

# **Rhetoric and Reality: The Historiography of British European Policy, 1945-73**

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## **ABSTRACT**

Drawing on postmodern approaches to the practice of history, this thesis examines the historiography of British policy towards European integration since 1945. Its core argument is that historians are subject to a host of pressures. This argument is developed through analysis of seven factors which have influenced the writing of British European policy. Prime amongst them is the influence on historical interpretation of writers' sociological background. The thesis examines the change in the dominant group of writers in the field from politicians to professional historians. It is only in that context, it explains, that the competing interpretations placed on British European policy can be understood. From here, the six other factors at work on writers are examined: the level of analysis writers use to explain British foreign policy, the approach to intentions and outcomes in the international arena, the use of hindsight and empathy in the writing of history, myth-making in contemporary history, the use of sources and the type of study written.

The secondary argument advanced in this thesis is that the changing sociological context of the historiography of Britain and Europe can best be elucidated by mapping the writers into schools. Using the typology of historiographical progression set down in American Cold War historiography, the thesis identifies three schools of writing in the historiography of Britain and Europe, 'orthodox', 'revisionist', and 'post-revisionist'. It goes on to draw conclusions about the nature of schools of writing in Britain, drawing

particular attention to the comparison with American foreign policy scholarship.

The thesis ends by analysing two broader conclusions to emerge from the historiography of Britain and Europe: British historians' obsession with primary sources and implications for the study of the making and implementation of foreign policy. The conclusion also reflects on three broader points of interest: the relationship between questions and answers in history, the lack of attention in methods training courses to the process of narrative construction of historical texts and Britain's continuing inability to define for itself a place in the wider world.

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# **INTRODUCTION**

This chapter introduces the philosophical framework within which this thesis was conceived and written. It is argued that there is too much distance, and not enough dialogue, between philosophers of history and the practitioners with whom they purport to converse. This study aims to bridge that gap by bringing philosophical reflection on the nature and practice of history to bear upon a fertile area of historical study. Historians need not fear postmodern reflectivism. It does not imply the end of history as a field of intellectual inquiry. Nor should they ignore the implications it has for the practice of history in Britain. Historians are, after all, in the most privileged position of all scholars to reflect upon their craft. Opening up channels of communication between philosophers and practitioners will be of massive benefit to both communities. Cross-fertilisation of ideas, methods and approaches will invigorate both fields, stimulate academic debate and advance our understanding of the past.

The first section of this chapter examines postmodernism in the context of the methodological revolution currently sweeping through the study of history, politics and international relations. It argues that the study of history-writing is, by its very nature, postmodern, in the sense that it takes a reflective, interpretative approach to historical texts. How far one can go in determining all the influences on historical interpretation- notably publishing pressures- is, however, still open to debate. The second section demonstrates the scope that exists for dialogue among philosophers and practitioners by arguing that one can find plenty of postmodern theorists who offer a position which is constructive enough to admit that historical 'facts' exist. At the same time, and

this is the crucial point, the historian needs to be methodologically and epistemologically aware enough not to treat those 'facts' unreflectively. The foundations will thus be laid for the next chapter, which considers the method of research employed in the thesis and the argument it advances.

## **1. Postmodern History and the Methodological Revolution**

'A major issue of debate among contemporary historiographical theorists is the difficulty of maintaining a position that is "constructivist" enough to recognise the unavoidable intrusion of point of view, implicit theory, and interpretive tropes in the production of "history", but "realist" enough to ascribe actual truth value to some historical accounts. [Hayden] White has not accomplished this feat, though he has committed himself to it'.<sup>1</sup>

Ian Lustick's disdainful verdict on White's philosophy bears witness to the scepticism with which critical theory has traditionally been greeted by historians. They either leap like Richard Evans to the 'defence of history',<sup>2</sup> or dismiss reflectivist approaches as passing distractions from the scholarly process of narrating what happened in the past using the evidence left to us in

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<sup>1</sup> Ian Lustick, 'History, Historiography and Political Science: Multiple Historical Records and the Problem of Selection Bias', *American Political Science Review*, 90, 3 (1996), pp.605-18 (p.613). E. H. Carr likewise worried that one is put in a difficult situation when one analyses the relationship between the historian and his or her facts, 'navigating delicately between the Scylla of an untenable theory of history as an objective compilation of facts...and the Charybdis of an equally untenable theory of history as the subjective product of the mind'. See *What is History?*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn. (London: Penguin, 1990), p.29.

<sup>2</sup> Richard J. Evans, *In Defence of History* (London: Granta, 1997). Postmodern ideas, warned Arthur Marwick in 1988, are a 'menace to serious historical study'. See Arthur Marwick, 'Two Approaches to Historical Study: The Metaphysical (Including "Postmodernism") and the Historical', *Journal of Contemporary History*, 30, 1 (1995), pp.5-35 (p.5).



the present. As Geoffrey Elton put it: 'a philosophic concern with such problems as the reality of historical knowledge or the nature of historical thought only hinders the practice of history'.<sup>3</sup>

The epistemological tenets of postmodernism have unfortunately been sullied by far-right groups who have pressed the analytical insights of reflectivism to its limits by questioning that the Holocaust ever occurred.<sup>4</sup> This use of postmodernism, John Gaddis argues,<sup>5</sup> as 'an instrument of politics', is a 'Whorfian kind of relativism' which undermines the practical advantages which can accrue from the methodological revolution the human sciences are currently witnessing.<sup>6</sup> To argue that the Holocaust revisionists reflect 'the postmodern intellectual climate' is to confuse propaganda with critical

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<sup>3</sup> Geoffrey Elton, The Practice of History (London: Methuen, 1967), preface p.7. On p.57 he was less kind, calling the concern with interpretation 'pernicious nonsense'. The 'practice of history' to which he refers is the positivist approach which assumes 'there is... a truth to be discovered if only we can find it'. See p.54. See also Geoffrey Elton, Return to Essentials (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991). The acknowledged architect of positivism was Leopold von Ranke whose recommendation was that we should endeavour 'to show things how they actually were'. Quoted in John Tosh, The Pursuit of History, 3<sup>rd</sup> edn. (London: Longman, 2000), p.5. There is a succinct summary of the positivist conception of history in Georg G. Iggers, Historiography: From Scientific Objectivity to the Postmodern Challenge (Hanover: Wesleyan University Press, 1997), pp.3-5, and in Beverley Southgate, History: What and Why?: Ancient, Modern, and Postmodern Perspectives (London: Routledge, 1996), pp.13-22. Evans notes that it is an oversimplification to ignore the reflectivism in Ranke's work, In Defence of History, op. cit., p.17. But it is fair to judge the continuing allure of Ranke's method of historical research to British historians in the context of his assiduous use of primary sources. See Max Beloff, An Historian in the Twentieth Century: Chapters in Intellectual Autobiography (London: Yale University Press, 1992).

<sup>4</sup> Their approach is summarised in Evans, In Defence of History, op. cit., pp.238-40. David Howarth is also alert to the 'relativistic nihilism' which, he argues, makes the very label 'something of a misnomer'. See 'Discourse Theory', in David Marsh and Gerry Stoker (eds.), Theory and Methods in Political Science (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1995), pp.115-33 (p.116). Alex Callinicos also discusses the Holocaust-related dimension of postmodernism in Theories and Narratives: Reflections on the Philosophy of History (Cambridge: Polity, 1995), pp.66-75. See also Iggers, Historiography, op. cit., p.13; Charlotte Watkins Smith, Carl Becker: On History and the Climate of Opinion (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1956), pp.109-10.

<sup>5</sup> John Lewis Gaddis, 'The Emerging Post-Revisionist Synthesis on the Origins of the Cold War', Diplomatic History, 7, 3 (1983), pp.171-90 (p.189).

<sup>6</sup> Hayden White, The Content of the Form: Narrative Discourse and Historical Representation (London: The John Hopkins University Press, 1992), p.187.

scholarship.<sup>7</sup> Attempting to reconstruct the past is a difficult, complicated process involving narrative reconstruction and imaginative leaps of faith to recreate causal chains of events.<sup>8</sup> It has long been recognised that history-writing is not neutral or innocent, that it is always written by someone for someone, but the misleading connotation that postmodernism naturally results in an 'anything goes' interpretation of history fatally overlooks the constructive impact reflectivism can have on the practice of history.<sup>9</sup>

It is an impact that historians have too often overlooked, but something historiography can remedy, as Robert Holub points out: 'Why a given work or author becomes famous, how that fame is perpetuated over periods of time, what factors increase or diminish a reputation- all of these questions involve the historian as much as the sociologist or psychologist'.<sup>10</sup> The gap between practice and theory can be bridged by promoting dialogue between the practitioners of history, and postmodern philosophers of history. 'This', Michael Bentley notes, 'is the environment in which historiography has moved

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<sup>7</sup> Evans, *In Defence of History*, op. cit., p.241. An example of the misunderstanding from which White regularly suffers is to be found in Colin Wight, 'Meta Campbell: The Epistemological Problematics of Perspectivism', *Review of International Studies*, 25, 2 (1999), pp.311-6. Selectively quoting throughout he erroneously assumes that White sees no value at all in using historical facts as the basis of narrative reconstruction. David Campbell responds in the next article 'Wight is greatly confused about White on the status of the historical record'. See David Campbell, 'Contra Wight: The Errors of Premature Writing', *Review of International Studies*, 25, 2 (1999), pp.317-21 (p.319).

<sup>8</sup> This study employs Lawrence Stone's definition of 'narrative': 'the organisation of material in a chronologically sequential order and the focusing of the content into a single coherent story, albeit with sub-plots'. Quoted in Callinicos, *Theories and Narratives*, op. cit., p.45.

<sup>9</sup> This term is taken from Southgate, *History*, op. cit., p.133. It is also used, erroneously, to describe the postmodern position in Raymond A. Morrow and David D. Brown, *Critical Theory and Methodology* (London: Sage, 1994), preface, p.13.

<sup>10</sup> Robert C. Holub, *Reception Theory: A Critical Introduction* (London: Methuen, 1984), p.47.

to centre-stage'.<sup>11</sup> Contrary to the argument of Jeremy Black who asserts that 'Postmodernist perspectives...are of scant value to those for whom [historiographical] studies are intended',<sup>12</sup> this thesis argues that postmodernism, historical philosophy and historiography are locked in a symbiotic relationship based on both reflectivism and interpretivism.

The label 'postmodernism' is commonly attached to methods of approaching academic study which call into question 'the [scientific] claims that originally inspired the Enlightenment project'.<sup>13</sup> 'Postmodernist de-differentiation', remarks Scott Lash, 'puts chaos, flimsiness, and instability in our experience of reality itself'.<sup>14</sup> Feminist theories are paving the way for assessments of the workings of the international system that depart from overbearing patriarchal norms (a focus on 'men' as the most influential or only players).<sup>15</sup> Post-colonial and neo-Marxist approaches are shifting the focus in international relations from core to periphery states.<sup>16</sup> Consideration of the kinds of

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<sup>11</sup> Michael Bentley, Modern Historiography: An Introduction (London: Routledge, 1999), preface p.9.

<sup>12</sup> Jeremy Black, review, 'A Little Local Difficulty: *The Pursuit of History*. By John Tosh; *The Routledge Companion to Historical Studies*. By Alan Munslow; *The Past and its Presenters: An Introduction to Issues in Historiography*. By John Warren', Times Higher Education Supplement: Textbook Guide, 25 February 2000, p.3.

<sup>13</sup> Morrow and Brown, Critical Theory and Methodology, op. cit., p.3.

<sup>14</sup> Scott Lash, The Sociology of Postmodernism (London: Routledge, 1990), p.15.

<sup>15</sup> Nancy Fraser and Linda Nicholson, 'Social Criticism without Philosophy: An Encounter between Feminism and Postmodernism', in Thomas Docherty (ed.), Postmodernism: A Reader (London: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1993), pp.415-32'; Jan Jindy Pettman, 'Gender Issues', in John Baylis and Steve Smith (eds.), The Globalization of World Politics: An Introduction to International relations (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), pp.483-93; J. Ann Tickner, Gender in International Relations: Feminist Perspectives on Achieving Global Security (New York: Columbia University Press, 1992); Joni Lovenduski, Women and European Politics: Contemporary Feminism and Public Policy (Amherst: The University of Massachusetts Press, 1986).

<sup>16</sup> Eric Hobsbawm and Terry Ranger (eds.), The Invention of Tradition (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983); Ashis Nandy, Traditions, Tyrannies and Utopias (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1987).

knowledge one can discover about history are not immune from this challenge to our conception of the international system. In the context of foreign policy analysis there is a growing awareness that to study foreign policy is not just to study 'what the Foreign Office does', it is to establish multiple chains of causation and webs of interaction in Whitehall, Downing Street, British culture and society and the world at large. This suggests that to conceive of 'diplomatic history' as the study of 'the preoccupations of political leaders'<sup>17</sup> is being eroded as the field of 'international relations' expands to include 'international studies' and thus the study of previously neglected actors on the political stage. Feminist and post-colonial methods are 'natural allies' of postmodernism in the process of epistemological reflection,<sup>18</sup> because they increase awareness that history needs also to account not only for 'the perspectives...of decision-makers but of those who are outside positions of power yet can present an equally plausible representation of reality'.<sup>19</sup>

'History, the individual self, the relation of language to its referents and of texts to other texts- these are some of the notions which', Linda Hutcheon observes, 'at various moments, have appeared as "natural" or unproblematically common-sensical. And these are what get interrogated by

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<sup>17</sup> Brian White, 'Diplomacy', in Baylis and Smith (eds.), The Globalisation of World Politics, op. cit., pp.249-62 (p.253).

<sup>18</sup> Lyon, Postmodernity, op. cit., p. 80.

<sup>19</sup> Tickner, Gender in International Relations, op. cit., p.132.

postmodernism'.<sup>20</sup> The complementary approaches to the study of international relations identified above, Beverley Southgate observes, 'can be seen to confirm and contribute to the crisis of postmodernity'.<sup>21</sup> Postmodern reflections on history highlight the intrinsic individuality of all narrative reconstructions and alert us to the key role of the historian in shaping the events he or she describes. As Carl Lorenz put it: 'it is the historian, not the past, which does the dictating in history'.<sup>22</sup> There is concurrently a move to uncover the array of governmental and publishing constraints on the historiography in addition to the relatively ostensible sociological, political and methodological inputs. Such is the individuality of each historical narrative, the postmodernist might argue, surely there is more to reveal about the history-writing process than social connections, political orientation, method of research and sources? For example, Black is convinced that there is more to learn in this context. No historiographic study to date, he argues, 'offers a serious discussion of the role of publishers and the nature of the pressures affecting publication'.<sup>23</sup> This study finds that there have been moments when historians' language and interpretation have been affected by publishers. John Young, for one, has revealed that he was asked by his publishers to

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<sup>20</sup> Linda Hutcheon, *A Poetics of Postmodernism: History, Theory, Fiction* (London: Routledge, 1998), preface p.13. See also Terri Apter, 'Expert Witness: Who Controls the Psychologist's Narrative?', in Ruthellen Josselson (ed.), *Ethics and Process in the Narrative Study of Lives* (London: Sage, 1996), pp.22-44 (p.42). All the contributors to this volume focus on the distinction that needs to be made between the observer and the observed. Of special interest to this thesis is Scott W. Webster, 'A Historian's Perspective on Interviewing', pp.187-206.

<sup>21</sup> Southgate, *History*, op. cit., p.98. See also Regina U. Gramer, 'On Poststructuralisms, Revisionisms and Cold Wars', *Diplomatic History*, 19, 3 (1995), pp.515-24 (p.517).

<sup>22</sup> Quoted in Keith Jenkins, 'Introduction: On Being Open About Our Closures', in Keith Jenkins (ed.), *The Postmodern History Reader* (London: Routledge, 1997), pp.1-30 (p.18).

<sup>23</sup> Black, review, 'A Little Local Difficulty', op. cit., p.3.

'tone...down' his 'sabotage' thesis on key individuals in 1955-6.<sup>24</sup> It can therefore be argued that 'in the practical world the demands of editors and tenure committees also need to be kept in mind'.<sup>25</sup>

Adding to the growing awareness of the impact of publishing pressures on historical interpretation is Ludmilla Jordanova who argues that patronage remains a crucial determinant of academic career-building and publishing. Moreover, 'Publishers develop market niches and their choices have a considerable impact on the content of what is published, especially on how books are used within the educational system'.<sup>26</sup> The historiographer can legitimately ask the questions: are certain publishing houses constrained only to publish the conventional wisdom? Is historiographic progression extant on the major publishing houses, to the detriment of smaller, innovative houses? Do authors with 'radical' backgrounds or interpretations find it hard to gain publishing contracts? The final question brings to mind Donald Maclean's book on post-Suez British foreign policy which has some innovative comment on British European policy at a time when the conventional wisdom was historiographically dominant.<sup>27</sup> Is it because of his 'discredited' background that he has generally been ignored? The Economist's verdict on Maclean is enlightening: 'Donald Maclean is about as unlikely an author for a serious

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<sup>24</sup> Email correspondence with John Young. Permission received to quote this message of 10 February 1999. See also Phil Baty, who discusses the pressures on academics from publishers, particularly in government-sponsored projects, in 'Labour Policy Poses Threat to Freedom', *Times Higher Education Supplement*, 31 March 2000, p.1.

<sup>25</sup> Alan C. Elms, *Uncovering Lives: The Uneasy Alliance of Biography and Psychology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), p.22.

<sup>26</sup> Ludmilla Jordanova, *History in Practice* (London: Arnold, 2000), pp.16-8.

<sup>27</sup> Donald Maclean, *British Foreign Policy Since Suez, 1956-1968* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1970).

study of British foreign policy as Mr Ronald Biggs would be for a survey of the criminal investigation department'. Amusing indeed, but it overshadows the reviewer's surprise at Maclean's 'oddly impersonal style', and the seriousness with which his work should in fact be taken.<sup>28</sup>

Such points about 'outsiders' and 'insiders' are inextricably linked to the process of historiographical evolution, who gets published, when and how the process of publishing can inhibit certain interpretations from emerging at a particular time. But before one approaches the complex relationship between publisher and author, there is much to discover about the writing of contemporary history. As Holub argues: 'The editorial policies of publishing houses or the selections of libraries may very well have some impact on the development of theory, but they are never enough to determine impact'.<sup>29</sup> It is the texts that have been of a priori importance to historiographic development. For this reason this thesis concentrates on the sociological, political and theoretical links among the writers it scrutinises, from the start-point of White's epistemological problematic which investigates the problem of historical knowledge and how it is constructed.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> 'Through a Spyglass Darkly', *Economist*, 7 May 1970, p.47.

<sup>29</sup> Holub, *Reception Theory*, op. cit., pp.34-5. See also Zara Steiner, 'The Historian and the Foreign Office', in Christopher Hill and Pamela Beshoff (eds.), *Two Worlds of International Relations: Academics, Practitioners and the Trade in Ideas* (London: Routledge, 1994), pp.40-53 (p.40).

<sup>30</sup> This work is less concerned with White's narrative theory, for which he is better known in the fields of philosophy and literary studies. Anyway, all of this stems from his overarching concern with epistemology, and can be considered an adjunct to the concerns of this thesis.

## 2. Postmodernism and the 'Facts' of History

There are certainly plenty of postmodern theorists who give us the mechanics for a finely balanced postmodern approach to history which is reflective enough to promote methodological rigour, innovation and experimentation but 'realist' enough to admit that there are historical events to be reconstructed.<sup>31</sup>

Southgate makes this point well: 'if some belief is maintained in an external reality- a social, political, economic, cultural reality, which may owe much to its linguistic portrayals but is ultimately independent of them- then some goal remains for historical investigation; and it remains possible in principle to aspire to some understanding of that actual independent existing past.'<sup>32</sup> Iggers concurs that, on a 'weaker' reading, postmodernism can remain constructive enough to appeal to historians because it 'still assumes that real people had real thoughts and feelings that led to real actions that, within limits, can be known and reconstructed'.<sup>33</sup> The postmodern approach to history is 'not an academic witch-hunt'<sup>34</sup> designed to invalidate the study of the past from various

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<sup>31</sup> Keith Jenkins puts postmodern theorists into five categories according to their distinct outlooks. For the purposes of simplicity I have not distinguished in the thesis between categories of postmodern historian, choosing to reflect on their broad agreement that 'history' as we conventionally study it needs to be reassessed in the light of postmodern reflection. See Keith Jenkins, 'Introduction', op. cit., pp.21-5. Key works include Joyce Appleby, Lynne Hunt and Margaret Jacob, Telling the Truth About History (London: W. W. Norton, 1994); Iggers, Historiography, op. cit.; Keith Jenkins, On 'What is History?': Carr and Elton to Rorty and White (London: Routledge, 1995); Southgate, History, op. cit. Earlier manifestations of this approach include Carl L. Becker, 'What is Historiography?', in Phil L. Snyder (ed.), Detachment and the Writing of History: Essays and Letters of Carl L. Becker (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1958), pp.65-78; John Cannon, The Historian at Work (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1980); Michael Stanford, The Nature of Historical Knowledge (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1986).

<sup>32</sup> Southgate, History, op. cit., p.124.

<sup>33</sup> Iggers, Historiography, op. cit., p.119.

<sup>34</sup> Southgate, History, op. cit., p.7.



viewpoints, but an attempt to expose the limits to existing methods and a guide to how one can analyse events in a sharper, more sophisticated fashion.

White, it must be remembered, did not deny the existence of historical 'facts' but warned against complacency in using those facts unreflectively.<sup>35</sup> Keith Jenkins restates White's case most aptly: 'Nobody is denying...that the actual past occurred. However, the facts that now constitute that now absent past and which get into representations have clearly been extracted from the now extant "traces of the past" and combined through inference by historians into synthetic accounts that mere reference back to the facts as such could never entail'.<sup>36</sup> Postmodern historians are sceptical about the ability of historians to uncover exactly what happened in the past but do not deny the importance of trying. 'It is hardly surprising', argues Callinicos, 'that contemporary scepticism about historical knowledge should focus on the fact that historians work on texts to produce other texts'.<sup>37</sup>

History-writing in this context is displaced from the lonely Eltonian world of dry 'facts' and 'truths',<sup>38</sup> into a world in which historians constantly interact with each other and with the individuals whose motives they now attempt to

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<sup>35</sup> As Martin Jay observes, White takes care to distinguish between 'the facts or events of history' and 'their narrative representation'. Quoted in Callinicos, *Theories and Narratives*, op. cit., p.73.

<sup>36</sup> Jenkins, 'Introduction', op. cit., p.19. See also Alan Munslow who observes that 'historians do not invent events, people or processes', in *Deconstructing History* (London: Routledge, 1997), p.11; Jenkins, *On 'What is History?'*, op. cit., p.29.

<sup>37</sup> Callinicos, *Theories and Narratives*, op. cit., p.65.

<sup>38</sup> See also G. M. Trevelyan who argued that 'the chief value of history is educative, its effect on the mind of the historical student, and on the mind of the public', a quote which sheds light on the individuality with which historical research is often undertaken, as if it is good for one's intellectual development, but little else. See G. M. Trevelyan, *An Autobiography and Other Essays* (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1949), p.57.

reconstruct. Southgate's comparison of the historian with the farmer ploughing 'a solitary furrow' in the field of evidence reflects how British historians approach their subject. Postmodernism opens up the field for dialogue which is crucial to the advancement of historical understanding, particularly if one accepts that history is a social as much as theoretical and factual construction. If one embraces postmodernism, and to continue Southgate's metaphor, 'at least now fertilisation can result in a more luxuriant crop, and enjoyment can be attained from harvesting'.<sup>39</sup> Alan Munslow also suggests that pluralism is to be enjoyed: 'Historiography well illustrates this eruption in our knowledge of the past, as well as our irruption into it. Not only is there more history, but historians agree on it less'.<sup>40</sup> Lucien Febvre took the same line in 1933: 'Given? No, created by the historian, so many times. Invented and fabricated, with the aid of hypotheses and conjectures, by a delicate and fascinating labour'.<sup>41</sup> The postmodern study of history reveals a moving, challenging, changing and emotive intellectual environment, one which is deconstructive yet maintains belief in an external historical reality.

Georg Iggers elucidates this tenet of White's philosophy. 'There is', he writes, 'a difference between a theory that denies any claim to reality in historical accounts and a historiography that is fully conscious of the complexity of historical knowledge but still assumes that real people had real thoughts and feelings that led to real actions that, within limits, can be known and

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<sup>39</sup> Southgate, *History*, op. cit., p.131.

<sup>40</sup> Munslow, *Deconstructing History*, op. cit., p.16.

<sup>41</sup> Quoted in Callinicos, *Theories and Narratives*, op. cit., p.75. See also Jenkins, *On 'What is History?'*, op. cit., p.29.

reconstructed'.<sup>42</sup> This study associates historiography explicitly with White's epistemological problematic, arguing that the study of the art of history-writing is centrally concerned with the kinds of knowledge one can know about the past, and how to represent it. Historiography, notes Holub, substitutes 'for the objective depiction of events and individuals the history of their becoming events and individuals for us'.<sup>43</sup>

It subjects what Neil Winn refers to as an 'emerging historical literature'<sup>44</sup> on Britain's relationship with Europe since 1945 to the historiographical test, analysing what lays behind the interpretations placed upon events by the various authors and what, therefore, explains historiographical evolution in Britain. Its core argument is that there are multiple forces at work on the construction of historical narratives and that each writer asserts his or her own explanation for British European policy. Paradoxically, however, it is the acute diversity of historical narratives which makes this such a revealing corpus of literature. For, despite the apparent eclecticism in the literature, writers can be placed into schools- labelled for simplicity 'orthodox', 'revisionist' and 'post-revisionist'- according to the interpretation they place upon the main events in British European policy.<sup>45</sup> The schools are divided on social, political and methodological grounds, all of which are intricately bound up with the date of writing and type of study produced. Before investigating the dynamics of the

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<sup>42</sup> Iggers, *Historiography*, op. cit., p. 119.

<sup>43</sup> Holub, *Reception Theory*, op. cit., p. 49.

<sup>44</sup> Neil Winn, review, '*Dealing with Britain: The Six and the First UK Application to the EEC*. By N. Piers Ludlow', *Journal of Common Market Studies*, 36, 2 (1998), pp. 283-4 (p. 284).

<sup>45</sup> These labels are not, it is shown, intended to denote intense ideological conflict as in American Cold War scholarship, but merely chronological progression in the historiography.

schools, it is necessary to analyse the intellectual underpinnings of the thesis. The next chapter explores the method of research used, and introduces the principal and secondary arguments advanced in the thesis.

# **Chapter 1**

## **METHOD AND ARGUMENT**

This thesis is not an historical account of Britain's relationship with the continent. By contrast, it explains how the morass of historical evidence has been manipulated by politicians and historians into competing accounts of British European policy, 1945-73. It was stimulated by the observation that every year the number of publications on Britain's relationship with Europe rapidly expanded and with it the variety of interpretations placed upon the key events. Why do writers disagree with some in a given field but not others. Is it their method, their sources, the genre of study they write, their political affiliation, or their sociological links? What makes these questions even more striking is that, in an academic era when the form of studies (method and research designs) have become as salient as substance (content and strength of argument), there exists little if any commentary at the beginning of the books or articles to inform the reader how the author had conducted his or her research.

This chapter will build on the philosophical framework of the thesis, discussed in the previous chapter. It will do this by analysing in greater detail the method of research employed in the thesis, and then introduce the primary and secondary arguments developed in the remainder of the study. To achieve these aims, the chapter is split into five sections. The first considers the nature of historiography, drawing out its postmodern dimensions by defining it as the study of the art of history-writing as well as the process of history-writing per se, and goes on to compare the approach employed in this study with that taken by Cold War historiographers in the United States. It points out the rationale behind the labels used to describe each school of writing, 'orthodox',

'revisionist' and 'post-revisionist'. They are used, it shows, to denote the chronology in the scholarship, a time-line, rather than to convey the political content often associated with them. The opening section then reflects upon the empirical and theoretical value of approaching historical texts from a historiographical viewpoint. It argues that historiography is an acutely revealing exercise because it offers the chance not just of thinking more critically about the practice of history but of uncovering fresh historical evidence. The second section continues to explain the method employed in the thesis by analysing why it is that the focus is on the literature on Britain's relations with Europe, 1945-73. It shows that on both the theoretical and practical levels this is an ideal corpus of literature to analyse, not least because it can inform current political and academic thinking about Britain's place in the world and approach to European integration.

The third section examines two alternative approaches to the identification of schools of writing, other than the thematic approach adopted in the thesis: the levels of analysis and institutional approaches. It argues that, while they have some strengths, and a strong intellectual coherence in many respects, they do not provide a better method of schoolification than the grouping of writers according to their position within the key debates about Britain and Europe. This is because to raise the a priori significance of theoretical approach or institutional affiliation is to overstate the importance of these variables at the expense of other inputs to interpretation. Hence, it is shown, the more conventional historiographic method of inferring influences on writers from their published interpretation allows one to explore the potential variables

more efficiently. The fourth section introduces the argument advanced in the thesis, introducing the reader to the six main influences on historical interpretation identified in the chapters that follow. In order of importance they are analysed as follows: the social construction of the schools, competing views about the foreign policy process, perceptions of intentions and outcomes in British foreign policy, the use of hindsight, myth-making in contemporary history, the use of sources. The concluding remarks in this chapter highlight the salience of the seventh variable, the type of study written in determining writers' positions within the debate, tying up all the observations previously made about how historians approach their material.

### **1. The Historiographic Method of 'Schoolification'**

'Every history', remarks Munslow, 'contains ideas or theories about the nature of change and continuity as held by historians- some are overt, others deeply buried, and some just poorly formulated'.<sup>1</sup> John Tosh is another who observes that historians 'are not given much to reflecting at length on the nature of their discipline'.<sup>2</sup> Rod Rhodes recently confirmed this sense of methodological malaise which the social sciences are only belatedly addressing: 'Our forebears in political science were not preoccupied with methodology. Not for them the lengthy digression on how to do it'.<sup>3</sup> This thesis directly addresses this issue,

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<sup>1</sup> Munslow, *Deconstructing History*, op. cit., p.5.

<sup>2</sup> Tosh, *The Pursuit of History*, op. cit., p.215.

<sup>3</sup> R. A. W. Rhodes, 'The Institutional Approach', in Marsh and Stoker (eds.), *Theory and Methods*, op. cit., pp.42-57 (p.42). Callinicos also remarks on the vagueness of historians' use of theory in their research. See *Theories and Narratives*, op. cit., p.91.



offering a 'lengthy digression' into the philosophical and methodological tenets of the thesis. It begins with the choice of method.

Historiography is crucially concerned with the nature of historical narrativity, how histories are constructed, interpretations developed and positions challenged by successive waves of writers. It is defined by Peter Burke as the 'history of historical writing... This awakening of interest in history's own past goes with an increased self-consciousness on the part of historians, and a rejection of the idea that they can produce an "objective" description, uncontaminated by their own attitudes and values, of what actually happened'.<sup>4</sup> Written well over twenty years ago this definition is especially pertinent given the current appeal of postmodernism.

The reflectivist nature of historiography suggests that there is a great deal to recommend Frank Ankersmit's claim that 'historiography, remarkably enough, has always had something postmodernist about it'.<sup>5</sup> The aim of history is to recreate what happened in the past using fragmentary evidence left to us about those events, what Elton calls the 'present traces of the past'.<sup>6</sup> The aim of historiography, the study of the art of history-writing, is to scrutinise the purveyors of historical knowledge, to tease out the processes by which writers draw conclusions about historical phenomena. As White argues, 'It is because

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<sup>4</sup> Peter Burke, definition in Alan Bullock and Oliver Stallybrass (eds.), The Fontana Dictionary of Modern Thought (London: Collins, 1977), p.286.

<sup>5</sup> F. R. Ankersmit, 'Historiography and Postmodernism', History and Theory, 28, 2 (1989), pp.137-53 (p.141). He took up this point in F. R. Ankersmit, 'Reply to Professor Zagorin', History and Theory, 29, 3 (1990), pp.275-96.

<sup>6</sup> Elton, The Practice of History, op. cit., p.9.

real events do not offer themselves as stories that their narrativisation is so difficult...Historiography is an especially good ground on which to consider the nature of narration and narrativity because it is here that our desire for the imaginary, the possible must contest with imperatives of the real, the actual'.<sup>7</sup>

He has been joined by writers such as Joyce Appleby, Lynne Hunt and Margaret Jacob, who observe that a reflective approach to history-writing alerts us 'to how the different perspectives of historians enter into their books'.<sup>8</sup> Iggers likewise notes that 'every historical account is a construct, but a construct arising from a dialogue between the historian and the past, one that does not occur in a vacuum but within a community of inquiring minds who share criteria of plausibility'.<sup>9</sup> The historiographer begins with the assumption that there is no 'transparently true and theoretically neutral historical record'.<sup>10</sup> One can reasonably argue, therefore, that the historiographic method arms us with the sharpest intellectual tools for analysing the changes in historical interpretation over time.

The wish to 'schoolify' writers stemmed from the discovery in the United States that the historiography of the Cold War had been driven by successive schools of writing which were extant on the political climate of opinion, different communities of writers and on the examination of 'newly

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<sup>7</sup> White, *The Content of the Form*, op. cit., p.4.

<sup>8</sup> Appleby, Hunt and Jacob, *Telling the Truth About History*, op. cit., p.246.

<sup>9</sup> Iggers, *Historiography*, op. cit., p.145.

<sup>10</sup> Lustick, 'History, Historiography, and Political Science', op. cit., p.613.

declassified' sources.<sup>11</sup> The Vietnam war shocked a whole generation which looked back to reinterpret the origins and development of the Cold War in the context of its disillusionment with American 'imperialism'.<sup>12</sup> Not surprisingly the New Left 'school of thought' harboured a different interpretation from the received wisdom of the political right which essentially blamed Russia for the onset of superpower tensions. Gaddis himself proposed a post-revisionist synthesis of the two explanations, all of which have since been challenged by corporatist and neo-orthodox accounts.<sup>13</sup>

This study employs the chronology but not the specific political implications of the labels 'orthodox', 'revisionist' and 'post-revisionist'. These have been coined for convenience, to denote the chronological progression in the historiography, not because the British schools reflect the intensely politicised schools in American Cold War scholarship. The term 'revisionism' has connotations in other fields of inquiry, as the association of David Irving with

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<sup>11</sup> The use of the word 'school' is important because it predates this study's use of the term to describe a community of writers who adhere, with variation on specifics, to a broad interpretation of a given event or period of events in history. Despite the occasional dissenting voice, the school is a generally accepted term in American Cold War historiography to denote the successive waves of writing in the field. See Gaddis, 'The Emerging Post-Revisionist Synthesis', op. cit., p.171; J. Samuel Walker, 'Historians and Cold War Origins: The New Consensus', in Gerald K. Haines and J. Samuel Walker (eds.), American Foreign Relations: A Historiographical Review (London: Francis Pinter, 1981), pp.207-36; Gramer, 'On Poststructuralisms', op. cit.; Richard A. Melanson, Writing History and Making Policy: The Cold War, Vietnam and Revisionism, Volume 6 (London: Lanham, 1986). The major dissenter is Warren Kimball, who disagrees that historical writing can be categorised in schools. He argues that the term artificially suppresses disagreement amongst writers in the same camp. See Lloyd C. Gardner, Lawrence S. Kaplan, Warren F. Kimball and Bruce, R. Kuniholm, 'Responses to John Lewis Gaddis, "The Emerging Post-Revisionist Synthesis on the Origins of the Cold War"', Diplomatic History, 7, 3 (1983), pp.191-204 (p.198).

<sup>12</sup> Gaddis, 'The Emerging Post-Revisionist Synthesis', op. cit., p.172.

<sup>13</sup> John Lewis Gaddis, 'Corporatism: A Skeptical View', Diplomatic History, 10, 4 (1986), pp.356-62; Michael J. Hogan, 'Corporatism: A Positive Appraisal', Diplomatic History, 10, 4 (1986), pp.363-72. See also Michael J. Hogan, A Cross of Iron: Harry S. Truman and the Origins of the National Security State, 1945-1954 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

'Holocaust revisionists' shows. Again, such implications are eschewed in this thesis. The term 'revisionism' is used to denote the body of writing that followed, a response to the 'orthodoxy', and which has now been followed by 'post-revisionism'.

Until more appropriate labels can be found, one must not shy away from using these names to identify the schools. This is a particularly persuasive argument when one considers that the terms are often accepted to show not political, but chronological progression in historical debate. Alan Bullock defines 'revisionism' as a 'tendency in American historiography in the 1960s and early 1970s to rewrite the history of the Cold War and shift blame for it onto the USA. This trend was strongly reinforced by the faults and failure of US policy in Vietnam... The revisionists' attack on the orthodox version of US post-war policy represents the second stage in the historiography of the Cold War. This in turn has been succeeded by a third stage [post-revisionism] which offers a more balanced appreciation of the complexities of the situation in the 1940s and represents a synthesis of the first two'.<sup>14</sup> Chris Cook also captures the chronological progression in schools of writing in the *Dictionary of Historical Terms*. He defines revisionist historians as those 'who overturn a generally accepted view of historical events in the light of new evidence and modified interpretation'.<sup>15</sup> In the context of British historiography the term 'revisionism' needs to be understood in the framework implied by Bullock and now

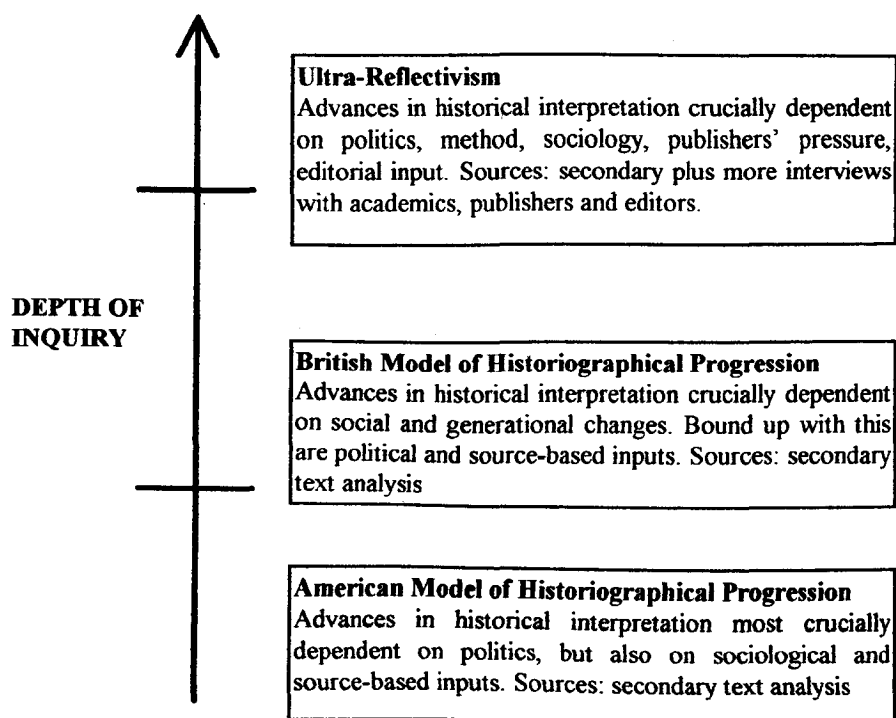
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<sup>14</sup> Bullock, definition, in Alan Bullock and Oliver Stallybrass (eds.), *The Fontana Dictionary of Modern Thought* (London: Collins, 1977), p.542.

<sup>15</sup> Chris Cook, *A Dictionary of Historical Terms*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edn. (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1998), p.310.

articulated by Cook.

**Figure 1: Directions in Western Historiography**



The research design for this study develops Gaddis' method of historiographical reconstruction, labelled above the 'American Model of Historiographical Progression'. While the method of research was similar, the conclusions drawn are quite different, as Figure 1 shows. What can be labelled the 'British Model of Historiographical Progression' has, it can be seen, to take more account of the sociological, rather than political, inputs to the writing of history.<sup>16</sup> The figure also sets out the potential for this approach to

<sup>16</sup> One can speculate on the reasons for this. The crucial point appears to be that there has been greater post-war consensus in the foreign policy arena in Britain. Though this is a controversial statement if one looks at points of detail, in general terms, and especially in the European arena, it is a judgment not without merit. Thus, this study argues, new historical interpretations have tended to coincide with changes in the communities of writers dominant in the field at particular times.

historiographic analysis to uncover even more personal, low-level inputs to writers' interpretations. It is an area that has yet to receive detailed attention, yet one which might highlight a whole new set of influences on the writing of history.

Before that, however, the rationale behind Gaddis' method of grouping writers in schools according to their interpretation needs to be explored, because it provides the benchmark by which this method has to be judged. The case against identifying schools in Cold War scholarship has been made by Warren Kimball. He took issue with Gaddis on the grounds that to 'lump' writers together in schools 'suggests that he sees a high degree of unity' among them, which is not borne out by the evidence of substantial disagreements among writers, particularly of the New Left.<sup>17</sup> Is it not artificial to locate writers who sometimes disagree heatedly with each other in the same school?

The case against was also made in an anonymous referee's report on an article, by this author, which schoolified the literature on Britain's Free Trade Area proposal in 1956. It divided the literature into the three categories pursued in this thesis: orthodox, revisionist and post-revisionist. The referee put the case as follows: 'Miriam Camps alone proves the article's own methodology wrong: proper historical research on British European policy cannot be classified into schools, at least not in the categories the author suggests'.<sup>18</sup> In both the United States and Britain, therefore, there is a groundswell of opinion that writers are

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<sup>17</sup> Gardner, Kaplan, Kimball and Kuniholm, 'Responses', op. cit., p. 198.

<sup>18</sup> Referee's report on draft article, 'The Myth of Sabotage: Plan G in British European Policy, 1955-7'. Received 11 October 1999.

all too different, their interpretations so individual, that to group them together brings unwarranted simplicity to a diverse field of historical inquiry that one should rejoice in, not gloss over.

Yet the schoolification of writers is no artificial exercise. Writers were not placed into schools for the sake of it, or to suit a preordained conviction that British historiography was evolutionarily similar to that across the Atlantic. It would have been convenient had there not been schools. One could have drawn conclusions about the deep differences between the academic communities in Britain and America. It could have trumpeted the genuine interpretative eclecticism of British historians, their methodological experimentalism, their ability to recreate the past in a bewildering number of ways. This contrast between the two communities of scholars could have been explained first by the absence of an equivalent trauma to the Vietnam war in Britain which so influenced the political and historical outlook of an entire generation. The relationship between Britain and Europe might be turbulent. It is, however, relatively less conflictual compared to the heated debate over Vietnam. Hence, it is unlikely that debates over Britain's relationship with the continent would impel 'normally placid professors to behave like gladiators at scholarly meetings' as occurred in the United States on more than one occasion.<sup>19</sup> The study might, secondly, have uncovered few links among writers on Britain and Europe for the very reason that the European question tends to spark as deep

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<sup>19</sup> Gaddis, 'The Emerging Post-Revisionist Synthesis', *op. cit.*, p. 171.

intra- as inter-party debate,<sup>20</sup> suggesting broad consensus on broad questions of foreign policy and on the European question in particular.<sup>21</sup> As Michael Clarke suggests, 'Ideology is always difficult to translate into action, and foreign policy is an area which time and again blunts ideological fervour in favour of a more cautious pragmatism'.<sup>22</sup> The parties of government, Labour and Conservative, have historically been equally split over Europe and, historians find, it is hard to label one more sympathetic to European unity than the other. One must wait to see whether the current Conservative stance on Europe represents a decisive and long-lasting division on Europe between the two main parties in Britain. The litmus test of William Hague's rhetoric will come if and when the Conservatives are returned to power.

Contrary to the argument that it is impossible to schoolify British historians,

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<sup>20</sup> That the 'Britain in Europe' campaign is currently spearheaded by a cross-party selection of dignitaries is evidence to this end. Earlier examples include the applications to join the EEC in the 1961 and 1967 which were made by the Conservatives then Labour respectively, suggesting 'a degree of continuity across changes in office'. Stephen George, *Politics and Policy*, op. cit., p.112. See also George, *An Awkward Partner*, op. cit., pp.5-41; Christopher Lord, 'Sovereign or Confused: The "Great Debate" About British Entry to the European Community 20 Years On', *Journal of Common Market Studies*, 30, 4 (1992), pp.419-36; A. J. Nicholls, 'Britain and the EC: The Historical Background', in Simon Bulmer, Stephen George and Andrew Scott (eds.), *The UK and EC Membership Evaluated* (London: Pinter, 1992), pp.3-9.

