and Democracy'. This alliance, based on the new understandings of social science, could preserve the best of liberal society and culture as it enacted the necessary changes to further social and moral progress under modern conditions. Through social science and reform, the demands of 'social equality' emerging from the enfranchised masses – unemployment insurance, workers' rights, and health and housing reform – could be safely enacted within the boundaries of liberal political culture and traditional political parties. With public intellectuals 'dutifully' mediating between social theory and established politics, these potentially revolutionary social changes could be introduced without the volatile masses in the streets or the leadership of

the independent and working class-based Labour party. To this end, the *Nation* tried to convince its readers that public institutions were becoming too complex for the understandings of everyday citizens or simple notions of democratic public opinion. There were new political groups, multiple reformist programs, and a host of political interests within the state. Therefore, the *Nation* group argued that the public intellectual – informed by social science and knowledgeable of the universal sources of social harmony, yet engaged in the practical politics of welfare reform – was the only force that could rise above the contending interests of modern political culture. Only these mediating intellectuals could understand the connective universals between all groups and lead this new complex ‘machine’ of mass democratic politics.⁷⁸

The public intellectual, therefore, emerged as an important identity for the New Liberals of the *Nation* group at the turn of the century. The synthetic nature of this identity allowed the group to claim a unique position and role in the dramatic social and cultural transformations of *fin de siècle* England. They argued that only they and their project of New Liberalism were equipped to provide both the moral and social scientific leadership that was necessary for the continuation of the rational progress, social harmony, and enlightenment left by the Victorian age. As public intellectuals, only they could inherit the legislative function of the Victorian men of letters and modernize this moralist tradition with professional social science. In this way, the *Nation* group could represent itself as that new generation of guiding ‘oracles’ that could overcome the ‘dearth of genius’ in Edwardian England.

Like many things Edwardian, neither the ideal of the public intellectual nor the *Nation* group itself survived the First World War intact. When the editor of the *Nation*, H.W. Massingham suddenly broke with the weekly’s neutralist position on 4 August 1914, the group was irrevocably split. Intellectually, socially, and personally, the *Nation* group began a long process of dissolution that ended formally in December of 1922 when Massingham resigned as editor under pressure from the paper’s proprietors. While the weekly continued as the *Nation and Athenaeum* under the direction of a new group headed by J.M. Keynes and Ramsey Muir, the original staff and *Nation* group resigned with Massingham.⁷⁹

The synthetic ideal of the public intellectual and the *Nation* group’s legitimacy before the public suffered a similar fate. As was the case for many convinced pre-war intellectuals, the war shattered the New Liberals’ faith in rational progress, social harmony, and the notion of a shared, universal knowledge. When Britain declared war on Germany, L.T. Hobhouse confessed: ‘... the world not only seemed different, but

became different on August 4 ... It turned out in sober truth a different world from that which we knew'.⁸⁰ According to Hobhouse, the greatest illusion turned out to be his generation's faith in progress. As he wrote to his sister Emily on 8 August 1914, 'all one's hopes for social and political progress are shattered once and for all ... We may write *Finis* to our work, and hope that civilization may rise again elsewhere'.⁸¹ J.A. Hobson shared his friend's sense of disillusionment. In his autobiography, he admitted that the war 'performed one extremely salutary, though disconcerting lesson ... formerly, we thought of civilized man as 80 per cent rational. We now halved the percentage'.⁸² According to Hobson, in retrospect such illusions seemed to define his whole pre-war generation.

One of these illusions that did not survive the war was the New Liberal ideal of the public intellectual. After 1914, the notion of elite intellectuals leading the English masses with unique insights into moral and social universals seemed dated, if not absurd. Without faith in rationalism, social progress, moral order, and a universal humanity, the very legitimacy of the public intellectual and his authority to lead the public was put into question. In England and throughout Europe, those late-Victorian 'faiths' were associated with a failed pre-war generation that had not foreseen or prevented a catastrophic war. Discredited along with the entire pre-war generation, the *Nation* group and its intellectuals lost their standing before the public. As usual, Hobhouse summed up the experience best by stating that the war made an old man out of him.⁸³