<sup>21</sup> 'Consensus', Kavanagh and Morris note, 'does not mean absence of conflict' between parties. 'It is more appropriate to think of it as a *set of parameters which bounded the set of policy options regarded by senior politicians and civil servants*'. In Dennis Kavanagh and Peter Morris, *Consensus Politics From Attlee to Major*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn. (Oxford: Blackwell, 1994), p.13. Emphasis in original. See also Pimlott, *Frustrate Their Knavish Tricks: Writings on Biography, History and Politics* (London: HarperCollins, 1994), p.232; Richard H. Ullman, 'America, Britain, and the Soviet Threat in Historical and Present Perspective', in Wm. Roger Louis and Hedley Bull (eds.), *The Special Relationship: Anglo-American Relations Since 1945* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), pp.103-14 (pp.104-5).

<sup>22</sup> Michael Clarke, 'The Policy-Making Process', in Smith, Smith and White (eds.), *British Foreign Policy: Tradition, Change and Transformation* (London: Hyman, 1988), pp.71-95 (p.84). Consensus has also been observed in the arena of defence policy since 1945, highlighting the broader argument that the post-war era has been characterised by bipartisan agreement in many key areas of government activity. See Tony McGrew, 'Security and Order: The Military Dimension', in Michael Smith, Steve Smith and Brian White (eds.), *British Foreign Policy*, op. cit., pp.99-123 (p.114). See also Richard Little, 'The Study of British Foreign Policy', in Smith, Smith and White (eds.), *British Foreign Policy*, op. cit., pp.245-59 (p.245).



this study finds that one can identify a certain degree of debate within schools and interpretative overlap across them. But schools nevertheless exist. It rejects Kimball's claim that the term 'school' implies rigid adherence to a monolithic interpretation of events. To do this the thesis uses the term in the sense in which Gaddis and other Cold War historiographers use the term,<sup>23</sup> uses which have been replicated in other contexts. For example, Martin Hollis and Steve Smith use the term to define competing theories of international relations. They observe that 'International Relations at the start of the 1990s is...a subject in dispute. There is no dominant theory. Instead, there are several schools, *each with its own set of assumptions and theories*'.<sup>24</sup> Derek Urwin uses the term to describe the competing theoretical approaches to European integration.<sup>25</sup> Elsewhere, Moses Finley separates the division of interpretations over Thucydides' method into 'schools'.<sup>26</sup> One would not expect individuals in such schools to adhere to exactly the same interpretations. The term is flexible enough to incorporate specific instances of disagreement among its members while suggesting a shared assumption that the interpretation, and by

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<sup>23</sup> Gaddis, 'The Emerging Post-Revisionist Synthesis', op. cit., p.172; Hogan, 'Corporatism', op. cit., p.372; Lawrence S. Kaplan, 'Review Essay: The Cold War and European Revisionism', *Diplomatic History*, 11, 2 (1987), pp.143-56 (p.155); Brian McKercher, 'Reaching for the Brass Ring: The Recent Historiography of American Interwar Relations', *Diplomatic History*, 15, 4 (1991), pp.565-98 (p.567); Walker, *Historians and Cold War Origins*, op. cit., p.224. For 'school', the terms 'approach' and 'understanding' are sometimes used, but the implication is the same, that writers agree on broad interpretation if not specifics. See Gramer, 'On Poststructuralisms', op. cit., pp.517-9; Melanson, *Writing History and Making Policy*, op. cit., p.7; Jerald A. Combs, 'Review Essay: Norman Graebner and the Realist View of American Diplomatic History', *Diplomatic History*, 11, 3 (1987), pp.251-64 (p.253).

<sup>24</sup> Martin Hollis and Steve Smith, *Explaining and Understanding International relations* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991), p.38. Emphasis added.

<sup>25</sup> Derek Urwin, review, 'The Origins and Development of the European Union 1945-95: A History of European Integration. By M. J. Dedman', *Journal of Common Market Studies*, 35, 1 (1997), p.170.

<sup>26</sup> See his introductory remarks in Thucydides, *History of the Peloponnesian War*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn. (London: Guild, 1993), p.12.

implication the methods, epistemological and ontological underpinnings, of the opposing school is flawed.

But the question remains: why study the published interpretation of writers as opposed to their oral testimony? This is a question Gaddis did not take time to answer but it is profitable to consider because it addresses the legitimate concern that there can be a divergence between published interpretation and private belief. To answer this one must refer to the interpretationist philosophy of William Child.<sup>27</sup> He argues that it is built on the presupposition that 'reflection on the nature of interpretation can yield conclusions about the nature of thought'.<sup>28</sup> Interpretationism, he explains, is the 'ascription of beliefs and desires to a subject' *not* 'the ascription of meanings to a subject's words'.<sup>29</sup> Herein lies the philosophical justification of the historiographic method employed in the thesis. It is crucially concerned with interpretation and what this reveals about the nature of historical practice and thinking in Britain. The reason published interpretation is the historiographer's data, is that it is written interpretation that drives the historiographic process. It is monographs, edited volumes, articles and reviews which are the public exposure of a particular writer's stance on events, whatever his or her stance privately. It is the textual

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<sup>27</sup> William Child, Interpretation, Causality and the Mind (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994).

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, p.13.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, p.4. The *process* of interpretation, he goes on, happens 'on the basis of publicly available facts about a subject's behaviour... When we interpret someone, we aim to make sense of her by attributing beliefs, desires, intentions, emotions and other propositional attitudes-attitudes in the light of which her behaviour is intelligible as, more or less, rational action. Interpretationists think that we can gain an understanding of the nature of the mental by reflecting on the nature of interpretation.' See p.7.

debate, the arguments in books and journals that drive historians into the archives looking for new evidence, that prompt them into using new methods of exploring historical occurrences. The thesis assumes, therefore, that one can ascribe interpretation to inner belief, even if this link is occasionally not there in practice.

When published interpretation departs from private belief one moves into the difficult territory of which account- private or published- to believe?<sup>30</sup> It can be argued against Child, though his project is psychological not historiographic, that one does not need to know 'everything that someone could find relevant in interpreting a subject' to understand historiographical progression.<sup>31</sup> His interpretationist prescriptions have therefore been adapted to suit the particular demands of understanding historiographical progression. As Child admits, 'the information that provides the basis for interpretation can only include what is, or in ordinary circumstances could be, available to the ordinary observer; it cannot, for example, include information about goings on in a subject's brain or nervous system'.<sup>32</sup> The historiographic method employed in the thesis thus concentrates on the published interpretation of writers and assumes that one can draw inferences based on the weight of evidence- even if causal links are more problematic- about what impelled writers to interpret the history of Britain and Europe as they did.

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<sup>30</sup> The interpretation placed on events in Lord Beloff's Britain and the European Union: Dialogue of the Deaf (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1996) seemed to contradict what he privately thought about Britain's European partners in interview, 15 April, 1998.

<sup>31</sup> Child, Interpretation, Causality and the Mind, op. cit., p.26.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, p.25.

By speaking both to theorists and to historians this thesis is a first wave attempt to cross the divide between postmodern theories of history and the practical pursuit of history. By taking a full reading of White,<sup>33</sup> the discipline of historiography can be constructive enough to admit the existence of historical 'truths', but reflective enough to maintain that the 'truth' for one writer is not necessarily the 'truth' for another. This is similar to the position of José y Gasset Ortega who argues that 'the world can only be interpreted by alternative systems of concepts, each unique and equally true'.<sup>34</sup> This approach is philosophically justified in interpretationist terms and practically justified in the context of the importance to historiography of the written over the spoken words of historians. Such is the theoretical value of this study.

There are two further empirical reasons why a historiographical thesis is so useful. They may not be as pressing as the theoretical reasons given above, but are nonetheless important offshoots of all historiographical studies. The first is that historiographies are a significant source of bibliographic data for historians and political scientists. This is largely self-explanatory in that by analysing the state of the historical debate at a particular juncture historiographical studies reveal all the major works in the field. By establishing links among writers, historiographies contextualise the key debates and open up the subject-matter for analysis by researchers in other fields.

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<sup>33</sup> As opposed to the nihilist, 'anything-goes' approach of writers such as Wight and Evans.

<sup>34</sup> Quoted in Wight, 'Meta Campbell', *op. cit.*, p.314.

This is particularly important in the context of political science. There is a debate, principally in the United States, about the relationship between 'history' and 'political science', the conventional wisdom being that the two are divided down an ideographic-nomothetic faultline, or what Jack Snyder calls 'richness and rigour'.<sup>35</sup> Anthony Forster summed up the distinction in a recent review article in which he stated 'This is more than a matter of semantics with the major controversy over how political science and history study international relations. The key differences concern the aspiration to prediction, policy relevance, complexity versus simplicity, and whether scholars should seek to understand single events rather than generalise about classes of events'.<sup>36</sup> Historians, the received wisdom goes, describe, political scientists explain. To use another analogy, historians are the plankton, political

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<sup>35</sup> That is, a division in aims between understanding the particular and explaining the general. See Elms, *Uncovering Lives*, op. cit., pp.15-6; Colin Elman and Miriam Fendius Elman, 'Diplomatic History and International Relations Theory: Respecting Differences and Crossing Boundaries', *International Security*, 22, 1 (1997), pp.5-21 (p.11); Jack S. Levy, 'Too Important to Leave to the Other: History and Political Science in the Study of International Relations', *International Security*, 22, 1 (1997), pp.22-33 (p.24).

<sup>36</sup> Anthony Forster, 'No Entry: Britain and the EEC in the 1960s', *Contemporary British History*, 12, 2 (1998), pp.139-46 (pp.139-40). See also Anne Deighton, 'The Cold War in Europe, 1945-1947: Three Approaches', in Ngaire Woods (ed.), *Explaining International Relations Since 1945* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), pp.81-97 (p.89); Richard H. Immerman, 'In Search of History- and Relevancy: Breaking Through the Encrustations of "Interpretation"', *Diplomatic History*, 12, 2 (1988), pp.341-56 (p.342). This debate is not without its precedent in Britain. In 1975 Alan Bullock and Ritchie Ovendale were vigorously engaged in 1975 about the alleged separation of the two disciplines, following a remark made by Ovendale about Frankel's 'social science' text which, he found, was 'of more limited value to the historical scholar'. See R. Ovendale, review, *British Foreign Policy 1945-1973*. By Joseph Frankel', *International Affairs*, 51, 4 (1975), pp.574-5 (p.575). 'Correspondence' ensued between the two in *International Affairs*, 52, 2 (1976), p.329. See also Colin Seymour-Ure's observation that political scientists have a 'preoccupation with the contemporary' which obscures their relevance to historical literature in his review, '*Cabinet Decisions on Foreign Policy: The British Experience October 1938-June 1941*. By Christopher Hill', *International Affairs*, 68, 1 (1992), p.170. Another diplomatic historian, John Kent, is similarly disparaging about the 'crude theorising' of historical events. See John Kent, review, '*The End of Superpower: British Foreign Office Conceptions of a Changing World*. By Stuart Croft', *Contemporary Record*, 9, 2 (1995), pp.477-9 (p.478).

scientists the whale, devouring historical research in a bid to generalise about the workings of domestic and international political systems. In addition, political scientists, like social scientists, are as interested in developing method as answering the substantive question. They are as keen, maybe more keen, to build an elaborate theoretical apparatus, as to process material through it. Such are said to be the distinctions between the historian and the political scientist.

The distinction between the disciplines can be exaggerated, as the contributors to a 1997 International Security symposium demonstrated,<sup>37</sup> and it is necessary to dwell on the methodological similarities across history and political science. Particularly significant is the implicit use of theory made by historians, theories that inform and are informed by shared ways of thinking with political scientists about how to study international relations.<sup>38</sup> That theories remain implicit should not blind us to their use by historians. The scope for dialogue and cross-fertilisation across the disciplines is therefore immense.

The crux is, however, that political scientists often rely heavily on historical accounts as data for their theory-building. With this in mind, Lustick observes that 'On most periods and themes of interest available accounts differ, not only substantively but also with respect to the implicit theories and conceptual

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<sup>37</sup> *International Security*, 2, 1 (1997). Especially useful are Paul W. Schroeder, 'History and International Relations Theory: Not Use or Abuse, but Fit or Misfit', *International Security*, 22, 1 (1997), pp.64-74 (pp.65-6). For earlier queries of the separation see Carr, *What is History?*, op. cit., pp.63-5; Elton, *The Practice of History*, op. cit., pp.10-11; Dennis Kavanagh, 'Why Political Science Needs History', *Political Studies*, 39 (1991), pp.479-95.

<sup>38</sup> Particularly revealing about such theories are the sources used by each, for they tell us much about how contentious terms such as 'decline', 'foreign policy', 'diplomacy' and 'statecraft' are defined and measured. See also Smith and Smith, 'The Analytical Background', op. cit., pp.22-3.

frameworks used to establish salience or produce commonsensical explanations. Un-selfconscious use of historical monographs thus easily results in selection bias...[R]esponsible techniques for using historical sources are available, but they require understanding of the extent to which patterns within historiography, rather than "History", must be the direct focus of investigation and explanation'.<sup>39</sup> Historiographies guide research in the areas on which they focus, by highlighting lacunae and pointing out potentially fruitful alternative methods and theories that could be utilised to advance historical understanding. Exploring the variety of interpretations placed upon history helps refine theories built on historical narratives. For example, there have been several explicit attempts to explain the workings of the Whitehall machinery and it is an implicit goal of studies of British foreign policy-making.<sup>40</sup> Historical evidence about relationships within Whitehall between individuals, bureaucracies, Committees, Cabinet members and all external contacts is crucial to our understanding of the foreign policy process.

Theories, it may be argued, are most representative when they include the biggest sample of data. Building comprehensive theories about the workings of the Whitehall machine are inextricably linked to the progression in historical understanding, as new sources reveal previously hidden influences at work on

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<sup>39</sup> Lustick, 'History, Historiography, and Political Science', op. cit., p.605.

<sup>40</sup> The most thorough is William Wallace, *The Foreign Policy Process in Britain*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn. (London: RIIA, 1977). See also James Barber, *Who Makes British Foreign Policy?* (Milton Keynes: The Open University Press, 1976); Sir James Cable, 'Foreign Policy Making: Planning or Reflex?', *Diplomacy and Statecraft*, 3, 3 (1992), pp.357-81; Joseph Frankel, *British Foreign Policy 1945-1973* (London: Oxford University Press, 1975); Roy E. Jones, *The Changing Structure of British Foreign Policy* (London: Longman, 1974); David Sanders, *Losing an Empire, Finding a Role: British Foreign Policy Since 1945* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1990); David Vital, *The Making of British Foreign Policy* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1971).

the making of British foreign policy. Being alert to the historiographical origins of interpretations of the decision-making process is of great help to the political scientist who wants to avoid 'selection bias', defined by David Collier as 'occurring when the *non*random selection of cases results in inferences, based on the resulting sample, that are not statistically representative'.<sup>41</sup> Historiographies are valuable in this respect because they elucidate the relevant books in the area and analyse the relationship between competing interpretations. It is sometimes said that the political scientist needs to be a better historian than the historian, in the sense that theory lives and dies by its factual base. Historiography can help strengthen the empirical grounding of political science theories because of the mass of information they contain about alternative approaches and histories to consult. Armed with a comprehensive historiography the political scientist need not carry out historical research him or herself, that is, be a better historian than the historian. He or she will have a good guide to all the available literature in a single work on which to draw as necessary. In such a way alternative sources or methods can be discussed to ease the way for dialogue with others in the field and cross-fertilisation of knowledge across disciplines.

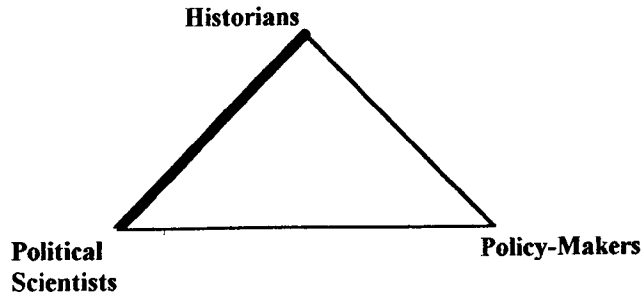
There is an additional dimension to consider when discussing the theoretical and empirical benefits of historiography.

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<sup>41</sup> Quoted in Lustick, 'History, Historiography, and Political Science', *op. cit.*, p.606.



**Figure 2: The Relationship Between Historians, Political Scientists and Policy-Makers**



It might be argued on one hand, that policy-makers do not or would be unwise to use ‘history’ to inform policy. Harold Macmillan was convinced that ‘history does not repeat itself’.<sup>42</sup> Lord Beloff concurred that ‘the “lessons of history” cannot be applied in any simple or mechanical fashion...All one can hope to have are suggestions and intimations that set the imagination working’.<sup>43</sup> Evans likewise argued that ‘Time and again history has proved a very bad predictor of future events. This is because history never repeats itself; nothing in human society, the main concern of the historian, ever happens twice under exactly the same conditions or in exactly the same way’.<sup>44</sup> These are prescient illustrations of the ideographic-nomothetic distinction that characterises the conventional separation of history from political science and, by extension, theory.<sup>45</sup>

<sup>42</sup> Quoted in Richard Lamb, *The Macmillan Years 1957-1963: The Emerging Truth* (London: John Murray, 1995), p.65.

<sup>43</sup> Beloff, *An Historian in the Twentieth Century*, op. cit., p.129.

<sup>44</sup> Evans, *In Defence of History*, op. cit., p.59.

<sup>45</sup> In a recent article scrutinising the pervasiveness of social theory in academic discourse, Frank Webster draws no attention at all to the relationship between history and theory: ‘social theory draws upon an enormous body of material, pulling together philosophers, sociologists, literary critics, anthropologists, even the occasional economist’. It is as if history has nothing to say to theorists at all. See Frank Webster, review, ‘Harnessing the Rampant Theory: *Theorising*

On the other hand, it has been found that policy-makers, like political scientists, use history for a variety of reasons and in a number of ways. The above diagram shows that the links between the two groups of academics are stronger than their respective relationship to policy-makers,<sup>46</sup> but the use of history by policy-makers, however inept or simplified, should not be overlooked.<sup>47</sup> This is best illustrated by referring to the work of Dan Reiter and Richard Neustadt and Ernest May.<sup>48</sup> Reiter found using quantitative data on the alliance politics of 'minor powers' in the twentieth century that 'states make alliance policy in accordance with lessons drawn from formative historical experiences'.<sup>49</sup>

Neustadt and May found that policy-makers can be 'taught' to use history as an analytical framework in which to develop more appropriate responses to foreign and domestic problems. Their argument stemmed from the observation that a host of American Presidents have used history systematically, if

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*Classical Sociology*. By Larry J. Rey; *Social Theory in the Twentieth Century*. By Patrick Baert; *Social Theory and Modernity*. By Nigel Dodd; *Social Theory: A Historical Introduction*. By Alex Callinicos; *The Blackwell Reader in Contemporary Social Theory*. By Andrew Elliott (ed.); *Contemporary Social and Political Theory: An Introduction*. By Fidelma Ashe et al', *Times Higher Education Supplement: Textbook Guide*, 25 February 2000, p.23.

<sup>46</sup> Melanson concluded that 'Those who write history and those who make policy will probably remain locked in their reciprocal, but frustrating relationship'. Melanson, *Writing History and Making Policy*, op. cit., p.226.

<sup>47</sup> Turning it round, Foucault argues, one cannot discount intellectuals from 'political responsibilities which he is obliged willy-nilly to accept'. Paul Rainbow (ed.), *The Foucault Reader: An Introduction to Foucault's Thought* (London: Penguin, 1991), p.72.

<sup>48</sup> Dan Reiter, 'Learning, Realism and Alliances: The Weight of the Shadow of the Past', *World Politics*, 46, 4 (1994), pp.490-526; Richard C. Neustadt and Ernest R. May, *Thinking in Time: The Uses of History for Decision-Makers* (New York: The Free Press, 1986). Bruce Kuklick also drew conclusions about learning from history in *American Policy and the Division of Germany: The Clash with Russia over Reparations* (London: Cornell University Press, 1972). See also Melanson, *Writing History*, op. cit., pp.4-6.

<sup>49</sup> Reiter, 'Learning, Realism and Alliances', op. cit., p.490.

inappropriately to draw 'fuzzy analogies' about current problems.<sup>50</sup> There have been no comparable studies in Britain.<sup>51</sup> But the history of European relations in the 1950s suggests that policy-makers were hesitant about joining supranational integration not just for dogmatic or ideological reasons. They were concerned about the recent past of potential partners, their political, military and social stability. Confirming Neustadt and May's findings, Christopher Lord argues that 'Decision-makers will tend to appraise new situations in the light of lessons drawn from previous experiences'.<sup>52</sup> In short, the weight of history loomed large in their thinking: why throw in Britain's lot with countries which had so recently been overrun in the Second World War?<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> Neustadt and May, *Thinking in Time*, op. cit., pp.32-3. See also John J. Mearsheimer, 'Back to the Future: Instability in Europe after the Cold War', *International Security*, 15, 1 (1990), pp.5-56 (p.9). He argues that 'views on the future of Europe are shaped by [policy-makers'] implicit preference for one theory of international relations over another'.

<sup>51</sup> The nearest in terms of weight of evidence (and conclusions) are Christopher Hill, 'The Historical Background: Past and Present in British Foreign Policy', in Smith, Smith and White (eds.), *British Foreign Policy*, op. cit., pp.24-49. See also Christopher Lord, *British Entry to the European Community Under the Heath Government of 1970-4* (Aldershot: Gower, 1985), pp.3-8; Little, 'The Study of British Foreign Policy', op. cit.; Steiner, 'The Historian and the Foreign Office', op. cit., pp.45-9.

<sup>52</sup> Lord, *British Entry to the European Community*, op. cit., p.7. Examination of the official record has reinforced the view that simplifying historical analogies permeated Whitehall thinking and led to Britain's ultimate withdrawal (or exclusion) from the founding of the EEC. See Simon Burgess and Geoffrey Edwards, 'The Six Plus One: British Policy-Making and the Question of European Economic Integration, 1955', *International Affairs*, 64, 3 (1988), pp.393-413 (pp.396-7); Wolfram Kaiser, *Using Europe. Abusing the Europeans: Britain and European Integration 1945-63* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1996), p.42; Richard Lamb, *The Failure of the Eden Government* (London: Sidgwick and Jackson, 1987), p.68; N. Piers Ludlow, *Dealing with Britain: The Six and the First UK Application to Join the EEC* (Cambridge University Press, 1997), p.19; John Turner, *Macmillan* (London: Longman, 1994), p.97; John W. Young, "'The Parting of Ways'?: Britain, the Messina Conference and the Spaak Committee, June-December 1955', in Michael Dockrill and John W. Young (eds.), *British Foreign Policy, 1945-56* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1989), pp.197-224 (p.199).

<sup>53</sup> An equally prominent doubt in Whitehall, about whether there was sufficient political will on the continent to succeed, turned on whether the Six could unite on economic grounds given the historical protectionism of the French. 'Britain and Europe's "Third Chance"', *Economist*, 19 November 1955, pp.633-4 (p.633); Elisabeth Barker, *Britain in a Divided Europe 1945-1970* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1971), p.151; Michael Charlton, *The Price of Victory* (London: BBC, 1983), p.165; Roy Denman, *Missed Chances: Britain and Europe in the Twentieth Century* (London: Cassell, 1996), p.194; George, *An Awkward Partner*, op. cit., p.26; Ian Gilmour and Mark Garnett, *Whatever Happened to the Tories: The Conservative Party Since 1945* (London: Fourth Estate, 1997), p.99; Northedge, *British Foreign Policy*, op. cit., p.166; Sked and Cook, *Post-War Britain*, op. cit., p.148.

Nicholas Ridley made the unfortunate comment in July 1990 that 'I'm not against giving up sovereignty in principle, but not to this lot. You might as well give it up to Adolf Hitler'.<sup>54</sup> Further examples include Ernest Bevin's comparison of the Soviet Foreign Minister to Hitler in 1946,<sup>55</sup> and Harold Wilson's resistance to devaluation in the late 1960s.<sup>56</sup> Observations about policy-makers learning from history are summed up by David Sanders' observation that many British foreign policy-makers since the 1930s have used a 'simplified' structural-realist model to inform foreign policy decision-making.<sup>57</sup> Hence, there is strong evidence to suggest that policy-makers do use history as a readily accessible model, a font of experience from which to draw analogies about current predicaments.

In this context, historiography has a fundamental role to play because it sharpens the intellectual tools available to policy-makers in their quest for a reliable historical model. When they consider the range of historical interpretations placed on the past they would be well advised to consult a historiographical study offering the entire range of interpretations. That would add nuance and subtlety to their thinking and the model they decide to use. That in the above diagram the relationship between academics and policy-

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<sup>54</sup> Quoted in Colin Pilkington, Britain in the European Union Today (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995), p.99.

<sup>55</sup> Alan Bullock, Ernest Bevin (London Heinemann, 1983), pp.132-4.

<sup>56</sup> It was, one biographer observed, an 'article of faith' traceable back to his days as President of the Board of Trade during the devaluation crisis of 1947. Austen Morgan, Harold Wilson (London: Pluto, 1992), p.266.

<sup>57</sup> Sanders, Losing an Empire, op. cit., p.265. He also remarks on Eden's 'long-standing determination to avoid repeating the errors of "appeasement" after 1945. See p.276, and Steiner, 'The Historian and the Foreign Office', op. cit., pp.48-9. See also D. R. Thorpe's reference to the impact of Suez on London's reaction to the Cuban missile crisis, in Alec Douglas-Home (London: Sinclair-Stevenson, 1996), p.239.

makers is denoted by a relatively thin line shows the problems of promoting such historical awareness in practitioners. While possible in theory it is unlikely that policy-makers will develop the habit of using academic studies to frame policy choices. The situation is changing, a trend identified by Hill when he wrote that 'The relationship between academics and policy practitioners has become steadily more significant over the course of this century'.<sup>58</sup> There are, moreover, examples of academics explicitly influencing policy direction.<sup>59</sup> Politicians are, however, constrained by time and resources, often preferring official histories written hastily in response to particular problems, rather than dense academic tracts which would develop their thinking along the lines suggested by Neustadt and May,<sup>60</sup> thus their scepticism that academic perspective will ever feature highly in political thinking.<sup>61</sup> Until further study of learning from history is carried out in Britain, and unless academics wish to compromise the intellectual content of their studies to appeal to policy-makers (which is unlikely), there are only limited possibilities for developing closer links between the academic and political communities in Britain.

This should not detract from the overall argument advanced in this section. On

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<sup>58</sup> Christopher Hill, 'Academic International Relations: The Siren Song of Policy Relevance', in Hill and Beshoff (eds.), *Two Worlds of International Relations*, op. cit., pp.3-25 (p.3). The new ESRC guidelines and the growing importance of policy-relevant research in government circles is also evidence of the increasing interconnection between the academic and political worlds.

<sup>59</sup> Hill cites the impact of Peter Ludlow's Centre for European Policy Studies on the 1989 Delors report on Economic and Monetary Union and reform of the Common Agricultural Policy. Ibid., p.21, footnote 2.

<sup>60</sup> The fragile nature of the relationship (voiced by individuals on both sides of the divide) is summed up in Steiner, 'The Historian and the Foreign Office', op. cit., and in Hill 'Academic International Relations', op. cit., pp.3-25. This volume contains consistent allusion to the caution, if not suspicion, with which the relationship is conducted.

<sup>61</sup> It is also the view of Steiner, in 'The Historian and the Foreign Office', op. cit., pp.45-8.

the theoretical level, bringing the historiographic method to bear on historical narratives is philosophically rewarding, theoretically rigorous and empirically significant. It is based on a constructive reading of White and assumes 'truths' about history exist, but they exist in the minds of the individual historian, each using his or her own methods and resources to study history. That scholars of Britain and Europe rarely recognise their interpretative similarities to others in the field allows us, by analysing the theoretical landscape, to draw fascinating conclusions about the state of the historical art in Britain. On an empirical level, historiographic studies show academics potential avenues down which historical understanding might in the future be advanced and provide both academics and policy-makers with a set of bibliographic and interpretative data on which to draw broader conclusions about the nature of history and politics. Having discussed the merits of the historiographic method, it is now necessary to consider the reasons for studying the writing of British European policy between 1945 and 1973.

## **2. Why the Literature on Britain and Europe, 1945-73?**

On the theoretical level, there are three prime reasons for analysing this corpus of writing. The first is that, with the Thirty Year Rule now cutting off access to the official material in the Public Record Office (PRO) after 1969, scrutinising historical interpretations to 1973 permits comparisons to be drawn between works penned pre- and post-archival release. The aim of the thesis is to uncover why historians interpret events as they do. Studying histories which

have out of necessity been written without access to unofficial sources allows us to test the proposition that sources are crucial stimuli behind advances in historical understanding. It is argued that, on the most general level, the interpretative content and texture of historical narratives changes dramatically when the Thirty Year Rule closes off access to primary source material.

The second reason is that, in light of its importance to our understanding of British, European and world politics since 1945, there has been nothing substantial written on the methods of historical research in this particular field. Studies rarely contain methodological sections explaining how research was operationalised, which theories guided historians' thinking and the potential for refinements and advances in understanding flowing from that particular study. Several authors offer surveys of the state of the art as a way of grounding their particular interpretation,<sup>62</sup> but no thorough study has yet been made of the entire range of sociological, political and methodological forces at work on historical interpretation. Students have been poorly served by existing accounts. This thesis provides a corrective and aspires to make a more sophisticated contribution.

The third reason for taking this particular subject matter is that it has been a burgeoning area of research for the last fifteen years. Many established historians who led the way now research alongside a younger generation of

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<sup>62</sup> There are measured accounts of this period in John W. Young, Britain and European Unity, 1945-1992 (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1993); Sean Greenwood, Britain and European Co-operation Since 1945 (Oxford: Blackwell, 1992). A similar account of a shorter period is to be found in Jan Melissen and Bert Zeeman, 'Britain and Western Europe, 1945-51: Opportunities Lost?', International Affairs, 63, 1 (1987), pp.81-95.

students who are refining their methods and subjecting their interpretations to minute historical attention. It is a vibrant field which is constantly evolving, mutating and casting its net wider and wider in search of new sources and evidence through which to interpret British European policy. The subject matter is crucially important to contemporary debates about the British attitude towards Europe. If any study can highlight ways to advance historical understanding and the quality of interpretative insights, it is the historiographic.

On the empirical level, Britain was a significant actor on the international stage in the period 1945-73. London took the lead in organising West Europe's response to the offer of Marshall Aid from America in 1947, culminating in the establishment of the European Recovery Programme and, in 1948, the Organisation for European Economic Co-operation which oversaw the recovery of post-war Europe. Meanwhile, Britain was a prime mover in forming the Dunkirk Treaty with France in 1947, extending this a year later to form the Brussels Pact with Belgium, Luxembourg and the Netherlands. In 1949 Britain was a signatory of the Washington Treaty and a founder member of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO). Five years later, in 1954, It was Prime Minister Anthony Eden who provided the security dimension for Western Europe through an expanded Brussels Pact which established Western European Union (WEU), following the collapse of the European Defence Community (EDC) in the French National Assembly. Outside the European Community Britain still acted in the world arena, and in 1959 was a founder member of the European Free Trade Area (EFTA). London's subsequent



efforts to join the EEC raise all sorts of pertinent questions about the problems of Community enlargement which are still being faced today.

There is good reason to argue, indeed, that interest in British European policy has flowed directly from growing historiographical awareness that more than just two powers were engaged in the Cold War. Many specialists on Britain and European integration originally started out examining the role of Britain in the division of Germany and the origins of the Cold War which was, after all, 'the touchstone of beginning and of the end of the Cold War'.<sup>63</sup> (Examine the writing of Avi Shlaim,<sup>64</sup> Deighton,<sup>65</sup> John Young,<sup>66</sup> and Geoffrey Warner).<sup>67</sup>

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<sup>63</sup> Deighton, 'The Cold War in Europe', op. cit., p.83.

<sup>64</sup> Avi Shlaim, 'Britain, the Berlin Blockade and the Cold War', *International Affairs*, 60, 1 (1984), pp.1-15; Avi Shlaim, 'The Partition of Germany and the Origins of the Cold War', *Review of International Studies*, 11 (1985), pp.123-37; Shlaim, Jones and Sainsbury (eds.), *British Foreign Secretaries*, op. cit.; Shlaim, 'The Foreign Secretary and the Making of Policy', op. cit.; Shlaim, *Britain and the Origins of European Unity*, op. cit.

<sup>65</sup> Anne Deighton, *The Impossible Peace: Britain, the Division of Germany, and the Origins of the Cold War* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993); Anne Deighton (ed.), *Britain and the First Cold War* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1990); Anne Deighton, 'Cold War Diplomacy: British Policy Towards Germany's Role in Europe, 1945-9', in Ian D. Turner (ed.), *Reconstruction in Post-War Germany: British Occupation Policy and the Western Zones, 1945-55* (Oxford: Berg, 1989), pp.15-34; Anne Deighton, 'The "Frozen Front": The Labour Government, the Division of Germany and the Origins of the Cold War', *International Affairs*, 63, 3 (1987), pp.449-65. She has gone on to publish a number of studies on Europe, including Anne Deighton (ed.), *Building Post-War Europe: National Decision-Makers and European Institutions, 1948-63* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1995); Anne Deighton, 'Harold Macmillan, Whitehall, and the Defence of Europe', in Elisabeth du Réau (ed.), *Europe des Elites? Europe des Peuples?: La Construction de L'espace Européen 1945-1960* (Paris: Presses de la Sorbonne Nouvelle, 1999), pp.235-47.

<sup>66</sup> John W. Young, *Britain, France and the Unity of Europe 1945-1951* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1984); John W. Young, *Cold War Europe 1945-1989: A Political History* (London: Edward Arnold, 1989); John W. Young, 'Cold War and Détente with Moscow', in Young (ed.), *The Foreign Policy of Churchill's Peacetime Administration*, op. cit., pp.55-80; John W. Young, 'The Foreign Office, the French and the Post-War Division of Germany, 1945-46', *Review of International Studies*, 12 (1986), pp.223-34. He was supervised by another Cold War specialist, Robert Frazier who penned 'Did Britain Start the Cold War?: Bevin and the Truman Doctrine', *Historical Journal*, 27, 3 (1984), pp.715-27.

<sup>67</sup> Geoffrey Warner, 'The Division of Germany 1946-1948', *International Affairs*, 51, 1 (1975), pp.60-70; 'The British Labour Government and the Atlantic Alliance, 1949-51', in Olav Riste (ed.), *Western Security: The Formative Years* (Oslo: Norwegian University Press, 1985), pp.247-65. He went onto studies such as 'The Labour Governments and the Unity of Western Europe 1945-51' in Ritchie Owendale (ed.) *The Foreign Policy of the British Labour Governments, 1945-1951* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1984), pp.82-116.

Their career paths provide evidence of the role fads and fashions play in determining which areas of history receive attention, which ignored.<sup>68</sup> Kaplan remarks that much European 'revisionism' came at a time in the middle of the 1980s when there was 'heightened awareness of the growth of a European entity capable of defending itself, either alongside or independent of the United States'.<sup>69</sup> Richard Little also suggests that 'developments in world politics...had an impact on the discipline's research agenda'.<sup>70</sup> As interest in European integration soared in the wake of the Single European Act, and perhaps recognising the long tradition of Anglo-American scholarship on

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<sup>68</sup> A point drawn out in Beatrice Heuser, review article, 'Keystone in the Division of Europe', Contemporary European History, 1, 3 (1992), pp.323-33 (p.325).

<sup>69</sup> Kaplan, 'The Cold War and European Revisionism', op. cit., p.150. The commitment of the EEC in the SEA to implement 'a European foreign policy', and the parallel upgrading of the importance of the Western European Union is presumably the event to which Kaplan refers. See Neill Nugent, The Government and Politics of the European Union, 3<sup>rd</sup> edn. (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1994), p.73.

<sup>70</sup> Richard Little, 'Historiography and IR', Review of International Studies, 25, 2 (1999), pp.291-9 (p.295).

Britain's role in the division of Germany,<sup>71</sup> many of these writers moved from Britain and Germany into its natural successor, Britain and European integration. The political climate of opinion, the impact of the Thirty Year Rule and pragmatic career choices thus all seem to have played big roles in the development of a distinct area of study on Britain and Europe. Here is a good example of the interconnectedness of accident and background in determining the areas to which historians turn their attention, echoing Beloff's comment that 'Most the choices I made [about what to study] can be put down to the

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<sup>71</sup> John H. Backer, The Decision to Divide Germany: American Foreign Policy in Transition (Durham, N. C.: Duke University Press 1978); Trevor Burridge, 'Great Britain and the Dismemberment of Germany at the End of the Second World War', International History Review, 3, 4 (1981), pp.565-79; Alec Cairncross, The Price of War: British Policy on German Reparations 1941-1949 (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1986); Robert W. Carden, 'Before Bizonia: Britain's Economic Dilemma in Germany, 1945-46', Journal of Contemporary History, 14, 3 (1979), pp.535-55; David Dilks, 'The British View of Security: Europe and a Wider World, 1945-1948', in Riste (ed.), Western Security, op. cit., pp.25-59; Joseph Foschepoth, 'British Interest in the Division of Germany after the Second World War', Journal of Contemporary History, 21, 3 (1986), pp.391-411; John Lewis Gaddis, 'The United States and the Question of a Sphere of Influence in Europe, 1945-1949', in Riste (ed.), Western Europe, op. cit., pp.60-91; John Gimbel, The Origins of the Marshall Plan (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1976); Harold Ingrams, 'Building Democracy in Germany', Quarterly Review (1947), pp.208-22; Bill Jones, The Russia Complex: The British Labour Party and the Soviet Union (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1977); Lothar Kettenacker, 'The Anglo-Soviet Alliance and the Problem of Germany, 1941-45', Journal of Contemporary History, 17, 3 (1982), pp.435-58; Julian Lewis, Changing Direction: British Military Planning for Post-War Strategic Defence, 1942-1947 (London: The Sherwood Press, 1988); Charles S. Maier, 'Who Divided Germany?', Diplomatic History, 22, 3 (1988), pp.481-88; R. B. Manderson-Jones, The Special Relationship: Anglo-American Relations and Western European Unity 1947-56 (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1972); Ray Merrick, 'The Russia Committee of the British Foreign Office and the Cold War, 1946-47', Journal of Contemporary History, 20, 3 (1985), pp.453-68; Philip Mosely, 'Dismemberment of Germany: The Allied Negotiations from Yalta to Potsdam', Foreign Affairs, 25, 3 (1950), pp.487-98; Harold Nicolson, 'Peacemaking at Paris: Success, Failure or Farce?', Foreign Affairs, 25, 2 (1947), pp.190-203; Ritchie Ovendale, 'Britain, the USA and the European Cold War, 1945-8', History, 67 (1982), pp.217-35; Ritchie Ovendale, The English-Speaking Alliance: Britain, the United States, the Dominions and the Cold War 1945-51 (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1985); David Reynolds, 'The Origins of the Cold War: The European Dimension, 1944-1951', Historical Journal, 28, 2 (1985), pp.497-515; Victor Rothwell, Britain and the Cold War 1941-1947 (London: Jonathan Cape, 1982); Keith Sainsbury, 'British Policy and German Unity at the End of the Second World War', English Historical Review, 94 (1979), pp.786-804; Tony Sharp, The Wartime Alliance and the Zonal Division of Germany (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975); Raymond Smith, 'A Climate of Opinion: British Officials and the Development of British Soviet Policy, 1945-7', International Affairs, 64, 4 (1988), pp.631-47; Hugh Thomas, Armed Truce: The Beginnings of the Cold War, 1945-46 (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1986); R. Harrison Wagner, 'The Decision to Divide Germany and the Origins of the Cold War', International Studies Quarterly, 24, 2 (1980), pp.155-90; Sir John Wheeler-Bennett and Anthony Nicholls, The Semblance of Peace: The Political Settlement After the Second World War (London: Macmillan, 1972); John Zametica (ed.), British Officials

vagaries of chance. Some were perhaps due to my upbringing and education, preparing me for or predisposing me to some choices rather than others'.<sup>72</sup>

On a negative note, Britain since 1945 has consistently acted as an impediment to supranationalism in Western Europe, playing a role Pierre-Henri Laurent describes as an 'internal inhibitor'.<sup>73</sup> London's watering down of the powers of the Council of Europe, its rejection of the Schuman Plan, a supranational European Army and withdrawal from the Messina process which led to the founding of the European Economic Community stand out as defining events in post-war European integration history. Britain is still seen as the 'awkward partner' in the European Union (EU),<sup>74</sup> the focus of a coalition of states 'content to shelter behind British objections rather than take up the argument themselves'.<sup>75</sup>

Britain's turbulent relationship with the EC, now EU, is one of the defining political conflicts of our age. Historical awareness of how Britain has got where it has vis-à-vis European integration is of absolutely crucial importance. It sheds light on a multitude of issues relevant to the study of contemporary history, politics and international relations. In the context of European studies, the case of Britain sheds light on the problems applicant states and the

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and *British Foreign Policy 1945-50* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1990).

<sup>72</sup> Beloff, *An Historian*, op. cit., p.1.

<sup>73</sup> Pierre-Henri Laurent, 'Reappraising the Origins of European Integration', in Hans J. Michelmann and Panayotis Soldatos (eds.), *European Integration: Theories and Approaches* (Maryland: University Press of America, 1994), pp.99-112 (p.104).

<sup>74</sup> George, *An Awkward Partner*, op. cit.

<sup>75</sup> Stephen George, *Politics and Policy in the European Community*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), p.204.

Community and Union have had coming to terms with enlargement, 'Euro-scepticism', and concepts of 'sovereignty' and the national interest. For analysts of British politics, Britain's policy towards European integration sheds light on the pluralism of the foreign policy process, the role of opposition parties in constraining foreign policy, and the importance of policy projection in a complex international environment in which rhetoric can be as potent as reality in determining foreign policy outcomes. This thesis is therefore aimed at several audiences. It primarily addresses philosophers of history but the practical findings on methods of historical research will also appeal to historians and political scientists. Having discussed the merits of historiographically analysing the writing of British European policy, it is now useful to consider alternative methods of schoolification that could have been employed. It will be shown that grouping writers according to the interpretation they place on historical events is the most apt approach to schoolification not only because of its intellectual coherence and tradition, but because of the flaws inherent in the two most promising alternatives.

### **3. Deeper Reflections on the 'Schoolification' Process**

A school of writing is defined as a group of writers who subscribe explicitly or implicitly to the same or similar interpretation of an event or events in a given area of history. The major points of conflict among writers of British European policy can be identified as follows: Bevin's concept of the 'Third Force'; Britain and the Schuman Plan; Britain and the European Army; Britain and the

founding of the EEC; Macmillan's application to join the EEC; De Gaulle's first veto; Wilson's entry bid; de Gaulle's second veto; Heath's 'Europeanism' and entry in 1973. Once writers' positions in each debate had been identified, conclusions were drawn about how they related to other writers taking up the same or similar position in the debate. Had there been no, or few, sociological, political or methodological links among the writers taking similar interpretations the thesis would have argued that no schools existed and drawn conclusions about why that happened to be the case. However, there *is* a correlation between the interpretation writers place upon events and the politics, aims and methods of writing. It is the distinction between writers on these grounds that forms the boundaries between schools of writing.

There are two alternative methods that could have been used. The first- mapping writers according to the level of analysis on which they account for British foreign policy- requires schools to be based on the theoretical underpinnings of writers' work. The second- institutional affiliation- assumes that schools of writing emerge from particular universities or other institutions. Analysing the strengths and weaknesses of each in turn, it will be shown that locating writers in schools according to their interpretation incorporates certain theoretically appealing aspects of both these alternatives without succumbing to their considerable failings.

- **The Levels of Analysis Approach: Theory Before Interpretation**

As Barry Buzan explains, the 'level of analysis' problem 'is about how to

identify and treat different types of location in which sources of explanation for observed phenomenon can be found'.<sup>76</sup> Born during the behavioural movement in the United States, levels of analysis attempted to bring scientific certainty and methodological rigour to the social sciences.<sup>77</sup> One of its architects, J. David Singer, argued that the levels model compelled writers to choose 'whether to account for the behaviour of the international system in terms of the behaviour of the nation-states comprising it or vice-versa'. Moving 'down' a level, 'Are we to account for the behaviour of the state in terms of the behaviour of its constituent bureaucracies (and other agencies), or vice-versa?'. Lower still, 'Are we to account for the behaviour of a bureaucracy in terms of the behaviour of the human individuals comprising it, or vice-versa?'.<sup>78</sup> One can see from this exposition that the structure-agency dichotomy is at the heart of the levels of analysis approach to foreign policy analysis, a theoretical instrument developed, Singer continued, 'to explain [foreign policy outcomes], and when descriptive and explanatory requirements are in conflict, the latter ought to be given priority'.<sup>79</sup>

This model possesses two principal strengths. First, it is an accessible view of how states behave in the international system, splitting what are perceived to be the dominant forces at work in the international system into neat 'levels' or

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<sup>76</sup> Barry Buzan, 'The Levels of Analysis Problem Reconsidered', in Ken Booth and Steve Smith (eds.), *International relations Theory Today* (Cambridge: Polity, 1995), pp.198-216 (p.199).

<sup>77</sup> Ibid.

<sup>78</sup> J. David Singer, 'The Levels-of-Analysis Problem in International relations', in James Rosenau (ed.), *International Politics and Foreign Policy* (London: Collier-Macmillan, 1969), pp.20-9. For a reformulation of this model see Smith and Smith, 'The Analytical Background', *op. cit.*, pp.8-11.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid., p.22.

‘categories’ of analysis. Second, it was dominant at a time when the study of international relations was undertaken in the shadow of the Cold War, a bipolar international system, and conception of ‘power’, defined in terms of nuclear weapons, ideology and bipolar conflict on the world stage.<sup>80</sup> As Buzan suggests, ‘Levels of analysis made a strong impact on international relations not least because the ideal of levels seemed to fit easily and neatly into the organisation of the discipline’s subject matter in terms of individuals, states and systems’.<sup>81</sup>

The literature analysed in the thesis is foreign policy-oriented. Would it not therefore be appropriate to schoolify writers according to their use of foreign policy theory rather than the interpretation they offer?<sup>82</sup> This would involve locating writers in three schools pertaining to the level on which each situates his or her analysis of British European policy, ‘world system’, ‘nation-state’ or ‘individual’ level. Is it not to misunderstand the nature of scholarship to examine interpretative content instead of theoretical underpinning? Given what has already been discussed about the relative lack of methodological reflection by historians in Britain, it appears not. By considering the theoretical and empirical weaknesses of the levels of analysis model it will be argued that it cannot supplant the thesis’ interpretationist approach to the literature on Britain and Europe.

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<sup>80</sup> In the Realist world-view, remarks Sanders, ‘the nation-state...can best protect itself by pursuing a strategy of either maximising its own power capabilities or seeking to avoid the development of any power preponderance elsewhere’. Sanders, *Losing an Empire*, op. cit., p.258.

<sup>81</sup> Buzan, ‘The Levels of Analysis Problem Reconsidered’, op. cit., p.200.

<sup>82</sup> See, for example, the categorisation of Kenneth Waltz as an international system level writer, contrasting with Lawrence Kaplan’s nation-state level in *ibid.*, p.201.



The theoretical concern with the levels model is that while conceptually neat, are there just three levels of analysis? Martin Hollis and Steve Smith's recent concerns about the model echo Buzan's worry that there is an 'unwarranted impression of simplicity about the whole idea'.<sup>83</sup> That each of the three levels can be sub-divided into four or more extra levels raises the issue of what is being explained here? This question is particularly pressing in an era of interdependence and globalisation. If one yearns for a parsimonious model that explains state behaviour, how deep into the black box of the state does one need to delve to make predictions? How, for instance, does the behaviour of individuals explain state behaviour across time or are each particular to their own states? What, then, of comparative generalisations? Or should one ignore individual influences and abstract to the upper levels? What, then, of the impact of individuals, bureaucracies and nation-state interaction in an 'anarchic' world? The model raises more questions about how to explain foreign policies of states than it can possibly answer.

It is such concerns which highlight the second weakness of the levels model. Even at the height of the Cold War most writers did not rigidly adhere to its structure, so what is its *raison d'être*? Singer conceded that scholars do not *necessarily* need to choose a single explanatory level of analysis: 'the problem is really not one of deciding which level is most valuable to the discipline as a

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<sup>83</sup> Martin Hollis and Steve Smith, Explaining and Understanding, op. cit., pp.1-91; Buzan, 'The Levels of Analysis Problem Reconsidered', op. cit., p.202.

whole and then demanding that it be adhered to from now unto eternity'.<sup>84</sup> Steve and Michael Smith have likewise pointed out that 'A comprehensive account or analysis of foreign policy in any country will take account of all of these levels, not only individually, but also in terms of the linkages and interaction between them'.<sup>85</sup> The question then becomes 'if two or more units and sources of explanation are operating together, how are their different analyses to be assembled into a whole understanding?'.<sup>86</sup> For these two main reasons, it can be argued that the levels model contains a number of internal inconsistencies and contradictions with which even its proponents struggled to come to terms. There are additional points to consider, which can be identified in the following figure.

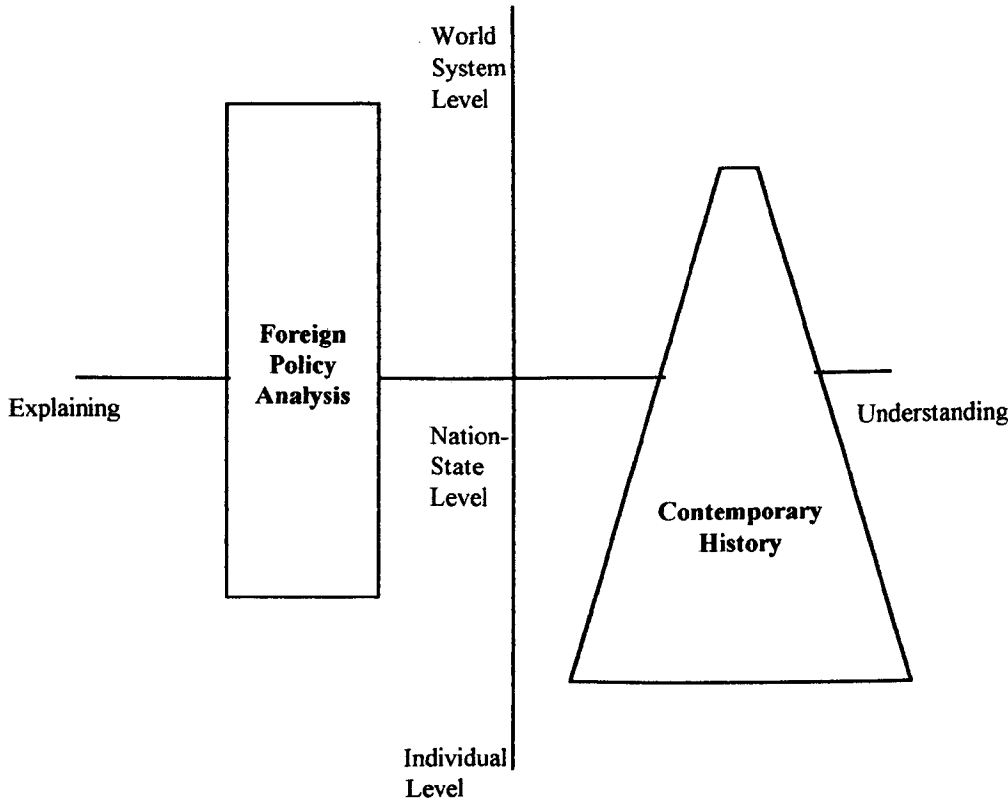
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<sup>84</sup> Singer, 'The Levels of Analysis Problem', op. cit., p.28.

<sup>85</sup> Steve Smith and Michael Smith, 'The Analytical Background: Approaches to the Study of British Foreign Policy', in Smith, Smith and White (eds.), British Foreign Policy, pp.3-23 (p.8).

<sup>86</sup> Buzan, 'The Levels of Analysis Problem Reconsidered', op. cit., p.213.

**Figure 3: Contemporary History and Foreign Policy Analysis in the Study  
of International Relations**



On the empirical level, the main weakness of the levels of analysis model is that its concern with theory has not been replicated by many historians of British European policy. Lawrence Freedman has found that ‘most contemporary narrative analysts of British foreign policy actually use a mixture’ of the rational actor and bureaucratic politics models. ‘Despite being conceptually distinct’, Sanders surmises, ‘the two models are in fact mutually compatible and can be jointly applied to the same empirical materials without serious difficulty or contradiction’.<sup>87</sup> They do not generally elect a level on which to analyse foreign policy-making, but, as a function of the documentary

<sup>87</sup> Freedman is quoted in Sanders, *Losing an Empire*, op. cit., pp.273-4.

method, have been content to present their narratives in the framework of individual and bureaucratic rivalry in the foreign policy process. As such, scholars in the field of Britain and Europe, defined in the figure above as 'contemporary history',<sup>88</sup> weight their analysis more towards the lower than higher levels of analysis. One is compelled to infer back on the basis of *interpretation* to say that X is a nation-state level writer, Y an individual level writer. This undermines the levels of analysis model still further, because it is a prerequisite that one chooses a level on which to explain foreign policy outcomes. That writers are located on different levels with great difficulty, and that they do not locate themselves on levels,<sup>89</sup> presents a fundamental argument against using the levels model to schoolify writers. It has had little impact on the evolution of British historiography.

Second, and even more damaging, White suggests that 'The field of historical studies may be taken as exemplary of those disciplines in the human and social sciences that rest content with the understanding of matters with which they deal in place of aspiring to explain them'.<sup>90</sup> 'Contemporary history' is located

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<sup>88</sup> 'The contemporary' in Britain is usually held to denote 'post-1945 history'. See Anthony Seldon, 'The Theatre of Contemporary History', in Anthony Seldon (ed.), Contemporary History: Practice and Method (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1988), pp.117-28 (p.117). See also John Barnes, 'Books and Journals', in the same volume, pp.30-54 where, on p.30, he gives the widely accepted view that 'contemporary history is best concerned with that period in which there can be profitable interaction between oral history and at least some documentation'. See also R. Palme Dutt, Problems of Contemporary History (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1963), pp.15-16. Fewer writers locate its origins at the start of the century. See Beloff, An Historian, op. cit., p.32. In different countries the date tends to differ also. See François Bédarida, 'France', in Seldon (ed.), Contemporary History, op. cit., pp.129-32.

<sup>89</sup> A rare exception is Sanders, Losing an Empire, op. cit. His concluding chapter is devoted to the 'relevance of foreign policy theory' Sanders argues that his study has been based on the bureaucratic and international system levels of analysis, an attempt to reflect the 'world-views of the policy-makers themselves'. See pp.257-87. This quote is from p.257.

<sup>90</sup> White, The Content of the Form, op. cit., p.60. Callinicos likewise argues that the 'typical aim of historical writing [is] to give an explanation of some event or episode or phenomenon in the past'. Callinicos, Theories and Narratives, op. cit., p.55.

in the half of the graph where ‘understanding’ is the goal. British historians working in this area do not attempt to ‘explain’, preferring, in Hollis and Smith’s terminology, to ‘understand’ British attitudes to the continent, usually over narrow periods of time.<sup>91</sup> The levels model is, by contrast, an attempt to explain and predict state behaviour. The concerns of historians do not sit well in the explanatory framework it provides.

The levels model, in sum, is an explanatory tool not a descriptive device. As Singer reminds us: ‘when descriptive and explanatory requirements are in conflict, the latter ought to be given priority’.<sup>92</sup> Historians of British European policy allude to geographic and geostrategic explanations for Britain’s aloofness from the continent after 1945. But they cite too the salience of individual conceptions of British foreign policy and the role of bureaucratic rivalry fought out within the Whitehall machine and in Cabinet. This is represented above by a shape to contemporary history which tapers at the top, highlighting the observation that historians regularly transgress boundaries between levels of analysis. To schoolify scholars on one or other level would be to falsely assume the a priori importance of theory to British historians, to artificially simplify the multilayered accounts produced, to ignore interpretative eclecticism and render an injustice to the literature.

Contrary to Sanders’ claim that foreign policy research ‘is rarely conducted in

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<sup>91</sup> Hollis and Smith, *Explaining and Understanding*, op. cit.

<sup>92</sup> Singer, ‘The Levels-of-Analysis Problem’, op. cit., p.22.

a theoretical vacuum',<sup>93</sup> historians' attention to the detail of particular events obviates their ability to theorise. British historians have been extremely reticent about generalising about the foreign policy process in Britain. Accounts of the period 1945-73, or some smaller portion, are usually closed and left to stand alone as descriptions of a past history which have little explicit relevance to present issues. Events, it seems, cannot be taken out of context. There are texts which draw explicit conclusions about the pluralism of the British foreign policy process, reinforcing the accounts of Wallace, Barber and Cable cited above.<sup>94</sup> There has also been a tendency in some recent literature to draw conclusions about European Union enlargement from the case of Britain's entry attempts.<sup>95</sup> However, the problems of drawing general conclusions from particular historical epochs is highlighted in Forster's review of Ludlow's monograph: 'While [his] conclusions may apply in their totality to the period of the 1960s- and indeed may explain the failure of the second British application- a far more nuanced set of conclusions needs to be drawn concerning the more recent process of enlargement'.<sup>96</sup>

The EU is an evolving entity, its future state the subject of intense debate. In

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<sup>93</sup> Sanders, *Losing an Empire*, op. cit., p.285.

<sup>94</sup> Roger Jowell and Gerald Hoinville (eds.), *Britain into Europe: Public Opinion and the EEC 1961-75* (London: Croon Helm, 1975); Robert J. Lieber, *British Politics and European Unity: Parties, Elites, and Pressure Groups* (Berkeley: University of California, 1970); Jeremy Moon, *European Integration into British Politics 1950-1963: A Study of Issue Change* (Aldershot: Gower, 1985). The latter used 'a methodological innovation in content analysis technique to examine the European integration issue in British politics', that innovation being 'quantitative analysis of political discourse'. It has not been repeated since. See F. E. C. Gregory, review, 'European Integration into British Politics 1950-1963: A Study of Issue Change. By Jeremy Moon', *Journal of Common Market Studies*, 24, 3 (1986), pp.255-6.

<sup>95</sup> Uwe Kitzinger, *Diplomacy and Persuasion: How Britain Joined the Common Market* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1975); Lord, *British Entry*, op. cit.; Ludlow, *Dealing with Britain*, op. cit.

<sup>96</sup> Forster, 'No Entry', op. cit., p.144.

this light, and given the intrinsic problems of generalising across historical eras it is no surprise that historians have shrunk from generalising, preferring the descriptive over predictive approach to Britain and Europe. One suspects that as historians investigate the archives on Britain's EEC entry under Heath, conclusions about contemporary British attitudes and policies, especially public, media and business opinion, the links from the past to the present will be better defined. This is because Heath, 'sceptics' argue, guided Britain into Europe without due regard for the constitutional, legal and financial implications and without recourse to public opinion.<sup>97</sup> This is naturally fertile ground on which to consider subsequent British attitudes to the process of European unity. It may be that historians of the Heath period will be more at ease with making links between the past and present than they have hitherto been.

Even so, any drift in the literature away from 'understanding' towards 'explaining' has been limited. These empirical weaknesses of the levels approach serve to exaggerate the theoretical concerns about it as a method of schoolification. It is not that writers do not choose a level on which to write, but it is not an explicit choice. Accounts are increasingly weighted to the lower levels, debates among writers revolving around individual motivation and nuance of language in the official documentation.<sup>98</sup> British historians' reluctance to generalise is against the spirit of the levels approach which

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<sup>97</sup> Jay, *Change and Fortune*, op. cit., pp.431-4; Thatcher, *The Path to Power*, op. cit., pp.209-10.

<sup>98</sup> The analysis of post-revisionism in Chapter 3 shows how the subtle changes in ministerial and official motivations are developing into the main historiographical battle ground.

demands just such theoretical underpinnings and conclusions. To prioritise the impact of levels of analysis would be to falsely raise the a priori importance of just one possible input to historical narrativisation over the host of others that are apparent in the historiography. The historical truths sought by historians are not akin to the sorts of 'truths' about the working of the international system sought by foreign policy analysts.

- **The Institutional Approach to Schoolification**

Schools of writing, it has been observed, are often associated with particular institutions. The 'Frankfurt School' originated in a research institute established in the Weimar Republic in 1923,<sup>99</sup> while the Annales school of French historians 'had a firm institutional basis'.<sup>100</sup> In Britain examples include the connection between the 'English school' of international relations and the LSE,<sup>101</sup> and the "third-way" thought current at the London School of Economics'.<sup>102</sup> Such tight communities of individuals are fertile environments in which to develop shared understandings, approaches, theories and models of academic study. Is it not the case, therefore, that schools of writing on Britain and Europe can be modelled according to institutional affiliation?

As an alternative method of schoolification to the interpretative method

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<sup>99</sup> Morrow and Brown, *Critical Theory and Methodology*, op. cit., pp.6-7 and pp.14-6; Webster, 'Harnessing the Rampant Theory', op. cit. See also Harriet Swain, 'Blair's Capital Hearing Aides', *Times Higher Education Supplement*, 17 March 2000, p.20.

<sup>100</sup> Iggers, *Historiography*, op. cit., pp.51-2.

<sup>101</sup> Tim Dunne, *Inventing International Society: A History of the English School* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1998), pp.5-10. See also Roger Epp, 'The English School on the Frontiers of International relations', *Review of International Studies*, 24 (1998), pp.47-63.

<sup>102</sup> Webster, 'Harnessing the Rampant Theory', op. cit.



employed in this study, the institutional approach has two merits. First, the association of schools with institutions, noted above, gives it a strong intellectual legitimacy which derives from the established tradition of linking the one to the other. There is a precedent in Britain of analysing schools in terms of academic affiliation, offering a ready-made set of methodological tools for writing the historiography of British European policy: map the writers, analyse their backgrounds and draw conclusions about the role of institutions as necessary. The second merit of this approach is that it would surely provide neat boundaries between schools which would be characterised by a 'high degree of unity' among their members.<sup>103</sup> For some scholars the term 'school' implies just such monolithic adherence to a singular interpretation of events. It could be, for example, that competing interpretations were associated with competing intellectual traditions, academic methods and approaches in different institutions. One could go on from here to draw conclusions about the influence of politics and methods in different institutions on historical interpretation.

There is evidence that Oxford and the LSE have been at the forefront of the revisionist school of writing. Deighton developed in the early 1990s a new approach to Britain's role in the early Cold War period, which stressed the role in the foreign policy process played by advice from officials and civil servants.<sup>104</sup> Young and Kent at LSE developed the revisionist critique of the

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<sup>103</sup> Gardner, Kaplan, Kimball and Kuniholm, 'Responses', op. cit., p.198.

<sup>104</sup> Deighton, The Impossible Peace, op. cit.; Deighton, 'Cold War Diplomacy', op. cit.; Deighton, 'The "Frozen Front"', op. cit.

‘consensus’ interpretation of the Third Force.<sup>105</sup> These have since supervised, or in a looser context, inspired many British historians working in this field, giving revisionist historiography a distinctive institutionally-oriented appearance. This is particularly poignant in that Cambridge arguably has less of a tradition in international history and international relations research than either LSE or Oxford. The former is naturally near the centre of power by virtue of geographic location, the latter’s ‘politics, philosophy and economics’ degree provided many of the key politicians and political thinkers of the 1960s and 1970s.<sup>106</sup> Cambridge has a stronger link to the natural sciences, a tradition which has continued recently with the University ‘putting its efforts into a different kind of power base, joining the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in a £68 million science enterprise project and developing a computer lab with £12 million of funding from Bill Gates’.<sup>107</sup> In short, one can reflect on the applicability of Patrick Dunleavy’s comment about Oxford, that it has a curriculum ‘largely of historical interest’ to the LSE also.<sup>108</sup> One could thus reflect on the irony that these establishment institutions have been home to interpretations which challenge the received wisdom of the policy-making establishment which, Milward complains, was ‘based on access to expensive

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<sup>105</sup> John Kent, ‘Bevin’s Imperialism and the Idea of Euro-Africa, 1945-49’, in Dockrill and Young (eds.), *British Foreign Policy*, pp.47-76; John Kent and John W. Young, ‘British Policy Overseas: The “Third Force” and the Origins of NATO- In Search of a New Perspective’, in Beatrice Heuser and Robert O’Neill (eds.) *Securing Peace in Europe, 1945-62: Thoughts for the Post- Cold War Era* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1992), pp.41-61; John Kent and John W. Young, ‘The “Western Union” Concept and British Defence Policy, 1947-8’, in Richard J. Aldrich (ed.), *British Intelligence, Strategy and the Cold War 1945-51* (London: Routledge, 1992), pp.166-92; John W. Young, ‘The Foreign Office, the French and the Post-War Division of Germany, 1945-46’, *Review of International Studies*, 12 (1986), pp.223-34. See also Michael Dockrill, ‘British Attitudes Towards France as A Military Ally’, *Diplomacy and Statecraft*, 1, 1 (1990), pp.49-70 (p.59).

<sup>106</sup> Swain, ‘Blair’s Capital Hearing Aides’, op. cit.

<sup>107</sup> Ibid.

<sup>108</sup> Quoted in ibid.

private education and privileged entry into two universities notable for the irrelevance of the knowledge they imparted to the task at hand'.<sup>109</sup> There are, however, two drawbacks of using the institutional approach to schoolification.

First, a searching examination of the literature suggests that institutional affiliation is not the only influence on historiography in Britain. While it reveals some of the influences on interpretation, to base schools mainly on institutions is to posit a link between the two that holds for some writers, but clearly not for many others. The best one can say is that institutional links are one of a number of reasons why the historiography has developed as it has. Political dogma, methodological eclecticism, historians' training in Britain, the type of study written, awareness of theoretical underpinnings and alertness to one's relationship to others in the field are all equally compelling explanations for advances in historical understanding. For different writers each operates with different force at different times and in different parts of their narratives. The interpretative method is the best way of capturing this array of influences and blending them into a sufficiently nuanced account which admits the intrinsic individuality of historical narratives but also the existence of schools.

The second weakness of building schools on institutions is that, if revisionist historiography has been characterised by relatively tight social structures, what

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<sup>109</sup> He continues in the same vein, noting the 'frequently amateurish and socially prejudiced' nature of the Foreign Office and, to a lesser degree, the Treasury. Alan S. Milward, The European Rescue of the Nation-State (London: Routledge, 1992), p.431. Clive Ponting also curses the 'small governing elite drawn from an extremely narrow educational background of the public schools and Oxbridge'. See Clive Ponting, review, '*Secrets and Lies: The Culture of Secrecy: Britain 1832-1998*. By David Vincent', Times Higher Education Supplement, 3 March 2000, p.25.

of its orthodox predecessor? There is less of an institutional grounding for this school, which combines transnational critics of British European policy. Ideology, rather than institutions is at the heart of the orthodox school. In Britain individuals associated with the Federal Trust have been prominent in expounding the orthodoxy,<sup>110</sup> but a range of other ideologies have joined them in inventing the record.<sup>111</sup> Identifying institutional affiliation works in the orthodox context but only to a certain degree. The communities of writers who have driven the historiography are too diverse to be captured in a narrow institutional context. What this method misses are, crucially, the competing ideologies behind the schools and the exceptions to the schools, that is individuals who share the methods but not the backgrounds of the leading members of the schools. Sociological contrasts between the schools are clear, but they do not always run down institutional lines. This is a necessary but not sufficient determinant of historiographical evolution. Just because someone researches at an establishment university, does this structural factor determine his or her interpretation any more than method, the climate of opinion, the time of writing and the nature of the study undertaken? The social construction of the field is intimately linked to the shared methods and assumptions about

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<sup>110</sup> For details on the history and membership of the Federal Union and associated organisations see Richard Mayne and John Pinder, Federal Union: The Pioneers (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1990). See the next section for further detail on this and other sociological linkages in the orthodox school.

<sup>111</sup> There are two examples of the disparity to orthodox historiography. The first is the Marxist critique of British foreign policy which stress London's allegiance to Washington in the immediate post-war era, apparently reinforcing the continental opinion that Attlee's Labour administrations had colluded with the Conservatives at the expense of European integration. See D. N. Pritt, The Labour Government, 1945-51 (London: Laurence and Wishart, 1963); Konni Zilliacus, I Choose Peace (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1949). The second is de Gaulle's critique of British European policy in the 1960s. Hardly a 'European' in the Monnet sense, the General nonetheless supported continental criticisms of Britain's aloofness from the continent and, again, subservience to the United States, both of which figure prominently in orthodox historiography. See Charles de Gaulle, Memoirs of Hope: Renewal 1958-62, Endeavour 1962-, trans. Terence Kilmartin (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1971).

Britain's post-war European policy among different communities of writers. However, to prioritise them over the other potential explanations would be to overlay the structural determinants of historiography.

The same overemphasis on structures occurs if one were to schoolify according to date of publication. This would be persuasive in the sense that it would capture shifting academic conceptions of IR in Britain and the changes in interpretation brought about by the release of archival documentation under the Thirty Year Rule, but illusory from an interpretive point of view. Politicians publishing in the 1990s have no more wish to debunk the conventional wisdom than those writing in the 1970s. There is a better case when applied to the academic literature, yet the implication would be that one could group new writers without even reading their work. While it might hold to some extent, the type of work, the sources used and the range of sociological pressures on writers all play their parts as well. The interpretations offered are multi-layered. It is crucial to know where writers stand on debates within schools as well as across them, so that one can discern who are the leading lights within schools, and who are their disciples.

As with the levels model, the interpretative method employed incorporates the input from institutional and other social backgrounds, developing schools which are not monolithic, not as tight as some scholars might like, but nonetheless the nearest one can get to capturing the individual yet interpretatively linked histories of Britain's relationship with Europe. The levels approach has been rejected because it necessitates drawing links

between theory and interpretation that rarely exist in a field of research which is dominated by diplomatic historians trying to uncover the foreign policy-making process in the context of individual and bureaucratic attitudes towards the continent. They focus on the particular not the general, undermining the core tenet of the levels of analysis approach. The institutional approach suffers from an over-reliance on structures as opposed to inputs from the individual historian's method, ideology and the deeper influences of the type of study written and publishing pressures. In conclusion, neither the levels of analysis nor institutional methods of schoolification offer the subtlety of the interpretationist method which incorporates the strongest elements of each in a more sophisticated account.

#### **4. The Argument of the Thesis**

Having explored the method behind this study, one can now introduce the argument developed below. The primary argument of the thesis is that history-writing in Britain is subject to a host of influences which affect the interpretation offered by writers. In terms of identifying the variables, one can identify seven and rank them according to their apparent impact on the writing of history. The weightiest influence stems from writers' social background, connections, organisational and professional affiliations. What this means, in sum, is that the historiography of Britain's relations with Europe has been driven by the changing dominance over time of different communities of writers in the field. From an agenda which was largely politically-dominated in

the 1960s and 1970s, one discovers that, as professional historians began to take an interest in the material, so conventional wisdoms have been challenged, the evidence reassessed in the light of fresh evidence. As new generations of historians now begin to survey the competing views of both these communities of writers, interpretations are changing still further. Thus, generational and social change have been inextricably linked in the process of historiographical progression.

It is crucial to understand the social dimension of the field before one explores the other six variables at work on the historiography. It is difficult to rank them in that they apply to different writers in different ways and with differing forces at different times. Nonetheless, they are analysed in the following order: competing views about the policy process, perceptions of intentions and outcomes in British foreign policy, hindsight in history, myth-making in contemporary history and the use of sources. The final variable to be analysed, the type of work produced, is intimately connected to the social background of the individual because the goal of one's study is intensely revealing about the questions one is putting to the history and therefore about the implicit intellectual framework within which history is written. One can see from this the extreme interconnection between the variables. For analytical purposes, however, it is necessary to identify first order and second order variables. It is hoped these categories of analysis will prove useful.

The secondary argument developed in this thesis is that the writers of British European policy can be grouped into 'schools of writing'. It is for this reason

that the chapters are divided into analysis of each school in turn, progressing in chronological order from the orthodox school, to the revisionist and now a post-revisionist school has emerged. Organising the thesis thematically around schools seems to be the most appropriate way of showing the multiple influences at work on writers. It is especially revealing about the social construction of the historiography. The reasons why certain interpretations are glossed over by some writers and not others are what binds those writers together in schools. They are driven by competing historical and political agendas which dictate what evidence is used and what is ignored, how 'foreign policy' is analysed, which personalities are criticised and who habilitated. One can by all means reflect on the *factual* similarities in the accounts produced on Britain and Europe. But recognising this overlap should not blind us to the very real *interpretative* differences that divide writers into schools. Before analysis of the dynamics of each school in detail, it is useful to reflect further on the primary argument advanced in this study. This section will conclude, therefore, by introducing how each influence on the historiography is analysed below. It begins with the social construction of the schools.

- **The Social Construction of the Schools**

The observation has been made in the natural sciences that 'There is still much to discuss, notably the role of communities of researchers, not just individuals, in building epistemic standards into scientific practice'.<sup>112</sup> The social construction of schools has to be the starting point for historiographical

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<sup>112</sup> Turney, 'Values in Scientific Ventures', op. cit.



analysis which attempts to untangle the structural forces at work on writers<sup>113</sup> from their own intellectual, theoretical and source-oriented inputs to the narration of history. It is no coincidence that one of the most recent publications on the historian's craft, Jordanova's *History in Practice*, is the first to deal in depth with the infrastructure of the discipline, the financial and practical, as well as the ontological, epistemological and methodological aspects of the practice of historical research and writing. Her argument about the utility of understanding the sociology, and anthropology, of history is well-taken: 'fields', she argues, 'share intellectual preoccupations, and in this sense they are communities built around ideas of one kind or another, whose members are constantly conversing, in their writings as much as in their direct contacts'.<sup>114</sup> She develops this line of argument two pages later: 'Just as modern societies need to be understood in terms of the structures, such as transport, banking and health services, which enable them to function, so academic disciplines need to be placed in the context of their support systems and institutional bases'.<sup>115</sup> This thesis elucidates the prime importance of the sociological underpinnings of the historiography of Britain and Europe.

The major difference between the schools, it asserts, is first of all that between the communities of writers who have driven the historiography. Referring to Jenkins' distinction between 'upper' and 'lower case' history helps explain this divide.<sup>116</sup> Upper case 'History' means 'grand' or 'metanarratives' of a Marxist

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<sup>113</sup> Notably the political climate of opinion, without which one cannot understand the stimulus to writing and the ultimate goal of historical studies.

<sup>114</sup> Jordanova, *History in Practice*, op. cit., p.1.

<sup>115</sup> Ibid., pp.1-3.

<sup>116</sup> Jenkins, 'Introduction', op. cit.

nature, implying, as David Howarth points out, ‘recourse to some underlying and “totalising” device of legitimation, as with the Marxist story of how history necessarily progresses in successive stages, to ensure objectivity or truth of our knowledge and to justify socialist or Communist political objectives’.<sup>117</sup> Marxist and other such metanarrative histories, the argument goes, are explicitly about attempting to change the present and future by re-writing the past.

The first school of writing to emerge on Britain and Europe- the orthodox school- was of the metanarrative nature, unable to hide its criticisms of British European policy, supporting David Edgerton’s claim that the ‘historiography of modern Britain, especially Britain in the wider world, is dominated by one issue- “decline”’.<sup>118</sup> The integration process set in motion by the ‘founding fathers’,<sup>119</sup> had orthodox writers suggested, a final destination.<sup>120</sup> As the title of a 1991 study of Monnet suggests, there is apparently a ‘path to European

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<sup>117</sup> Howarth, ‘Discourse Theory’, op. cit., p.117.

<sup>118</sup> David Edgerton, review, ‘Declinism: *The Lost Victory: British Dreams, British Realities, 1945-50*. By Correlli Barnett’, London Review of Books, 18, 5 (1996), pp.14-5 (p.14). Another who makes this link is Peter Ghosh, review, ‘How We Got Where We Are: *Hope and Glory: Britain 1900-1990*. By Peter Clarke’, London Review of Books, 18, 23 (November 1996), pp.18-19 (p.18).

<sup>119</sup> This is the term used to describe the individuals credited with inspiring and developing in the 1950s the plans for the European Coal and Steel Community, the (failed) European Defence Community and most commonly the Treaty of Rome. The group includes Jean Monnet, Robert Schuman, Pierre Uri and Paul-Henri Spaak. See Derek Urwin, review, ‘*The European Rescue of the Nation-State*. By Alan S. Milward’, Journal of Common Market Studies, 32, 1 (1994), pp.112-3 (p.113).

<sup>120</sup> Jean Monnet, Memoirs, trans. Richard Mayne (London: Collins, 1978).

unity', some final 'state' which Britain was wrong to reject.<sup>121</sup> These writers are Marxist in style if not substance,<sup>122</sup> for their sweeping discourse can be compared to a 'metanarrative'. Foucaultian thinking has it that "discursive formations" refer to regular bodies of ideas and concepts which claim to produce knowledge about the world'. In his work he 'sketches out... underlying discursive regularities and connects their production and transformation to the broader social and political processes of which they are a part'.<sup>123</sup>

Judging by the language and metaphors the orthodox school use to chastise British policy-makers, one can reasonably compare the 'Monnetist'<sup>124</sup> approach to British European policy with metanarratives which contain their own discourse, hegemonising important signifiers and marginalising alternatives which challenge the ideological predilection of the 'author'. To

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<sup>121</sup> Douglas Brinkley and Clifford Hackett (eds.), Jean Monnet: The Path to European Unity (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1991). See also François Duchene, Jean Monnet: The First Statesman of Interdependence (London: W. W. Norton and Co., 1994); Mary and Serge Bromberger, Jean Monnet and the United States of Europe, trans. Elaine P. Halperin (New York: Coward-McCann, 1968).

<sup>122</sup> Though Marxist historiography has added considerable weight to the Monnetist charge that Britain eschewed European integration for the 'special relationship'. A key writer to take this line is Wolfram Kaiser who has developed a 'dual appeasement' approach to British European policy. He argues that Harold Macmillan's application to join the EEC in 1961 rested largely on the wish to 'appease the United States government into continuing the special treatment of Britain'. Kaiser's emphasis on Washington's hold over British foreign policy is a dramatic restatement of the 'Keep Left' approach to British foreign policy in the 1940s and 1950s. Kaiser, Using Europe, op. cit., p.108; Wolfram Kaiser, 'To Join or Not to Join?: The "Appeasement" Policy of Britain's First EEC Application', in Brian and Harriet Jones (eds.), From Reconstruction to Integration: Britain and European Integration Since 1945 (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1993), pp.144-56.

<sup>123</sup> Howarth, 'Discourse Analysis', op. cit., p.116. Hayden White's 'Performance Model of Discourse' resembles the historiographical approach to interpretation in the sense that it regards discourse 'as an apparatus for the production of meaning rather than as only a vehicle for the transmission of information about an external referent'. White, The Content of the Form, op. cit., p.42. See also Little, 'Historiography and IR', op. cit., p.294.

<sup>124</sup> This term is used in the thesis interchangeably with the term 'orthodox school'. The use of 'Monnetist' implies the socially constructed nature of the first school around Monnet's vision of European integration.

echo Gabriel Spiegel, it seems that histories are grounded strongly in social contexts: 'it is by focusing on the social logic of the text, its location within a broader network of social and intertextual relations, that we best become attuned to the specific historical conditions whose presence and/or absence in the work alerts us to its own social character and formation, its own combination of material and discursive realities that endow it with its own sense of historical purposiveness'.<sup>125</sup>

In the same way that Howarth shows Thatcher to have hegemonised key words and phrases to manipulate the debate about the ills of social collectivism in the 1980s,<sup>126</sup> the Monnetists have their own set of linguistic tools which they employ in their critique of British European policy. Prime amongst these are the charges that Britain 'missed chances'<sup>127</sup> to lead Europe after the Second World War and, according to recent reformulations, that Britain has historically been the 'awkward' or 'reluctant partner' in the European Union.<sup>128</sup>

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<sup>125</sup> Quoted in Callinicos, *Theories and Narratives*, op. cit., p.93.

<sup>126</sup> Howarth, 'Discourse Analysis', op. cit., pp.124-7. See also David Marsland who notes that Thatcher's ideology was in part 'constituted into innovative arguments' which 'provided a challenging alternative to the political orthodoxy'. The word 'constituted' suggests this dichotomy between action and words. David Marsland, 'A Nanny no, A Medusa...maybe', *Times Higher Education Supplement*, 3 March 2000, p.20.

<sup>127</sup> 'Britain and Europe's "Third Chance"', op. cit. It was a common criticism to be found in many works: Boothby, *My Yesterday*, op. cit., p.73; Bullock, *Ernest Bevin*, op. cit., p.790; Charlton, *The Price of Victory*, op. cit., pp.122-3; Peter Clarke, *Hope and Glory: Britain and the World 1900-1990* (London: Penguin, 1996), p.236; Edmund Dell, *The Schuman Plan and the British Abdication of Leadership in Europe* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), p.303; Denman, *Missed Chances*, op. cit.; Earl of Kilmuir, *Political Adventure: The Memoirs of the Earl of Kilmuir* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1964), p.186; Anthony Nutting, *Europe Will Not Wait: A Warning and a Way Out* (London: Hollis and Carter, 1960), p.34.

<sup>128</sup> Stephen George, *An Awkward Partner*, op. cit.; David Gowland and Arthur Turner, *Reluctant Europeans: Britain and European Integration 1945-1998* (Harlow: Pearson, 2000).

The community of writers which gave voice to the orthodoxy can, for purposes of analysis, be split into three groups. First, it is the product of Monnetist criticisms on the continent and in the United States about the myopic policy pursued by British decision-makers. It is therefore firmly rooted in moralising by supranational integrationists on the continent and across the Atlantic about the 'right course' for European integration. That Britain was not part of this supposed virtuous path to unity led to the virulent criticisms that characterise orthodox historiography.<sup>129</sup> Like its historiographical counterpart in Germany, Wolfram Kaiser explains, the British '*Sonderweg*' thesis about 'a historically unique departure from the apparently normal path of democratic virtue' in Europe is a further example of a nation hunting down scapegoats, or 'guilty men' to explain its past.<sup>130</sup>

The second tie among writers in the orthodox school is among the British Monnetists, the community of commentators in the media, notably the Economist Intelligence Unit and in the Federal Union and associated bodies, responsible for bringing the language of 'missed opportunities' into fashionable use to describe the entire course of British European policy since the Second World War.<sup>131</sup> The third community of writers forming the orthodox school includes British contemporaries of Monnet who, while not

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<sup>129</sup> Monnet, *Memoirs*, op. cit.; Dean Acheson, *Present at the Creation: My Years in the State Department* (New York: Signett, 1969), pp.385-7.

<sup>130</sup> Kaiser, *Using Europe*, op. cit., introduction, p.16.

<sup>131</sup> As the first chapter shows, the objective of the Federal Trust, now called Federal Union, as its name suggests, is to offer federal solutions to regional and global security problems. Despite fractiousness over time and disagreement among members on specifics one can compare its broad outlook to that of the continental and American supranationalists, hence the term 'British Monnetists'.

sharing his federalist outlook, nonetheless shared in the despondency surrounding British foreign policy, supporting the criticisms of British European policy in the 1960s for a variety of personal and political reasons.<sup>132</sup>

The final community of writers which has contributed to orthodox historiography consists of journalists, political scientists and historians writing during this period of intense unhappiness with British European policy. What their shared outlook suggests is that, at least in the early phase of the historiography, differences of approach between political scientists and historians had less of an impact on interpretation than one might presume in the light of a supposed division between the disciplines in terms of their approaches to the study of International Relations. The language they employed reflects the climate of opinion at the time of writing, up to the end of the 1980s, when the 'missed opportunities' approach was sustained by the linkage that was commonly drawn between the deep economic recessions and Britain's failure to join the EEC sooner. Had Britain been 'in' from the start, the argument goes, at least the economy would have benefitted.<sup>133</sup> It is clear that the 'missed opportunities' discourse became the accepted interpretation of

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<sup>132</sup> Boothby, My Yesterday, op. cit., p.73; Bullock, Ernest Bevin, op. cit., p.790; Denman, Missed Chances, op. cit.; Dell, The Schuman Plan, op. cit., p.303; Lord Gladwyn, The Memoirs of Lord Gladwyn (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1972), p.3; Nutting, Europe Will Not Wait, op. cit., p.34; Kilmuir, Political Adventure, op. cit., p.186. This verdict is nicely captured in Charlton's volume of oral testimony, The Price of Victory, op. cit. Lord Home likewise recalled that 'we could have had the leadership of Europe, but let it slip from our grasp'. Quoted in Maclean, British Foreign Policy, op. cit., p.75.

<sup>133</sup> Miriam Camps in Britain and the European Community, op. cit., p.45; Camps, European Unification in the Sixties, op. cit.; Barker, Britain in a Divided Europe, op. cit., p.152. See also Joseph Frankel, British Foreign Policy 1945-1973 (London: Oxford University Press, 1975), p.319; Peter Hennessy, 'The Attlee Governments, 1945-1951', in Peter Hennessy and Anthony Seldon (eds.), Ruling Performance: British Governments from Attlee to Thatcher (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1987), pp.28-62 (p.47).

Britain's approach to Europe by a generation of commentators in Britain railing against the establishment neglect of Europe. Supposed European policy failings achieved mythical status for politicians and officials disillusioned with Britain's relatively poor economic performance, the dismantling of Empire and exclusion by Russia and America from Cold War diplomacy.

One can infer similarly tight connections among writers in the revisionist (and post-revisionist) schools.<sup>134</sup> One of the major reasons why there was a shift from the orthodoxy to revisionism seems to be that in the mid-1980s, under the relaunch of the Community with the Single European Act, academic interest in 'Europe' exploded. As Young put it: academic interest only really picked up c.1984-5 as the EEC itself recovered from the doldrums of the 1970s'.<sup>135</sup> In Britain the issues surrounding the relaunch were put into sharper focus by Thatcher's rhetoric against the 'Brussels bureaucracy'.<sup>136</sup> Despite being a prime mover behind the Single European Act she continued to reject the political implications of integration.<sup>137</sup> One can compare this to what happened in Denmark. Until this time, notes Knud Erik Jørgensen, 'The unspoken assumption was that "reluctant Europeans" do not need to do research [into European integration]...Research on the EC was a latecomer to the social

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<sup>134</sup> It is not necessary at this stage to analyse revisionism and post-revisionism separately, because while they differ on interpretation the social construction of the schools is broadly similar. For 'revisionism', therefore, read 'post-revisionism' too.

<sup>135</sup> Permission granted to quote from email correspondence, 27 January 1999.

<sup>136</sup> Margaret Thatcher, *The Downing Street Years 1979-1990* (London: HarperCollins, 1993), pp.742-6.

<sup>137</sup> Yves Mény and Andrew Knapp, *Government and Politics in Western Europe: Britain, France, Italy, Germany*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edn. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), pp.374-5.

sciences in Denmark'.<sup>138</sup> The paucity of studies on the history of Britain and European integration at this time is alluded to in Roger Bullen's 1985 review of texts by Young and Ritchie Ovendale in which he wrote 'It is to be hoped that they stimulate a wider European debate'.<sup>139</sup>

One can overstate this case, however. It is necessary to distinguish between the rise of European studies and the burgeoning of interest in Britain and Europe, with which this study is centrally concerned. Evidence from key revisionist writers- analysed in chapter four- suggests that it was the release of documents under the Thirty Year Rule that had greater impact on historians paying attention to Britain and Europe in the 1980s. The dearth of primary source accounts of the period spurred a generation of historians into seeking the reasons for how Britain had got where it was in Europe.<sup>140</sup> In January 1985 the official government material in the PRO to 1954 was already available for inspection. This wealth of material suited historians trained in Britain on Eltonian principles of hard factual evidence as the soundest foundation of our knowledge about the past.<sup>141</sup> As Jack Levy summarises this ideology: 'the historian's aim is to show history "as it really was", to recreate the past that exists independently of the preconception and prejudices of the historians.

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<sup>138</sup> Knud Erik Jørgensen, 'European Integration as a Field of Study in Denmark', *Journal of Common Market Studies*, 33, 1 (1995), pp.157-62 (p.157).

<sup>139</sup> Roger Bullen, review, '*Britain, France and the Unity of Europe 1945-1951*. By John W. Young; *The Foreign Policy of the British Labour Government 1945-1951*. Edited by Ritchie Ovendale', *Journal of Common Market Studies*, 24, 1 (1985), pp.77-8 (p.78).

<sup>140</sup> Young explains this twin motivation as follows: 'it fitted into my interests in the origins of the Cold War as an undergraduate AND it was an area just opening up in the archives (so no-one could beat me to it)'. Email correspondence, 27 January 1999.

<sup>141</sup> Elton, *The Practice of History*, op. cit.



Through immersion in the documents and application of the critical hermeneutic method, the historian [can] recreate the past through narratives and achieve value-free, scientific certainty'.<sup>142</sup> Beloff likewise: 'no documents, no history'.<sup>143</sup> Just as the orthodoxy has to be situated in the context of the particular time, the political climate of opinion and all that that entails in terms of the type of study and method behind the school, understanding the revisionist school requires analysis of the academic community which gave it its voice. This is pertinent because it undercuts the argument that revisionist historiography is any less positioned than its orthodox predecessor.