It is tempting for historians to take such intellectual self-assessment at face value and equate the death of the public intellectual with the First World War and the 'crisis of rationalism' or the displacement of Victorian amateur intellectual culture by Edwardian professional intellectual culture. This, however, would oversimplify the theoretical and historical complexities of intellectual identity in the public sphere. As the public intellectuals of the *Nation* group illustrate, intellectuals constantly formulate and shape their identities before the public in a search for legitimacy, authority, and relevance. This process of constructing intellectual identity is *both* discursively and socially constituted. On one hand, poststructuralists and cultural historians such as Bruce Robbins are correct to argue that there is an element of a 'usefully mobilizing fiction' in this construction and representation of public intellectual identity. In the case of the *Nation* group, the representation of a 'decline of Victorian men of letters' created a sense of intellectual crisis that could only be resolved by a particular normative ideal for knowledge and a particular type of public intellectual. This representation was self-

fulfilling. Through public celebrations, articles in the *Nation*, and L.T. Hobhouse's formulation of general sociology and the general sociologist, New Liberal intellectuals represented themselves as the heirs to the Victorian men of letters for the Edwardian age.

On the other hand, the formulation and construction of public intellectual identity were socially constituted in the very real transformations of *fin de siècle* England. As Pierre Bourdieu rightly argued, all representations of intellectual identity, authority, and legitimacy occur within a historical social context that defines the possibilities for that representation. Again, in the case of the *Nation* group, their public intellectual identity was only possible within the context of a perceived age of the masses, the new authority of professional social science, and the group's proximity to elite political culture. This unique constellation of social and political change created the context for New Liberal representations of public intellectual identity and the need for such public intellectuals. Once that context disappeared after 1914, their sources of intellectual legitimacy, cultural authority, and social status disappeared with it. The postwar era created an entirely different political, social and cultural context for intellectuals in which New Liberals were unable and/or unwilling to compete.

The historical case study of *Nation* group in *fin de siècle* England contributes to the issue of the perceived 'decline and fall' of Victorian men of letters and the broader contemporary issue of the decline of intellectuals in the public sphere over the last century. If the notion of the public intellectual is reinterpreted as a constructed identity that is constantly reformulated within real social and historical contexts, then claims of their historical decline and fall since the Victorian age should be reconsidered. Instead of grand narratives of the decline of a 'golden age' of public intellectuals since the nineteenth century, historians should rethink the historical context and the specific sources of intellectual legitimacy and cultural authority that all intellectuals and their circles mobilized during their eras – including the Victorian age and those following it. In this way, intellectuals in the public sphere can be critically rethought and their lives, projects, and relevance analytically situated within the complex field of cultural production that has existed within all historical periods.

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Endnotes

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Conferences during 1998 and 1999. I thank the participants and chairs of those panels, particularly Lawrence H. Davis, Marvin R. Cox, Peter Bergmann, and Joel Blatt for their insightful comments and suggestions.

1. 'The Dearth of Genius', *Nation*, 20 June 1908, 410.
2. Russell Jacoby, *The Last Intellectuals: American Culture in the Age of Academe* (New York: Basic Books Inc., 1987), ix-xii.
3. *Ibid.*, ix
4. Jurgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society*, translated by Thomas Burger with the assistance of Frederick Lawrence (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1991). Originally published in 1962 as Habermas' *Habilitationschrift*, it was rejected by Horkheimer and Adorno as for being insufficiently critical of the Enlightenment. See Calhoun, ed., *Habermas and the Public Sphere* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1992), 4-5. The skeleton outline of the concept of the public sphere was first published in English as a dictionary-type entry by Habermas in 1974. See Habermas, 'The Public Sphere', *New German Critique*, 3 (Fall, 1974): 49-55.
5. Christopher Lasch, *The Revolt of the Elites and the Betrayal of Democracy* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1995), Jean Bethke Elshtain, *Democracy on Trial* (New York: Basic Books, 1995), Michael Sandel, *Democracy's Discontent: America in Search of a Public Philosophy* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1996), John Keane, *Public Life and Late Capitalism: Towards a Socialist Theory of Democracy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), Terry Eagleton, *The Function of Criticism: From The Spectator to Post-Structuralism* (London: Verso, 1984), and Jean Francois Lyotard, *Le Tombeau de l'intellectuel* (Paris: Galilee, 1984).
6. Bruce Robbins, ed., *Intellectuals: Aesthetics, Politics, Academics* (Minneapolis: The University of Minnesota Press, 1990), xi.
7. *Ibid.*
8. International intellectuals who either published in the *Nation* or met with the group while visiting London include German socialist theoretician Eduard Bernstein, 'cadet' leader of failed 1905 Russian Revolution, Paul Miliukoff and American progressive intellectuals Walter Lippman and Herbert Croly.
9. The two best studies of this group of New Liberals and their ideas are Peter Clarke, *Liberals and Social Democrats* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978) and Alfred Havighurst, *Radical Journalist: H.W. Massingham* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1974).
10. See Peter Clarke, 'The Progressive Movement in England', in *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, Fifth Series, Vol. 24 (1974): 159-82.
11. See Peter Clarke *Lancashire and the New Liberalism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971) and *Liberals and Social Democrats*. For the social programme of New Liberalism see Stefan Collini, *Liberalism and Sociology: L.T. Hobhouse and Political Argument in England 1880-1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), Michael Freedon, *The New Liberalism: An Ideology of Social Reform* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978), H.V. Emy, *Liberals, Radicals and Social Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1973), and Peter Weiler, *The New Liberalism: Liberal Social Theory in Great Britain 1889-1914* (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc. 1982). The religious roots of this new social theory are explored in Melvin Richter, *The Politics of Conscience: T.H. Green and His Age* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1964). Very recently, scholars have begun to re-examine the intellectual and cultural writing of New Liberals. See Gal Gerson, 'Liberals and the Carnavalesque: Gilbert Murray and Francis Cornford on Ritual', *History of European Ideas*, 24. 4-5 (1998): 331-54.