Professional academic histories are, Jenkins remarks, history in the lower case. Is such historiography any more 'innocent' than the orthodoxy? No, claims Jenkins, because their deference to sources is an artificial intellectual closure that makes revisionist, and by extension post-revisionist, historiography as ideological as the orthodoxy.<sup>144</sup> As Ferdinand Braudel argued also: 'historical narrative is not a method, or even the objective method *par excellence*, but simply a philosophy of history like any other'.<sup>145</sup> To argue that the study of the past should not have anything to do with the present/future is as present/future oriented as saying it should. Campbell makes this point about the positioned

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<sup>142</sup> Jack S. Levy, 'Too Important to Leave to the Other: History and Political Science in the Study of International relations', *International Security*, 2, 1 (1997), pp.22-33 (p.26).

<sup>143</sup> Beloff, *An Historian*, op. cit., p.10. See also Max Beloff, *New Dimensions in Foreign Policy: A Study in British Administrative Experience 1947-59* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1961), p.12; Palme Dutt, *Problems of Contemporary History*, op. cit., p.38. 'The seeker after the truth', he argues, 'has often to delve in documents and archives'.

<sup>144</sup> Jenkins, 'Introduction', op. cit., pp.5-6.

<sup>145</sup> Quoted in Callinicos, *Theories and Narratives*, op. cit., p.45. On p.51 he goes on to paraphrase White's position: 'Historical writing must thus be understood primarily as a form of ideology'.

nature of 'scientific history' as follows: 'especially in International Relations, when many people argue in reified terms about epistemologies and methodologies they are more often than not delineating positions which themselves are ethico-political and cannot, in terms of their own logic, be epistemologically defended and secured'.<sup>146</sup>

Jenkins continues in the same vein: 'In fact liberal pluralism restricts its tolerances to those histories and historians who subscribe to the values of "the academic" lower case. For if liberal pluralism accepts that any sort of representation of the past is permissible...then clearly other types of historiography such as upper case versions...are not "not history" but just "different". Consequently at this point lower case history has to lose its innocence and become as positioned and interested as any other history. In preventing just anything counting as history, a tolerant liberal pluralism in the lower case becomes an intolerant Liberal Ideology in the upper. Accordingly, what we have here is the ideologisation/politicisation of all histories'.<sup>147</sup>

The 'say it with documents' approach,<sup>148</sup> getting at Watt describes as 'the real archival evidence',<sup>149</sup> or what G. M. Trevelyan termed, in true Eltonian

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<sup>146</sup> Campbell, 'Contra Wight', op. cit., p.318.

<sup>147</sup> Jenkins, 'Introduction', op. cit., p.15.

<sup>148</sup> A term taken from Anne Deighton, 'Say it with Documents: British Policy Overseas 1945-1952', *Review of International Studies*, 18, 4 (1992), pp.393-4-2. Such an ideology shows in Shlaim's 1978 book in which he advised 'The writing of authoritative history of this subject cannot precede, it can only follow, the opening of the official papers for research...[T]he interpretation is necessarily tentative in that it is not underpinned by primary sources. Shlaim, *Britain and the Origins of European Unity*, op. cit., p.4.

<sup>149</sup> D. Cameron Watt, 'Demythologising the Eisenhower Era', in Louis and Bull (eds.), *The Special Relationship*, op. cit., pp.65-85 (p.72).

fashion, 'the facts of history',<sup>150</sup> is also positioned because it can be taken as a manipulation of professional historians by the officials who choose and weed all the documents deposited in the PRO, giving them an artificially important place in British history which, it could be argued, they feel they deserve after years of neglect in the press and on television. As one diplomatic historian, Constantine Pagedas, has summarised: 'the Thirty Year Rule governing the release of archival material....has meant that historians are now able to piece together systematically the events...more accurately than ever before'.<sup>151</sup> But *whose* history is this? Further, professional histories could be said to impose artificial order on history, a sense of 'managed decline' of British power and influence which necessarily results from the narrativisation of events.

As White suggests, narrating the past imposes on it a 'continuity, wholeness, closure and individuality that every "civilised" society wishes to see itself as incarnating'.<sup>152</sup> Yet to base judgments on 'an apocalyptic objectivity' is, Foucault maintains, a futile ambition. 'Truth', he argues, 'is produced only by multiple forms of constraint',<sup>153</sup> in this case the narrow selection of surviving documents and the weeding of those documents by those with a vested interest in presenting a particular representation of events. The shortcomings of the diplomatic historians' reliance on documentary evidence is revealed in Rodney Lowe's critique of Lamb's claim that 'the release by the Public Record Office

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<sup>150</sup> Trevelyan, *An Autobiography and Other Essays*, op. cit., p. 68.

<sup>151</sup> Constantine A. Pagedas, *Anglo-American Strategic Relations and the French Problem 1960-1963: A Troubled Partnership* (London: Frank Cass, 2000), p. 7.

<sup>152</sup> White, *The Content of the Form*, op. cit., p. 87.

<sup>153</sup> Quoted in Rainbow (ed.), *The Foucault Reader*, op. cit., pp. 72-3 and p. 87.

on 1 January 1994 under the Thirty Year Rule of the final official archives relating to the Macmillan Government enables historians to write the truth'.<sup>154</sup> This, Lowe notes, 'is of course nonsense'.<sup>155</sup> The reason he gives for Lamb's nonsensical claim is not that his publisher forced him to put it in as a memorable opening to the book, or that he was being overly confident, but simply that 'By no means all the documents were released in 1994'.<sup>156</sup> Overtly political tracts have given way to professional histories which now dominate the historiography of Britain's relations with Europe. The question of whether the 'say it with documents' approach is more or less positioned than open political tracts is a worthy digression, but should not detract attention from the first key divide between the schools: sociological context. Jordanova makes this point well: 'publications are never free-standing, although they are often seen in this way, but rather are parts of elaborate conversations with other historians, living and dead. They are also conversations with governments, political parties, interest groups and so on'.<sup>157</sup>

#### • Competing Views about the Foreign Policy Process

The second gulf between orthodox and revisionist (post-revisionist) historiography exists in their approaches to the foreign policy process. The foreign policy process itself has in the last ten years become the object of inquiry as much as policy content, hence the emphasis in the current

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<sup>154</sup> Lamb, *The Macmillan Years*, op. cit., p.1

<sup>155</sup> Rodney Lowe, review, '*The Macmillan Years, 1957-1963: The Emerging Truth*. By Richard Lamb', *Contemporary British History*, 10, 2 (1996), pp.239-41 (p.240).

<sup>156</sup> Ibid.

<sup>157</sup> Jordanova, *History in Practice*, op. cit., p.1.

historiography on the role of civil servants, bureaucracies and departments on the formation of policy. The Prime Minister and Foreign Secretary are secondary in many of these accounts. This development has coincided with the use of primary sources and reflects academic interest in what David Vincent calls 'the culture of secrecy' in British political life. As Clive Ponting points out, Britain's culture of secrecy 'ranges much wider than the Whitehall machine'.<sup>158</sup> Foreign policy analysts and historians working on Britain and Europe have been as keen to investigate the form of the foreign policy machine as much as the substance, or policy output.<sup>159</sup>

Explanations for this tendency in the historiography are not just rooted in the inquisitive academic mind and the 'culture of secrecy' in Britain. It reflects three additional trends. The first is historians' epistemological preference for understanding particular events over explaining trends across time. There was never full agreement on the explanatory power of realism, but the end of the

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<sup>158</sup> Clive Ponting, review, '*The Culture of Secrecy: Britain 1832-1998*. By David Vincent', *Times Higher Education Supplement*, 3 March 2000, p.25.

<sup>159</sup> Peter Hennessy, *Cabinet* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1986); Peter Hennessy, *Whitehall* (London: Secker and Warburg, 1989); Anthony Adamthwaite, 'Britain and the World, 1945-9: The View from the Foreign Office', *International Affairs*, 61, 2 (1985), pp.223-35; Clarke, 'The Policy-Making Process', op. cit.; Beloff, *New Dimensions in Foreign Policy*, op. cit., especially pp.22-56; Anthony Adamthwaite, 'Introduction: The Foreign Office and Policy-Making', in John W. Young (ed.), *The Foreign Policy of Churchill's Peacetime Administration, 1951-55* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1988), pp.1-28; Anthony Adamthwaite, 'Overstretched and Overstrung: Eden, the Foreign Office and the Making of Policy, 1951-1955', *International Affairs*, 64, 2 (1988), pp.241-59; Merrick, 'The Russia Committee', op. cit.; Avi Shlaim, 'The Foreign Secretary and the Making of Policy', in Avi Shlaim, Peter Jones and Keith Sainsbury (eds.), *British Foreign Secretaries Since 1945* (London: David and Charles, 1977); a nice companion to this is Hennessy and Seldon (eds.), *Ruling Performance*, op. cit.; Zametica (ed.), *British Officials and British Foreign Policy*, op. cit. For a political science perspective on policy-making see Simon Bulmer and Martin Burch, 'Organising for Europe: Whitehall, the British State and the European Union', *Public Administration*, 76, 4 (1998), pp.601-28; Colin Hay and David Richards, 'The Tangled Webs of Westminster and Whitehall: The Discourse, Strategy, and Practice of Networking of within the British Core Executive', *Public Administration*, 78, 1 (2000), pp.1-28.

Cold War certainly hastened its demise. If key individuals such as George Bush and Mikhail Gorbachev 'catalysed' such key transformations as the democratic transformation in Eastern Europe, initiated military withdrawals from the region, facilitated agreement on the unification of Germany and helped to codify parity in weapons systems through the Conventional Armed Forces in Europe Treaty,<sup>160</sup> how could structures still be held responsible for the action of agents in the foreign policy arena? Was British foreign policy the result of rational actors holding a 'structural-realist' Weltanschauung, or is that too simplistic a model which ignores the workings of the Whitehall machine, its permeation by outside sources of power and influence? The very formulation of the question raises doubts about the generalising tendencies of the structural realist approach to British foreign policy.

So there is a political explanation, revolving around the impact of the world system on the academic study of international relations. Michael Scriven has, however, noted the problems of extrapolating interpretation from structural forces at work on writers. 'Surely to say C caused E *logically* commits one to the view that anything identical to C in every respect *including the time* will produce something similarly identical to E'.<sup>161</sup> There is, secondly, a more fundamental dimension to consider: methodological input.<sup>162</sup> The very nature of the subject matter on which revisionist and post-revisionist accounts are based- primary archives in the PRO- presents a persuasive explanation for the

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<sup>160</sup> William C. Cromwell, The United States and the European Pillar (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1992), preface p. 13.

<sup>161</sup> Quoted in Kaplan, On Historical and Political Knowing, op. cit., p.30. Emphasis in original.

<sup>162</sup> If one includes in the term 'method' the sources utilised by historians, not just the research design, aims and objectives.

interest these historians show in the Whitehall machine. Scrutinising individual and departmental exchanges has prompted archival researchers to take an avid interest in who were the prime movers in British foreign policy, rendering revisionist and post-revisionist historiography qualitatively different in texture from orthodox accounts of British foreign policy. This word 'texture' introduces the third explanation: the type of study and the questions one asks of history have a massive bearing on the interpretation offered.<sup>163</sup> General studies written about foreign policy gave only superficial attention to the machinery of Whitehall because of a lack of time and space; studies of the European dimension of British foreign policy gave it more weight; articles on one or two year periods in that relationship have been more incisive still. Hence, the greater attention now being paid in the historiography to the workings of the British foreign policy process can be explained using a combination of three factors: paradigmatic shifts in the study of international relations, pragmatic issues associated with methods and sources and the type of study produced. All of these affect how each school treats the issue of the foreign policy process.

- **Perceptions of Intentions and Outcomes in British Foreign Policy**

The third distinction one can draw between orthodox and revisionist and post-revisionist schools centres on the issue of intentions and outcomes in foreign policy-making. Orthodox historiography tended to see British foreign policy as a direct function of what British ministers and officials willed it to be. For revisionists, by contrast, the execution of British foreign policy is not nearly so

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<sup>163</sup> Beloff, *An Historian*, op .cit., pp.33-4.

neatly captured. The aims of British policy-makers were not always achieved, not because of what British policy-makers did wrong (the conventional wisdom, so easy to believe in light of opposition criticism and complaint) but sometimes because of events beyond their control. Foreign policy, they argue, is made and projected in an uncertain, complex international environment. Many claims of the orthodoxy rely on the distorting rhetoric of politicians rather than on a considered examination of the original intentions of British decision-makers.

An offshoot of this development has been growing historiographical recognition in Britain that British foreign policy is made in a global environment.<sup>164</sup> It has, however, taken a relatively long time for the global influences at work on British European policy to be recognised. A relatively recent research area, it is natural that British historians first aspired to investigate the British side of the argument thoroughly. They could, for example, have gleaned more evidence from the Economist, which offers many revealing insights about the interaction between multilateral diplomacy and the

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<sup>164</sup> This development is shown in recent historiography which takes into account the impact on Britain's European goals of the foreign policy strategies of Britain's partners in Europe and the United States. See the contributions in George Wilkes (ed.), Britain's Failure to Enter the European Community 1961-63: The Enlargement Negotiations and Crises in European, Atlantic and Commonwealth Relations (London: Frank Cass, 1997). It was also prevalent in earlier revisionist historiography which stressed the positioned nature of the criticisms of British European policy, opening the debates about the difference between rhetoric and reality and how one defines 'Europeanism'. See Young, 'Churchill's "No" to Europe: The "Rejection" of Union by Churchill's Post-War Government, 1951-1952', Historical Journal, 28, 4 (1985), pp.923-37. See also Anthony Seldon, Churchill's Indian Summer: The Conservative Government, 1951-55 (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1981), especially pp.381-483; Melissen and Zeeman, 'Britain and Western Europe', op. cit.



British approach to European integration.<sup>165</sup> The globalism of its articles (its Brussels, Paris and Bonn correspondents providing much of the evidence) is similar to what is now paraded as revisionism, the 'new' or 'original' approach to British European policy. Likewise, there could be greater appreciation of the global picture through analysis of secondary texts by foreign writers on alliance diplomacy and British European policy as the function of international developments. To take just one example explored below, studies of de Gaulle, American foreign policy in Europe and nuclear defence discussions all argued that the fate of the first British application to the EEC policy was out of British hands, determined by competing American and French designs for Europe.<sup>166</sup>

That such sources are so underused by historians in Britain reflects their fascination with primary evidence and the recollection of key British players. It also shows the penetration of history by empiricism: the need for a rigorously scientific evidential base. Stoker sets out this broader position within the social

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<sup>165</sup> It is no coincidence that writers such as Young who made use of media sources, provided a revisionist account of British European policy. See his Britain and European Unity, op. cit.; George offered more than a hint of revisionism, but was less explicit than Young. In An Awkward Partner, op. cit.

<sup>166</sup> George W. Ball, The Discipline of Power (London: The Bodley Head, 1968), pp.198-220; Brian Crozier, De Gaulle: The Statesman (London: Eyre Methuen, 1973), p.539; John Dickie, 'Special' No More: Anglo-American Relations: Rhetoric and Reality (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1994), pp.105-32; Alan Dobson, 'The Years of Transition: Anglo-American Relations 1961-1967', Review of International Studies, 16 (1990), pp.239-58 (pp.243-6); Alfred Grosser, The Western Alliance: European-American Relations Since 1945 (New York: Continuum, 1980), pp.183-208; Stanley Hoffmann, Decline or Renewal? France Since the 1930s (New York: The Viking Press, 1974), pp.283-399; Robert Marjolin, 'What Type of Europe?', in Brinkley and Hackett (eds.), Jean Monnet, op. cit., pp.163-83; Henry Kissinger, Diplomacy (London: Simon and Schuster, 1994), pp.594-619; Jean Lacouture, De Gaulle: The Ruler 1945-1970, trans. Alan Sheridan (London: Horvill, 1990), pp.334-75; Bernard Ledwidge, De Gaulle (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1982), pp.259-84; Macridis, De Gaulle, op. cit.; David Nunnerley, President Kennedy and Britain (London: The Bodley Head, 1972); Andrew Shennan, De Gaulle (London: Longman, 1993), pp.118-24; Alexander Werth, De Gaulle: A Political Biography (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1965); Pascaline Winand, Eisenhower, Kennedy, and the United States of Europe (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1993), pp.210-338.

sciences, using the words of A. Zuckerman to argue that 'Political science demands from its practitioners that they will produce arguments and evidence that will convince others. "Emotional attachments, personal hunches and intuitive understanding do not justify knowledge claims...logical coherence and adequate evidence are the most widely adopted criteria by which we judge claims to knowledge'.<sup>167</sup> 'Facts' gleaned from primary sources tend to be considered more 'scientific' than media accounts which are considered secondary not primary sources. That Camps, Barker and Beloff are considered 'academic' despite their journalistic background shows the import of being *seen* to be academic. Such points associated with the professionalisation of the writing of British European policy will be developed below. What is crucial to understand at this point is the widening scope of the historiography in recent years and the concurrent observation that this could theoretically have occurred before the release of documents under the Thirty Year Rule.

#### • Removing Hindsight from Historical Accounts

The use of hindsight in the writing of history is a particular feature of British political memoirs which form the backbone of the orthodox school.<sup>168</sup> This

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<sup>167</sup> Stoker, 'Introduction', in Marsh and Stoker, Theory and Methods, op. cit., pp.1-18 (p.3). In history, Iggers notes, the parallel assumption is that 'methodologically controlled research makes objective knowledge possible'; Iggers, Historiography, op. cit., p.2.

<sup>168</sup> One can include diaries alongside memoirs in this category. See Clement Attlee, As it Happened (London: William Heinemann, 1954); Tony Benn, The Benn Diaries, ed. Ruth Winstone (London: Arrow, 1996); Boothby, My Yesterday, op. cit.; George Brown, In My Way: The Political Memoirs of Lord George Brown (London: Victor Gollancz, 1971); Barbara Castle, The Castle Diaries 1964-1976 (London: Papermac, 1990); Richard Crossman, The Crossman Diaries, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn, ed. Anthony Howard (London: Mandarin, 1991); Anthony Eden, Full Circle: The Memoirs of Sir Anthony Eden (London: Cassell, 1960); Edward Heath, The Course of My Life: My Autobiography (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1998); Dennis Healey, The Time of My Life: My Autobiography (London: Penguin, 1990); Lord Home, The Way the Wind Blows: An Autobiography (London: Collins, 1976); Kilmuir, Political Adventure, op. cit.; Ivone Kirkpatrick, The Inner Circle: The Memoirs of Ivone Kirkpatrick (London: Macmillan, 1959); Harold Macmillan, Tides of Fortune, 1945-1955 (London: Macmillan, 1969); Harold

should come as no surprise. Looking back with the advantage of ten, twenty or even thirty years distance the detail of events will be lost, even with the help of personal papers, researchers and ghost writers. An extra reason for this is to be found in the character of memoirs which are, by definition, centrally concerned with highlighting (or suppressing) the author's involvement in events. This leaves little room for consideration of the parts played by ministerial colleagues and officials. But memoir-writers also suffer from 'convenient' memory loss. The distortion of events to suit a particular political line, to hide personal embarrassment, or to make an apologia for policy. Hence Austen Morgan's damning indictment: 'Politicians belong to that special class of liar who seem to be genuinely unable to discriminate between special pleading, the suppression of material evidence, and outright falsification of the record'.<sup>169</sup>

Politics is a fickle occupation. Members of the ruling elite tend to make more enemies than friends, both in opposition parties and their own. Europe is an issue that tends to cut across party divides and one discovers in memoirs a lot of personal and political antagonism. Another concern may, of course, be that controversy boosts book sales. Memoirs full of criticism, intrigue and 'revelations' are likely to sell more copies and induce lucrative serialisation deals than dense chronological narrative. The insights political recollections

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Macmillan, Riding the Storm, 1956-59 (London: Macmillan, 1971); Harold Macmillan, At the End of the Day, 1961-1963 (London: Macmillan, 1973); Harold Macmillan, Pointing the Way, 1959-61 (London: Macmillan, 1972); Lord Moran, Winston Churchill: The Struggle for Survival (London: Constable, 1966); Harold Wilson, A Prime Minister on Prime Ministers (London: Book Club, 1977); Harold Wilson, The Labour Government 1964-1970: A Personal Record (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1971).

<sup>169</sup> Morgan, Harold Wilson, op. cit., p.389.

give us into the making and implementation of British European policy are generally scant for a number of reasons. They tend to repeat the conventional wisdom about individuals rather than analysing the substance of policy itself. But this is more than made up for by vitriol and personal antagonism that demonstrates the intense personal rivalry among British politicians.

Memoirs can therefore be misleading both for unintentional and intentional reasons. On one hand human memory loss and egotism sway former practitioners to eschew detail in favour of recounting their own involvement in events. On the other, personal bias, antagonism and the use of hindsight can distort historical events to such an extent that Morgan's criticism would seem nearer the mark. On key issues such as Britain and Europe the link across memoirs is that they tend to propagate the conventional wisdom about decision-makers, the events themselves relegated to a position of secondary importance. Whether this be hostile approaches to Eden or more favourable verdicts on Edward Heath's policy, the key point is that all the personal tensions resulting from the practice of politics have had a massive bearing on the historiography.<sup>170</sup>

The fourth divide between orthodox and revisionist and post-revisionist schools is to be found in the latter two's explicit attempts to eschew hindsight.

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<sup>170</sup> Biographies of the key players- especially official- are rarely willing to question the ideology of the subject. See Bullock, Ernest Bevin, op. cit.; Kenneth Harris, Attlee, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn. (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1995); Alistair Horne, Macmillan 1894-1956: Volume 1 of the Official Biography (London: Macmillan, 1988); Alistair Horne, Macmillan 1956-1986: Volume 2 of the Official Biography (London: Macmillan, 1991); Kenneth Young, Sir Alec Douglas-Home (London: J. M. Dent and Sons, 1970); Philip Ziegler, Wilson: The Authorised Life of Lord Wilson of Rievaulx (London: Wiedenfeld and Nicolson, 1993).

Historical training in Britain teaches that one should tell the story as it was using the remnants of events available to us in the present. Scholars therefore attempt to empathise with the predicament in which individuals found themselves, trying to reconstruct events through the eyes of politicians and officials rather than imprinting the concerns of the present on the past. Whether they achieve such detachment is a separate matter. This in turn raises a crucial point about the debunking of the received wisdom about Britain and Europe.

#### • Myth-Making in Contemporary History

Intimately linked to the professional aspiration to avoid hindsight, the fifth gulf between orthodox and revisionist approaches to British European policy is their willingness to question and debunk conventional political wisdom. There appears to be something in the human psyche that makes us ultra-critical of figures in the public eye. Many politicians are now treated with disdain,<sup>171</sup> reminding one of a nostalgic 'golden age' when they were treated with, and deserved, respect. The Wilson administrations were, it seems, a watershed experience.<sup>172</sup> The alleged opaqueness in the policy process- characterised in

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<sup>171</sup> This is not purely a British phenomenon. Politicians across Western Europe in general have come under sustained attack from the media on the grounds of sleaze and corruption. The loss of legitimacy of domestic politicians has been reflected and, reinforced by, by the increasing disdain shown towards politics at European Union level. As Palme Dutte observes, humans do tend to look back nostalgically on the past, whatever the difficulties at the time. See *Problems of Contemporary History*, op. cit., p.28.

<sup>172</sup> Wilson was Prime Minister from October 1964 to June 1970 and March 1974 to April 1976. That the Fulton Report on civil service reform, published in June 1968, made the Prime Minister 'responsible for senior appointments, the machinery of Government and security matters' may have had the paradoxical effect to the one intended. That is, while it raised the levels of initiative and responsibility for junior members of the civil service, it donated greater powers of patronage to the Prime Minister through the changes listed above. The Earl Jellicoe, 'Lord Edward Arthur Alexander Shackleton', *Biographic Memoirs of Fellows of the Royal Society*, 45 (1999), pp.485-505 (p.494).

the literature by charges that the premier presided over a kitchen cabinet-<sup>173</sup> stimulated suspicion in Britain about the state of political life, the quality of those elected to lead the country. The common theme of the diaries by Richard Crossman, Barbara Castle and Tony Benn is the detachment of the Prime Minister from Cabinet and Parliamentary scrutiny, stimulating interest amongst academics in the debates about the power of the civil service and Prime Ministerial versus Cabinet Government in Britain.<sup>174</sup>

Yet if one looks back to their predecessors, the verdict on them was not always as kind as one would expect. *At the time* European policy was just one of a number of political issues greeted with disdain by the opposition and the back benches of the governing party. The rhetoric about that policy, the criticisms levelled against it have had strong repercussions in the literature, because they have set in motion the discursive formation it is all too easy for writers to repeat without question. Personal antagonism, pithy soundbites for headline writers and dismissive one-liners about policy in the House of Commons have

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<sup>173</sup> Castle, The Castle Diaries, op. cit., p.3 (26 January 1965), p.11 (18 March 1965); Joe Haines, The Politics of Power (London: Jonathan Cape, 1977), p.157; Jay, Change and Fortune, op. cit., p.378; Morgan, Harold Wilson, op. cit., p.390; Kenneth O. Morgan, Labour People: Leaders and Lieutenants: Hardie to Kinnock (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), p.256; Clive Ponting, Breach of Promise: Labour in Power 1964-1970 (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1989), pp.33-5.

<sup>174</sup> Sixth-formers and undergraduates are made well aware of their arguments. See for example Patrick Dunleavy, 'Government at the Centre', in Patrick Dunleavy, Andrew Gamble and Gillian Peele (eds.), Developments in British Politics 3 (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1990), pp.96-125. There is continuity into the next edition. See Keith Dowding, 'Government at the Centre', in Patrick Dunleavy, Andrew Gamble, Ian Holliday and Gillian Peele (eds.), Developments in British Politics 4 (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1993), pp.175-93. See also Dennis Kavanagh, British Politics: Continuities and Change, 3<sup>rd</sup> edn. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), pp.247-76; Donald Shell and Richard Hodder-Williams (eds.), Churchill to Major: The British Prime Ministership Since 1945 (London: Hurst and Co., 1995); Geoffrey Fry, 'Is the Civil Service Too Powerful?: The Case Against', Contemporary Record, 3, 4 (1990), pp.10-2 (p.11); Mark Wickham-Jones, 'Is the Civil Service Too Powerful?: The Case For', Contemporary Record, 3, 4 (1990), pp.9-10; R. W. Johnson, review, 'Digging Up the Ancestors: *Hugh Gaitskell*. By Brian Brivati', London Review of Books, 18, 22 (1996), pp.13-4 (p.13).

set the tone for much orthodox historiography, apparently reinforced by criticisms from continental Europeans intimately involved in the construction of Europe.

Jeremy Richardson argues that 'The job of academics is to debunk conventional wisdom'.<sup>175</sup> This sentiment applies extremely strongly to revisionist approaches to Britain's relationship with Europe. They have been unhappy with the generalising tendencies of the conventional wisdom, attacking the twin inconsistencies in the orthodoxy: its charges of crude 'negativity' towards the continent levelled at successive governments and the 'missed opportunities' approach to European policy. They seem to have been reacting against what Brian Harrison describes as the 'over-personalised, present-oriented "who was to blame and how can we do better next time?" agenda?'.<sup>176</sup> Some of the personal political antagonisms are easy to identify without recourse to the documentation. Macmillan, Robert Boothby and David Maxwell Fyfe against Eden, for example; the Labour diarists against Wilson; Thatcher against Heath. When such antagonisms flow over into broad criticisms of European policy revisionists have found it relatively easy to uncover the motivations. These were convenient rhetorical myths at the time. However, they argue, charges that policy-makers were 'anti-European' could equally apply to those making the accusations. Revisionists have therefore

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<sup>175</sup> Quoted in Baty, 'Labour Policy Poses Threat to Freedom', *Times Higher Education Supplement*, op. cit.

<sup>176</sup> Brian Harrison, 'The Wilson Governments 1964-1970. Edited by R. Coopey, S. Fielding and N. Tiratsoo', *Contemporary Record*, 7, 2 (1993), pp.490-1 (p.490).

have been challenging the conventional wisdom on the grounds of hypocrisy. David Dutton's reassessment of Eden is lapidary: 'If the Foreign Secretary is to be blamed for a lack of vision as to what the forces of supranationalism could achieve, his guilt must be shared, with very few exceptions, by a whole political generation'.<sup>177</sup>

- **The Use of Sources**

The sixth gulf between orthodox and revisionist historiography is in the different sources used by each school. The orthodox school is dominated by political memoirs, autobiographies, diaries and early secondary accounts. It is harder to generalise about biographies because they are increasingly becoming 'contextualised',<sup>178</sup> setting interpretations in the context of broader academic discourse about the individual and politics at the time.<sup>179</sup> This enables the writer to incorporate current trends in the historiography into their studies, making them hard to locate in any one school.<sup>180</sup>

Revisionist and post-revisionist accounts, by contrast, have followed closely the release of primary documentation under the Thirty Year Rule. This is not to say historians necessarily *needed* official archives to construct a revisionist case. The thesis argues that the foundations of their approaches are to be found

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<sup>177</sup> David Dutton, Anthony Eden: A Life and Reputation (London: Arnold, 1997), p.301; He echoes Young's earlier judgment that 'not all in Whitehall were blindly "anti-European"'. See Young, Britain and European Unity, p.40.

<sup>178</sup> This term was coined by Patrick O'Brien, 'Is Political Biography a Good Thing?', Contemporary British History, 10, 4 (1996), pp.60-66 (p.66).

<sup>179</sup> Hence Dutton's awareness of revisionism, noted above.

<sup>180</sup> The best examples of this are John Campbell, Edward Heath: A Biography (London: Pimlico, 1994); Dutton, Anthony Eden, op. cit.; Morgan, Harold Wilson, op. cit.; Peter Weiler, Ernest Bevin (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1993).



in the internal contradictions and inconsistencies of argument in orthodox accounts. The contrast lies in the emphasis placed on competing explanations of European policy by the different schools. This raises interesting questions about the nature of contemporary history in Britain: why do explanations tacitly acknowledged but not developed in orthodox works take so long to develop into revisionism? It is argued below that for latent revisionism and post-revisionism to develop into distinct alternative historiographical schools of writing, requires generational change, changes in the dominant social construction of history and a new range of evidence to be brought to bear on historical events.

## **5. Conclusion: The Significance of Questions and Answers in History**

The preceding analysis alerts us to the six major influences at work on historical interpretation in Britain. It has been shown that underpinning all the interpretative divides between schools are differences resulting from the type of study written. Seventh and finally, therefore, one needs to understand historiographical progression in the context of R. G. Collingwood's 'logic of question and answer'. That is, the interpretation one places upon history can only be as good, or bad, as the questions one asks of it. Callinicos summarises Collingwood's position as follows: 'Historical facts are...not the starting point of the process of inquiry but its result...Conceiving the historian's practice in this way, as the interplay of question and answer, in which the autonomy of the

process is established when the historian poses her own questions, rather than taking them ready-made from the sources, displaces the attempt to reduce historiography to narrative'.<sup>181</sup>

What Collingwood is driving at is highly relevant to historiographical inquiry into the connection between interpretation and the type of study written. This can be tabularised as follows:

**Table 1: The Foundations of the Historiography of British European Policy, 1945-73**

<b>ORTHODOXY</b>	Parliamentary debate; political memoir and autobiography; political diaries; oral testimony; political biography (especially official)  Academic studies written before (or not using) primary archives released under the Thirty Year Rule
<b>REVISIONISM</b>	Academic studies based on research into official archives, especially government records from the political branches of central government; 'contextualised biography'  'Contextualised biography' and studies based on research in foreign archives (a new methodological advance)
<b>POST-REVISIONISM</b>	Academic studies based on additional PRO sources to those consulted by revisionists, usually files from the economic departments

What emerges from this introductory chapter is that the historiography of Britain's relations with Europe has been driven by different genres of literature, political memoir and general accounts gradually being replaced by

<sup>181</sup> Callinicos, *Theories and Narratives*, op. cit., pp.76-8.

academic tracts analysing British foreign policy over increasingly narrow periods of time. These authors are all asking different questions of the past. As Joseph Bleicher writes: 'All interpretative activity involves us in inventing the object by "finding" it in a particular way. The object is never available to us in pristine form "out there" but is made available to us through the way we approach it'.<sup>182</sup>

Politicians are not necessarily interested in European policy per se; biographies similarly reflect the lack of attention or interest their subjects had in the making of European policy; general studies and textbooks have relatively little time to devote to detailed analysis of the machinery of Whitehall; academic studies are, by contrast, concerned with the detail over broader trends. They are, in short, asking different question of history. The phrase 'asking questions' of history goes even deeper than the genre of study. It also involves how one researches, what research design is employed, which sources consulted, which ignored, who is interviewed and who one collaborates with in the writing process. As Callinicos observes, 'every narrative is a theory in that, by selecting only certain events for inclusion, it imposes a structure on them'.<sup>183</sup> This raises important questions about the dominant conception in the social sciences of the term 'method'.

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<sup>182</sup> Joseph Bleicher, 'Invention and Community: Hermeneutic Politics in Europe', in Terrell Carver and Matti Hyvärinen (eds.), Interpreting the Political: New Methodologies (London: Routledge, 1997), pp.143-53 (pp.147-8).

<sup>183</sup> Callinicos, Theories and Narratives, op. cit., p.90.

'Method' is a term about which, Campbell argues, social scientists now talk in 'reified' terms.<sup>184</sup> The assumption is that having a 'method' means one's conclusions are empirically sound, logical and testable by one's colleagues in the field. It can reasonably be argued on the basis of this thesis that the constituent elements of 'method' are in fact much harder to capture. The interpretative processes that occur in the human brain vis-à-vis narrative reconstruction are in most urgent need of attention. This is where historians can fruitfully converse with philosophers and psychologists to understand better the nature of their craft. The factors involved in deciding which sources to consult can also be dependent upon pragmatic matters of accessibility, availability, time and financial resources as to a planned choice of research design. Even less well analysed has been how long-held ideological or political outlooks and sociological factors distort the interpretation of historical evidence. That the same document in the PRO has been put to different interpretive ends by different schools of historians, and even historians in the same school, shows that identifying method is not always the most appropriate way of identifying output. Such are the complexities of the human mind and necessary processes of historical imagination that go into the reconstruction of historical events.

Thus, to say one has a 'research method' can actually mask deeper influences at work on historical research. This necessarily requires reflection on which alternative methods could be used, which additional sources consulted and

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<sup>184</sup> Campbell, 'Contra Wight', *op. cit.*, p.318.

who one might interview to gain a clearer understanding of events. That the historiography of Britain and Europe contains little discussion to this end is testament to the theoretical malnutrition of British historians as well as to the relative isolation of history not just from political science but from critical theory and the reflectivism embodied in postmodern approaches to history. Ironically, David MacCannell observes, 'the one path that still leads in the direction of scholarly objectivity, detachment and neutrality is exactly the one originally thought to lead away from these classic virtues: that is, an openly autobiographic style in which the subjective position of the author, especially on political matters, is presented in a clear and straight forward fashion. At least this enables the reader to review his or her position to make the adjustments available for dialogue'.<sup>185</sup>

The next three chapters are devoted to analysis of the three schools of writing of Britain and Europe, 1945-73. The next chapter analyses the foundation and development of the orthodox school, the fourth the challenge presented by the emergence of the revisionist school, the fifth the smaller- post-revisionist school. Taking a thematic, school-oriented, approach seems to allow the most detailed analysis of the influences at work on writers in each school and therefore the strongest links binding writers together in schools. What it also demonstrates is the generational progression that characterises the historiography. The supplanting of one dominant community of writers by

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<sup>185</sup> Quoted in Jenkins, *On 'What is History?'*, op. cit., p. 14.

another, it is argued, is perhaps the defining reason why the interpretation of one school becomes dominant in the field and then fades into the background.

That different communities of writers ask different questions of the history, uncover fresh evidence, bring new practices to the field and write different types of study are thus intimately bound up with social change. The chapters address each influence in turn, while reminding the reader that they are all evidence of the same phenomena: the turn in the literature from politically geared tracts to professional historical accounts. Thematically analysing the three schools of writing on Britain and Europe, one finds that Jenkins' concern to raise the discussion of political influences on writers fails to grasp the remaining fundamentals of the historiographical process. There is at least as much to discover about the financial constraints within the discipline, the nature and constraints of the sources historians use and, as significant, those they ignore.

## **Chapter 2**

# **THE ORTHODOX SCHOOL: INVENTING THE RECORD**

**Table 2: Key Writers in the Orthodox School**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Institution/Background</b>	<b>Sources</b>
Elisabeth Barker	Journalist	Eye-witness account
John Baylis	University College of Wales (hereafter UCW), Aberystwyth	PRO, especially FO371, CAB, CoS*
Nora Beloff	Journalist	Eye-witness account
Alan Bullock	University of Oxford	Ernest Bevin's papers
Miriam Camps	US State Department official, research fellow at the RIIA	Eye-witness account
Michael Charlton	Journalist	Oral testimony
Joseph Frankel	Royal Institute of International Affairs	Secondary
Uwe Kitzinger	EC official, University of Oxford, RIIA	Eye-witness account
Richard Mayne	EC Official, University of Cambridge and UCW, Aberystwyth	Eye-witness account
F. S. Northedge	LSE	Secondary
Anthony Nutting	Civil Servant	Eye-witness account
Ritchie Ovendale	UCW, Aberystwyth	CAB, Ernest Bevin's papers

\* These abbreviations stand, respectively, for the minutes and papers of the Cabinet and its committees, the Foreign Office and the Chiefs of Staff

A cursory glance at the leading names in the orthodox school suggests the widespread appeal of this interpretation of British European policy to politicians, journalists and academics. A table such as this cannot hope to capture either the entire range of individuals who have expounded the orthodoxy, nor all of their personal backgrounds, sources and methods of research. Historians naturally combine political testimony and recollection, eye-witness experience, reflection on secondary sources and primary sources in



their accounts of contemporary history. Rarely do they outline to what extent each determined their ultimate interpretation of events. The identification of 'sources' with writers therefore involves a judgment about which *appear* to have been most fundamental to that particular historian. Even with such simplifying assumptions, however, this table tells us much about the principle argument which will be developed in this chapter.

The first section considers what initially appears to be a diverse collection of writers in the orthodox school. After exploring the broad interpretation of events offered by orthodox writers, centring on the contention that Britain 'missed opportunities' to lead the process of integration in Europe after the Second World War, it examines the problem the diversity of writers associated with the school poses for schoolifying the literature. It argues that despite the eclecticism of backgrounds, there are multiple connections among writers in the orthodox school. Analysing these factors supports the core argument of the thesis, that history-writing is subject to a host of sociological pressures, implicit theoretical assumptions and personal influences.

The second section analyses the sociological ties among orthodox writers. It asserts that the school has been driven by a mixture of those sympathetic to Monnet's vision of European unity and those in Britain resentful of the politico-economic position in the world in which Britain found itself in the 1960s and 1970s. Political recrimination from across the spectrum of ideologies, which fed into contemporary journalistic and academic accounts of this period, has been a key stimulus to the historiography. The third section

moves on from the sociological underpinnings to analyse the implicit theoretical underpinnings of the orthodox school. This term is taken to imply the conceptual lenses through which orthodox writers have approached the study of international relations in general and British foreign policy in particular. These are examined under the following headings: structural explanations of the making of foreign policy, the definition of 'British foreign policy', hindsight and historical entrenchment of the conventional wisdom. The section thus confirms the dominant theme to emerge from its predecessor on the sociology of the orthodox school. That is, the agenda and outlook of politicians and civil servants has been crucial in determining the realist, power-oriented, backward-looking approach of the orthodox school to British European policy. Academics following the defence-oriented approach to British European policy have echoed this preoccupation in their studies.

The fourth section lays the foundations for the next chapter by analysing the interpretative inconsistencies, the hints at alternative explanations, in orthodox works. It explores the underlying tensions in historical texts, making the argument that what divides writers into schools is their prioritisation of some explanations over others. This is not the same, it warns, as saying that all the literature is post-revisionist. The dividing line between schools is thin, it can be and is transgressed by writers over time. The shift from school to school occurs because of changes in the dominant communities of historians at particular times, and is usually an explicit choice made by successive generations of writers. The concluding section raises the question of method and interpretation in history. It argues that training how to research is different

from the practice of research. It argues that historians, political scientists and their counterparts across the social sciences should be more aware of the influence on interpretation stemming from the paradox between the human desire to understand the past and the human mind's capacity to reconstruct effectively the events one purports to describe. In so doing, it provides an apt summary to this chapter which is centrally concerned with the simplifying assumptions placed on historical events by politicians, their protégés and academics attempting to come to terms with Britain's standing in Europe in the first thirty years after the Second World War.

### **1. Introduction: The Heterogenous World of Orthodox Historiography?**

The orthodox school breathed historical life into the conventional wisdom on Britain and Europe. It invented the record, setting the tone for all the subsequent historiography. This chapter explores the dynamics by which historical invention and myth-making have been a crucial driving force behind the development of the orthodox school of writing on British European policy. Reassessing the motivations behind orthodox writers allows us to expose their implicit theoretical assumptions about the British foreign policy process and the application of it, against which revisionist historians would later revolt. This is not to denigrate the work of orthodox historians, to argue that all historiographical progression is advancing to a better or more astute interpretation of events. Indeed, this study supports the argument of Gwyn

Prins that: 'The invention of tradition is neither surprising nor dishonest, especially not in cultures with no single criterion of truth'.<sup>1</sup> The terms 'myth' and 'invention' are meant rather to imply the intellectual processes by which all histories are written, applying as much to revisionist and post-revisionist as orthodox historians.

The role played by orthodox accounts in guiding subsequent writing is underscored by the recognition that they have set the tone for 'event history' which dominates the historiography of Britain and Europe. We cannot understand recent developments in the literature without examining the nature of earlier historiography. Burke's definition of 'event history' captures well how historians in the field of Britain and Europe have approached their subject. '[T]raditional historians think of history as essentially a narrative of events, while the new history is more concerned with the analysis of structures'.<sup>2</sup> The latter is anathema to the majority of writers on Britain and Europe who debate along lines set down by orthodox historiography, 'emphasising the deeds and decisions of the leaders, which furnish a clear story line'.<sup>3</sup> Replicating discussion of events and personalities, revisionists have become embroiled in the traditional form of historical narrative we associate

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<sup>1</sup> Gwyn Prins, 'Oral History', in Peter Burke (ed.), New Perspectives on Historical Writing (Cambridge: Polity, 1991), pp.114-39 (p.126).

<sup>2</sup> Peter Burke, 'Overture: The New History', in Burke (ed.), New Perspectives, op. cit., pp.1-23 (p.4).

<sup>3</sup> Peter Burke, 'History of Events and the Revival of Narratives', in Burke (ed.), New Perspectives, op. cit. pp.233-48 (p.235). The dictum that 'history is the biography of great men' dies hard, notes Carr in What is History?, op. cit., p.45.

with event history. 'Like history', Burke concludes, 'historiography seems to repeat itself- with variations'.<sup>4</sup>

Before examining the interpretation placed upon events orthodox writers of British European policy, it is useful to reflect on the apparent heterogeneity of the school. The eclecticism of the writers that breathed life into the school, implies that there may be problems with schoolifying the literature. If we assume that the orthodoxy of this period was at its height in the period between 1950 and 1985, after which revisionist accounts began to command the field, this covers a huge amount of writing. The bulk of the school consists of political memoir, diary and autobiography, official and unofficial biography and, less commonly, oral testimony, supporting Deighton's observation on American scholarship that 'many orthodox works were memoirs or eye-witness accounts'.<sup>5</sup> Clement Attlee, Ernest Bevin, Winston Churchill, Anthony Eden, Harold Macmillan, Harold Wilson and Edward Heath draw most attention, a point which underscores Burke's remark that history has traditionally been associated with 'the deeds and decisions of the leaders'.<sup>6</sup> In addition there is

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<sup>4</sup> Burke, 'History of Events', op. cit., p.233.

<sup>5</sup> Deighton, 'The Cold War in Europe', op. cit., p.83. Key accounts include Attlee, As it Happened, op. cit.; Benn, The Benn Diaries, op. cit.; Boothby, My Yesterday, op. cit.; Bullock, Ernest Bevin, op. cit.; Castle, The Castle Diaries, op. cit.; Crossman, The Crossman Diaries, op. cit.; Denman, Missed Chances, op. cit.; Dell, The Schuman Plan, op. cit.; Eden, Full Circle, op. cit.; Harris, Attlee, op. cit.; Horne, Macmillan Volume 1, op. cit.; Horne, Macmillan Volume 2, op. cit.; Kilmuir, Political Adventure, op. cit.; Kirkpatrick, The Inner Circle, op. cit.; Macmillan, Tides of Fortune, op. cit.; Macmillan, At the End of the Day, op. cit.; Macmillan, Pointing the Way, op. cit.; Macmillan, Riding the Storm, op. cit.; Moran, Winston Churchill, op. cit.; Nutting, Europe Will Not Wait, op. cit.; Ben Pimlott (ed.), The Political Diary of Hugh Dalton, 1918-40, 1945-60 (London: Jonathan Cape, 1987); Roberts, 'Ernest Bevin', op. cit.; Williams, Ernest Bevin, op. cit.; Harold Wilson, The Labour Government 1964-1970: A Personal Record (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1971).

<sup>6</sup> Burke, 'History of Events', op. cit., p.235.

the official history to 1950,<sup>7</sup> general works on post-war British foreign policy, notably those by Joseph Frankel and Frank Northedge,<sup>8</sup> and some specifically on Britain and Europe.<sup>9</sup>

How, given the acute diversity of works that make up the orthodoxy, can we call it a 'school'? One scholar has claimed that: 'proper historical research on British European policy cannot be classified into schools, at least not in the categories the author suggests'.<sup>10</sup> The intrinsic eclecticism of the historiography presents a persuasive case against our ability to delineate schools. Paradoxically, however, it is just this diversity in the literature that makes the schoolification process both necessary and interesting. The reasons why certain interpretations are glossed over by some writers and not others are what binds those writers together in schools. That is, the schools are driven by

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<sup>7</sup> Rohan Butler and M. E. Pelly (eds.), Documents on British Policy Overseas, 1, 1, 1945 (London: HMSO, 1984); Roger Bullen and M. E. Pelly (eds.), Documents on British Policy Overseas, 1, 2, 1045 (London: HMSO, 1985); Roger Bullen and M. E. Pelly (eds.), Documents on British Policy Overseas, 1, 3, 1945 (London: HMSO, 1986); Roger Bullen and M. E. Pelly (eds.), Documents on British Policy Overseas, 1, 4, 1945 (London: HMSO, 1987); M. E. Pelly and H. J. Yasamee (eds.), Documents on British Policy Overseas, 1, 5, 1945 (London: HMSO, 1990); M. E. Pelly and H. J. Yasamee (eds.), Documents on British Policy Overseas, 1, 6, 1945-1946 (London: HMSO, 1991); H. J. Yasamee and K. A. Hamilton, Documents on British Policy Overseas, 1, 7, 1946-1947 (London: HMSO, 1995); Roger Bullen and M. E. Pelly, Documents on British Policy Overseas, 2, 2, 1950 (London: HMSO, 1987).

<sup>8</sup> Frankel, British Foreign Policy, op. cit. Frankel completed his PhD at the London School of Economics in 1950, and went on to lecture and then head the Politics Department at the University of Aberdeen, in the period 1951-73. Amongst others he held senior posts at St. Anthony's College Oxford, and the Universities of Wales and Southampton. Information from Who Was Who 1971-1980 (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1981), p.266. F. S. Northedge, Descent from Power: British Foreign Policy 1945-1973 (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1974). See also Kenneth O. Morgan, The People's Peace: British History 1945-1990 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990).

<sup>9</sup> Barker, Britain in a Divided Europe, op. cit.; Nora Beloff, The General Says No: Britain's Exclusion from Europe (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1963); Miriam Camps, Britain and the European Community 1955-1963 (London: Oxford University Press, 1964).

<sup>10</sup> Anonymous referee's report on a draft article which placed the writers on British European policy on the development of Plan G, 1955-7, into the three schools identified in this thesis. Received 11 October 1999.

competing agendas which dictate what evidence is used and what is ignored, which personalities are criticised and who habilitated, which definitions of 'foreign policy' subscribed to and which ignored. It is possible to reflect on the underlying similarities in the accounts produced on Britain and Europe. But recognising the similarities should not blind us to the very real differences that divide writers into schools. Indeed, admitting the presence of similarities actually strengthens the secondary argument in this study, that schools exist because we can embrace them but *still* make a clear distinction between the various waves of writing that have been produced on Britain and Europe. Since the schools are divided according to the interpretation they place upon the history of British European policy it is necessary to analyse the interpretative content of the school before exploring the dynamics behind it. Laying bare the empirical face of the orthodox school will help us establish the salience of events and personalities to its writers and how this has set the tone for the 'event history' that dominates the field.

The orthodox school condemns British European policy. Its underpinning assumption is of bipartisan consensus in the field of foreign policy, the 'belief that post-war Britain was characterised by an absence of serious policy debate in any significant area'.<sup>11</sup> Its charge is that a succession of British governments 'missed opportunities' to lead the process of European integration after 1945.

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<sup>11</sup> Harriet Jones, 'The Post-War Consensus in Britain: Thesis, Antithesis, Synthesis?', in Brian Brivati, Julia Buxton and Anthony Seldon (eds.), *The Contemporary History Handbook* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1996), pp.41-9 (p.44). Jones is one of a number of revisionist historians in Britain to disagree with the view that consensus has in fact prevailed in British political and economic life since the Second World War. See Kevin Jefferys, review, 'The Myth of Consensus: New Views on British History, 1945-64. Edited by Harriet Jones and Michael David Kandiah', *Contemporary British History*, 11,1 (1997), pp.157-8 (p.157). On the

The argument is made using a number of metaphors for 'missed opportunities', notably 'missed chances', a phrase first used by the Economist in 1955, 'missed buses' and 'missed boats'.<sup>12</sup> The assumption, however, is the same: British policy towards Europe was deeply flawed in the post-war era. Frankel asks the question which is at the heart of the school: 'How are we to explain Britain's neglecting to take a lead in Western European affairs when it was open to her in the later 1940s and in the 1950s? In retrospect, this seems to be the fundamental and most costly mistake in post-war policies... its causes must be sought in the faulty perceptions, anticipations and priorities of the successive British governments'.<sup>13</sup>

Smith and Smith argue that the 'traditional' approach to British foreign policy is centrally concerned with the concept of 'decline' which was dominant in British society in the 1960s and 1970s. '[A] central argument', they write, 'was

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question of Europe this notion has yet to be seriously challenged, and revisionist historians are still taken by the concept.

<sup>12</sup> 'Britain and Europe's "Third Chance"', *Economist*, op. cit., p.633; Boothby, *My Yesterday*, op. cit., p.73; Bullock, *Ernest Bevin*, op. cit., p.790; Charlton, *The Price of Victory*, op. cit., pp.122-3; Peter Clarke, *Hope and Glory: Britain and the World 1900-1990* (London: Penguin, 1996), p.236; Dell, *The Schuman Plan*, op. cit., p.303; Denman, *Missed Chances*, op. cit.; Kilmuir, *Political Adventure*, op. cit., p.186; Nutting, *Europe Will Not Wait*, op. cit., p.34; Frankel, *British Foreign Policy*, op. cit., p.319. See also Nicholas Henderson's verdict quoted in Sanders, *Losing an Empire*, op. cit., p.73. It was a phrase first used in academic texts by Camps in *Britain and the European Community*, op. cit., p.45; Barker, *Britain in a Divided Europe*, op. cit., p.152. The 'Europeans' in the American State Department also cleaved to this line of thinking. Acheson's criticism was that Britain's rejection of the Schuman Plan was 'the greatest mistake of the post-war period'. See Acheson, *Present at the Creation*, op. cit., p.502. David Bruce (Ambassador to London, 1961-8) likewise thought that the failure to create the European army in the 1950s was 'the greatest lost opportunity in modern European history'. Quoted in John Ramsden, review, 'The Last American Aristocrat: The Biography of Ambassador David K. E. Bruce. By Nelson Lankford', *Contemporary British History*, 11, 2 (1997), pp.166-8 (p.168). The contention that Britain 'missed the bus' has appeal in other areas, and has been used to describe Britain's refusal to jointly work on nuclear weapons projects with the United States during the war. See Margaret Gowing, 'Nuclear Weapons and the "Special Relationship"', in Louis and Bull (eds.), *The Special Relationship*, op. cit., pp.117-28 (p.119).

<sup>13</sup> Frankel, *British Foreign Policy*, op. cit., pp.233-4.



that by the 1970s there was little left for Britain but to throw in her lot with the Europeans...[I]n a world of radical change the inability to take fundamental choices and to reassess priorities constitutes a fundamental weakness'.<sup>14</sup> For their use of the term 'traditional' one can substitute the term 'orthodox' to suit the demands of this study. David Allen concurs. 'In most academic writing', he argued in 1988, 'and amongst the public at large, Britain's post-war relationship with Western Europe is seen as reflecting decline and retreat'.<sup>15</sup>

Orthodox criticisms stem, it appears, from the growing awareness in the 1960s of Britain's estrangement from European integration which began in the 1940s and 1950s. Britain's aloofness resulted, the argument goes, from a series of 'misjudgments' in policy vis-à-vis the Council of Europe, the Schuman Plan, the European Defence Community (EDC) and the Messina negotiations which culminated in the Treaty of Rome.<sup>16</sup> Policy in the 1960s and 1970s was reacting to this 'failure' of not being at the heart of Europe, a *pis aller* to make up lost strategic and, Nicholas Crafts points out, economic ground.<sup>17</sup> A further stimulus to this line of thinking was, it seems, Whitehall's preoccupation with Anglo-American relations after 1945. David Watt describes this sentiment with reference to the 'Europeanists in British public life, to whom it has become virtually axiomatic that our failure to "catch the European bus" in the mid-

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<sup>14</sup> Smith and Smith, 'The Analytical Background', op. cit., pp.16-7.

<sup>15</sup> Allen, 'Britain and Western Europe', op. cit., pp.168-9.

<sup>16</sup> Mayne and Pinder, Federal Union, op. cit., p.98.

<sup>17</sup> Nicholas Crafts, Britain's Relative Economic Decline 1870-1995: A Quantitative Perspective (London: The Social Market Foundation, 1997), pp.43-62.

1950s was almost entirely due to a national obsession with the special relationship'.<sup>18</sup>

Such views have intertwined, giving rise to the charge that Britain fatally neglected the European option. Lamb believes, for example, that 'In 1955 Eden could have sailed freely into the still malleable Common Market, and obtained substantial concessions for the Commonwealth. Not for another twenty years was Britain able to negotiate entry and then on worse terms than would have been available under Eden's Prime Ministership'.<sup>19</sup> The implication is that policy-makers could have hurdled the barrier put before them by Charles de Gaulle had they done more to persuade the French President that Britain was 'European'. Whether it be policy in the late 1940s or 1970s, the lost opportunity metaphor sums up an entire generation's sense of tragedy about British foreign policy. The term is an emotive linguistic symbol of Britain's reduced impact on the world stage.<sup>20</sup> The orthodoxy is synonymous with Boothby's lament that 1945 'was the moment when Britain could and should have taken the undisputed leadership of a united Western Europe... We did nothing'.<sup>21</sup> Thus, Harrison's summary is that this is an 'over-personalised,

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<sup>18</sup> David Watt, 'Introduction: Anglo-American Relations', in Louis and Bull (eds.), *The Special Relationship*, op. cit., pp.1-14 (p.7).

<sup>19</sup> Lamb, *The Failure of the Eden Government*, op. cit.; p.101. See also Shlaim, 'Anthony Eden', op. cit., pp.108-9.

<sup>20</sup> It is almost as if writers were trapped within this discursive framework. Annette Morgan, reviewing the edited volume by Jowell and Hoinville published in 1976, observes that in the historical introduction to the book 'the joint authors had little scope for originality and little pretension to it'. Annette Morgan, 'Britain into Europe: Public Opinion and the EEC 1961-75. Edited by Roger Jowell and Gerald Hoinville', *Journal of Common Market Studies*, 15, 3 (1977), pp.221-2 (p.221).

<sup>21</sup> Boothby, *My Yesterday*, op. cit., p.73.

present-oriented “who was to blame and how can we do better next time?” agenda’.<sup>22</sup>

Before examining the dynamics behind the interpretation placed on events by orthodox writers it will be useful to analyse the four leading threads of the argument in this chapter. The first is that the orthodox school is trenchantly critical of British European policy, discussed above. Leading policy-makers and, less, officials, were, it claims, politically ‘myopic’ in not joining European integrative efforts from the outset.<sup>23</sup> The second theme is that the Europeans were following the ‘correct’ path in the post-war era: they had seen the light offered by federal solutions to regional and world problems.<sup>24</sup> Britain, by contrast, as one critic of the orthodox school puts it, was ‘dysfunctional’ for not joining them.<sup>25</sup> Alan Milward also takes issue with the orthodoxy: ‘Early historical accounts of the Community divided politicians into those who still...inhabited the benighted world of European nationalism and those around who the great light had shone, the prophets of the new order’.<sup>26</sup> He is referring

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<sup>22</sup> Harrison, *The Wilson Governments 1964-1970*. Edited by R. Coopey, S. Fielding and N. Tiratsoo’, *Contemporary Record*, op. cit., p.490.

<sup>23</sup> A word commonly associated with orthodox criticisms of British policy-makers. See, for example, Dell, *The Schuman Plan*, op. cit.

<sup>24</sup> The implication being that London’s preference for the ‘concept of intergovernmentalism has a particularly damaging and distorting impact upon the relevance of federalism to the European Community’. Michael Burgess, *Federalism and European Union: Political Ideas, Influences and Strategies in the European Community, 1972-1987* (London: Routledge, 1989), p.2.

<sup>25</sup> Wolfram Kaiser, *Using Europe*, op. cit., introduction, p.16. That Britain has forged a separate path, and adopted a ‘different’ approach to integration from the continentals, is summed in David Allen’s observation that Britain’s commitment to European integration is of a ‘fundamentally different order from that of its European counterparts’. In ‘Britain and Western Europe’, op. cit., p.170.

<sup>26</sup> Alan Milward, *The Reconstruction of Western Europe, 1945-51*, (London: Methuen, 1984), p.17.

to the 'pioneers' of European unity such as Jean Monnet and Robert Schuman who ignited the orthodox school.<sup>27</sup> Bullen goes further: 'The founding fathers of the European federal movement of the second half of the twentieth century have assiduously propagated a number of myths about the origins and purpose of integration'.<sup>28</sup> Criticisms of British policy have been inextricably linked to the accusations made in live political debate about the events now being described.

White has observed that 'it seems possible to conclude that every historical narrative has as its latent or manifest purpose the desire to moralise the events of which it treats'.<sup>29</sup> The third theme of the chapter draws on the mixture of historical narrative with normative judgments about who was 'right' and 'wrong'. There is a strong sense in which the orthodox school has been driven by those sympathetic to the cause of European unity. One must refrain from using the term 'pro-European' because it is not value-neutral, holding different meanings for different people at different times and in different countries. The point is that the notion of 'missed opportunities' sprang directly from the assumption that successive British governments *should* have been sympathetic to the supranational approach to European unity espoused by the 'founding

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<sup>27</sup> 'Monnet is very much the hero of the book', writes Murray Forsyth in his review, 'The Recovery of Europe: From Devastation to Unity. By Richard Mayne', *International Affairs*, 48, 1 (1972), pp.100-1 (p.100). Milward also notes that 'All previous lives of Schuman have been simple hagiographies' in his review, *Robert Schuman: Homme d'Etat 1866-1963*. By Raymond Poidevin', *Journal of Common Market Studies*, 26, 2 (1987), pp.344-5 (p.344).

<sup>28</sup> Bullen, review, 'Britain, France and the Unity of Europe 1945-1951. By John W. Young; *The Foreign Policy of the British Labour Government 1945-1951*. Edited by Ritchie Owendale', *Journal of Common Market Studies*, op. cit., p.77.

<sup>29</sup> White, *The Content of the Form*, op. cit., p.14. This, Nigel Hamilton argues, is only natural: 'Life is full of monsters and heroes...we cannot blind ourselves to human nature'. See 'The Role of Biography', in Seldon (ed.), *Contemporary History*, op. cit., pp.165-9 (p.167).

fathers' who aimed, in Christopher Brewin's words, to 'convince British civil servants and journalists that the federal idea has been the correct path since 1939'.<sup>30</sup> Publications such as the *Economist*, one has to remember, are what Richard Gardner refers to as 'pillars of Establishment opinion', organs of political ideas, 'opinion-formers' in Hill's words,<sup>31</sup> as much as political report. They are held in high regard not just among the elite in London, but, crucially, in Washington.<sup>32</sup> Hence, opposite to the orthodoxy on the Cold War in the United States which 'provided important support for post-war US foreign policy',<sup>33</sup> the earliest works in Britain were intent on changing the direction of British foreign policy.

Against this, Kaiser argues that the British 'Sonderweg'<sup>34</sup> thesis not only oversimplifies the political and social development of the West in general... but fails to recognise that there is no one path to modernity'.<sup>35</sup> The final theme running through the orthodoxy is its tendency to generalise and complain about British policy from the vantage point of the present. Explaining how we got where we are is an extremely significant part of understanding the dynamics of the orthodox school on Britain and Europe. With hindsight it is easy to argue

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<sup>30</sup> Christopher Brewin, review, '*The United States of Europe*. By Ernest Wistrich', *Journal of Common Market Studies*, 33, 2 (1995), pp.300-1 (p.301).

<sup>31</sup> Hill, 'Academic International Relations', op. cit., p.8.

<sup>32</sup> Richard N. Gardner, 'Sterling-Dollar Diplomacy in Current Perspective', in Louis and Bull (eds.), *The Special Relationship*, op. cit., pp.185-200 (p.188). See also Ernest R. May and Gregory F. Treverton, 'Defence Relationships: American Perspectives', in Louis and Bull (eds.), *The Special Relationship*, op. cit., pp.161-82 (p.163).

<sup>33</sup> Melanson, *Writing History*, op. cit., p.7.

<sup>34</sup> The term 'Sonderweg' means, in Kaiser's words, 'a historically unique departure from the apparently normal path of democratic virtue', and is lifted from German historiography in the 1960s and 1970s which attempted to explain why Germany acted as it did in the last century. Kaiser, *Using Europe*, op. cit., introduction, p.16.

<sup>35</sup> Iggers, *Historiography*, op. cit., p.69.

that Britain should have been 'in' at the beginning,<sup>36</sup> particularly when in the 1970s the world suffered from severe economic recession. Britain in the 1980s was seen to be gaining very few economic advantages from being 'in Europe'. Had Eden joined in 1957- or earlier- Britain could have reaped the rewards from the post-war economic boom. This might have made the EC more palatable to the British public and we might not now be seen as the 'awkward partner' in the EU. The use of 'presentism' in contemporary history has been unavoidable for many orthodox historians, whose accounts of Britain's relationship with the continent are laced with acid comment on what they see as severe policy failure at the elite level.

Orthodox historiography on Britain's relations with Europe is, in summary, a potent mix of criticism and apologia, underpinned by the assumption that Britain in the post-war era departed from the path of democratic virtue by pouring scorn on the integrative efforts taking place on the continent. The intrinsic individuality of historical accounts makes each orthodox narrative differ slightly from the other, in terms of both the language and evidence used to criticise British policy. But this is a natural repercussion of writing historical narratives. Reconstructing historical events requires leaps of faith to fill in the inevitable gaps in our knowledge. Iggers captures this concept of fluidity in

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<sup>36</sup> Take, for example, Dell's argument that the European Coal and Steel Community was less supranational than Britain had initially feared, and therefore that London should have joined. 'It is a pity that the perception of what was, in fact, inevitable did not permeate Labour government thinking in 1950'. Dell, *The Schuman Plan*, op. cit., pp.181-2. At the time, how were policy-makers expected to see into the future with such clarity? Mayne is critical of Dell's use of hindsight in his review, 'The Schuman Plan...By Edmund Dell', *International Affairs*, 72, 2 (1996), pp.396-7. See also Janne Taalas, 'The Schuman Plan...By Edmund Dell', *Contemporary British History*, 10, 2 (1996), pp.248-9. For this reason one has to question Milward's judgment that Dell's 'first-class research' was combined with 'persuasive argumentation'. See Alan S. Milward, review, *The Schuman Plan...By Edmund Dell*, *Journal*

interpretation across generically similar works in his remark that ‘every historical account is a construct, but a construct arising from a dialogue between the historian and the past, one that does not occur in a vacuum but within a community of inquiring minds who share criteria of plausibility’.<sup>37</sup> In this sense, Dunne’s definition of the term ‘school’- a body of writers producing interpretations joined by a set of ‘family resemblances’- is particularly prescient. The orthodox school contains writers who, while individual to a certain extent, interpret British European policy in ways ‘which are interwoven and distinct’.<sup>38</sup> Having introduced the interpretation placed on British European policy 1945-73, the chapter will now examine the sociological, political and (implicit) theoretical linkages among writers in the school.

## 2. The Social Construction of the Orthodox School

Behind the apparently amorphous collection of British writers in the orthodox school- politicians, civil servants, journalists and academics- there is a common intellectual thread: advocacy of the federalist vision espoused by Monnet and given voice in Britain via the think tank Federal Union<sup>39</sup> and its ‘immediately associated bodies’, the Federal Trust for Education and Research and Wyndham Place Trust.<sup>40</sup> As one of its members and historian of this

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of *European Integration History*, op. cit., p.100.

<sup>37</sup> Iggers, *Historiography*, op. cit., p.145.

<sup>38</sup> Dunne, *Inventing International Society*, op. cit., p.5.

<sup>39</sup> Launched in January 1939. For an official history see Mayne and Pinder, *Federal Union*, op. cit.

<sup>40</sup> The latter was set up in 1960 ‘to work on the federal idea in a religious context’. Ibid., p.69.

period, Uwe Kitzinger, described the broad appeal of the British Monnetists: 'They came from a wide variety of backgrounds: one the son of a peer, another who left school at fourteen, one the son of a small tailor, another the son of a bank clerk, several with family origins on the continent, some candidates or local councillors of the Labour, some of the Liberal and some of the Conservative Party, some full-time trade unionists, some lawyers, some in public relations, one who worked for the British Council of Churches, another for the Economist, several at universities or various research institutions'.<sup>41</sup>

Analysing the sprawling network of individuals in or associated with Federal Union supports the contention that many writers in the orthodox school are bound by a shared Monnetist outlook about the most desirable future for Europe, a federal future which Britain resisted in the post-war era. Hence their concern with what Duchene calls the 'bottomless pit of a question' as to why the British 'were so resistant to European integration',<sup>42</sup> and the pervasiveness of historical accounts that chastise politicians and civil servants whose 'misjudgments...led their European policy so grievously astray'.<sup>43</sup> The thesis is not directly concerned with the push for federalism at the national and global levels, rather with the issue of regional federalism, and in particular the

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<sup>41</sup> Kitzinger, Diplomacy and Persuasion, op. cit., p.190. Kitzinger himself would know many of them. He worked at the Economic Section of the Council of Europe between 1951 and 1958, worked up through the University of Oxford between 1956 and 1976, before taking leave of absence in 1973-5 to work for Christopher Soames, then Vice-President of the European Commission. He sat on the National Council of the European Movement between 1974 and 1976 and was a member of the RIIA between 1973 and 1985. See Who's Who 2000, (London: A and C Black, 2000), p.1153.

<sup>42</sup> Duchene, Jean Monnet, op. cit., p.208. He was a Federal Trustee. See Mayne and Pinder, Federal Union, op. cit., p.113.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid., p.98.



intellectual concern of its members with 'Britain's relationship to the emerging European Union'.<sup>44</sup>

Perhaps the most significant associate body to consider is the Federal Trust.<sup>45</sup> Its constitution proclaims that it 'acts as a forum in which the suitability of federal solutions to problems of governance at national, continental and global level can be explored'.<sup>46</sup> It has been credited with bringing Britain 'into Europe' and leading 'the British section of the European movement to a federalist stand in the British political debate on the future of Europe'.<sup>47</sup> Of particular interest also is the impact of the Regional Commission, 'a group containing the hard core of its supporters of the Monnet approach to Community-building'. It was set up in 1956, to plan 'how to change British opinion and policy'.<sup>48</sup> All branches of Federal Union have voiced the critique by the 'Eurosaints'<sup>49</sup> of the traditionally 'British' preference for looser intergovernmental co-operation in Europe.<sup>50</sup> Having established the concern of Federal Union and its associated bodies with the British approach to European integration, one can infer three links to orthodox historiography.

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<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

<sup>45</sup> Founded in 1945, out of the idea that Federal Union 'ought to engage in educational work. Political action and propaganda had their part to play; but deeper and (in the best sense) more academic study, reflection, and research were essential too'. Ibid., p.109.

<sup>46</sup> 'A Note for Friends About the Federal Trust', October 1999, p.1.

<sup>47</sup> Andrea Bosco, review, '*European Unity and World Order: Federal Trust 1945-1995*. By John Pinder', *Journal of Common Market Studies*, 35, 2 (1997), p.325. See for example *Europe Against de Gaulle* (London: Pall Mall, 1963).

<sup>48</sup> Mayne and Pinder, *Federal Union*, op. cit., pp.146-7.

<sup>49</sup> A name coined by W. E. Paterson in his review, '*Eminent Europeans: Personalities who shaped Contemporary Europe*. Edited by M. Bond, J. Smith and W. Wallace', *Journal of Common Market Studies*, 35, 3 (1997), pp.488-9 (p.488).

<sup>50</sup> Mayne and Pinder, *Federal Union*, op. cit.

The first is, simply, that many of the key individuals in the orthodox school have, or have had, links with Federal Union. (See the Appendix for its widespread social and political influence). Individuals such as Pinder and Mayne who now write on the history of European integration have, Andrea Bosco notes in one review, 'been for four decades loyal to the European construction'.<sup>51</sup> Thus, Mayne argues in true Monnetist fashion, 'Scepticism, based partly on lack of interest and partly on ignorance, was the characteristic reaction of British officials to the initiatives proposed by Monnet, Schuman and the Six'.<sup>52</sup> Pinder consistently issues, another reviewer observes, 'a characteristically well-argued appeal to British policy-makers to abjure their intergovernmentalism'.<sup>53</sup> His judgment that Britain 'remained coldly aloof from the Europeans' ideas' also has a Monnetist flavour to it.<sup>54</sup> Another critic in this group is Roy Pryce, Director of the Federal Trust, 1983-90.<sup>55</sup> Michael Gehler thus suggests 'that one should not underestimate the influence of the

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<sup>51</sup> Bosco, review, *'European Unity and World Order: Federal Trust 1945-1995'*. By John Pinder', *Journal of Common Market Studies*, op. cit., p.325. Mayne was an official in the ECSC, 1956-8 and in the EEC, 1958-63 before being personal assistant to Monnet 1963-6. Pinder has been chairman of the Federal Trust since 1985, and was previously press officer of Federal Union, 1950-2, worked at the Economist Intelligence Unit, 1952-64 and was President of the Union of European Federalists, 1984-90. See *Who's Who 2000*, op. cit., p.1390 and p.1623.

<sup>52</sup> See Richard Mayne, review, *'The Price of Victory'*. By Michael Charlton', *International Affairs*, 60, 2 (1984), pp.326-7 (p.327). His key publications include *Postwar: The Dawn of Today's Europe* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1983); *The Community of Europe* (London: Victor Gollancz, 1962); *The Recovery of Europe: From Devastation to Unity* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1970).

<sup>53</sup> Christopher Brewin, review, *'Maastricht and Beyond: Building the European Union'*. By A. Duff, J. Pinder and R. Pryce', *Journal of Common Market Studies*, 34, 1 (1996), p.134.

<sup>54</sup> John Pinder, *Europe Against de Gaulle* (London: Pall Mall Press for Federal Trust), p.68.

<sup>55</sup> He was previously Head of Information Office of High Authority of ECSC, 1957-60, and Head of the Joint Information Office of the European Communities, 1960-4. See *Who's Who 2000*, op. cit., p.1664. His publications include *The Political Future of the European Community* (London: John Marshbank, 1962); *The Dynamics of European Union* (London: Routledge, 1990).

European federalists in setting up different ideas, concepts and programmes on European integration'.<sup>56</sup>

The second link brings in Federal Union's transnational connections. Significantly, Mayne and Pinder recall, the Regional Commission was set up just after '*Federal News* welcomed the establishment of Jean Monnet's Action Committee for the United States of Europe'.<sup>57</sup> It must be remembered, Nigel Ashford observes, that one of the main driving forces behind integration and our subsequent interpretations of it was Monnet, the Action Committee for a United States of Europe and his 'network of friends and colleagues who influenced US policy in favour of supranational European integration'.<sup>58</sup> Richard Aldrich finds an American intelligence connection here, locating the European movement in the broader context of American Cold War strategy. He presents evidence that between 1949-60, American sources injected \$3-4 million into 'European federalist activity'.<sup>59</sup> Milward also argues that 'the ultimate purposes of the Marshall Plan were almost entirely political albeit that

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<sup>56</sup> Michael Gehler, review, '*Interdependence Versus Integration: Denmark, Scandinavia, and Western Europe, 1945-1960*. By Thorsten B. Olesen', *Journal of European Integration History*, 3, 2 (1997), pp.100-2 (p.102).

<sup>57</sup> Mayne and Pinder, *Federal Union*, op. cit., p.146.

<sup>58</sup> Nigel Ashford, review, '*Eisenhower, Kennedy and the United States of Europe*. By Pascaline Winand', *Journal of Common Market Studies*, 33, 2 (1995), p.309-10 (p.309). This web of personalities should not surprise us: the Conservative Party is renowned for being dominated by a few hundred families 'bound together by class and kinship', a network which impacts both upon their politics and rhetoric. See Harriet Jones, review, '*Bob Boothby: A Portrait*. By Robert Rhodes James', *Contemporary Record*, 6, 2 (1992), pp.403-4 (p.403).

<sup>59</sup> Richard J. Aldrich, 'European Integration: An American Intelligence Connection', in Deighton (ed.), *Building Post-War Europe*, op. cit., pp.159-79 (p.159). He concludes on p. 173 as follows: 'A surprising number of the political elite concerned with the emerging European Community in the 1940s and 1950s were also sometime members of the Western intelligence community'. It is a point not lost on William Wallace who notes the importance of the United States in pushing its 'West European clients towards political integration as it provided them with the means for national reconstruction'. In William Wallace, review, '*Inside the Foreign Office*. By John Dickie; *The European Rescue of the Nation-State*. By Alan S. Milward', *Times Literary Supplement*, 30 April 1993, p.25.

its mechanisms were almost entirely economic'.<sup>60</sup> Given that many former American politicians cleave to the 'missed opportunities' approach to British European policy, one can conclude from this that Federal Union's transnational connections have played a crucial role in setting the orthodox school in motion.

It must also be remembered, writes Sean Greenwood, that 'until the 1970s the British press tended to be pro-Community'.<sup>61</sup> There is an important link, finally, between the Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU) and the goals of Federal Union. It consistently advocated closer British involvement in the process of European integration and was, it appears, the first to coin the term 'missed chances' to describe the history of British European policy after the Second World War.<sup>62</sup> Take Christopher Layton, son of Lord Layton who was a Federal Union activist, Vice-President of the Consultative Assembly of the Council of Europe, 1949-57 and a former employee of the Economist.<sup>63</sup> In 1958 he was 'on the staff of the *Economist* after a spell at the Economist Intelligence Unit [and] was close to John Pinder [another who worked for the EIU] and other federalists in the EIU and had written in *World Affairs* about the blindness of Britain's negative policy towards European integration'.<sup>64</sup> Not

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<sup>60</sup> Milward, The Reconstruction of Western Europe, op. cit., p.5. See also Milward, The European Rescue, op. cit., p.348; Cromwell, The United States and the European Pillar, op. cit., p.1; Perkins, 'Unequal Partners', op. cit., pp.55-7. Aldrich's findings on the covert side could thus be said to reinforce the established finding that the Marshall Plan was overtly federalist. This approach is well explained in Michael J. Hogan, The Marshall Plan: America, Britain and the Reconstruction of Western Europe, 1947-1952 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), pp.26-53; Hogan, A Cross of Iron, op. cit., pp.2-3. See also Watt, 'Demythologising the Eisenhower Era', op. cit., pp.80-1; Camps, European Unification in the Sixties, op. cit., pp.236-57.

<sup>61</sup> Sean Greenwood, review, 'Britain for and Against Europe: British Politics and European Integration. Edited by D. Baker and D. Seawright', Journal of Common Market Studies, 36, 4 (1998), pp.603-4 (p.603).

<sup>62</sup> 'Britain and Europe's "Third Chance"', Economist, op. cit., p.633.

<sup>63</sup> Gladwyn, Memoirs, op. cit., p.142; Mayne and Pinder, Federal Union, op. cit., p.147.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, p.153.

only that, he was in the EIU 1953-4 and was the editorial writer on European affairs between 1954-62 and later, amongst other responsibilities, Chef du Cabinet to Altiero Spinelli.<sup>65</sup> This is the sort of personal connection that helps explain the permeability of historical writing by political and sociological connections. A shared outlook on events has sprung from a shared ideology on how to maintain peace in Europe and the world. Writing in 1990, Mayne and Pinder summed up this meeting of minds thus: Christopher Layton, Richard Mayne, John Pinder and Roy Pryce still remain members of the Council [of the Federal Trust]. They, in fact, have formed part of the core of the Trust's leadership for over a quarter of a century.<sup>66</sup> 'Higher' journalists such as Nora Beloff and Camps,<sup>67</sup> the latter praised by Mayne and Pinder as 'one of the shrewdest observers of Europe during this period,'<sup>68</sup> could also be included in this group, journalists who made strong attacks on British European policy in texts which sparked the historiography of Britain and Europe into life.<sup>69</sup>

Their hopes that Western Europe would take on a federalist structure after the Second World War meant, of course, little sympathy for a British policy which aimed, broadly, at an intergovernmental process of integration. Mayne and

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<sup>65</sup> Who's Who 2000, op. cit., p.1197. See also Christopher Layton, 'One Europe: One World: A First Exploration of Europe's Potential Contribution to World Order', Journal of World Trade Law, Special Supplement 4, 1986.

<sup>66</sup> Mayne and Pinder, Federal Union, op. cit., p.113.

<sup>67</sup> The term 'higher journalism' has been used by Hill to describe academic forays into media appearances, and might well apply to the academic-type studies penned by Barker, Beloff and Camps. See Hill, 'Academic International Relations', op. cit., p.6.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, p.143.

<sup>69</sup> Beloff, The General Says No, op. cit.; Camps, Britain and the European Community, op. cit. As Camps put it in a later text: 'the arguments for British membership in the Community seem to me, as a resident of that country, to be quite compelling'. This gives her work a similar campaigning dimension to that of the Economist. See Camps, European Unification in the Sixties, op. cit., preface, pp.6-7.

Pinder's volume is on the surface a history of the 'pioneers' of Federal Union. It is, additionally, interspersed with vitriolic sideswipes about the post-war elite in Britain, their shortsightedness and their crude negativity towards the continent. An apt summary comes in the form of Jo Josephy's concern that Britain 'would find herself perched precariously on the perimeter of a united Europe'.<sup>70</sup> Josephy, finds Pinder, was right: 'But it was to be some time before British governments were to learn that lesson- if indeed they have'.<sup>71</sup> It also contains a foreword by Roy Jenkins in which he berates Macmillan for only 'belatedly seeing the light' and Britain for not being 'wholeheartedly in Europe'.<sup>72</sup> The message is clear. Federalism was the 'right' solution for the post-war settlement because it would take national interests out of national hands. 'Non-believers' in Britain receive short shrift, particularly the political and bureaucratic elites, ably supported by what Milward terms 'snobbish' and 'elitist' educational establishments 'notable for the irrelevance of the knowledge they imparted to the task at hand'.<sup>73</sup>

Kaplan has warned that 'We do not know how intuitions are produced, although we can speculate about this'.<sup>74</sup> It is not that the orthodoxy on Britain and Europe stems *solely* from affiliation with Monnet or the Federal Union. For example, politicians such as Edmund Dell,<sup>75</sup> Macmillan, Boothby and

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<sup>70</sup> Josephy was a founding director of Federal Union in 1941.

<sup>71</sup> Mayne and Pinder, Federal Union, op. cit., p.94.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid., foreword, p.8.

<sup>73</sup> Milward, The European Rescue, op. cit., p.354 and p.431

<sup>74</sup> Kaplan, On Historical and Political Knowing, op. cit., pp.6-7.

<sup>75</sup> He was one of the British Labour Party members who rebelled against Party instructions in October 1971 and voted for UK membership of the EEC. See Alan S. Milward, review, *The Schuman Plan and the British Abdication of Leadership in Europe*. By Edmund Dell', Journal of European Integration History, 3, 2 (1997), pp.99-100 (p.99).

Maxwell Fyfe<sup>76</sup> have their own reasons for criticising British European policy, but have joined the Monnetists to level similar criticisms about the myopia of British European policy. Another poignant example in this context is de Gaulle, who was profoundly suspicious of British policy, but who would hardly be termed a Monnetist.<sup>77</sup> What further clouds the debate is that one occasionally discovers self-styled 'sceptics' such as Nicholas Ridley,<sup>78</sup> addressing the Federal Trust in 1969 on the merits of approaching federalism 'through the front door, not the back door'.<sup>79</sup> The many contradictory ways in which 'Europeanism' has been defined in Britain appears to have contributed to the different communities of writers who have voiced the missed opportunities approach to British European policy.<sup>80</sup> However, they have contributed to rather than led the orthodoxy which was originally fired by the federal approach to European integration. The social construction of history is therefore the crucial starting point for any exploration of what drives the historiographical process.

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<sup>76</sup> Their agendas are personal rather than political. They develop their disenchantment in the context of the European question, despite not being of Monnetist outlook. See Macmillan, *Tides of Fortune*, op. cit.; Macmillan, *Pointing the Way*, op. cit.; Boothby, *My Yesterday*, op. cit.; Kilmuir, *Political Adventure*, op. cit.

<sup>77</sup> De Gaulle, *Memoirs of Hope*, op. cit.

<sup>78</sup> Famous for comparing giving up sovereignty to the EEC with giving up sovereignty to Hitler. See Pilkington, *Britain in the European Union*, op. cit., p.99.

<sup>79</sup> Mayne and Pinder, *Federal Union*, op. cit., p.187. On p.165 they observe that Max Beloff gave a lecture at the 1961 Easter Seminar of the Cambridge Federal Union group. It is interesting that he later contributed an article in 1996 to Martin Holmes' edited volume, *The Eurosceptical Reader* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1996). The concluding chapter in this thesis returns to the interesting issues raised by the rise of 'Eurosceptic' scholarship in Britain.

<sup>80</sup> What is interesting, Thomas Barman notes, is that Barker argues 'The real charge against Britain was not "un-Europeaness" so much as a mistaken belief that a skilful diplomacy could be an efficient substitute for solid military alliances or for forward-looking economic policies'. For the Monnetists Britain was 'un-European' precisely because these were integral parts of their European project, highlighting Barker's muddled thinking on the subject. See Thomas Barman, review, *Britain in a Divided Europe 1945-1970*. By Elisabeth Barker', *International Affairs*, 48, 1 (1992), pp.105-6 (p.106).

### 3. Underlying Assumptions of the Orthodox School

The definition of 'method' employed in this thesis is founded on Stoker's definition. He takes it as a 'particular way of producing knowledge', raising questions of philosophical concern, notably how can we know the social world? What counts as an adequate explanation of social phenomenon?<sup>81</sup> This study has refined this definition to give writers' 'method' two dimensions: documentary, the sources they consult, and personal, the host of lower level individual influences at work on writers: bias, prejudice, oversights and sociological contacts.

In this revised context, method involves the process of research *and* the narrativisation of findings into historical texts. Entering the complexities of the human mind raises all sorts of difficult questions about how we know what we do and philological concerns about how we convey that knowledge to others. The secondary argument of this thesis is that, despite the inherent individuality of historical narratives there are general patterns across them that enable them to be grouped into schools according to the interpretation placed on events in British European policy. It is now necessary to look beyond the social construction of the orthodox school, to the underlying assumptions its writers hold about the British foreign policy process.

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<sup>81</sup> Stoker, 'Introduction', op. cit., p.13.



- **Structural Explanations of the Making of Foreign Policy**

The emphasis in orthodox historiography on Britain's standing in the world stems in part from political rhetoric on Europe since 1945. Hans Morgenthau observed that statesmen 'make a habit of presenting their foreign policies in terms of their philosophic and political sympathies in order to gain support for them'.<sup>82</sup> Politicians after 1945 hid behind the national interest as a way of explaining away London's reluctance to absorb itself in continental integration. Britain, they claimed, was 'victorious' in the Second World War. It had neither been occupied nor economically ravaged and still gained economic and political prestige and economic benefits from the Commonwealth. Allied with London's close relationship with Washington, the national interest was apparently best served by remaining aloof from far-fetched European schemes for integration with 'clubs of losers' on the continent.<sup>83</sup>

John Cockcroft defines this stance as follows: "A thousand years of history" and the fact that it was the apparent winner of the 1939-45 war, made Britain more nationalistic, more conscious of its ostensible sovereignty, than any other European nation'.<sup>84</sup> Denis Healey's 1949 observation that 'The European Movement is likely to disappear or disintegrate in the near future' was, it

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<sup>82</sup> Quoted in *ibid.*; Realism as a feature of the historiography is also discussed in Shlaim, 'The Foreign Secretary and the Making of Policy', *op. cit.*, p.13.

<sup>83</sup> A term used to denote how the British elite commonly saw the continent in Michael Gehler, review, 'Interdependence Versus Integration...By Thorsten B. Olesen', Journal of European Integration History, *op. cit.*, p.102.

<sup>84</sup> John Cockcroft, review, 'From Reconstruction to Integration: Britain and Europe Since 1945. Edited by Brian Brivati and Harriet Jones', Contemporary Record, 9, 1 (1995), pp.265-8 (p.267).

seems, a widely held opinion in the corridors of Whitehall.<sup>85</sup> Thus, Brewin notes, both Socialist and Conservative leaders before the 1960s were as one in making sure that British fortunes were not dependent on what they thought was a poverty-stricken and internally unstable Europe'.<sup>86</sup> This has been summed up by Perry Anderson thus: 'for fifteen years after the war British policy towards European integration was essentially settled by rulers who put calculations- or rather miscalculations- of political power and prestige before estimates of economic performance'.<sup>87</sup>

This emphasis in political thinking and informed debate on 'power and balance',<sup>88</sup> meant, David Sanders argues, that realism 'represents the [theory] that has been used most frequently by mainstream analysts of postwar British foreign policy'.<sup>89</sup> Hill also points out the dominance of realism in the study of International Relations in the post-1945 era. 'After the Second World War', he argues, 'the return to the balance of power between the major powers was reflected in the universities in the dominance of realism'.<sup>90</sup> Most orthodox studies were penned before the end of the 1980s, when, Deighton observes, the shadow of the Cold War 'lay across every significant area of international

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<sup>85</sup> Quoted from his speech at the Baarn Conference, May 1949, in Aldrich, 'European Integration', op. cit., p.168.

<sup>86</sup> Brewin, review, 'The United States of Europe. By Ernest Wistrich', *Journal of Common Market Studies*, op. cit., p.301.

<sup>87</sup> Perry Anderson, review, 'Under the Sign of the Interim: *The European Rescue of the Nation-State*. By Alan Milward; *The Frontier of National Sovereignty: History and Theory 1945-1992*. By Alan Milward; *Jean Monnet: The First Statesman of Interdependence*. By François Duchène', *London Review of Books*, 18, 1 (1996), pp.13-7 (p.16).

<sup>88</sup> Deighton, 'The Cold War in Europe', op. cit., p.89.

<sup>89</sup> Sanders, *Losing an Empire*, op. cit., p.13. Published in 1990 he was writing before revisionism became the vogue.

<sup>90</sup> Hill, 'Academic International Relations', op. cit., p.6.

politics'.<sup>91</sup> It was unsurprising that approaches to European policy were so intertwined with 'structural' or 'functional' explanations of causation in which 'outcomes are explained, not in terms of the motivations and intentions of the actors involved, but in terms of the consequences of their effects'.<sup>92</sup> 'Realists and neorealists', Deighton continues, 'are not primarily concerned with causality and process, but concentrate on interests and outcomes and their relationship to the structure of the international system'.<sup>93</sup>

Politics is, after all, about the control, distribution and manipulation of power at all levels of human interaction. Orthodox historiography reflects the Cold War environment in which European policy was developed and implemented. In many political and official recollections, the Cold War and strategic defence matters take clear precedence over consideration of the European question. 'RAB' Butler's declaration that he was 'bored' with European integration, and that Eden was 'even more bored than I was', is a telling insight into the widespread apathy towards the European question in Whitehall in the 1950s.<sup>94</sup> This is reflected in the lack of sustained attention to the European question in many memoirs, or only sporadic attention compared to the discussion of Cold

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<sup>91</sup> Deighton, 'The Cold War in Europe', op. cit., p.89. See also Tickner, Gender in International Relations, op. cit., pp.10-2.