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12. This early rejection of Victorianism is recounted in Nevinson's autobiographical work, *Fire of Life* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1935). Also see Hobson's reflections on the 1890s in 'The Task of Reconstruction' published as the concluding chapter of *The Crisis of Liberalism*, edited with an introduction by P.F. Clarke (New York: Barnes and Noble Books, 1974).
13. On the pre-war sensibilities of the Bloomsbury Group see Peter Stansky, *On or About December 1910: Early Bloomsbury and Its Intimate World* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1996).
14. C.F.G. Masterman, *In Peril of Change* (1905), 20.
15. See 'The Dearth of Genius', *Nation*, 20 June 1908, 410. The classic analysis of this 'Edwardian crisis' is, of course, George Dangerfield, *The Strange Death of Liberal England* (1936). More recent analyses of this crisis of Liberal England can be found in Michael Bentley, *The Climax of Liberal Politics: British Liberalism in Theory and Practice 1868-1918* (London: Edward Arnold, 1987).
16. C.F.G. Masterman, *Tennyson as a Religious Teacher* (Boston: Knight and Millet, 1900), 248.
17. Pierre Bourdieu, *The Field of Cultural Production: Essays on Art and Literature*, Edited and Introduced by Randal Johnson (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993). In particular see the essay, 'The Field of Cultural Production, or: The Economic World Reversed', 29-73.
18. These franchise statistics are from Walter L. Arnstein, *Britain Yesterday and Today*, 118, 147. Also see Soffer, *Ethics and Society in England: The Revolution in the Social Sciences* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978), 169-70.
19. Ross McKibbin, *The Ideologies of Class: Social Relations in Britain, 1880-1950* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994) and Donald Read, *The Age of Urban Democracy: England 1868-1914* (London and New York: Longman, 1994).
20. James Baldwin Brown, *First Principles of Ecclesiastical Truth* (1871), quoted in Read, *The Age of Urban Democracy: England 1868-1914*, 3.
21. See L.T. Hobhouse, *Democracy and Reaction*, 2nd Edition 1909, reprint edition with introduction to second edition appended and introduction and notes by P.F. Clarke (New York: Harper and Row Publishers, 1973), especially 70-72; Graham Wallas, *Human Nature and Politics* (London: Archibald Constable and Co. Ltd., 1908); and J.A. Hobson, *The Crisis of Liberalism*, reprint edition with an introduction by P.F. Clarke (New York: Harper and Row Publishers, 1974). Also see J.A. Hobson, 'The Mob-Mind', *Nation*, 1 August 1908, 631-2.
22. In the *Nation* and among New Liberals, the *Daily Mail* was the symbol of the dangers of yellow journalism. See 'The Worst Journalism', *Nation*, 20 July 1907, 755-6.
23. Christopher Kent, *Brains and Numbers: Elitism, Comtism, and Democracy in Mid-Victorian England* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1978).
24. The impact of the Boer War on Liberals and New Liberals is well documented in Collini, *Liberals and Social Democrats* and Havighurst, *Radical Journalist: H.W. Massingham*. Also see H.A.L. Fisher, *James Bryce*, Volumes I and II (Westport: Greenwood Press, Reprint ed., 1973), J.A. Hobson, *The Psychology of Jingoism* (London: Grant Richards, 1901), L.T. Hobhouse, *Democracy and Reaction* (1904).
25. C.F.G. Masterman, 'Our "Educated" Classes', *Nation*, 22 January 1910, 660.
26. J.A. Hobson, *The Social Problem*, (1901), 234.
27. Zygmunt Bauman, *Legislators and Interpreters: On Modernity, Post-Modernity and Intellectuals* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1987).
28. Bauman, *Legislators and Interpreters*, 3-4.
29. Hobson, *The Crisis of Liberalism*, 261-5.