<sup>92</sup> Colin Hay, 'Structure and Agency', in Marsh and Stoker (eds.), Theory and Methods, op. cit., pp.189-206 (p.194).

<sup>93</sup> Deighton, 'The Cold War in Europe', op. cit., p.81. See also p.89. For more on the realist approach to International Relations see Bruce Russett and Harvey Starr, World Politics: The Menu for Choice, 4<sup>th</sup> edn (New York: W. H. Freeman, 1992), p.187; McGrew, 'Security and Order', op. cit., p.99. The prevalence of realist theory is shown by Mearsheimer who claimed in 1990 that 'factors of military power have been most important in shaping past events, and will remain central in the future'. Mearsheimer, 'Back to the Future', op. cit., p.11.

<sup>94</sup> He was Chancellor of the Exchequer between October 1951 and December 1955, a crucial period in the relationship with Britain and the continent. Quoted in Charlton, The Price of Victory, op. cit., p.195.

War politics.<sup>95</sup> It is as if aloofness from Europe was predetermined geographically, a policy decision-makers could have done little to alter.<sup>96</sup>

Orthodox interpretations of European policy during the 1945-51 Attlee governments are a good example of the way in which the orthodox understanding of European policy has been dominated by structural approaches to Cold War politics. John Baylis published two seminal articles on Britain and the formation of NATO in 1982 and 1984.<sup>97</sup> Perhaps not coincidentally at the height of the Reagan-Thatcher offensive against the Soviet Union, he was not the first to search for reasons behind what Kenneth Morgan calls 'the majesty of [Bevin's] overall grand design': entangling America in the defence of Western Europe.<sup>98</sup> British European policy, Baylis argued, was guided by Bevin's vision and foresight in showing Europe's willingness to share the burden of defence costs in creating the Dunkirk and Brussels Pacts in 1947-8. His studies were representative of the major trends in orthodox, or 'consensus' accounts of British European policy explored in this chapter.<sup>99</sup> First, it took Europe as a pawn on the chessboard of Cold War politics. As David Calleo and Benjamin Rowlands have pointed out most succinctly: 'Popular memory

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<sup>95</sup> Eden, *Full Circle*, op. cit., devotes little attention to European integration, the Messina conference receiving only one page (p.337) amidst discussion of his visit to Washington in February 1956. Butler fails to mention Europe at all in Lord Butler, *The Art of the Possible: The Memoirs of Lord Butler* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1973).

<sup>96</sup> Hill provides a succinct summary of this position in 'The Historical Background', op. cit., p.28.

<sup>97</sup> John Baylis, 'Britain and the Dunkirk Treaty: The Origins of NATO', in *Journal of Strategic Studies*, 5, 2 (1982), pp.236-47; John Baylis, 'Britain, the Brussels Pact and the Continental Commitment', *International Affairs*, 60, 4 (1984), pp.615-29.

<sup>98</sup> Kenneth O. Morgan, review, 'Ernest Bevin'. By Alan Bullock; *The Diary of Hugh Gaitskell 1945-1960*. Edited by Philip Williams; *Breach of Promise*. By John Vaizey', *Times Literary Supplement*, 11 November 1983, pp.1243-4 (p.1244).

<sup>99</sup> The label 'consensus' for the orthodoxy on Bevin was first coined by critics of the Baylis approach. See John Kent and John Young, 'British Policy Overseas', op. cit., p.41.

dwells upon the Cold War'.<sup>100</sup> Bevin was seen to be acting as any defender of the British national interest would have. The 'consensus' view which Baylis put forward was fulsome in its praise for a policy that helped save Western civilisation from the Communist menace.<sup>101</sup> Second, Baylis' account reflected the political gloss retrospectively put on British policy by Bevin's supporters, showing how political rhetoric feeds orthodox interpretations of contemporary British history.<sup>102</sup> Third, a tendency to explain history by looking back, drawing conclusions about earlier policy from later events and the concerns of the present. The motivating question of such studies is apparently: what role have Britain and NATO played in the Cold War? Using hindsight the answer is relatively clear. At the time, however, and this was where revisionists have made their most potent challenge, the transition from the Dunkirk and Brussels Pacts to NATO was not nearly so smooth, or even envisaged at all by Bevin in 1947-8.<sup>103</sup>

It is an oversimplification to argue that orthodox writers have no interest at all in the process of policy-making. This can be explained by the prominence of

<sup>100</sup> Quoted in Bradford Perkins, 'Unequal Partners: The Truman Administration and Great Britain', in Louis and Bull (eds.), The Special Relationship, op. cit., pp.43-64 (p.51).

<sup>101</sup> Eden, Full Circle, op. cit., p.5; Macmillan, Tides of Fortune, op. cit., pp.132-3. See also Sidney Aster, Anthony Eden (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1976), pp.90-1; Kirkpatrick, The Inner Circle, op. cit., p.205; Anthony Montague Browne, Long Sunset: Memoirs of Winston Churchill's Last Private Secretary (London: Indigo, 1996), p.79; Nutting, Europe Will Not Wait, op. cit., p.21 and p.125; William Rees-Mogg, Sir Anthony Eden (London: Rockliff, 1956), p.99; Robert Rhodes James (ed.), Chips: The Diaries of Sir Henry Channon (London: Penguin, 1970), entry for 20 August, 1945, the occasion of Bevin's first major speech as Foreign Secretary, p.502; Montgomery of Alamein, Memoirs (London: Collins, 1958), p.511; Williams, Ernest Bevin, op. cit., pp.266-7; Harold Wilson, Memoirs: The Making of a Prime Minister 1916-64 (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, Michael Joseph, 1986).

<sup>102</sup> Miriam Camps, 'Missing the Boat at Messina and Other Times?', in Brian Brivati and Harriet Jones (eds.), From Reconstruction to Integration: Britain and Europe Since 1945 (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1993), pp.134-43 (p.134).

<sup>103</sup> It is only with the benefit of hindsight that, they argue, one can link the three in a neat success story.

key Foreign Office officials in the period concerned. What many take as the seminal text on Britain and Europe, Camps' *Britain and the European Community* was, she later admitted, 'read in draft by three officials- Sir Frank Lee, Russell Bretherton and Sir Frank Figgures', as well as by Richard Mayne, another prominent orthodox writer.<sup>104</sup> Naturally when such contact is a part of one's daily routine as a journalist, and when one operates in the same ideological prism as those individuals, these will have a considerable influence on the final record of events one narrates as history. Writers' connections, in this case the intimate links between journalists, academics and key officials, has thus had a bearing on lower levels of explanation creeping into orthodox historiography.

Orthodox histories are, however, texturally different from revisionist accounts which, it will be shown in the next chapter, analyse foreign policy-making in a multipolar international system. This implies uncertainty, interdependence and greater exploration of the roles of individuals and bureaucratic wrangling in the formation of policy. While not lacking entirely from orthodox works, this dimension has been assigned a priori importance by revisionists whose research findings bear the signs of post-Cold War uncertainty and primary source input.

## • Definition of 'British Foreign Policy'

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<sup>104</sup> Miriam Camps, 'Missing the Boat at Messina and Other Times?', in Brian Brivati and Harriet Jones (eds.), *From Reconstruction to Integration: Britain and Europe Since 1945* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1993), pp.134-43 (p.134). Camps served during the war in the US State Department, before moving into the journalistic and academic fields. See Brivati and Jones, *From Reconstruction to Integration*, op. cit., p.7, list of contributors.

One of Ranke's methodological prescriptions was, Iggers notes, that 'human actions mirror the intentions of the actors and that it is the task of the historian to comprehend these intentions in order to construct a coherent historical story'.<sup>105</sup> The second distinguishing feature of orthodox historiography is that it takes British foreign policy as a direct function of what British ministers and officials willed it to be, echoing Barber's 'formal office holder perspective on foreign policy-making'.<sup>106</sup> The underlying assumption is that blame for Britain's 'missed opportunities' in Europe can be placed on the key policy-makers who were myopic towards the continent, clinging to outdated notions of great power status and grandeur, spurning a regional role for Britain. For revisionists, by contrast, the link between intentions and outcomes is not nearly so neatly captured, the process of policy-making fitting Barber's 'departmental negotiated order perspective'.<sup>107</sup> But there is even more to it. In an interdependent international system, revisionists argue, British intentions often foundered on the rocks not of London's own making but, very often, of others. This facet of revisionism will be elucidated in the next chapter but it is crucial to recognise the dichotomy between the orthodox emphasis on intentionality and the revisionist stress on uncertainty in the foreign policy arena, where things do not always go according to plan.

This assumption shows itself in orthodox interpretations of British European policy in two ways. First, it emerges in studies that explain foreign policy in

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<sup>105</sup> Iggers, *Historiography*, op. cit., p.3.

<sup>106</sup> Barber, *Who Makes British Foreign Policy?*, op. cit., p.7.

<sup>107</sup> *Ibid.*, p.34.

terms of a co-ordinated Whitehall structure. Orthodox accounts focus mainly on the Prime Minister and Foreign Secretary as the originators of foreign policy, with civil servants and the Foreign Office occasionally involved, but usually in rather vague and ill-defined ways. The responsibility for British policy failure, the orthodoxy has it, lays with the top executive. Bevin, for example, is taken by orthodox writers as 'the Emperor' in foreign policy matters.<sup>108</sup> Anthony Eden and the Foreign Office are commonly said to have overridden Churchill's 'Europeanism' in the period 1951-5.<sup>109</sup> The common thread running through all these approaches to foreign policy making is that responsibility lay in the upper echelons of a coherent, highly organised Whitehall decision-making structure. Put succinctly: 'British federalists faced real difficulties, given the post-war mood of key civil servants and politicians'.<sup>110</sup>

There are other explanations for the focus on the top executive as the originators of policy. It is on one hand hagiographically appealing to stress the domination of foreign policy by one or two individuals as a way of praising their achievements. Orthodox historiography of Bevin and Heath both exhibit this orthodox trait, stressing a single-minded foreign policy, albeit with different aims. Bevin is praised for his role in entangling America in the

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<sup>108</sup> Kirkpatrick, *The Inner Circle*, op. cit., p.202.

<sup>109</sup> This is an argument made by orthodox writers and revisionists. See Horne, *Macmillan Vol.1*, op. cit., p.349; Kilmuir, *Political Adventure*, op. cit., p.189; Macmillan, *Riding the Storm*, op. cit., p.65; Maudling, *Memoirs*, op. cit., p.63; Montague Browne, *Long Sunset*, op. cit., pp.122-31; Charlton, *The Price of Victory*, op. cit., p.129; Gilmour and Garnett, *Whatever Happened to the Tories*, op. cit., pp.66-8. On the revisionist side see Richard Lamb, *The Macmillan Years 1957-63: The Emerging Truth* (London: John Murray, 1995), p.104; Seldon, *Churchill's Indian Summer*, op. cit., p.38; Ramsden, *The Age of Churchill and Eden*, op. cit., p.260.

<sup>110</sup> Mayne and Pinder, *Federal Union*, op. cit., p.95.



defence of Western Europe;<sup>111</sup> Heath for pursuing EEC entry with unswerving determination, his one 'success story' in an otherwise calamitous premiership.<sup>112</sup> On the other there is the orthodox tradition of criticising leading policy-makers for dominating and manipulating the policy process to such an extent that the voices of ministers lukewarm to the process of European integration went unheard in Cabinet. This trend began, it seems, with Macmillan, Maxwell Fyfe and Boothby's criticisms of Eden.<sup>113</sup> It was continued by the Labour diarists under Wilson and has come to form the backbone of the view that Cabinet government over the European question withered away during the 1960s.<sup>114</sup> Accusations about 'inner cabinets' and

<sup>111</sup> In addition to Kirkpatrick on Bevin see Elisabeth Barker, The British Between the Superpowers 1945-50 (London and Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1983), p.43; Bullock, Ernest Bevin, op. cit.; Michael Foot, Aneurin Bevan 1897-1960 (London: Indigo, 1999), pp.238-428; Frankel, British Foreign Policy, op. cit., pp.185-6; Roberts, 'Ernest Bevin as Foreign Secretary', op. cit.

<sup>112</sup> Arthur Aughey, review, 'The Heath Government, 1970-74. Edited by Stuart Ball and Anthony Seldon', Contemporary British History, 10, 4 (1996), pp.162-4 (p.162). See for example Campbell, Edward Heath, op. cit., pp.74-86; Heath, The Course of My Life, op. cit., p.356; George Hutchinson, Edward Heath: A Personal and Political Biography (London: Longman, 1970), p.90; Margaret Laing, Edward Heath: Prime Minister (London: Sidgwick and Jackson, 1972), pp.124-47; John Ramsden, The Winds of Change: Macmillan to Heath 1957-1975 (London: Longman, 1996), p.337; Anthony Seldon, 'The Heath Government in History', in Stuart Ball and Anthony Seldon (eds.), The Heath Government 1970-74: A Reappraisal (London: Longman, 1996), pp.1-19; Sainsbury, 'Lord Home', in Shlaim, Jones and Sainsbury (eds.), British Foreign Secretaries, op. cit., pp.144-73 (p.159, pp.167-8).

<sup>113</sup> Boothby, My Yesterday, op. cit., pp.83-4; Kilmuir, Political Adventure, op. cit., p.186-7; Macmillan, Tides of Fortune, op. cit., pp.410-413. In his biography Nigel Fisher - a self-confessed admirer - is happy to swallow Macmillan's account. See Nigel Fisher, Harold Macmillan (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1982), p.307. See also Sked and Cook, Post-War Britain, op. cit., p.112; Nutting, Europe Will Not Wait, op. cit., p.40; Barber, Who Makes British Foreign Policy?, op. cit., p.47; Gilmour and Garnett use Maxwell Fyfe and Nutting's accounts in their criticism of Eden in Whatever Happened to the Tories, op. cit., pp.67-8.

<sup>114</sup> Particularly pertinent accusations on the manipulation of the European policy agenda arise over the Prime Minister's power of patronage. Writers of all schools debate the significance to European policy of the Cabinet reshuffles of July 1960 and August 1966, coming to conflicting conclusions. On Macmillan's reshuffle see Richard Aldous, '"A Family Affair": Macmillan and the Art of Personal Diplomacy', in Richard Aldous and Sabine Lee (eds.), Harold Macmillan and Britain's World Role (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1996), pp.9-35 (p.15); Barber, Who Makes British Foreign Policy?, op. cit., p.16; Barker, Britain in a Divided Europe, op. cit., p.170; John Barnes, 'From Eden to Macmillan, 1955-1959', in Hennessy and Seldon (eds.), Ruling Performance, pp.98-149 (p.109); Beloff, Britain and the European Union, op. cit., p.60; Beloff, The General Says No, op. cit., p.97; Campbell, Edward Heath, op. cit., p.114; Camps, Britain and the European Community, op. cit., p.314; Charlton, 'How (and Why) Britain Lost the Leadership of Europe (3): The Channel Crossing', Encounter, 57, 3 (1981), pp.22-33 (p.29);

'kitchen cabinets' become increasingly common from opponents of entry after 1964. Jay is, moreover, convinced that Wilson ignored and suppressed his 'sceptical' views on the EEC.<sup>115</sup> European policy, remarked Barbara Castle at the time, was 'ruthlessly stage-managed'.<sup>116</sup> To the apologies of ministers lamenting that Britain was too distant from Europe, therefore, one also discovers a line of 'sceptic' retirees arguing that European policy was regularly left off the Cabinet agenda.

The combination of hagiography and odium that fires orthodox accounts are stark reminders of the multiple and conflicting reasons why historical accounts

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Anne Deighton, 'La Grande-Bretagne et la Communauté Economique Européenne (1958-1963)', *Histoire, Economie et Société*, 1 (1994), pp.113-30 (p.123); David Dutton, 'Anticipating Maastricht: The Conservative Party and Britain's First Application to Join the European Community', *Contemporary Record*, 7, 3 (1993), pp.522-40 (p.526); George, *An Awkward Partner*, op. cit., p.30 Kaiser, *Using Europe*, op. cit., p.136; Michael Pinto-Duschinsky, 'From Macmillan to Home, 1959-1964', in Hennessy and Seldon (eds.), *Ruling Performance*, pp.150-85 (p.159); Ramsden, *The Winds of Change*, op. cit., p.24; David Reynolds, *Britannia Overruled: British Policy and World Power in the Twentieth Century* (London: Longman, 1991), p.219; Anthony Sampson, *Macmillan: A Study in Ambiguity* (London: Allen Lane/Penguin, 1967), p.216. Kristian Steinnes, 'The European Challenge: Britain's EEC Application in 1961' *Contemporary European History*, 7, 1 (1998), pp.61-79 (p.65); Young, *Britain and European Unity*, op. cit., p.72; Hugo Young, *This Blessed Plot: Britain and Europe from Churchill to Blair* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1998), pp.119-24. On Wilson's reshuffle see Castle, *The Castle Diaries*, op. cit., p.105 (6 January 1967); James Callaghan, *Time and Chance* (London: Collins, 1987), pp.184-5; Jay, *Change and Fortune*, op. cit., pp.363-4; Benn, *The Benn Diaries*, op. cit., p.265 (23 September 1966); Howard, insert in *The Crossman Diaries*, op. cit., p.196; Peter Jones, 'George Brown', in Shlaim, Jones and Sainsbury (eds.), *British Foreign Secretaries*, op. cit., pp.205-20 (p.205); Morgan, *Harold Wilson*, op. cit., p.291; Ben Pimlott, *Harold Wilson* (London: HarperCollins, 1992), pp.435-7; Uwe Kitzinger, *The Second Try: Labour and the EEC* (London: Pergamon, 1968), p.13; Marcia Williams, *Inside Number Ten* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1972), pp.130-1; Sked and Cook, *Post-War Britain*, op. cit., pp.222-3. See also Nigel Bowles, 'Harold Wilson. By Ben Pimlott', *International Affairs*, 69, 3 (1993), pp.586-7 (p.586); John Grigg, review, 'Policies of Impotence', *International Affairs*, 48, 1 (1972), pp.72-6 (p.74). Wilson alludes to a further reshuffle in January 1967, but little mention of it has since been made. See Wilson *The Labour Government*, op. cit., p.326.

<sup>115</sup> Douglas Jay, *Change and Fortune: A Political Record* (London: Hutchinson, 1980), pp.373-84; Clive Ponting, *Breach of Promise: Labour in Power 1964-1970* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1989), p.210, p.35; Richard Crossman, *The Crossman Diaries: Selections from the Diaries of a Cabinet Minister 1964-1970*, ed. Anthony Howard (London: Book Club, 1979), p.349 (2 May 1967).

<sup>116</sup> Barbara Castle, *The Castle Diaries 1964-1976* (London: Papermac, 1990), p.125 (27 April 1966).

are written. Highlighting the dominance over the foreign policy process by top ministers is used either to praise them or, commonly in the historiography of Britain and Europe, to blame them for policy failures. There is also the argument, espoused by Crossman and Healey, that they let Wilson pursue entry because they knew it would crash on the rocks of de Gaulle's hostility to Britain.<sup>117</sup> In this context, hindsight has also been used by politicians to show publicly how they were justified in the long-run, supporting the oft-made criticism of autobiographies, memoirs and diaries that they constitute poor historical records.<sup>118</sup>

Orthodox historiography also emphasises the political over economic inputs to foreign policy. Where, in all the discussion of Prime Ministerial and Foreign Secretarial intent, is the view from the Treasury, Board of Trade and the Bank of England and from business organisations? Frankel provides part of the answer in his comment that 'The last war was an all-out national effort in which security completely overrode economic considerations; security continued to overshadow them during the early period of the cold war and they gradually shifted to the foreground of British foreign policy only in the 1960s'.<sup>119</sup> This quote serves as a reminder that orthodox historiography was written in a period when the threat of war and the need for security were the dominating characteristics of the international system. Economic

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<sup>117</sup> Crossman, The Crossman Diaries, op. cit., p.349 (2 May 1967); Denis Healey, The Time of My Life (London: W. W. Norton, 1990), pp.329-30.

<sup>118</sup> John Barnes, 'Books and Journals', in Seldon (ed.), Contemporary History, op. cit., pp.30-54 (pp.34-40).

<sup>119</sup> Frankel, British Foreign Policy, op. cit., p.255.

considerations were, it seems, simply less important to the politicians and historians of the time.

The other part of the explanation lies in the divorce between economics and politics at policy-making level, pointed out by William Wallace: 'The separation of foreign economic policy from the traditional concerns of foreign policy has been deeply embedded in British policy and practice'.<sup>120</sup> For practitioners and historians of this epoch the reality was of a decision-making process in which, as Beloff observed, the Treasury and Foreign Office *were* rivals. Back as far as the 1930s, he argued, the Treasury was of the view 'that economic affairs were its concern alone and that the Foreign Office should be confined to the more traditional spheres of diplomacy'.<sup>121</sup> This has been supported by historians of the constitutional role of the Treasury in the foreign policy process. George Peden, for example, notes that former members of other key Whitehall departments, especially the Foreign Office, have tended to emphasise the Treasury's 'meanness'. The image this generates reinforces Beloff's focus on the rivalry between the economic and political branches of government.<sup>122</sup>

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<sup>120</sup> William Wallace, The Foreign Policy Process in Britain, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn. (London: The Royal Institute of International Affairs, 1977), p.156. See also Beloff, New Dimensions in Foreign Policy, op. cit., pp.23-4; Adamthwaite, Introduction', op. cit., p.17.

<sup>121</sup> Quoted in *ibid.*, p.170. See also Clarke, 'The Policy-Making Process', op. cit., p.87.

<sup>122</sup> G. C. Peden, British Rearmament and the Treasury: 1932-1939 (Edinburgh: Scottish Academic Press, 1979). He continues the theme of the practical and academic separation of economics from other spheres of government activity in George C. Peden, British Economic and Social Policy: Lloyd George to Margaret Thatcher, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn. (London: Phillip Allen, 1985).

A good example of the separation of economics from politics is to be found in the historiography of the devaluation of sterling in September 1949. There are many political and official accounts of the British economy and economic policy-making which refer to the economic causes and consequences of devaluation, without mentioning the foreign policy consequences.<sup>123</sup> It was a position reaffirmed at a 1991 Witness Seminar on devaluation, when Edwin Plowden<sup>124</sup> was tackled on the political waves he thought devaluation might make abroad. 'To be honest', he admitted bluntly, 'I don't think they played much part'.<sup>125</sup> Only in 1984 did the foreign policy significance of the devaluation receive attention in the pioneering research of Scott Newton.<sup>126</sup> Comparing the approaches to devaluation of the two schools supports the observation made through this study, that they are asking different questions of

<sup>123</sup> On the key players in the 1949 crisis see Brian Brivati, Hugh Gaitskell (London: Richard Cohen, 1997), pp.84-6; Chris Bryant, Stafford Cripps: The First Modern Chancellor (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1997), pp.424-34; Bullock, Ernest Bevin, op. cit., pp.704-66; Alec Cairncross and Barry Eichengreen, Sterling in Decline: The Devaluations of 1931, 1949 and 1967 (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1983), pp.129-52; Alec Cairncross (ed.), The Robert Hall Diaries 1947-53 (London: Unwin Hyman, 1989), pp.1-99; Dell, The Schuman Plan, op. cit., p.34; Bernard Donoghue and G. W. Jones, Herbert Morrison: Portrait of a Politician (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1973), pp.446-7; Foot, Aneurin Bevan, op. cit., pp.269-77; Harris, Attlee, op. cit., pp.434-6; Jay, Change and Fortune, op. cit., pp.185-91; Pimlott (ed.), The Political Diary of Hugh Dalton, op. cit., pp.450-7; Sidney Pollard, The Development of the British Economy, 1914-1990, 4<sup>th</sup> edn (London: Arnold, 1992), pp.197-9; Philip M. Williams, Hugh Gaitskell: A Political Biography (London: Jonathan Cape, 1979), pp.195-203. Secondary studies that allude to devaluation include Barker, The British Between the Superpowers, op. cit., pp.156-60; Gilmour and Garnett, Whatever Happened to the Tories, op. cit., p.29; Morgan, Labour People, op. cit., pp.171-2; Morgan, The People's Peace, op. cit., pp.73-4; Northedge, British Foreign Policy, op. cit., p.40; Sked and Cook, Post-War Britain, op. cit., pp.36-7. Chief Planning Officer and Chairman of the Treasury's Economic Planning Board, 1947-53.

<sup>124</sup> Chief Planning Officer and Chairman of the Treasury's Economic Planning Board, 1947-53.

<sup>125</sup> Peter Hennessy, 'Witness Seminar: 1949 Devaluation', Contemporary Record, 5, 3 (1991), pp.483-506 (p.502). See also Pimlott (ed.), The Political Diary of Hugh Dalton, op. cit., pp.450-7.

<sup>126</sup> C. C. S. Newton, 'The Sterling Crisis of 1947 and the British Response to the Marshall Plan', Economic History Review, 37, 3 (1984), pp.391-408; Scott Newton, 'The 1949 Sterling Crisis and British Policy Towards European Integration', Review of International Studies, 11 (1985), pp.169-82; Scott Newton, 'Britain, the Sterling Area and European Integration, 1945-50', Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History, 13 (1985), pp.169-82.

history. Practitioners are concerned to elaborate on their involvement with particular events, not reflect on the implications of their actions. Scholars, by contrast, are concerned with the machinery, with gaining a full account of the policy process and collating that data into a coherent story. This, they argue, must take account of the economic influences on foreign policy. This stance is explained by Roger Tooze as follows: 'Interdependence as it has developed in the post-war system makes the policy and conceptual distinction between "foreign" and "domestic" and between "political" and "economic" largely redundant, mainly because of the interpenetration of national economies and the centrality of economic and welfare goals to the continued legitimacy of contemporary governments'.<sup>127</sup> Comparing the weight attached by Tooze to the economic determinants of foreign policy with Frankel's assertion above, one can discern the sea-change in academic approaches to the study of British foreign policy which have influenced historians in the 1980s.

Having said that, when politicians and officials were forced to confront the political implications of economic crises such as devaluation, orthodox historians of Britain and Europe also paid them attention. This is evidence that key lines of historical inquiry are stimulated by live political debate about events. Sanders summarises the confluence of economics and politics in explaining Macmillan's entry bid by arguing that: 'At the decision-making level, the crucial factor was the apparent benefit which it was believed EEC membership would bestow on the British economy; at the structural level, the

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<sup>127</sup> Roger Tooze, 'Security and Order: The Economic Dimension', in Smith, Smith and White (eds.), *British Foreign Policy*, op. cit., pp.124-45 (p.132).

major causal influence was the autonomous shift in the pattern of Britain's external trade- away from the Empire and towards the Commonwealth'.<sup>128</sup>

Wilson's bid has also been explained with strong reference to economic factors, notably the poor economic performance of EFTA compared to the EEC, a favourite theme of the *Economist* from 1964 which was still campaigning for membership.<sup>129</sup> The pertinence of economics in the Wilson era was heightened by the emphasis he placed on science and technology as part of his reasons for wishing to join the Community. In line with the orthodox inquisition of the 'European' credentials of leading policy-makers some have taken the line set down by Heath who, via Campbell's biography, repeated his slur that it 'was right to be sceptical of Wilson's technological jargon, which was quite as superficial as [Heath] alleged. Wilson was thoroughly conservative in his personal tastes and habits and a devout Little Englander at heart'.<sup>130</sup> Also unconvinced about the veracity of his commitment

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<sup>128</sup> Sanders, *Losing an Empire*, op. cit., p.136. He thus identifies the two main reasons given in the historiography for joining: findings on the 'stop-go' cycle of the British economy and, looking to the future, reports on the economic threat from continuing exclusion from Europe. See Beloff, *The General Says No*, op. cit., pp.90-136; Camps, *Britain and the European Community*, op. cit., p.231; Beloff, *Britain and the European Union*, op. cit., p.63; Frankel, *British Foreign Policy*, op. cit., p.224; Northedge, *British Foreign Policy*, op. cit., p.304; Jay, *Change and Fortune*, op. cit., pp.425-7; Kilmuir, *Political Adventure*, op. cit., pp.319-20; Sked and Cook, *Post-War Britain*, op. cit., p.169.

<sup>129</sup> 'The Compass Swings Back to Europe', *Economist*, 20 February 1965, pp.745-7 (p.745). See also 'The Door Ahead', *Economist*, 24 October 1964, p.334; 'Business: Britain', *Economist*, 27 March 1965, p.410; 'Two-Span Stuff', *Economist*, 7 August 1965, p.510; 'Frost Over Europe', *Economist*, 30 October 1965, pp.473-4; 'Go For Europe', *Economist*, 5 February 1966, pp.487-8; 'A Europe to Live With', *Economist*, 30 July 1966, pp.419-20. 'Whose Trade is Hit?', *Economist*, 31 October 1964, p.571. See also T. Clive Archer, 'Britain and Scandinavia: Their Relations Within EFTA, 1960-1968', *Co-operation and Conflict*, 11 (1976), pp.1-23 (p.1); Pimlott, *Harold Wilson*, op. cit., pp.434-5; Philip Ziegler, *Wilson: The Authorised Life of Lord Wilson of Rievaulx* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1993), p.240; Denman, *Missed Chances*, op. cit., p.227; Frankel, *British Foreign Policy*, op. cit., pp.225-6; Sked and Cook, *Post-War Britain*, op. cit., p.235.

<sup>130</sup> Campbell, *Edward Heath*, op. cit., p.163.

to 'the white heat of revolution' was Barker, who argued that 'Wilson's enthusiasm for European technical co-operation was counter-balanced by British refusal to carry through joint projects which were proving over-costly or unlikely to give worthwhile results'.<sup>131</sup> Grosser made the more telling observation that although Wilson 'suddenly declared that Great Britain was on its way to becoming the industrial helot of the United States' he never rejected a single investment application from across the Atlantic.<sup>132</sup>

Wilson's 'technological community' has, however, received a more sympathetic hearing elsewhere. The Economist was in no doubt. It was 'an article of faith', it reported, that the Six wanted to boost Europe's competitiveness vis-à-vis the United States in technological matters.<sup>133</sup> There was widespread acceptance in Britain, it argued in August 1966, that 'Europe will never develop rockets or computers or aircraft that can match America's unless the European government commit themselves to a minimum of common budgets and joint policies'.<sup>134</sup> Peter Shore, Secretary of State for Economic Affairs 1967-9 also gave the 'technological community' a sympathetic hearing.<sup>135</sup> Literature on industrial reorganisation and rationalisation also persuades us that the creation of the Department of Economic Affairs (DEA) in 1964 and the 1966 Industrial Reorganisation Corporation Act were geared to

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<sup>131</sup> Barker, *Britain in a Divided Europe*, op. cit., p.221.

<sup>132</sup> Grosser, *The Western Alliance*, op. cit., p.224.

<sup>133</sup> 'The Wilson Community', *Economist*, 21 January 1967, pp.197-8 (p.197); 'Let's Try Again', *Economist*, op. cit., p.796. See also Grosser, *The Western Alliance*, op. cit., pp.218-9.

<sup>134</sup> 'Let's Try Again', *Economist*, op. cit., p.796.

<sup>135</sup> Peter Shore, *Leading the Left*, (London: Jonathan Cape, 1993), pp.88-90.



support Mintech and the Science and Technology Act of 1965, however unsuccessful they were in the long-run.<sup>136</sup>

The 'technological community' has also had a broadly sympathetic hearing from historians. Frankel wrote that it 'loomed large in Wilson's platform'.<sup>137</sup> David Horner agreed that 'the deployment of the "scientific revolution" as the keynote of the Labour campaign was rooted in a longer running discourse on the social relations of science which had been developed by radical socialist and communist scientific intellectuals in the 1930s and 1940s'.<sup>138</sup> Wilson's biographers were just as certain about the premier's commitment to a 'technological revolution'.<sup>139</sup> Coopey, Fielding and Tiratsoo are therefore wrong to argue that 'most commentators have assumed that there was no real commitment...and dismiss it as another example of Wilson's cynical political expediency'.<sup>140</sup> There is a better balance in the historiography than they suggest. The literature on science policy and industrial reorganisation has largely been kind to Wilson, only a few historians saw no substance behind the rhetoric. It remains to be seen what a revisionist approach to Wilson's

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<sup>136</sup> In particular, observed P. Mottershead, it was hoped that 'selective intervention to modernise industry would help to solve the balance of payments problems without resorting to devaluation'. P. Mottershead, 'Industrial Policy', in Blackaby (ed.), British Economic Policy, op. cit., pp.418-83 (p.432). Wilson reportedly told Frank Cousins, the first Minister of Technology in 1964, that he had 'about a month to save the British computer industry'. Ross Hamilton, 'Despite Best Intentions: The Evolution of the British Microcomputer Industry', Business History, 38, 2 (1995), pp.81-104 (p.89). See also Wilson, The Labour Government, op. cit., p.300.

<sup>137</sup> Frankel, British Foreign Policy, op. cit., p.59. See also Maclean, British Foreign Policy Since Suez, op. cit., p.27.

<sup>138</sup> David Horner, 'The Road to Scarborough: Wilson, Labour and the Scientific Revolution', in R. Coopey, S. Fielding and N. Tiratsoo (eds.), The Wilson Governments 1964-1970 (London: Pinter, 1993), pp.48-71 (p.49). See also Richard Coopey, 'Industrial Policy in the White Heat of the Scientific Revolution', in Coopey, Fielding and Tiratsoo (eds.), The Wilson Governments, op. cit., pp.102-22.

<sup>139</sup> A. Morgan, Harold Wilson, op. cit., p.246; Pimlott, Harold Wilson, op. cit., p.274.

<sup>140</sup> Coopey, Fielding and Tiratsoo, 'Introduction', op. cit., p.5.

economic and science policy under Wilson will look like. The signs are that the Economist's relatively positive approach will be sustained, rather than Heath's critical appraisal.<sup>141</sup> This would fit the trend in the historiography of earlier periods. The major point to take from this is that the 1960s do seem to have been the period when the British were made fully aware of the politicised nature of economic decisions. This has been echoed loudly by orthodox writers on the Macmillan and Wilson applications to join the EEC.

It is surprising, then, to find Sanders in 1990 offering a neo-orthodox account of devaluation. Amidst the turn to revisionism in the historiography, he argues that 'not only are self-evidently "political" strategies frequently shaped by economic objectives and constraints, but decisions about economic policy are equally often guided by political criteria'.<sup>142</sup> This exception highlights the individuality inherent in constructing historical narratives, the host of pressures at work on writers. The exigencies of producing a broad, textbook study of British foreign policy since 1945 perhaps militated against a thorough consideration of the literature on devaluation and European integration. Judging by his bibliography, it seems he was unaware of Newton's work and the historiographical foundations it had put in place for challenging the conventional wisdom on Bevin's Atlanticism.

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<sup>141</sup> John W. Young, 'The "Technological Community" in Wilson's Strategy for EEC Entry', conference paper delivered at *The Second Try: Harold Wilson and Europe, 1964-67*, Institute of Historical Research, London, 13 January 2000.

<sup>142</sup> Sanders, *Losing an Empire*, op. cit., p.197. On devaluation see p.203.

This highlights a significant influence on historiographical interpretation: general studies of British European policy cannot always capture the essence of archival findings. '[A]ny historian', observes Brian Brivati, 'is only as good as his or her sources'.<sup>143</sup> They work their way into mainstream literature sometimes after several years have elapsed, and even then only if they fit in with the predilections of those who consult them. The breakout from one school to another has less to do with sources than the willingness of individual historians to state the case more boldly than it has been stated already. Rather than toying with the alternative explanations hinted at by orthodox writers, revisionists lead with them. It only takes one or two individuals to do this before many more find evidence to back them up in the documents. A further explanation for Sanders' oversight may be the self-imposed epistemological chains he put on his study. By explicitly choosing a state-centric realist approach to foreign policy he, like many orthodox writers, sought explanations for British foreign policy in 'high politics', national security issues. The year 1949 is more commonly remembered not for devaluation but the signing of the Washington Treaty.

Hence, two explanations for why economics and politics were separated in orthodox studies of British European policy up to 1960 are that it reflected policy-making structures and relative public inattention to the relationship before 1960. As a result, the two were separated in the worlds of British politics and academia. Revisionist historians, too, have been somewhat limited

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<sup>143</sup> Brian Brivati, 'Introduction', in Buxton, Brivati and Seldon (eds.), The Contemporary History Handbook, op. cit., pp.15-24 (p.22).

in their use of economic papers. How fast one expects primary sources to be devoured in the quest for a 'complete' historical picture, is one to which the next chapter pays close attention. What this analysis of the orthodox school's portrayal of a coherent, tightly controlled Whitehall machine, with politics dominating economics shows, is the emphasis the school places on intentionality. British European policy, it assumes, can be defined largely in terms of the political ideology and aims of the major foreign policy actors.

- **Hindsight**

This chapter has so far identified three ties among writers in the orthodox school: sociological, a realist outlook on foreign policy and an assumption that foreign policy outcomes can be deduced from the intentions of key political players. Orthodox historiography contains two further features which now need to be analysed: a reliance on hindsight to reconstruct historical events and the entrenchment of the conventional wisdom about personalities and policies. It will be shown that such qualities are associated with the overtly politicised accounts which dominate the orthodox school.

To assert that a defining feature of the orthodoxy is its use of hindsight is another way of arguing that the concerns of the present influence interpretations of the past. To fully understand the impact of hindsight on orthodox historiography thus requires analysis of two factors: the social and political climate which spawned orthodox works and the goals of the studies which dominate the school. On the issue of the climate of opinion, most orthodox works contained, it can be argued, politically driven criticisms of

British personalities and policy, based on the assumption that London had diverged from the righteous path of continental integration in the post-war era. British writers in particular were extremely introspective, taking disappointment with Britain's failure to join the EEC in the 1960s as the starting point for attempts to explain why London was hovering on the fringes of European integration. In the 1980s, academics became increasingly interested in whether Thatcher's 'Gaullist unwillingness to cede any further sovereignty to the EC's institutions' was representative of Britain's post-war European policy.<sup>144</sup>

Appleby, Hunt and Jacob observe that 'The fascinating thing about telling a story is that they start with the end. It is a conclusion that arouses our curiosity and prompts us to ask a question, which then leads back to the beginning from which the eventual outcome unwound'.<sup>145</sup> That there has yet to be a conclusion to the process of European unity makes contemporary historical judgment even more acutely susceptible to the vagaries of individual interpretation. Living through history makes it harder than usual to reconstruct events free from personal and political prejudice. For writers today the present is different from the present experienced by writers thirty years ago. Writing about history necessarily involves looking back on the past with the benefit of hindsight and experience. The question is how much writers let these factors impinge on their interpretations of the past.

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<sup>144</sup> Sanders, Losing an Empire, op. cit., p.9.

<sup>145</sup> Appleby, Hunt and Jacob, Telling the Truth About History, op. cit., p.263.

This is made clearer by assessing the three generic groups of study that are the lifeblood of orthodox writing. The first group consists of several closely related genres of literature: political memoirs, autobiography (what John Grigg calls those 'monumentally egocentric' studies)<sup>146</sup> and writing based on oral testimony. The human memory is less than perfect. What interests us here is forgetfulness and loss of memory, policy-makers' inability to remember with precision the course of events in which they were involved decades ago. 'There are', notes Prins, 'certain sorts of memory which may be forever irrecoverable because of the manner of their loss'.<sup>147</sup> Further, contemporary events can always have an impact on our interpretations of the past. In the case of politicians (and officials who form the bulk of our insights in Charlton's widely used volume of oral history)<sup>148</sup> criticism and apologia are enmeshed in their assessments of the key events in British European policy. It may seem overly simplistic to associate political memoir with official recollection. Is there a difference between what each group says about Britain and Europe? Officials tend to take what Mayne calls the '*mea culpa*' approach,<sup>149</sup> discussing what more they could have done to develop a constructive European policy. They are also more reticent about publishing their views which tend to gain public voice through their presence at academic conferences and witness seminars. Politicians, by contrast, are more concerned with the allocation of blame and the value of their own contribution, seamlessly extending the

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<sup>146</sup> Grigg, review, 'Policies of Impotence', *International Affairs*, op. cit., p. 73.

<sup>147</sup> Prins, 'Oral History', op. cit., p. 126.

<sup>148</sup> Charlton, *The Price of Victory*, op. cit.

<sup>149</sup> Mayne, review, '*The Price of Victory*. By Michael Charlton', *International Affairs*, op. cit., p. 327.

personal animosity they felt for other decision-makers into a critique of European policy. Their interpretations tend to be weighted towards political not bureaucratic recollection. So there is a division between the volume and style of official and political recollections. However, a combination of the two sets of practitioners has set the tone for orthodox historiography of Britain and Europe. It is thus convenient to take the two together for analytical purposes.

What muddies the waters still more is that political memoir and recollection are not exclusively concerned with the European question. Politicians usually carry many responsibilities during their careers, in several areas of policy competence. The fact for researchers of British European policy is that most simply did not take a keen interest in Europe in the 1950s, and only marginally more so in the 1960s when it was thrust onto the agenda with successive British applications to join the Communities. It is easy for them to replicate the conventional wisdom because the sections or passages on Europe in their publications are likely to be thin. As R. K. Middlemas argues, political recollection can too often be dull and uninformative: 'Some parts of [Macmillan's memoirs] read like extracts from the Annual Register, or from the lengthy Foreign Office briefs which Bevin used to read out in the House of Commons'.<sup>150</sup> They neither have the time nor the interest, even with the aid of a team of researchers and ghost writers, to devote much attention to Europe, when the conventional wisdom has been established for a number of years. It is easy to forget that for many practitioners the European question was not the

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<sup>150</sup> R. K. Middlemas, review, *Tides of Fortune, 1945-1955*. By Harold Macmillan', International Affairs, 46, 3 (1970), pp.568-9 (p.568).

dominating factor in their thinking. The Cold War, relations with Russia, America, the Commonwealth, Greece, Turkey, Cyprus, the Middle East and, later, Rhodesia and China all impinged on the time devoted to Europe. To take one crucial period, the Messina conference, John Barnes notes that 'In their differing ways, Eden Butler and Macmillan were all part of a broad consensus within Whitehall which recognised the growing importance of Europe to Britain but which was not prepared to narrow its horizons to Europe alone'.<sup>151</sup>

But this is being kind. Politicians also suffer from 'intentional' memory loss,<sup>152</sup> a reminder that 'forgetting is about something real'.<sup>153</sup> Austen Morgan's criticism is representative of the majority verdict on political memoir: 'Politicians belong to that special class of liar who seem to be genuinely unable to discriminate between special pleading, the suppression of material evidence, and outright falsification of the record'.<sup>154</sup> A. J. P. Taylor recoiled in similar fashion: 'Old men drooling about their youth? No!'.<sup>155</sup> Politics is a fickle business, and politicians can make as many enemies as friends. For this reason, argues Nick Crowson, remember 'how "personality" and personal enmity influence the "rise" of individual politicians'.<sup>156</sup> They tend in their memoirs to

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<sup>151</sup> Echoing the point made above that Butler and Eden were, by 1955, 'bored' with the European question. Barnes, 'From Eden to Macmillan', op. cit., p.131. See also Young, "'The Parting of Ways'?", op. cit., p.209; Simon Burgess and Geoffrey Edwards, 'The Six Plus One', op. cit., p.413; Dutton, Anthony Eden, op. cit., p.307; Kaiser, Using Europe, op. cit., pp.43-4; Reynolds, Britannia Overruled, op. cit., pp.197-8.

<sup>152</sup> Anthony Seldon, 'Interviews', in Seldon (ed.), Contemporary History, op. cit., pp.3-16 (pp.6-7).

<sup>153</sup> Appleby, Hunt and Jacob, Telling the Truth About History, op. cit., p.267.

<sup>154</sup> Morgan, Harold Wilson, op. cit., p.389.

<sup>155</sup> Quoted in Prins, 'Oral History', op. cit., p.114.

<sup>156</sup> N. J. Crowson, review, 'Backbench Debate Within the Conservative Party and its Influence on British Foreign Policy, 1948-57. By Sue Onslow', Contemporary British History, 11, 4 (1997), pp.133-4 (p.133).



be alternately bland and controversial as a means of obscuring their own personal involvement with sensitive issues and to sell books. Newspaper editors appear to prefer literary atom bombs over hand grenades, controversy over dull and verbose recollection. In the historian's point of view, political memoirs, autobiography and oral testimony analysis of Britain and Europe too often relegate in-depth discussion of the European policy process below personal vitriol and the obfuscation of the policy process. Even more so for politicians who had little to do with the foreign policy process, where their opinion on European policy is necessarily dictated by what they heard in the lobbies and read in the media.