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30. Raymond Williams, *Culture and Society, 1780-1950* (New York, Harper Torchbooks, 1958). In particular see 'The Romantic Artist', 30-49.
31. A representative sampling would be H.W. Nevinson *Herder and His Times* (1885) and *The Life of Friedrich Schiller* (1889), J.L. Hammond, *Charles James Fox* (1903) and F.W. Hirst, *Adam Smith* (1904) and J.A. Hobson, *John Ruskin Social Reformer* (1899).
32. Hobson, *John Ruskin, Social Reformer*, 47-8.
33. *Ibid.*, 19-56.
34. H.W. Nevinson, 'The Teaching of Tolstoy', *Nation*, 12 September 1908, 827-8. Also see 'The Representative Man', *Nation*, 17 September 1910, 866-7 almost certainly written by Nevinson. Similar tributes to Tolstoy are numerous in the *Nation*. Tolstoy was a particular hero of H.W. Massingham. See H.W. Massingham, 'The Philosophy of a Saint', *Contemporary Review* (December 1900): 809-20.
35. Bourdieu, 'The Field of Cultural Production', 65.
36. Hobsbawm and Ranger, eds., *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983).
37. E. Biagini, 'The Debate on Taxation, 1860-1874' in E. Biagini and A. Reid, eds., *Currents of Radicalism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991). A good summation of the meaning of Cobden to the free trade debate can be found in Anthony Howe, 'Towards the "Hungry Forties": free trade in Britain, c.1880-1906' in E. Biagini, ed., *Citizenship and Community: Liberals, Radicals and Collective Identities in the British Isles, 1865-1931* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).
38. The Diary of Henry W. Nevinson, 17 March 1908, Henry Wood Nevinson Papers, Eng. misc., Bodleian Library, Oxford University. Nevinson kept a daily diary throughout his adult life and it is an invaluable source for understanding the social world of the *Nation* group and London progressivism. The Nevinson diary will be cited as ND throughout.
39. ND, 15 February 1919. This celebration was planned for 1913-14. However, it was postponed at the outbreak of War in August 1914. This celebration of the past in 1919 took on a different meaning in the post-war years than it would have had in 1913.
40. ND, 22 June 1910.
41. ND, 19 March 1908.
42. ND, 15 February 1919.
43. There are too many articles and tributes to past intellectuals in the *Nation* to list. For a good example of this type of writing see 'The Representative Man', *Nation*, 17 September 1910, 866-7 and 'Life and the Poet', *Nation*, 30 May 1908, 303-4.
44. Nevinson, 'The Teaching of Tolstoy', 828.
45. L.T. Hobhouse, 'A Re-Statement of Liberalism', *Nation*, 8 January 1910, 614.
46. *Ibid.*
47. See Soffer, *Ethics and Society in England*, 32-45.
48. On the emerging importance of science in social investigation during this period see Reba Soffer, *Ethics and Society in England*, Eileen Janes Yeo, *The Contest for Social Science* (London: Rivers Oram Press, 1996) and Gertrude Himmelfarb, *Poverty and Compassion: The Moral Imagination of the Late Victorians* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1991).
49. The best example of this is H.G. Wells, *The New Machiavelli* (New York: Duffield and Company, 1917). Originally published in 1905. Also see *The Diary of Beatrice Webb*, 3 volumes, edited by Norman and Jeanne Mackenzie (Cambridge: Harvard University, 1984).
50. H.G. Wells, Letters to the Editor, 'On the Alleged Diabolical Influences of the Fabian