The second type of study that dominates orthodox historiography is closely related to political testimony: biography in which, Mark Steyn notes, there is often a 'morphing of biographer and subject'.<sup>157</sup> This, Campbell has communicated, is for the key reason that 'In my experience it is usually a waste of time interviewing politicians who have written their memoirs, because all they ever do is repeat what they have written; and much the same I think applies to historians'. It is very hard for biographers to escape the confines of the subject's mind-set because they have generally 'forgotten' alternative explanations for their action or policy, sticking to an established version of events.<sup>158</sup>

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<sup>157</sup> Mark Steyn, 'Is Hillary Hurting?: *Hillary's Choice*. By Gail Sheehy', Sunday Telegraph, 19 December 1999, p.18. See also Walker who argues that 'As is usually the case in biographies, most cold war scholars sympathised with the positions espoused by their subjects'. Walker, 'Historians and Cold War Origins', op. cit., p.224.

<sup>158</sup> Permission received to quote written correspondence with John Campbell, 6 March 2000.

Biography, notes Hamilton, takes 'multitudinous forms and genres...as the way we look at real lives and have looked at them throughout history'.<sup>159</sup> It is useful at this stage to distinguish between three different biographic genres: official, unofficial and 'contextualised'. The orthodox interpretation is more often sustained in the first two, but far less in the third. So this chapter concentrates on official and unofficial biography, leaving contextualised for the next. The question is why do these genres of writing more often than not lead to a replication of the often well established views of the 'subject', that is, the politician whose life is being investigated? In the case of 'official biography' the reasons are not hard to locate. Often sponsored by the subject or his or her relatives, the official biographer is under immense pressure to convey honour on the individual whose life is being written, to bow to the demands of the 'keepers of the flame'.<sup>160</sup> 'Part of the implicit understanding in "official" biography', explains Ben Pimlott, 'is that the author should be counsel for the defence'.<sup>161</sup> Such a process can be unplanned or unconscious. To take the example of Alistair Horne's two volume portrait of Macmillan: official biographies that collate interview evidence from the subject rely on a combination of hours of with the subject. Pimlott's verdict is that 'Horne comes perilously close to going native...Macmillan's snobbery spills on to the author'.<sup>162</sup> The common charge is that official biographies too often represent

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<sup>159</sup> Hamilton, 'In Defence of the Practice of Biography', op. cit., p.86.

<sup>160</sup> This term has been coined by Ian Hamilton in Keepers of the Flame: Literary Estates and the Rise of Biography (London: Pimlico, 1992). It is also known as the 'Defender of the Faith' thesis. See Elms, Uncovering Lives, op. cit., p.30.

<sup>161</sup> Pimlott, Frustrate Their Knavish Tricks, op. cit., p.26. On the need to preserve political reputations after the death of the subject because of family pressures see also p.155.

<sup>162</sup> Ibid., p.28.

the views of the subject and lack analytical insights into those views.<sup>163</sup> It is perilous to assume *all* official biography suffers from these traits, but for the purposes of picking out broad characteristics, official political biography in Britain has developed largely on hagiographic lines. This, writes Elms, should come as no surprise: 'For much of its history [biography] was largely hagiographic, recording the saintly practices of genuine or putative saints'.<sup>164</sup>

'Unofficial biography' is much harder to encapsulate because so many types of writer attempt it. In addition to academic studies, politicians, usually protégés or admirers of the subject, often present interim verdicts on their mentors at or about the time they rise to positions of power. They tend to be personal accounts aimed at the general public to inform them of the sort of person that has come to lead them. By definition there is little policy content, because they are penned before the subject has spent long in government.<sup>165</sup> On the other side there are (fewer) critical accounts written by opponents of the subject to 'warn' the public about who is about to govern them. As political polemic often penned before terms in office these are less use to the historian of Britain's relations with Europe, but invaluable contributions to the conventional wisdom on particular politicians.<sup>166</sup>

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<sup>163</sup> The best examples are Harris, Attlee, op. cit.; Horne, Macmillan, Volume 1, op. cit.; Horne, Volume 2, op. cit.; D. R. Thorpe, Alec Douglas-Home (London: Sinclair-Stevenson, 1996); Philip Ziegler, Wilson: The Authorised Life of Lord Wilson of Rievaulx (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1993).

<sup>164</sup> Elms, Uncovering Lives, op. cit., p.3.

<sup>165</sup> Aster, Anthony Eden, op. cit.; Roy Jenkins, Mr. Attlee: An Interim Biography (London: William Heinemann, 1948); Ernest Kay, Pragmatic Premier: An Intimate Portrait of Harold Wilson (London: Leslie Frewin, 1967); Hutchinson, Edward Heath, op. cit.; Laing, Edward Heath, op. cit.; William Rees-Mogg, Sir Anthony Eden (London: Rockliff, 1956).

<sup>166</sup> Russell Lewis, Tony Benn: A Critical Biography London: Associated Business Press, 1978).

Taking official and unofficial biography together, one can draw out two fundamental reasons why they voice the conventional wisdom on Britain and Europe. The first turns crucially on the questions biographers ask of their subject and therefore of history itself. 'Most modern biographies', observes Pimlott, 'for all their revelations of promiscuity and personal disorder, have barely departed from the Victorian, and medieval, tradition of praising famous men. Nowhere is this more true than in the comparative backwater of political biography'.<sup>167</sup> Because of the chronologically ordered account each offers, the issue of Europe tends to be treated only spasmodically, and only then in the context of the 'big' decisions that were made in London. The rejection of the Schuman Plan, the turn from the EDC, the withdrawal from Messina, the failure to win over de Gaulle- these are the major themes around which debates among orthodox writers crystallise; other policy innovations go either unmentioned or are devoted only the occasional line. That 'Europe' rarely features as a chapter in its own right militates against thorough consideration of all the issues involved. But one should expect this- these are after all expansive works. Ranging over a lifetime's political work will naturally lead to gaps and distortions.

Pimlott highlights the second explanation: the support given to the hagiographic tradition of political biography by publishing houses. 'Publishers, reflecting public taste, continue to want orthodox lives spiced with colourful

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<sup>167</sup> Pimlott, Frustrate Their Knavish Tricks, op. cit., p. 154.

details, of orthodoxly famous people: the best contracts go to those who provide them'.<sup>168</sup> Biographers who wish to use psychoanalytical insights to explain individual actions are held back by the tradition of political biography in Britain which is geared more to public achievements than to personal lives. To concentrate too heavily in Freudian fashion on sexuality and personal relationships as explanations of political behaviour would, it seems, not be adequately 'academic' because it is too reminiscent of the 'tabloid newspaper treatment of modern politics and politicians'.<sup>169</sup> They pay attention to the formative experiences of politicians only as adjuncts to explanations of behaviour rooted in political caste or ideology. There is a case to be made that there has not been *enough* experimentation with Freudian analysis which, Pauline Croft argues, is in 'irreversible decline'.<sup>170</sup> Judicious use of methods designed to uncover the source of political action from personal backgrounds, while no more testable than other influences, would be a new and interesting departure in British historiography, adding to our understanding of the body politic. Nigel Hamilton points out that some universities in Britain are now offering undergraduate and postgraduate courses on the practice of biography which will surely replenish interest in 'discredited' approaches to the writing of political lives.<sup>171</sup> Thus, traditional methods of researching political biographies in Britain look set to stay, supported as they are by the political, academic and publishing communities. The next chapter will analyse a new

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<sup>168</sup> Ibid., p.159.

<sup>169</sup> O'Brien, 'Is Political Biography a Good Thing?', op. cit., p.62.

<sup>170</sup> Pauline Croft, 'Political Biography: A Defence (1)', Contemporary British History, 10, 4 (1996), pp.67-74 (p.72).

<sup>171</sup> Nigel Hamilton, 'In Defence of the Practice of Biography', Contemporary British History, 10, 4 (1996), pp.81-6 (p.82).

development, contextualised biography, that endeavours to align the study of 'great men' more closely with textually rich historical narrative.

The third type of study that forms the backbone of the orthodox school are the early studies of British foreign policy, notably those by Frankel and Northedge.<sup>172</sup> General studies, or survey histories, of the entirety of Britain's multilateral relations from 1945 suffer from the same limitations that hamper the study of historical events in the context of political memoir and biography. They are by necessity unable to cover each relationship in detail. Just as biographies cannot deal with the subject matter as rigorously as historians would like, general histories of a long period such as 1945-73, are not concentrated histories of Britain and Europe, but wider studies of the entirety of Britain's external relationships. The pioneering studies by Barker, Beloff and Camps did, however, devote entire books to Britain and Europe. Yet, these works reinforced the orthodox interpretations of British European policy. Why was this? It was not necessarily the time of writing or constraints imposed by the Thirty Year Rule. That Camps later admitted archival evidence 'contained few surprises' shows that the weight of preordained convictions can easily override the consultation of 'new' sources of evidence.<sup>173</sup> Their sympathy for Monnet's European project suggests there is a political agenda running through these texts. Their journalistic background adds further weight to the argument that these were histories of Britain's attempts to come to terms with Europe,

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<sup>172</sup> Frankel, British Foreign Policy, op. cit.; F. S. Northedge, British Foreign Policy: The Process of Readjustment (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1962); Northedge, Descent from Power, op. cit.

<sup>173</sup> Camps, 'Missing the Boat', op. cit., p.134.

tacitly sponsored by the 'Europeans' in Whitehall and the parliamentary lobbies campaigning for Britain to be nearer the epicentre of integration. It is no coincidence that the same officials who later bemoaned Britain's missed opportunities on the continent were those with whom these historians would have had daily contact both during and long after the events they described. Camps, wrote a reviewer in 1965, 'is, or was, a "European" and her convictions are not concealed. Yet, he continued, 'this rarely leads to bias'.<sup>174</sup> Revisionists would strongly disagree.

The orthodox school has set the tone for the historiography of Britain's relations with Europe. Its points of reference, the language it employs, its symbolism and emotion, make it a compelling adjunct to the literature on Britain's post-war decline. Even in recent texts that contain significant allusion to revisionist material, the overarching orthodox theme is Britain's awkwardness, its reservations, its reluctance to join the Europeans in their integrative adventure.<sup>175</sup> Not only does this make the schoolification of writers according to the date of publication hazardous- politicians are as likely to sustain the conventional wisdom whether they publish in 1950 or 1990- it introduces us to the final link across orthodox writers to be analysed below: the admission but suppression of revisionist interpretations. Its widespread appeal can be seen by examining other writers apart from Camps who place an orthodox interpretation on the history despite using primary sources, which

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<sup>174</sup> S. C. Leslie, review, '*Britain and the European Community 1955-1963*. By Miriam Camps', *International Affairs*, 41, 1 (1965), pp.121-2 (p.121).

<sup>175</sup> George, *An Awkward Partner*, op. cit.; David Gowland and Arthur Turner, *Reluctant Europeans: Britain and European Integration 1945-1998* (Harlow: Pearson, 2000).

have been the lifeblood of revisionism. What this reveals is that it is not just sources, or methods of research, that determine historiographical progression in Britain, but sociological forces, the willingness by certain writers to decisively break out of the interpretative mould set by their predecessors in the field. Three accounts make this point about the pervasiveness of the discursive framework set up by the orthodox school: those by Victor Rothwell, Alan Bullock and Alan Milward.<sup>176</sup>

Rothwell's was the first study in Britain to use PRO documents- mainly Foreign Office correspondence- as the major source of evidence. Bullock a year later built on the foundation he had laid in a biography of Bevin that included also reference to Bevin's private papers and interview material. Yet, to take one key debate in the literature on Britain and Europe where a revisionist school using primary sources is well established, they never went so far as to argue that Bevin was *primarily* interested in creating a Third Force despite admitting in several places that it was indeed a consideration for Bevin in his approach to British foreign policy.<sup>177</sup>

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<sup>176</sup> Rothwell, Britain and the Cold War 1941-1947, op. cit.; Bullock, Ernest Bevin, op. cit.; Milward, The European Rescue, op. cit. Other waverers on this issue include Beloff, Europe and the Europeans, op. cit., p.158; Donald C. Watt, Succeeding John Bull: America in Britain's Place 1900-1975 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), pp.109-22; Hennessy, 'The Attlee Governments', op. cit., pp.39-43; Beloff, Britain and the European Union, op. cit., pp.52-4; George, An Awkward Partner, op. cit., pp.18-9; Gilmour and Garnett, Whatever Happened to the Tories, op. cit., p.45; Alan Dobson, 'The Special Relationship and European Integration', Diplomacy and Statecraft, 2, 1 (1991), pp.79-102 (pp.63-5); Edward Fursdon, The European Defence Community A History (London: Macmillan, 1980), pp.29-40; Howard, 'Introduction', op. cit., p.12; Kaiser, Using Europe, op. cit., pp.13-23; Manderson-Jones, The Special Relationship, op. cit., pp.22-6 and pp.65-74.

<sup>177</sup> Bullock, Ernest Bevin, op. cit., p.153, p.358, pp.395-6; Rothwell, Britain and the Cold War, op. cit., pp.449-50.



Why did they not go the whole way? For Rothwell, like Bullock, the first part of the answer is to be found in the aim of the study. They were most concerned with the Cold War, not Bevin and Europe, so one cannot have expected them to explore Bevin's 'Europeanism' at length. They asked different questions of the history from revisionists. Bullock in particular was more intent on praising Bevin for his vision in saving Western civilisation through the creation of NATO, evidence of the hagiography that can dominate political biography: 'Bevin's part in creating the Atlantic Alliance crowned his achievement'.<sup>178</sup> The second centres on the issue of closure. Rothwell's study ended in 1947. He did not analyse the archives for 1948, the year when for revisionists the Third Force conception was at its apogee in the Foreign Office.<sup>179</sup> This limitation on his work could be due to oversight, time, length of book or financial constraints. The crux is that whatever Rothwell's sources, or belief that primary sources were the best sources in the reconstruction of history, the shut-off point of his study militated against him examining evidence for what has since become the crucial year of 1948. Consequently, he never felt comfortable about actually naming the 'Third Force'. A further reason takes us onto Bullock's work. It is associated with the goal of study, the underlying agenda of analysing Britain's role in the Cold War rather than his European policy *per se*.

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<sup>178</sup> Bullock, Ernest Bevin, op. cit., p.840. See also Rothwell, Britain and the Cold War, op. cit., pp.413-50; Adamthwaite, 'Britain and the World', op. cit., p.228. 'The flirtation', he argues, 'ended almost as soon as it began'.

<sup>179</sup> Young, Britain and European Unity, op. cit., p.18.

So there are issues surrounding the major goals of each study. However, their reluctance to pursue the Third Force seems to require deeper explanation. Perhaps they were hesitant because the term was not in general usage in the early 1980s. It has been argued by Kaplan that the labelling of theories and concepts can have powerful repercussions on their acceptance by scholars who are inherently conservative. 'Ideological belief systems', he writes, 'often have powerful psychological appeal, for they offer answers to questions that people feel a need to ask'.<sup>180</sup> The symbolism of the language employed, the simplifying function provided by the use of labels to describe of Bevin's 'Third Forcism' did, it seem, play a significant role in determining the timing of the rise of revisionist scholarship in this area.<sup>181</sup> Language and symbolism are vital elements of discursive formations which help us understand complex historical realities around which writers coalesce into schools. The simpler interpretations are to understand, the more compelling they are to scholars who are short on time and resources to check for primary evidence of it themselves. Thus it is that Kent and Young have become the benchmark for Third Force revisionism,<sup>182</sup> not Rothwell and Bullock who only alluded to Bevin's interest in it. That they also named the writers against which they set their new interpretation helped set the historiographical boundaries of schools even more clearly. Academic fads and fashions, the rise and fall of discursive formations

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<sup>180</sup> Kaplan, *On Historical and Political Knowing*, op. cit., p. 83.

<sup>181</sup> This is supported by White's point that we find in the theory of language and narrative itself the basis for a more subtle presentation of what historiography consists of than that which simply 'tells the student to go and "find out the facts" and write them up'. Quoted in Jenkins, *On 'What is History?'*, op. cit., pp. 153-4.

<sup>182</sup> Kent, 'Bevin's Imperialism', op. cit.; Kent and Young, 'British Policy Overseas', op. cit.; Kent and Young, 'The "Western Union" Concept', op. cit.; Young, 'The Foreign Office, the French', op. cit.; Young, *Britain and European Unity*, op. cit., pp. 12-8.

about the past, therefore play a pivotal part in the nature of historical interpretation, because they determine the time at which one school supplants another in the historiography.

Milward was another to use a vast array of primary documentation, this time economic statistics on European reconstruction after the war. His argument was not centrally about British European policy, but naturally he did make more than passing reference to it. In the penultimate chapter on the role of sterling and the dollar world Milward traces British hopes for a world role for sterling, particularly through accommodation with the American dollar.<sup>183</sup> The parallels with Newton's work are evident. Yet he concurred with the orthodox account of British attitudes to the continent, using the emotive language of 'missed opportunities'. It was, he argues, a 'serious mistake' not to sign the Treaty of Rome because Britain was economically and politically marginalised from the continent after 1957.<sup>184</sup> We see here many properties of orthodox historiography, notably analysis of Britain and Europe in the context of a broader study which is not hinged on British European relations per se.

Milward was, it seems, unaware of Newton's work.<sup>185</sup> Had he been, would he have taken a more revisionist approach? It is hard to tell. That he did not pay

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<sup>183</sup> Milward, *The European Rescue*, op. cit., pp.345-433.

<sup>184</sup> Ibid., p.433. There is an interesting comparison to be drawn with Peter Clarke's *Hope and Glory*. '[O]n p.403', one reviewer notes, 'it is established that "the most obvious missed opportunity" of the twentieth century was Britain's failure to enter Europe in the Fifties- and with this the book ends'. Ghosh, 'How We Got Where We Are', *London Review of Books*, op. cit., p. 18.

<sup>185</sup> This in itself is interesting: Newton's articles were published in the *Economic History Review* and *Review of International Studies*. Had they been showcased in the 'bigger' *International Studies*, might they have had more recognition?

detailed attention to state diplomacy, concerned as he was with economics, his core research aim was not to investigate the political ramifications in the same way as revisionists have done. The chances are that as a peripheral area of inquiry, Milward would not have even been aware of his contribution to the debate about Britain and Europe, so knowledge of Newton's work would have made little difference. Milward was deepening our understanding of Newton's economic findings in another direction. Historians' use of evidence has a crucial bearing on interpretation and can have significant ramifications on historiographical development. New evidence does not necessarily bear the fruits of revisionism when preordained beliefs are brought to the study of history. 'Political and ideological control', observes Southgate, 'is an essential aspect of historical study, and it is concerned not only with...conscious and deliberate manipulations...but also with the often unconscious controls exercised in the very language or "discourse" in which history is written'.<sup>186</sup> The words of Appleby, Hunt and Jacob are extremely relevant to Milward's conclusion on 'missed opportunities': 'The fact that authors do not intend all that they say does not render their intentions uninteresting or irrelevant; it merely highlights the subterranean quality of many of the influences that play upon word choices'.<sup>187</sup>

- **Historical Entrenchment of the Conventional Wisdom**

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<sup>186</sup> Appleby, Hunt and Jacob, Telling the Truth About History, op. cit., p.267.

<sup>187</sup> Quoted in 'What Jim Knew and Henry Did', Times Higher Education Supplement, 12 November 1999, pp.24-5 (p.24).

A. J. P. Taylor observed in *Who Burned the Reichstag?* that 'Events happen by chance and men mould them into a pattern. That is the way of history'.<sup>188</sup> Taylor's reference is to the essential reliance of history-writing on the use of imaginative mental reconstruction in the narration of events, the evidence of which is usually left to us in fragmentary and haphazard form. There is a case for arguing that there is an in-built revisionist tendency in historiography, as successive generations of politicians and scholars interpret and reinterpret the past to suit their own ideological predilections. Such is the nature of historiographical evolution. This is where the analytical element of Taylor's use of the word 'mould' becomes significant, because it implies that all historical facts are malleable, subject to different interpretations and understandings. In essence, Taylor was expounding a postmodern approach to history.

The fifth link among writers in the orthodox school is that their interpretation tends to represent a reification of the conventional wisdom. Contemporary political criticisms of British European policy have come to be moulded into the earliest historical accounts of events, accounts revisionists hotly dispute. To understand this link between the received wisdom and subsequent interpretations of British European policy one needs to explore further the three ways in which 'politics', that is, the ebb and flow of political debate, personal recrimination and propaganda, has inspired orthodox interpretations of events. The first strand of this argument has already been examined: the

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<sup>188</sup> Quoted in 'What Jim Knew and Henry Did', Times Higher Education Supplement, 12 November 1999, pp.24-5 (p.24).

trend of criticising British policy set in motion by Monnet and those sympathetic to his vision of European unity. The orthodoxy was spawned to a large extent by activists in the Federal Union and associated bodies in Britain, Western Europe and the United States, who were unimpressed with Britain's apathy about joining the nascent Communities. The rhetoric they used about Britain being 'awkward' in Europe and hostage to reminiscence about the 'special relationship' and the power of the Commonwealth became, as we have seen, the established critique of British European policy in the discursive form of 'missed opportunities'.

The reasons why this found fertile ground in Britain represents the second way in which politics has impinged on the orthodox interpretation. There is something in the human psyche that makes us revel in opprobrium towards figures in the public eye. Carr observed, in the historical context, that 'Russians, Englishmen, and Americans readily join in personal attacks on Stalin, Neville Chamberlain, or McCarthy as scapegoats for their collective misdeeds'.<sup>189</sup> In the 1990s our politicians are generally treated with disdain, and we hark back to a 'golden age' when they were treated with, and deserved, respect, 'before some strange demon...brought it to an end'.<sup>190</sup> The Wilson administrations, October 1964 to June 1970 and March 1974 to April 1976, were a watershed experience in this respect, marking in Pimlott's words the 'effective end of *noblesse oblige* in British politics'.<sup>191</sup> The alleged opaqueness in the policy process- characterised in the literature by charges that the premier

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<sup>189</sup> Carr, What is History?, op. cit., p.78.

<sup>190</sup> Palme Dutt, Problems of Contemporary History, op. cit., p.28.

<sup>191</sup> Pimlott, Frustrate Their Knavish Tricks, op. cit., p.30.

presided over a kitchen cabinet- stimulated suspicion in Britain about the state of political life, the quality of those elected to lead us. Yet if we look back to the time when the supposed 'great' politicians were in power (Attlee, Churchill, Eden, Macmillan) the contemporary verdict on them was not much more kind, despite what we like to believe many years on. *At the time* European policy was just one of a number of foreign and domestic policies greeted with disdain by the opposition and on the backbenches.

The rhetoric surrounding government policy and the criticisms levelled against it have had important repercussions on the literature, because they have set a trend it is all too easy for orthodox writers not focused on the European question to repeat without question. Personal antagonism, pithy soundbites for headline writers and dismissive one-liners about policy in the House of Commons have set the tone for much orthodox historiography, apparently reinforced by criticisms from continental Europeans intimately involved in the construction of Europe and amplified in the press. In Greg Knight's compilation of 'honourable insults' over the dispatch box there is a sharp resemblance to how we now perceive key figures in the post-war governments: through rhetoric. This shows the way in which humorous quips and labelling of events can come to stand for the reality, even if there is dispute over what is actually implied by the label.<sup>192</sup> This prompted Kaplan's observation that 'It is amazing how often simple models are offered as the conventional wisdom

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<sup>192</sup> Greg Knight, Honourable Insults: A Century of Political Invective (London: Arrow, 1991).

even in the face of contrary evidence'.<sup>193</sup> Palme Dutt remarked on the 'official myths' which 'by dint of incessant repetition are presented and often accepted by many sincere people...as the Gospel truth'.<sup>194</sup> Barraclough also observed that 'The history we read, though based on facts, is, strictly speaking, not factual at all, but a series of *accepted judgments*'.<sup>195</sup> All these points of view are summarised appropriately by Hill who comments of political practice that 'Long-established perceptions and conventional wisdoms can become more or less objective parts of an individual's environment'.<sup>196</sup> There is strong evidence to support the postmodern position here, that the language and symbolism one uses to describe historical events can be of greater importance to subsequent interpretations of events than the external reality one purports to describe in the first place.

In a globalised society where we are bombarded with information at an alarming rate we cannot hope to understand or remember the detail in everything we hear, see and read. What we do remember are strong images and pithy descriptions of personalities and policies. Criticisms of individuals carry much weight and can lead to criticisms of a given policy, even when little of that policy behind the scenes is actually known or made public. Attlee is remembered as an unassuming premier, so it is conventionally assumed he held no sway over the domineering Bevin. As Churchill remarked: 'An empty taxi

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<sup>193</sup> Kaplan, *On Historical and Political Knowing*, op. cit., pp.106-7. This need to simplify events so that the historian can 'order' historical facts is taken up in Southgate, *History*, op. cit., pp.63-4.

<sup>194</sup> Palme Dutt, *Problems of Contemporary History*, op. cit., p.38.

<sup>195</sup> Quoted in Carr, *What is History?*, op. cit., p.14.

<sup>196</sup> Hill, 'The Historical Background', op. cit., p.30.



cab drew up outside the House of Commons and Clement Attlee got out'.<sup>197</sup> Eden is treated with disdain for his Suez policy, his European policy tarred with the same brush. He will be remembered, A. J. P. Taylor trumpeted, 'as the prime minister who steered the ship of state onto the rocks'.<sup>198</sup> Much like his flaws on the personal front, Wilson remarked, he 'hardly ever said boo to a goose. When he did say boo, he chose the wrong goose and said it far too roughly'.<sup>199</sup> Wilson's manipulation of his Cabinet has, likewise, been extended to include a dishonest European policy. The crux is that to conclude one from the other is a logical non sequitur. One can admit, for example, that Eden's policy on Suez was seriously flawed without condemning all his other policies. One can acknowledge that Wilson was obsessed by his public image,<sup>200</sup> without concluding that his commitment to the 'technological community' was a merely a thinly veiled oratorical stunt to impress the watching Europeans. This is not a zero-sum game.

The orthodox school, however, tends not to split policy areas but view them through the same critical lens. This approach is reinforced by the final impact of political comment on orthodox interpretation: opposition jibes about a myopic British European policy. As Benjamin Disraeli said, 'The duty of the opposition is to oppose'.<sup>201</sup> Opposition politics can often exaggerate the artificial dichotomy between rhetoric and reality, form and substance. What

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<sup>197</sup> Quoted in Knight, *Honourable Insults*, op. cit., pp.46-7.

<sup>198</sup> A. J. P. Taylor, introduction to Aster, *Anthony Eden*, op. cit.

<sup>199</sup> Quoted in Knight, *Honourable Insults*, op. cit., p.100.

<sup>200</sup> Ian Macleod's insult was that 'He is a man whose vision is limited to tomorrow's headlines'. *Ibid.*, p.95.

<sup>201</sup> Quoted in Kavanagh, *British Politics*, op. cit., p.294.

this implies is that opposition parties have an interest in creating party divisions over the dispatch box where none exist in practice. There are several examples of parties being lions in opposition and lambs in power. 'It is', Camps states, 'of course always easier to advocate bold policies out of office than in office'.<sup>202</sup> These can now be analysed to demonstrate the long-lasting effect mischievous opposition rhetoric can have on the interpretation of historic events. As Michael Clarke has observed, 'the whole range of Britain's relations with the EC is subject to domestic perceptions of that institution and to the vigorous party political debate which has accompanied Britain's every step in respect of the EC before Britain joined'.<sup>203</sup>

Take the historical debate which sprung up around the Conservative jibe that Labour should have joined the ECSC on the same terms of the Netherlands. The intention was clearly to embarrass the government and win points for the Conservatives by saying 'we would join if we were in power'. That the 1951 Churchill administration refused to join the coal-steel pool shows the disingenuousness of their taunts. 'While the [Conservative] Party could proudly talk of "Mr. Churchill's United Europe Movement"', writes John Ramsden, 'there was not much substance in it as a policy'.<sup>204</sup> Many, however, were inclined to take seriously this recommendation.<sup>205</sup> It was openly admitted that the criticisms were part of a Conservative conspiracy to oust the government. The aim, as Boothby later put it, was to 'harry the life out of' a

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<sup>202</sup> Camps, European Unification in the Sixties, op. cit., p.165. See also pp.128-9.

<sup>203</sup> Clarke, 'The Policy-Making Process', op. cit., p.83. Emphasis added.

<sup>204</sup> Ramsden, The Age of Churchill and Eden, op. cit., p.195, p.220.

<sup>205</sup> Dell, The Schuman Plan, op. cit., p.161; Nutting, Europe Will Not Wait, op. cit., p.29.

Labour government with a majority of only six in the House of Commons. This meant haranguing the government on every issue in every debate to force another general election.<sup>206</sup> But it took many years for writers finally to admit that comparing Britain's political and economic circumstances with the Netherlands in 1950 was hardly viable.<sup>207</sup>

Many strands of orthodox historiography did, however, flow from this dispatch box taunt, demonstrating the extent to which intensely political concerns can have a large impact on historical interpretation. Writers have generally been slow to question the rhetoric of opposition parties but quicker to swallow their criticisms of British European policy. That opposition rhetoric supported and in some cases gave birth to whole strands of orthodox writing suggests a strong correlation between political rhetoric and orthodox historiography. Revisionists, as shown in the next chapter, were unhappy with the moulding of political oratory into historical reality.

Using Europe as a stick with which to beat the government had two effects on the historiography. First it lent weight to Monnet's charges of British bad faith over Europe. Governments came to power on the back of lofty rhetoric about European unity,<sup>208</sup> only to dash the hopes of Monnet and his followers by pursuing a policy not unlike their predecessor's. Politicians and some academic

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<sup>206</sup> Aster, Anthony Eden, op. cit., p.98. See also Roger Makins' words in Charlton, The Price Of Victory, op. cit., p.102.

<sup>207</sup> Bullock, Ernest Bevin, op. cit., p.783; Northedge, British Foreign Policy, op. cit., p.149; Rhodes James, Anthony Eden, op. cit., p.333.

<sup>208</sup> Take Churchill's speeches on the European Army. Max Beloff, Europe and the Europeans: An International Discussion (London: Chatto and Windus, 1957), pp.155-7.

commentators were fooled by lofty rhetoric into thinking that it was a guide to policy intentions, so historiographical opinion has levelled charges of crude 'anti-Europeanism' at successive British governments, reflecting the let-down felt among the founding fathers and those associated with Federal Union at the apparent divergence between intention and practice.

Not only did oppositionism reinforce suspicion of British intentions on the continent, live political debate has in certain cases taken writers off down historiographical cul-de-sacs. That is, academics and retirees have debated the 'if only' question in history without paying sufficient attention to the circumstances within which criticisms were levelled. A good example is again to be found in the literature on the Schuman Plan. Orthodox writers take the post hoc justification for British European policy, set out in the *European Unity* pamphlet of June 1950, as evidence of Britain's opposition to the Schuman Plan.<sup>209</sup> The *Economist* was just the first to moan that the pamphlet left the impression that 'the Labour Party stands for socialism or nothing in its dealings with the continent'.<sup>210</sup> Such broad policy statements cannot, for revisionists, tell the whole story. Young remarks that, because the pamphlet had been prepared before May, 'references to the Schuman Plan had been

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<sup>209</sup> See Monnet, *Memoirs*, op. cit., pp.314-5; Lieber, *British Politics and European Unity*, op. cit., pp.18-9; Barker, *Britain in a Divided Europe*, op. cit., pp.87-8; Diebold, *The Schuman Plan*, op. cit., pp.55-8; Louis Lister, *Europe's Coal and Steel Community: An Experiment in Economic Union* (New York: Twentieth Century Fund, 1960), p.8; Northedge, *British Foreign Policy*, op. cit., p.148.

<sup>210</sup> 'Socialism *Contra Mundum*', *Economist*, 17 June 1950, pp.1313-5 (p.1313); *Times*, 13 June 1950, p.4. See also Ernst B. Haas, *The Uniting of Europe: Political, Social and Economic Forces 1950-1957* (London: Stevens and Sons, 1958), p.159; Acheson, *Present at the Creation*, op. cit., pp.504-5; Fursdon, *The European Defence Community*, op. cit., pp.58-61; Gilmour and Garnett, *Whatever Happened to the Tories*, op. cit., pp.41-5; Henry Pelling, *Britain and the Marshall Plan* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1988), p.100.

added to it'.<sup>211</sup> Aldrich also remarks that key members of the American intelligence community concluded 'erroneously' that the pamphlet had been released to destroy the Schuman Plan.<sup>212</sup> One therefore needs to treat historical texts, as the primary sources on which they are based, with caution, bearing in mind the difficult processes by which 'facts' are constructed into historical stories.

### **5. Sowing the Seeds of Revisionism**

The final key feature of orthodox historiography is a flirtation with but ultimate rejection of alternative interpretations of British European policy. From what has been argued in the chapter already, it is clear that schools of writing on Britain and Europe are not polar opposites. Virtually all orthodox works contain the seeds of what would later develop into a full-blown revisionist school interpretation. The term 'seeds' means unexplored alternative explanations or interpretations that might challenge the dominant 'missed opportunities' paradigm. One can point to two obvious examples in the literature. First, on Eden's European policy, Camps, it is generally assumed, argued that Plan G was 'not maliciously conceived'.<sup>213</sup> She had earlier admitted, however, that the line between a defensive and offensive foreign policy is 'almost impossible' to draw.<sup>214</sup> It is precisely this problem of

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<sup>211</sup> Young, *Britain and European Unity*, op. cit., p.34.

<sup>212</sup> Aldrich, 'European Integration', op. cit., p.169.

<sup>213</sup> Camps, *Britain and the European Community*, op. cit., p.510. See also Barker, *Britain in a Divided Europe*, op. cit., p.153.

<sup>214</sup> Camps, *Britain and the European Community*, op. cit., p.217.

perception that sparked the revisionist school into life. In a departure from the established pattern, revisionist writers agreed, on the basis of PRO sources, with the argument of Monnet and his followers that British policy was an 'engine of war' designed to strangle the EEC at birth. Critics from across the Channel, they observed, were right to condemn the FTA proposal.<sup>215</sup> Camps had planted the seeds of revisionism but conveniently failed to explore the tension she had produced in her account by applying her caution about the problems of policy projection abroad to the rest of her study. Maybe she did not recognise it. But perhaps she knew that if she admitted that policy presentation was the problem for Britain it would undermine her central claim that British policy was myopic. Revisionists and post-revisionists would later argue that British policy was only 'malicious' when seen through the eyes of continentals such as Monnet who had a particular view of how Europe should integrate. Such an admission could, however, have damaged the credibility of her broader account which on other issues was Monnetist in outlook.

The second example of the potential for revisionist interpretations to emerge from orthodox accounts comes in the literature on Bevin's foreign policy. It has been shown how some orthodox writers argued that Bevin flirted with the

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<sup>215</sup> This is one of the strongest revisionist criticisms, given in Anne Deighton, 'La Grande-Bretagne', op. cit., pp.113-9. For the political verdict rife at the time see Monnet, Memoirs, op. cit., pp.449-50; Ball, The Discipline of Power, op. cit., p.80; Charles de Gaulle, Memoirs of Hope: Renewal 1958-62, trans. Terence Kilmartin (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1971), pp.179-80; Roy Jenkins, A Life at the Centre (London: Macmillan, 1991), p.105; Heath, The Course of My Life, op. cit., p.202. On the academic side see Lamb, The Failure of the Eden Government, op. cit., p.95. Greenwood's 'spoiling tactic' echoes Lamb who he uses for his evidence. See Sean Greenwood, Britain and European Co-operation Since 1945 (Oxford: Blackwell, 1992), p.68; John W. Young, "'The Parting of Ways'?: Britain, The Messina Conference and the Spaak Committee, June- December 1955', in Dockrill and Young (eds.), British Foreign Policy, pp.197-224.

idea of creating a Third Force in Europe until 1948. In the end, however, they maintained that he preferred all along the Atlantic Alliance. That they refused to develop the revisionist interpretation is evidence of the structural and political forces at work on historical narratives.

These are just two examples of the seeds of revisionism being sown in key orthodox texts. Could one not, therefore, argue that all the literature is post-revisionist, in the sense that virtually all studies incorporate elements of the orthodox and revisionist interpretations of British European policy? No. The crucial distinction between schools is that some writers prioritise orthodox interpretations over revisionist approaches and vice-versa. That Camps flirted with revisionism in some respects does little damage to the observation that the impression one has from reading her studies are of a flawed British policy. One does not emerge with the same picture after reading revisionist historiography. To label all the literature 'post-revisionist' is to misunderstand how the various parts of the historical narrative fit together, to overlook the issue of intentionality in historical interpretation and neglect the weighting each historian allocates competing explanations of policy. It may sometimes be only the weighting that is different, but this is enough to delineate schools of writing.

The shift from one school to another is crucially dependent on a combination of generational and sociological forces. While sources of evidence and the political inputs to British historiography also need to be analysed in any explanation of historiographical evolution, they are necessary but not sufficient

conditions for the break between schools. What appears to be of greater consequence, and what therefore has to be considered the vital factor in defining the shift from one school to another, is the will by individual scholars to break *decisively* from the orthodoxy on crucial points of conflict. The will to do this stems from historiographical awareness on the part of a new generation of scholars who are reacting against the received wisdom. The role played by language and symbolism in this is crucial, because just as the orthodox school hides behind the discursive formation associated with 'missed opportunities', one finds revisionism and post-revisionism starting to gain most acceptance after one or two scholars have labelled their approach and set it explicitly against orthodox interpretations. British historiography has thus been less dependent than American on political upheaval. It is more closely linked to evidentiary bases and, most significantly, sociological divisions and the symbolic linguistic formations associated with them.

## **6. Conclusion**

On closer reading, then, orthodox works often contain the sources of evidence or throw-away one liners that later flourish into the revisionist interpretation. Similarly, revisionist writers often pay more than mere lip-service to the merits of the orthodox approach, before rejecting and subsuming it in a critique of the missed opportunities approach to British European policy. The division between the schools, what makes the historiographical study of Britain's relations with Europe so revealing, turns on why the revisionist approach



remained submerged beneath the orthodoxy for so long. Orthodox texts are qualitatively different from revisionist texts in terms of focus, texture and depth of analysis. The questions they ask of history are different, resulting in different aims, objectives, sources and methods of narrativisation.

Officials and politicians from both parties first voiced, and still repeat, the conventional wisdom. Academic studies tended to focus on the whole web of Britain's post-war contacts, not simply the European. To counter the view that this disparate coalition of writers cannot be termed a 'school', it must be remembered that writers do not necessarily have to be aware of their relationship to others in the field, to the historiographical landscape on which they tread, or to contemporary historical opinion to be a member of a school. The process of schoolification is necessarily a retrospective judgment. Behind the two schools there are intensely revealing sociological links among writers that it is hard to overlook in explaining historiographical evolution. It is only in the past fifteen years that the study of Britain's relationship with Europe has come to be studied as an area in its own right. It has, to be sure, been professionalised, bringing with it new methods of study, sources and epistemological concerns.

In this light, the term 'research method' needs to take greater account of all the sociological pressures and processes of imaginative reconstruction that go into the writing of history. As the term currently stands it is insufficiently aware of the practice of research, concentrating instead on the theory. If one can identify one's method, it seems, one has the ability to produce a scientifically objective

and logical interpretation of events. What this thesis shows, by contrast, is that there is an intrinsic individuality to all historical narratives, yet an overarching link among writers in schools which stems not from research design, or sources, or particular approaches to the study of political history. By contrast, interpretation is as much the product of language, symbolism and rhetoric, which, taken together, represent the discursive formations associated with particular communities and generations of writers. Research methods courses do not take sufficient account of the individual who narrates the history.

Historiography, the study of the individuals and communities who produce waves of historical writing, is ideally situated to shed light on the gap that currently exists in academic training between the theory of and practice research. The construction and writing of narratives are not as strongly linked to how one gathers data as they are to how one imaginatively collates that data into a coherent story. Historians and political scientists can learn much from dialogue with psychologists, anthropologists, postmodernists and critical theorists about how our interpretations shape and are continuously shaped by both the events we analyse and the language we use to narrate them. 'The past as an object will be read differently from one generation to another', note Appleby, Hunt and Jacob presciently.<sup>216</sup> Professional historical attention to the subject of Britain and Europe brought new approaches and language to the historiography. This is the subject of the next chapter.

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<sup>216</sup> Appleby, Hunt and Jacob, Telling the Truth About History, op. cit., p.265.

## **Chapter 3**

# **THE REVISIONIST SCHOOL: CHALLENGING THE RECEIVED WISDOM**

**Table 3: Key Writers in the Revisionist School**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Institution/Background</b>	<b>Sources</b>
Anne Deighton	University of Oxford	PRO, especially FO371, Bevin's papers, CAB
John Kent	LSE	PRO, especially FO371, CAB, CO*
Piers Ludlow	University of Oxford, LSE	Archives of European Commission and PRO, especially MAFF**
Scott Newton	University College, Cardiff	PRO, especially T, FO371 and CAB
Victor Rothwell	Edinburgh University	PRO, especially FO371
Geoffrey Warner	Open University	PRO, especially CAB and FO371
Hugo Young	Journalist	PRO, especially CAB, PREM and FO371
John Young	LSE, University of Leicester	PRO, especially CAB, PREM, FO371

\* CO stands for Colonial Office archives

\*\* BT stands for the various departments of the Board of Trade; T stands for the various committees and divisions of the Treasury; MAFF stands for the papers of the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food

Compare this table of key writers with that at the beginning of the last chapter.

What one discovers is that there is a striking difference between the sociological connections of the key writers in the revisionist school with those in the orthodox school. The domination of the revisionist school by professional historians, as opposed to the political, journalistic and eye-witnesses who form the backbone of the orthodox school, is intensely revealing

about the core argument advanced in this thesis. That is, the key influence on historiographical progression in Britain has been sociological. The dominance of the field of Britain and Europe by different communities of writers is thus the first variable to be considered in any account of the process of history-writing. The remaining influences on interpretation all seem to flow from this connection, but are split from it analytically for simplicity and because of the need to understand fully their impact on the methods and approaches to the study of history taken by revisionist writers.

This chapter is divided into six sections. The introductory section analyses the broad interpretation of British European policy offered by revisionist writers. This permits immediate contrasts to be drawn with the orthodoxy. Moreover, it reinforces the secondary argument advanced in this thesis, that the identification of clear schools of writing, based on published interpretation, is an extremely useful way of analysing this body of writing. The second section focuses on the significance of understanding historiographical progression in the context of different communities of writers asking different questions of the historical evidence put before them. The third examines the most obvious manifestation of the professionalisation of the field of Britain and Europe: the use of PRO sources by academic historians. It argues that for a combination of epistemological and practical reasons, documentation in the PRO has been the major source on which revisionist accounts have been built. In addition, it is pointed out, the identification of practical reasons governing the widespread use of PRO material reveals much about considerations of money and time in the process of historical research. Such constraints on the pace and direction of

historical understanding in Britain cannot be overlooked. Yet, it is argued, they have yet to be systematically considered either by historians or philosophers of history. The fourth section turns attention to the assumptions that are implicit in much of the historical research undertaken by revisionist historians. It asserts the significance of the level of analysis on which they locate their accounts of British European policy, their approach to intentions and outcomes in the foreign policy arena, the new sources of evidence brought to bear on the past and the implications all this has had for their attack on the use of hindsight in orthodox historical accounts.

The fifth section takes a step back, inquiring whether it has been sources leading revisionist accounts, or revisionists seeking new evidence in the primary documentation simply to reinforce their unhappiness with orthodox interpretations. While it is difficult to make decisive judgements about cause and effect, it is argued that one can discern from the weight of evidence provided, the importance of primary sources to revisionist interpretations of British European policy. Without the release of documents under the Thirty Year Rule, it is unlikely that such a bold revisionism as has appeared in the last decade would yet have emerged. This section goes on to reflect further on the premium placed by professional historians on PRO sources, arguing that other potential sources- notably the media- have too often been overlooked. This, it shows, may have retarded the development of the new historical understandings one now finds in the literature. The conclusion to this chapter reflects on the limits to historical understanding imposed by the individuality of historical research and the natural tendency of historians to examine history

with the preoccupations of their own country in mind. Such introspectiveness, for which they are hardly to be blamed, tends to mean that 'global' perspectives on history have worked their way only slowly into the historiography of Britain and Europe. The chapter ends by speculating that this arguably more balanced perspective could be achieved by transnational teams of historians working on the material.

### 1. The Revolt Against the Conventional Wisdom

'It is not without significance', Elton remarked wryly, 'that the one historian among the ancients for whom no-one has a bad word seems to be Asinius Pollo, of whose writing nothing survives'.<sup>1</sup> Human beings are naturally inquisitive, investigative and argumentative animals. Academia in particular possesses, Morrow and Brown note, an 'inherently competitive character'.<sup>2</sup> Historiographical evolution can in this context be taken as one of scholarship's givens. One explanation for an event or events is bound to be met with suspicion by a host of critics who will propose alternatives. As Kaplan explains: 'history has no meaning except the meaning it has for certain individuals within the context of matters that have importance for them...History has no independent existence. Nor is there any unity that can

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<sup>1</sup> Elton, *The Practice of History*, op. cit., p.2.