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- Society', *Nation*, 6 April 1907, 227. Wells is responding to J.A. Hobson, 'The New Aristocracy of Mr. Wells', *Contemporary Review* (April 1906): 487-99.
51. Collini, *Public Moralists: Political Thought and Intellectual Life in Britain, 1850-1930* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991), 217.
 52. See Stefan Collini, *Liberalism and Sociology*, 209-11. Also see Philip Abrams, *The Origins of British Sociology* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1968)
 53. L.T. Hobhouse, *Mind in Evolution*, Parts I and II (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1901), *Morals in Evolution*, Parts I and II, (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1906) and *Development and Purpose: An Essay Towards a Philosophy of Evolution* (London: Macmillan and Co. Ltd., 1913). For the circumstances surrounding his appointment to the Martin White chair of sociology see Collini, *Liberalism and Sociology*, 209-11. A recent reevaluation of Hobhouse's relationship with the Sociological Society can be found in Eileen Janes Yeo, *The Contest for Social Science*, 233-4.
 54. Eileen Yeo has recently used a neo-Marxist perspective to argue that Hobhouse's 'organic sociology' was an attempt by liberal sociologists to 'displace class consciousness' and deflect the real challenge from below. See Yeo, *The Contest for Social Science*, 233-7.
 55. Hobhouse's address to the Sociological Society in 1907 was published as an editorial article in the first issue of the new journal the *Sociological Review*. See L.T. Hobhouse, 'Sociology, General, Special and Scientific', *Sociological Review* (1908), reprinted in Abrams, *The Origins of British Sociology*, 247-59.
 56. For a recent re-evaluation of British Idealism see Sandra M. Den Otter, *British Idealism and Social Explanation: A Study in Late Victorian Thought*. Oxford Historical Monographs (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996).
 57. Hobhouse, *Development and Purpose*, quoted in Fletcher, *The Making of Sociology: A Study of Sociological Theory* (London: Michael Joseph, 1971), Vol. 2, 152.
 58. This lecture was later published as *Social Evolution and Political Theory* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1911), 6.
 59. L.T. Hobhouse, 'Sociology, General, Special and Scientific', 252-3.
 60. Soffer, *Ethics and Society in England*, 193-5.
 61. Hobhouse, *Morals in Evolution*, vol. 2, 234.
 62. See Bauman, *Legislators and Interpreters*, 4.
 63. Hobson, *The Social Problem*, 262.
 64. Hobson, *The Crisis of Liberalism*, 228-9.
 65. For the relationship between the Liberal party and the *Nation* group see Clarke, *Liberals and Social Democrats*, 100-27, Freedman, *The New Liberals*. The notion of the New Liberals serving as a 'ginger group' was brought to my attention by L.P. Curtis at Brown University.
 66. Nevinson frequently mentioned Lloyd George and Winston Churchill as guests at the weekly 'Nation lunch'. ND, *passim*. e.g. 30 August 1910, 21 October 1913. Also see Havighurst, *Radical Journalism*, 152-3.
 67. See Clarke, *Liberals and Social Democrats*, 110-11, Masterman, *C.F.G. Masterman: A Biography*; and Weiler, *The New Liberalism*, 112-26.
 68. L.T. Hobhouse, leader, *Manchester Guardian*, 17 December 1904. Quoted in Collini, *Liberalism and Sociology*, 93.
 69. L.T. Hobhouse, 'The Re-Statement of Liberalism', 614.
 70. L.T. Hobhouse, leader, *Manchester Guardian*, quoted in Collini, *Liberalism and Sociology*, 93.
 71. L.T. Hobhouse, 'The Career of Fabianism', *Nation*, 30 March 1907, pp. 182-3.

72. Ibid., 183.
73. The Charity Organization Society was founded in 1869 on the philosophy of self-help and individual moral effort. It was led by C.S. Loch and then by the Bernard and Helen Bosanquet at the turn of the century. They fell out with Barnett and the Toynbee reformers during the 1890s. The New Liberal labelling of them as working from 'unscientific moralism' can be found in an anonymous article, 'The Ways of the C.O.S.', *Nation*, 21 March 1914, 1029.
74. 'The Ways of the C.O.S.', 1029.
75. Ibid.
76. Ibid.
77. L.T. Hobhouse, 'Oxford and the People', *Nation*, 6 February 1909, 710-11.
78. 'The Common Man', *Nation*, 6 May 1911, 196.
79. The wartime divisions and ultimate dissolution of the *Nation* group is detailed in Havighurst, *Radical Journalist: H.W. Massingham*.
80. Hobhouse, *A World in Conflict* (London, T. Fisher Unwin Ltd., 1915), 6. Also quoted in Clark, *Liberals and Social Democrats*, 167.
81. L.T. Hobhouse to Emily Hobhouse, 8 August 1914. Quoted in Collini, *Liberalism and Sociology*, 245.
82. J.A. Hobson, *Confessions of an Economic Heretic* (London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1938), 94.
83. Quoted in Hobson and Ginsberg, *L.T. Hobhouse: His Life and Work* (London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd.), 91.