<sup>2</sup> Morrow and Brown, *Critical Theory and Methodology*, op. cit., preface, p.14. See also Southgate, *History*, op. cit., p.69. Elton also remarked that the only certainty in history is that 'there will be more said and that, before long, others will say it'; *The Practice of History*, op. cit., p.63. Rhodes James agreed that 'There will be further and different assessments. This is in the nature of historiography', in *Anthony Eden*, op. cit., preface, p.14. See also Carr, *What is History?*, op. cit., p.124.

single-mindedly be imposed upon it, for history is analysable from many different perspectives that can be applied only within limited frameworks'.<sup>3</sup>

The typology of historiographical development identified by John Gaddis on the origins and evolution of the Cold War suggests that an orthodox interpretation will be followed by a revisionist critique. Post-revisionists will then blend elements of the two in a balanced synthesis which agrees partially with orthodox and partially with revisionist accounts.<sup>4</sup> But is there more to revisionism than the dynamics of human understanding and inquiry? This chapter explores the intertwining factors in the development of the revisionist school of writing on Britain's relationship with Europe since 1945.

In doing so, it supports Kaplan's observation that 'The uses that are made of history will be no better than the questions put to it'.<sup>5</sup> One of the core assumptions of this study is that there is no single 'truth' about what happened in the past, but a number of competing claims to the truth made by all the individuals who narrate historical events. The writing on Britain and Europe provides a compelling demonstration of this assertion, because the professionalisation of research in this field has led to a whole new set of issues being examined in the light of fresh primary evidence. Revisionists asked a whole new array of questions about Britain and Europe, using new sources to answer them. The accounts they have produced are different both in orientation, tone, substance and texture from the orthodoxy. Ritchie

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<sup>3</sup> Kaplan, *On Historical and Political Knowing*, op. cit., p.99.

<sup>4</sup> Gaddis, 'The Emerging Post-Revisionist Synthesis', op. cit.

<sup>5</sup> Kaplan, *On Historical and Political Knowing*, op. cit., p.105.



Ovendale's criticism of Frankel's *British Foreign Policy*, what Jordanova classes as a 'survey history',<sup>6</sup> akin to textbooks in their propensity to generalise, is representative of the view diplomatic historians in Britain have generally had of the historical content of broad studies, and those from the pens of political scientists, of Britain's foreign relations since 1945: 'This work is probably of interest to social scientists concerned with "paradigms", "parameters" of action and "salience". Its value to historical scholars is more limited'.<sup>7</sup>

There are three broad themes running through the writing and interpretation of the revisionist school. It will be helpful introduce these before showing how they manifest themselves in the revisionist school's core sociological and theoretical underpinnings. The first is the challenge it poses to orthodox conceptions of British European policy. The previous chapter showed how orthodox writers were vehement that British policy-makers pursued a flawed, myopic policy towards European integration in the post-war era. While there were debates about *when* Britain had the best 'opportunity' to seize the leadership of Europe, the broad consensus among them was that Britain *did* miss opportunities to pursue a leadership role in Europe after 1945.

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<sup>6</sup> Jordanova, *History in Practice*, op. cit., p.19.

<sup>7</sup> Ovendale, review, *British Foreign Policy 1945-1973*. By Joseph Frankel', *International Affairs*, op. cit., p.575. Historians in general tend to take issue with 'the stereotypes peddled by many journalists and most politicians' about the past. See Stefan Collini, *English Pasts: Essays in History and Culture* (Oxford: oxford University Press, 1999), p.1. It is a theme he takes up again in the first chapter, 'Writing "the National History": Trevelyan and After', pp.10-37.

Revisionists, by contrast, have treated the subject, in the words of Michael Hopkins, in a 'broadly sympathetic' way.<sup>8</sup> They have questioned what David Reynolds refers to as 'the anti-reputation of British leaders'.<sup>9</sup> Clearly unhappy with the missed opportunities discourse, revisionists see in it an unnecessarily crude simplification of events to suit particular political ends. Stuart Croft notes, for example, that 'What the critics have done is essentially accept the continental and North American agendas' when criticising British governments after 1945.<sup>10</sup> The very language employed by revisionists, attacking Britain's 'anti-reputation' highlights the contrasting approaches to the writing of history taken by each school. They attack the 'spurious unity that has been imposed on the construct "consensus"'.<sup>11</sup> There is, argues Wilkes, need for a clearer perspective: 'The weight given to the UK's mistakes in historical accounts has had some unfortunate side-effects: historians have tended to pass quickly over important episodes in British-Six relations which did not involve conflict, and have been more concerned to explain the inadequacy of the motivation or vision behind British European policies than to analyse their causes and effects thoroughly'.<sup>12</sup> Bradford Perkins attempts to explain this dominance in the historical record of discord over unity thus: 'Historians are drawn, almost

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<sup>8</sup> Michael Hopkins, review, '*Britain and European Unity 1945-1992*. By John Young', *International Affairs*, 70, 4 (1994), p.811. Nicholas Rees uses the same word to describe Greenwood's approach in his review, *Britain and European Co-operation Since 1945*. By Sean Greenwood', *International Affairs*, 69, 4 (1993), pp.792-3 (p.792).

<sup>9</sup> David Reynolds, review, '*The Foreign Policy of Churchill's Peacetime Administration, 1951-1955*. Edited by John W. Young', *International Affairs*, 65, 1 (1989), p.144.

<sup>10</sup> Stuart Croft 'British Policy Towards Western Europe, 1947-9: The Best of Possible Worlds?', *International Affairs*, 64, 4 (1988), pp.617-29 (p.618).

<sup>11</sup> Jonathan Hollowell, review, '*Callaghan: A Life*. By Kenneth O. Morgan', *Contemporary British History*, 11, 4 (1997), pp.129-33 (p.130). The same, Watt argues, might be said of Britain's 'decline' after 1945. See Watt, 'Demythologising the Eisenhower Era', op. cit.

<sup>12</sup> George Wilkes, 'The First Failure to Steer Britain into the European Communities: An Introduction', in George Wilkes (ed.), *Britain's Failure*, op. cit., pp.1-32 (p.4).

necessarily by the nature of their sources, to emphasise discord. Position papers, correspondence, memoirs- all are far more likely to record disagreement than agreement. Tacit understandings, by their nature, are rarely documented'.<sup>13</sup> It might usefully be observed, bearing in mind Wilkes' previous assertion, that in the historiography of Britain's relations with Europe it has been left to the historians to draw out the areas which 'did not involve conflict'.

The revisionist approach has also been elucidated by Hill. He reflected that 'It is not enough in the late 1980s to recite a list of apparent failures in British foreign policy since the last war and to link them to an inability to let go of past attitudes and commitments'.<sup>14</sup> It is also worth reflecting further here on David Watt's observation- introduced in the last chapter- to make this point. The missed opportunities orthodoxy is, he argues, the preserve of 'Europeanists in British public life, to whom it has become virtually axiomatic that our failure to "catch the European bus" in the mid-1950s was almost entirely due to a national obsession with the special relationship. Closer investigation... shows that things were much more complicated'.<sup>15</sup> Neither the course of Anglo-European nor Anglo-American relations can be described in the general terms adopted by the orthodox school of writers on Britain and Europe. Margaret Gowing also has little sympathy for 'counter-factual history- what might have happened but didn't'.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Perkins, 'Unequal Partners', op. cit., pp.63-4.

<sup>14</sup> Hill, 'The Historical Background', op. cit., p.33.

<sup>15</sup> Watt, 'Introduction: The Anglo-American Relationship', op. cit., p.7.

<sup>16</sup> Gowing, 'Nuclear Weapons', op. cit., p.125.

By analysing the 'sympathetic' approach to the debate about Britain and Europe, one immediately begins to identify some of the major ties binding writers in the revisionist school. John Colville, in a departure from what Mayne describes as the 'painful *mea culpa* on the part of the British officialdom' which characterises the orthodox school,<sup>17</sup> reached to the heart of revisionism with these words to Charlton: 'People now talk as if there were great opportunities missed. I doubt there were those opportunities. Nobody wanted that particular [European] solution'.<sup>18</sup> Young echoes this sentiment: 'The fact is that Britain could not have had the leadership of Europe *on its own terms* because Britain saw no need to abandon its sovereignty to common institutions, whereas the Six saw this as vital. Britain could only have played a leading role in European integration, paradoxically, *if* it had accepted the continentals' terms and embraced supranationalism, but very few people advocated this before 1957'.<sup>19</sup> Thus, writes Hill, 'it is pointless to spend too much time berating dead or ennobled Prime Ministers for missing the boat'.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Mayne, review, 'The Price of Victory. By Michael Charlton', *International Affairs*, op. cit., p.327.

<sup>18</sup> Charlton, *The Price of Victory*, op. cit., p.23. See also Keith Sainsbury, 'Selwyn Lloyd', in Shlaim, Jones and Sainsbury (eds.), *British Foreign Secretaries*, pp.117-43 (p124). Here he argues that 'Britain was not psychologically ready to "enter Europe" in 1955; and that her interests and commitments were then probably irreconcilable with the essential EEC concept. *This was certainly the general view at the time*'. Emphasis added. In so doing they draw out hints in other orthodox works, such as Barker's *Britain in a Divided Europe*, that few policy-makers realised they were missing opportunities at the time. See pp.152-3. See also Northedge's comment on the Schuman Plan: 'there were intelligible reasons why British opinion could not be wildly enthusiastic about the coal and steel pool'- was there an opportunity missed here, then? Northedge, *British Foreign Policy*, op. cit., p.152.

<sup>19</sup> Young, *Britain and European Unity*, op. cit., p.54. Emphasis in original. See also Burgess and Edwards, 'The Six Plus One', op. cit.; Sainsbury, 'Selwyn Lloyd', op. cit., especially pp.124-33; Warner, 'The Labour Governments and the Unity of Western Europe', op. cit.

<sup>20</sup> Hill, 'The Historical Background', op. cit., p.45.

Beloff picked out a further discrepancy in the orthodox position. It was, he commented, the Franco-German, not Anglo-French or Anglo-German axis, which was central to the success of integrative efforts in Europe after the Second World War. 'We are told that a historic opportunity was missed'. But 'it is hard to see how any British government, even one in which trade union influence was less strong, could have accepted entering upon such a venture'.<sup>21</sup> The continentals preferred that Britain joined the integration process but would not halt if she decided not to. In sum, revisionists delineate three inconsistencies in the orthodox interpretation of British European policy. First, British policy-makers were not wedded to a strictly European role for Britain after 1945. But when they were, secondly, they could be more constructive and, by implication, less 'negative' than orthodox writers made allowance for.<sup>22</sup> Deighton's verdict is that 'it is a fallacy to believe that Britain turned her back on continental Europe during the fifteen years or so that followed the Second World War. Europe always remained at or near the forefront of British decision-makers' minds'.<sup>23</sup> Finally, the Six were not simply waiting for Britain to take the lead. Rather, they were capable of considerable achievements exogenous from Britain's influence, as innovations such as the Messina process which followed so soon after the collapse of the EDC in the French parliament demonstrated. 'The truth of the matter was seen when Britain *did* try to take the lead in Europe: Bevin tried to "lead" Europe after 1948, but was

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<sup>21</sup> Beloff, Britain and the European Union, op. cit., p.7, p.55.

<sup>22</sup> Anne Deighton, 'Missing the Boat', Contemporary Record, 3, 3 (1990), pp.15-7 (p.15). See also Geoffrey Warner, 'The Labour Governments and the Unity of Western Europe', in Ovendale (ed.), The Foreign Policy of the British Labour Governments, op. cit., pp.61-82.

<sup>23</sup> Deighton, 'Missing the Boat', op. cit., p.15.

unable to prevent the Schuman Plan; Eden tried to establish institutional co-operation with the Six through the 1952 “Eden Plan”, yet, as Spaak put it, Europe by this time was in a ‘whole hog mood’; British proposals were only ‘half-way houses’.<sup>24</sup>

To characterise this period in Britain’s relationship with Europe as one of ‘missed opportunities’ is for revisionists to misunderstand the politics and policy of the majority of key decision-makers in Britain at this time. The charge of missed opportunities is, they argue, a normative *political* judgment based largely on Monnetist premises that the ‘right’ or ‘enlightened’ integrative course for the continent to follow after the war was federal or supranational. Kaiser puts it thus: the orthodox position is ‘based on the normative assumption that the path taken by the Six in the 1950s was not only successful but natural, and also morally superior to the British preference for trade liberalisation within intergovernmental institutional structures’.<sup>25</sup> In Britain the preference for intergovernmentalism in the Council of Europe, the Schuman Plan, the European Army and the EEC contrasted with the thinking of the Monnetists, but is that any reason to make sweeping criticisms based on hindsight?<sup>26</sup> David Dutton thinks not: ‘it has become common to suggest that

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<sup>24</sup> Young, Britain and European Unity, op. cit., pp.53-4. See also Raymond Aron, ‘Historical Sketch of the Great Debate’, in Lerner and Aron (eds.), France Defeats EDC, op. cit., pp.2-21; Winand, Eisenhower, Kennedy, op. cit., p.23; John Gillingham, ‘Jean Monnet and the European Coal and Steel Community: A Preliminary Appraisal’, in Brinkley and Hackett (eds.), Jean Monnet, op. cit., pp.129-62; Marjolin, ‘What Type of Europe?’, op. cit.

<sup>25</sup> Kaiser, Using Europe, op. cit., introduction, p.16. Hill likewise argues that ‘The search for roles... encourages an emphasis on “turning points” or the obverse, “missed opportunities”, which casts a misleadingly apocalyptic light on the process of change’. In Hill, ‘The Historical Background’, op. cit., p.45.

<sup>26</sup> The use of hindsight to construct the missed opportunities critique is crucial, as Lord Gladwyn later revealed to Michael Charlton in The Price of Victory, op. cit., pp.55-6.

Britain, through a combination of neglect and wilfulness, missed the “European bus” waiting to transport her to her rightful destiny. But Eden would have wanted to know the precise destiny of such a vehicle’.<sup>27</sup> Revisionists would argue that such ‘glib criticism’ has been wrongfully levelled at many other politicians and officials directing British European policy since 1945,<sup>28</sup> John Charmley summarising this as follows: ‘Those who cleave to the “lost opportunities” myth show, by so doing, an inadequate appreciation of the situation in which Britain found herself in 1950-1’.<sup>29</sup>

Reynolds takes this argument the furthest, arguing that Britain did not need to pay serious attention to its regional concerns to remain a power of genuine world standing. ‘Britain was exerting itself as a power more energetically than at any time outside the world wars, certainly far more than in its supposed Victorian heyday’.<sup>30</sup> This displays an overconfidence in Britain’s post-war standing from which many revisionist writers would recoil, Jan Melissen and Bert Zeeman highlighting the generally accepted interpretative dichotomy between the schools in succinct fashion: ‘Britain did not miss the European bus; it just declined to board one which was going in the wrong direction’.<sup>31</sup>

This definition of the interpretation placed by the revisionist school of writers

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<sup>27</sup> David Dutton, *Anthony Eden: A Life and Reputation* (London: Arnold, 1997), p.302.

<sup>28</sup> Robert Shepherd, review, ‘*Alec Douglas-Home*. By D. R. Thorpe; *Anthony Eden: A Life and Reputation*. By David Dutton’, *Contemporary British History* 11, 1 (1997), pp.153-5 (p.154).

<sup>29</sup> John Charmley, *Churchill’s Grand Alliance: The Anglo-American Special Relationship 1940-57* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1995).

<sup>30</sup> Reynolds, *Britannia Overruled*, op. cit., p.198. The stridency with which he makes this claim marks him apart from revisionists who are not nearly so sure about Britain’s future outside the Community.

<sup>31</sup> Melissen and Zeeman, ‘Britain and Western Europe’, op. cit., p.93. See also Greenwood, *Britain and European Co-operation*, op. cit.; Kaiser, *Using Europe*, op. cit.

upon events in British European policy is the first theme running through this chapter.

The second theme running through the chapter is that the community of writers dominating the revisionist school is different from that dominating the orthodox school. In contrast to the politicians, officials and journalist dominant in the orthodoxy, the revisionist school has been driven by professional historians researching Britain's relationship with Europe. A significant link among revisionist writers is their positivist outlook and judicious use of primary sources in the PRO. This suggests a shared assumption about the value of 'hard 'facts' and 'testable evidence' as the foundations of historical knowledge. As Jordanova observes: 'The general assumption is that for something to count as knowledge, whatever the field, it has to go through a series of evaluation and checks such that authors are felt to be somehow accountable to their readers. At the most basic level this is why scholarly works have footnotes and bibliographies'.<sup>32</sup>

In this context, there is a strong connection between revisionism and establishment institutions such as Oxford and the LSE.<sup>33</sup> Cambridge is a different case, and one can speculate as to the reasons why. Primarily it seems that its weaker tradition in the field of International Relations and European Studies has impeded it from rivalling Oxford and LSE as a bastion of revisionism. Cambridge has a stronger link to the natural sciences, a tradition

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<sup>32</sup> Jordanova, *History in Practice*, op. cit., p. 16.

<sup>33</sup> Students writing now are following the tradition of scholars such as William Wallace and F. S. Northedge who have been at the forefront of British international studies.



which has continued recently with the University 'putting its efforts into a different kind of power base, joining the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in a £68 million science enterprise project and developing a computer lab with £12 million of funding from Bill Gates'.<sup>34</sup>

The third theme running through the chapter is revisionists' dissatisfaction with the political use and abuse of the labels 'European' and 'anti-European'. It is developed in their attack on the crude negativity attributed to successive governments' European policies. They argue that it is hypocritical and intentionally misleading for British 'Europeans' such as Maxwell Fyfe and Boothby to characterise Eden as 'anti-European' by suggesting that their own views were any more palatable to the Monnetists. From the Monnetist perspective there were, notes Greenwood, 'no real "pro-Europeans"'<sup>35</sup> in Whitehall in the 1950s, despite their later pleas to the contrary. Few at the time advocated joining integrative efforts in the 1950s; only later did they claim they did.<sup>36</sup>

These are the leading threads running through the argument of this chapter. A corollary of revisionist critiques of missed opportunities, is that orthodox

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<sup>34</sup> Swain, 'Blair's Capital Hearing Aides', op. cit.

<sup>35</sup> Greenwood, Britain and European Co-operation, op. cit., p.78.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., p.50; Young, Britain and European Unity, op. cit., p.38; David Carlton, Anthony Eden: A Biography (London: Allen Lane, 1981), op. cit., p.309; Dutton, Anthony Eden, op. cit., p.295.

writers have allowed personal political antagonism to obscure considered reflection on European policy; that they use hindsight and selective quotation to manufacture the historical record to suit certain ideological predilections; and that there is lack of 'empathy' in the construction of orthodox historical narratives which ignore the complexities of the domestic and international systems within which foreign policies are developed and projected. Revisionists would agree with Brivati's assertion that empathy 'is a virtue in historical writing and not a vice. It is built of small things: of hand-written notes, of glimpses of the ordinary humanity behind the historical façade: it is built up in the direct interaction between the evidence and the historian'.<sup>37</sup> This chapter will elaborate on all the factors that have stimulated the revisionist critique of the 'missed opportunities' orthodoxy and the assumptions that underpin it. It is most appropriate to begin with the social construction of the school.

## **2. The Social Construction of the Revisionist School**

Beloff wrote that 'Much of the impetus to revisionism arises from the mere expansion of the historians' profession'.<sup>38</sup> Kaplan likewise argued that 'It may

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<sup>37</sup> Brivati, 'Cd-Rom and the Historian', op. cit., p.477. See also Jordanova, History in Practice, op. cit., p.7. She discusses here the importance of 'empathy' in the teaching of history from the early school years onwards, showing that it is of paramount importance to the way we think about and reconstruct events. Herbert Butterfield also argued (in the context of the history of Cold War origins) that 'In historical perspective we can learn to be a little more sorry for both parties than they knew how to be one another', a quote which highlights the empathetic approach historians can apparently take with distance and care to consult the primary sources. See Herbert, Butterfield, History and Human Relations (London: Collins, 1951), p.17.

<sup>38</sup> Beloff, An Historian, op. cit., p.32.

even be...that an interlocking directorate of foundations, corporations and universities determines the direction in which social science goes and even the subjects it explores'.<sup>39</sup> Jon Turney has continued this theme recently, arguing that 'There is still much more to discuss [in the context of why scientific theories rise and fall], notably the role of communities of researchers, not just individuals, in building epistemic standards into scientific practice'.<sup>40</sup> They were all alluding to the sociological dynamics of historiographical progression, the advances in historical understanding brought about by conscious or unconscious decisions on the parts of individuals and funding bodies about what areas to study and how to study them. It would be historiographically neat and convenient if the revisionist school came from a completely contrasting sociological grouping and there is plenty of evidence to suggest that this has indeed been the case. The core argument of this thesis is that the two dominant schools in the historiography of Britain's relationship with the continent are first and foremost divided along a sociological fault line. Watt summarises this distinction between the social construction of the schools by noting that there is a 'first wave of writers who reviewed this period, that curious mélange of backward-looking commentators, political fixers, myth-makers and second-guessers whose initial occupation of the field makes the task of the professional historian so much more difficult'.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> Kaplan, *On Historical and Political Knowing*, op. cit., p.134.

<sup>40</sup> Jon Turney, 'Values in Scientific Ventures', op. cit.

<sup>41</sup> Watt, 'Demythologising the Eisenhower Era', op. cit., p.72.

It was argued in the last chapter that what lay behind many orthodox accounts was a direct or indirect link with the political vision espoused by Monnet. Flowing from this was an interpretation of British European policy that was not at all kind to those who had been centrally involved in planning and executing Britain's approach to the continent after 1945. That the writers were came from political, official and journalistic backgrounds suggested that the school was at least in part socially constructed.

Even before the Single European Act reinvigorated the EEC, British historians realised that there were research opportunities in post-1945 international history away from conflict, into peacetime relations. As Deighton has communicated: 'I don't think [the] relaunch of [the] EC is a reason as much as the availability of documents. The Thirty Year Rule plays such a powerful role in the generation of contemporary historical research...I certainly don't remember being infected by some kind of passion for Europe as the SEA was being negotiated! Indeed, it is worth remembering that, at the time, the possible impact of the SEA was underestimated'.<sup>42</sup> Young is in full agreement: 'I started off seeing the Cold War as a focus to my PhD in 1979 but realised in 1980-81- long before any revival of the EEC- that the unity theme was essential to Anglo-French relations, and completed in 1982 with that focus'.<sup>43</sup> In general, Brivati, Buxton and Seldon note, 'The 1980s saw a significant expansion in the study of contemporary, which increasingly meant post-war,

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<sup>42</sup> Permission to quote from email message of 6 May, 2000.

<sup>43</sup> Permission to quote email message of 8 May 2000.

British history'.<sup>44</sup> Hitler no longer dominated the international relations research agenda, but the Cold War was still proving a financially attractive area. Thus, there was an intermingling of research into Britain's Cold War and European policies, the one acting as a stimulus to the other.<sup>45</sup>

Recalling how he came to research the history of Britain's relations with Europe, Young has also written: 'it fitted into my interests in the origins of the Cold War as an undergraduate AND it was an area just opening up in the archives (so no-one could beat me to it)'.<sup>46</sup> There is, according to this evidence, only a vague sense in which the revisionist school has been driven by the fads and fashions in the academic world of international studies. It has been driven more fundamentally by the release of documents into the PRO. Some of the leading names were originally interested in the origins of the Cold War, but linked their research into Anglo-French relations to the unity of Europe, it seems, *before* the revival of the EEC in 1985. Given the vast number of books on Britain, the division of Germany and the origins of the Cold War, this was a

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<sup>44</sup> Brian Brivati, Julia Buxton and Anthony Seldon, 'Preface', in Brivati, Buxton and Seldon (eds.), The Contemporary History Handbook, op. cit., pp.11-14 (p.12).

<sup>45</sup> Observe how leading revisionist scholars also have a list of publications in the field of Cold War politics. Young, Britain, France and the Unity of Europe 1945-1951, op. cit.; Young, Cold War Europe 1945-1989, op. cit.; Young, 'Cold War and Détente with Moscow', in Young (ed.), The Foreign Policy of Churchill's Peacetime Administration, op. cit., pp.55-80; Young, 'The Foreign Office, the French and the Post-War Division of Germany, 1945-46', Review of International Studies, 12 (1986), pp.223-34. His publications on Britain and Europe include 'Britain and the EEC 1956-73: An Overview', in Brivati and Jones (eds.), From Reconstruction, pp.103-13; 'British Officials and European Integration', op. cit.; 'Churchill's "No" to Europe', op. cit.; 'German Rearmament and the European Defence Community', in Young (ed.), The Foreign Policy of Churchill's Peacetime Administration, pp.81-107; 'The Heath Government and British Entry into the European Community', in Ball and Seldon (eds.), The Heath Government, pp.159-84; '"The Parting of Ways"?'', op. cit.; 'The Schuman Plan and British Association', in Young (ed.), The Foreign Policy of Churchill's Peacetime Administration, pp.109-34.

<sup>46</sup> Email correspondence, 27 January 1999.

useful career move!<sup>47</sup> There is a case to be argued, then, that revisionist historiography is intimately connected to the political climate in Europe in the 1980s.

Iggers argues that, 'while postmodern thought increasingly called into question [in the last twenty years] the authority of the professional scholar, historical work in fact felt the pressures of increasing professionalisation'.<sup>48</sup> The major revisionist writers have been diplomatic historians testing orthodox propositions against primary evidence discovered in the PRO. The archives subject to the closest scrutiny have been those of the Foreign Office, Cabinet and the Prime Minister's Office. Recently there have been moves into the Treasury and Board of Trade papers and greater awareness of evidence from colonial histories and archives abroad.

Kaplan warned that 'explanatory frameworks in the social and physical sciences run the risk of merely skimming the surface of the particularity to be explained; and this is especially true the closer we come to the level of microevents'.<sup>49</sup> Specialisation and all that that entails vis-à-vis the need to publish new accounts, to build academic reputations and careers, to criticise established orthodoxies, to be methodologically rigorous, has had the effect of

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<sup>47</sup> Deighton's trajectory is also from Cold War to European unity. See Deighton, The Impossible Peace, op. cit.; Deighton (ed.), Britain and the First Cold War (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1990); Deighton, 'Cold War Diplomacy', op. cit.; Deighton, 'The "Frozen Front"', op. cit. Her studies on Europe include the edited volume Building Post-War Europe, op. cit.; and the articles 'Harold Macmillan, Whitehall, and the Defence of Europe', op. cit.; 'La Grande-Bretagne', op. cit.; 'Missing the Boat: Britain and Europe 1945-61', Contemporary Record, 4, 1 (1990), pp.15-7.

<sup>48</sup> Iggers, Historiography, op. cit., p.15.

<sup>49</sup> Kaplan, On Historical and Political Knowing, op. cit., p.44.

adding new dimensions to our understanding of British European policy. As in the process of painting a water-colour scene, the orthodox school covered the canvas with broad sweeps of the brush. Revisionists have been filling in the detail, adding new individuals to the scene, depicting the shape of existing individuals more sharply. In short, revisionists argue, they have been giving the picture of Britain's relationship with the continent its perspective. To the orthodox 'truth' we can add the revisionist version of the 'truth'. This supports Kaplan's observation that: 'When one theory replaces another, it is usually because the previous theory has been shown not to offer a genuine explanation. Thus, although the domain of a new theory may be smaller than the previously accepted domain of the old theory, its new domain is larger than the now (often) zero domain of the old theory'.<sup>50</sup> It is clear that the communities of writers dominant in each school are different. Can one conclude, therefore, that this is the most significant distinction between the schools? Not necessarily.

The sociological division between schools is conceptually neat but overlooks several issues which will be drawn out in this section. First, there is no single revisionist interpretation of events. Beneath agreement on the flaws in the orthodoxy, revisionists debate among themselves the weighting to assign each potential explanation of British European policy. Second, one cannot date revisionism to a certain point in the mid-1980s when it was 'born'. Most studies of Britain and Europe contain the seeds of revisionism. More damagingly still, the Economist thirty years ago and works by foreign writers

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<sup>50</sup> Ibid., p.17.

examining, if only in passing, Britain's attitude and relationship with the continent, picked out factors in the creation of British European policy that now form central tenets of the revisionist school.<sup>51</sup> Alluding to this, Donald Watt called at an International History conference in the PRO<sup>52</sup> for scholars to be more aware of the 'informed debate' in the press when they construct historical narratives. Wm Roger Louis also warned against the dangers of primary research producing 'knowledge for the sake of knowledge'.<sup>53</sup>

Their pleas are particularly relevant to the historiography of Britain's relations with Europe. What Louis has identified is the phenomena of professional historians waiting until the archives are open before offering interpretations of the past. Yet, reading the 'informed debate' in opinion-setters such as the *Economist* offers a version of events as they happened which rivals the documentary evidence. It may not contain insights into the workings of the Whitehall machine, but by commenting on the oft forgotten officials and ministers active in Europe at the time, such journalistic accounts present the opportunity for historians to get round the problem of hindsight and begin to narrate events 'as they happened' before the Thirty Year Rule releases official government sources to the public.

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<sup>51</sup> Examples of this are to be found throughout its articles on the 1945-73 period. It is not necessarily that it proposed revisionist explanations, but the detail it contains on bilateral contacts between British officials and their colleagues on the continent later to appear at the forefront of revisionist interpretations of policy and policy-making. These individuals rarely appear in professional histories until primary sources are consulted.

<sup>52</sup> 24 June 1999.

<sup>53</sup> Their presentations were reminiscent of Watt's 1978 call for British historians to reformulate their goals and refine their methods. See 'Re-thinking the Cold War: A Letter to a British Historian', *Political Quarterly*, 49, 4 (1978), pp.446-56.



That the workings of the foreign policy machine are not always revealed by the press is one reason why many professional historians eschew it as a primary source. The decision-making machinery has developed into one of their major lines of interest.<sup>54</sup> Fascination with processes rather than outcomes is not, however, confined to British diplomatic historians. This suggests a shared epistemological outlook across different academic communities about how to reconstruct historical events.<sup>55</sup> The second reason is that the press does not have the same respectability as an empirical source for British historians. Peter Hennessy's verdict is representative: 'historians are likely to find newspapers poor witnesses to much contemporary history'.<sup>56</sup> It is well known that the 'printed text has come to enjoy [an] assured status of certainty, authority and reliability'. More importantly, Christopher Phipps continues, 'books have become trustworthy disseminators of knowledge'.<sup>57</sup> The work that goes into

<sup>54</sup> Studies which highlight the preoccupation of historians with the process of foreign policy-making include Zametica (ed.), British Officials and British Foreign Policy 1945-50, op. cit.; Adamthwaite, 'Britain and the World, 1945-9: The View from the Foreign Office', op. cit.; Adamthwaite, 'Introduction: The Foreign Office and Policy-Making', op. cit.; Adamthwaite, 'Overstretched and Overstrung: Eden, the Foreign Office and the Making of Policy', op. cit.; Pagedas, Anglo-American Strategic Relations, op. cit.; John W. Young, 'British Officials and European Integration, 1944-60', op. cit.; Shlaim, 'The Foreign Secretary and the Making of Policy', op. cit. The continuing allure of the machinery of policy is a theme taken up by Tim Garden who notes the interest of recent scholarship on British defence policy to those fascinated in 'the machinations of Whitehall'. Tim Garden, 'The War Baby Grows Up: *Modern Strategy*. By Colin S. Gray, *The Politics of British Defence 1979-98*. By Lawrence Freedman', Times Higher Education Supplement, 18 February 2000, p.29.

<sup>55</sup> Sabine Lee, 'German Decision-Making Elites and European Integration: German "Europolitik" During the Years of the EEC and Free Trade Area Negotiations', in Deighton (ed.), Building Post-War Europe, op. cit., pp.39-54; Gerald Boussat, 'The French Administrative Elite and the Unification of Western Europe, 1947-58', in Deighton (ed.), Building Post-War Europe, op. cit., pp.21-37; Thierry Grosbois and Yves Stelandre, 'Belgian Decision-Makers and European Unity, 1945-63', in Deighton (ed.), Building Post-War Europe, op. cit., pp.127-40;.

<sup>56</sup> Peter Hennessy, 'The Press and Broadcasting', in Seldon (ed.), Contemporary History, op. cit., pp.17-29 (p.22). He uses as his example the media verdict on Britain and the EEC, which is interesting in the context of the findings in this study that the Economist contains many useful insights that could be used by historians.

<sup>57</sup> Christopher Phipps, review, 'Printing Practice Done by the Book: *The Nature of the Book: Print and Knowledge in the Making*. By Adrian Johns', Times Higher Education Supplement, 3 March 2000, p.32.

the writing and printing of books apparently renders them better purveyors of knowledge because they deliver an 'authority, veracity and textual reliability [which] have had to be grafted on over time through the concerted, often thwarted, efforts of author and printer'.<sup>58</sup> It is books and archives which are taken as 'trustworthy' sources. Newspapers do not have the same appeal to historians labouring under the notion that 'scientific' and 'scholarly' are synonymous.<sup>59</sup>

The academic and publishing communities demand hard evidence and sustainable theories. But historians tend to shrink from reconstructing history directly in the wake of events. They prefer to wait for the Thirty Rule on the release of documents to take effect rather than relying on hunches, oral testimony or the media which they perceive to be less reliable a source. Book reviews which stress the fallibility of interpretations on periods for which primary material is not available reinforce the caution with which historians generally approach the post-Thirty Year Rule period. On Young's *Britain and European Unity*, for example, George remarked that 'While the treatment of the early period is reliable, Young's foray into more contemporary scholarship does not enhance his reputation as a scholar'.<sup>60</sup> Conservatism in the discipline of history is possibly related to the loneliness which traditionally

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<sup>58</sup> Ibid.

<sup>59</sup> Morrow and Brown, *Critical Theory and Methodology*, op. cit., p.4.

<sup>60</sup> Stephen George, review, '*Britain and European Unity, 1945-1992*. By John W. Young', *Journal of Common Market Studies*, 33, 2 (1995), pp.306-7 (p.307). Of the similar work by Greenwood, George makes the same observation: 'his judgements are more questionable the nearer the book approaches to the present'. See Stephen George, '*Britain and European Co-operation Since 1945*. By Sean Greenwood', *Journal of Common market Studies*, 31, 1 (1993), p.128.

characterises the pursuit of scholarly knowledge. Southgate draws an analogy between the historian and the farmer: 'the historian may, and often does, plough a solitary furrow, but comfort can be taken from providing some contribution to the tilling of the whole field. The process will never be complete: there is no final solution'.<sup>61</sup> The loneliness that has traditionally characterised historical research is also an important part of why historians have been slow to engage with the morass of available primary material on Britain and Europe, a point that will be developed further below.

The twin requirements of professionalism and hard evidence can clearly be seen in the type of study penned by revisionist historians. Their accounts have been published in academic journals, monographs and edited volumes. In contrast to the orthodoxy, revisionist historiography has been coincident with specialist studies, using evidence assiduously gathered in the PRO. The footnotes, endnotes and bibliographies in these studies reveal the difference in sources. Biographies, memoirs and general secondary studies are not now the lifeblood but are used to contextualise and frame research designs which centre instead on primary sources. The revisionist school has been coincident with the professionalisation of the study of Britain and Europe. This in turn has had far-reaching effects in the literature, causing some orthodox scholars to shift their interpretations. It is a phenomenon which further demonstrates the impact of interpretative fads and fashions on historiographical interpretation and the inherently competitive character of academia.

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<sup>61</sup> Southgate, *History*, op. cit., p.131.

The impact of revisionist historiography on the ebb and flow of academic debate can be elucidated in two ways. First, it has become the vogue for other academics to incorporate revisionist interpretations into their accounts of Bevin's Third Force strategy in 1945-50. It also shows in biographic representations of key politicians. To begin with the literature on the Third Force. In the 1980s, Baylis gave academic voice to the prevailing 'consensus' interpretation that Bevin was disinterested in economic co-operation in this period, using the fishing metaphor that the Dunkirk and Brussels Treaties were 'sprats' to lure the American 'mackerel' into the defence of the West.<sup>62</sup> It was an interpretation that appealed to all shades of the political spectrum. First, to left-wingers who felt Labour had become entangled in the Cold War against

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<sup>62</sup> Historians who pursue this line include Barker, Britain in a Divided Europe, op. cit., pp.117-27; Camps, Britain and the European Community, op. cit., p.21. Croft uses Barker to come to the same conclusion- which belies his general criticism of the orthodox position, in 'British Policy Towards Western Europe', op. cit., p.619; Charlton, The Price of Victory, op. cit., pp.53-66; Cromwell, The United States and the European Pillar, op. cit., pp.1-2; Frankel, British Foreign Policy, op. cit., pp.186-237, pp.284-97; Lawrence Kaplan, 'An Unequal Triad: The United States, Western Union, and NATO', in Riste (ed.), Western Security, op. cit., pp.107-27; Walter LaFeber, America, Russia, and the Cold War 1945-1992, 7<sup>th</sup> edn. (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1993), pp.51-80; Northedge, British Foreign Policy, op. cit., pp.46-58; Ovendale, 'Britain, the United States', op. cit.; R. Ovendale, 'Introduction', in Ovendale (ed.), The Foreign Policy of the British Labour Governments, pp.1-17; Terry H. Anderson, The United States, Great Britain, and the Cold War 1944-1947 (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1981). See also Robert M. Hathaway, Ambiguous Partnership: Britain and America, 1944-1947 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1981), p.270; Perkins, 'Unequal Partners', op. cit., p.57; Shlaim, Britain and the Origins of European Unity, op. cit., pp.68-115; Sked and Cook, Post-War Britain, op. cit., pp.50-76. The pervasiveness of this interpretation has been shown recently by Hugo Young who uses Bullock's *Bevin* to offer the conclusion that 'Bevin was Britain's first peacetime Atlanticist'. See Young, This Blessed Plot, op. cit., p.31. It is not surprisingly the line taken in the official history: Rohan Butler and M. E. Pelly (eds.), Documents on British Policy Overseas, 1, 1, 1945 (London: HMSO, 1984); Roger Bullen and M. E. Pelly (eds.), Documents on British Policy Overseas, 1, 2, 1945 (London: HMSO, 1985); Roger Bullen and M. E. Pelly (eds.), Documents on British Policy Overseas, 1, 3, 1945 (London: HMSO, 1986); Roger Bullen and M. E. Pelly (eds.), Documents on British Policy Overseas, 1, 4, 1945 (London: HMSO, 1987); M. E. Pelly and H. J. Yasamee (eds.), Documents on British Policy Overseas, 1, 5, 1945 (London: HMSO, 1990); M. E. Pelly and H. J. Yasamee (eds.), Documents on British Policy Overseas, 1, 6, 1945-1946 (London: HMSO, 1991); H. J. Yasamee and K. A. Hamilton, Documents on British Policy Overseas, 1, 7, 1946-1947 (London: HMSO, 1995).

Russia 1945.<sup>63</sup> Second, to the political establishment in Britain and America which praised Bevin for saving Western civilisation.<sup>64</sup> Amongst the latter group there was, Perkins observes, 'broad satisfaction with the foreign policy of the Labour government'.<sup>65</sup> By 1990 Baylis, however, was less sure his findings held true. He had, one reviewer noted, changed his 'emphasis and interpretations'.<sup>66</sup> Not now the view that Bevin single-mindedly wanted to entangle America in the defence of Western Europe from 1945. Instead, He directly referred to writers such as Kent and Young to argue that Bevin was more interested in European co-operation and colonial exploitation than he had

<sup>63</sup> Leon D. Epstein, Britain: Uneasy Ally (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1954), p.81; Pritt, The Labour Government, op. cit.; Wayne Knight, 'Labourite Britain: America's "Sure Friend"? The Anglo-Soviet Treaty Issue, 1947', Diplomatic History, 7, 4 (1983), pp.267-82 (pp.267-8); Eugene J. Meehan, The British Left Wing and Foreign Policy: A Study of the Influence of Ideology (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1960), pp.30-4; Jonathan Schner, Labour's Conscience: The Labour Left 1945-51 (London: Unwin Hyman, 1988); Brian Brivati, Hugh Gaitskell (London: Richard Cohen, 1997), p.166; Michael Foot, Aneurin Bevan: A Biography, Volume 2, 1945-1960 (London: Davis-Poynter, 1973), p.32; Mark M. Krug, Aneurin Bevan: Cautious Rebel (London: Thames Yoseloff, 1961), p.102. His verdict sums up the Marxist view that Bevin was 'if anything, less conciliatory than Eden would have been' in dealing with Russia.

<sup>64</sup> Attlee, As It Happened, op. cit., p.171; Eden, Full Circle, op. cit., p.5; Healey, The Time of My Life, op. cit., p.114; Jenkins, Mr. Attlee, op. cit.; Kirkpatrick, The Inner Circle, op. cit., p.205; Macmillan, Tides of Fortune, op. cit., pp.132-3; Montgomery of Alamein, Memoirs, op. cit., p.511; Roberts, 'Ernest Bevin as Foreign Secretary', op. cit.; Wilson, Memoirs, op. cit., p.125. On this issue even Herbert Morrison stood 'firmly behind the hard line of his old enemy Bevin'. Bernard Donoghue and G. W. Jones, Herbert Morrison: Portrait of a Politician (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1973), p.433. Ben Pimlott argues that most leading ministers were 'almost unreservedly on the side of the United States', and uninterested in a 'Third Alternative' for foreign policy. See Ben Pimlott (ed.), The Political Diary of Hugh Dalton, 1918-40, 1945-60 (London: Jonathan Cape, 1987), linking remarks, p.469. See also Mark Stephens, Ernest Bevin: Unskilled Labourer and World Statesman 1881-1951 (Stevenage: SPA Books, 1985), pp.109-24; Aster, Anthony Eden, op. cit., pp.90-1; Harris, Attlee, op. cit., p.295; Rees-Mogg, Sir Anthony Eden, op. cit., p.99; Robert Rhodes James (ed.), Chips: The Diaries of Sir Henry Channon (London: Penguin, 1970), entry for 20 August, 1945, the occasion of Bevin's first major speech as Foreign Secretary, p.502; Montague Browne, Long Sunset, op. cit., pp.59-60; Nutting, Europe Will Not Wait, op. cit., p.21; Williams, Ernest Bevin, op. cit., pp.266-7.

<sup>65</sup> Perkins, 'Unequal Partners', op. cit., p.46.

<sup>66</sup> Jay Wagner, review, 'The Diplomacy of Pragmatism: Britain and the Formation of NATO, 1942-49. By John Baylis', International Affairs, 69, 4 (1993), pp.781-2 (p.781); John Baylis, The Diplomacy of Pragmatism: Britain and the Formation of NATO, 1942-49 (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1993).

previously thought.<sup>67</sup> The signing of the North Atlantic Treaty (NAT) was an admission that the building of a European unit between the superpowers had failed, not a success story built on one man's skill and diplomatic vision. One can see evidence here of the historiography being propelled by the interpretative fads and fashions of the time. Had Baylis remained unaware of Kent and Young's contributions he might well have continued to uphold the 'mythical halo' that often hangs over the 1945 Attlee administrations.<sup>68</sup> The alacrity with which the revisionist interpretation became incorporated into mainstream academic discourse meant that Baylis could no longer ignore the challenge. The community of academics demands analytical rigour and source coverage. As revisionism gained credence among fellow academics, orthodox writers began to incorporate it into their accounts.

<sup>67</sup> Economic and Commonwealth inputs to the development of European policy, as well as domestic considerations, come through very strongly in P. J. Cain and A. G. Hopkins, British Imperialism: Crisis and Deconstruction 1914-1990 (London: Longman, 1993), pp.260-76; Dockrill and Young (eds.), British Foreign Policy, 1945-56 (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1989); Fieldhouse, 'The Labour Governments and the Empire-Commonwealth', op. cit.; Sean Greenwood, 'Ernest Bevin, France and "Western Union": August 1945- February 1946', European History Quarterly, 14, 3 (1984), pp.319-37; Greenwood, Britain and European Co-operation, op. cit.; Kaiser, Using Europe, op. cit.; Kent, 'Bevin's Imperialism', op. cit.; Newton, 'The Sterling Crisis of 1947', op. cit.; Newton, 'The 1949 Sterling Crisis', op. cit. See also Curtis, The Ambiguities of Power, op. cit., pp.13-24; John Ramsden, The Age of Churchill and Eden, 1940-1957 (London: Longman, 1995); John Ramsden, The Winds of Change, op. cit.; Wilkes (ed.), Britain's Failure, op. cit.; Young, This Blessed Plot, op. cit.; Young, Britain and European Unity, op. cit. Some American accounts support the argument that Labour was keen on the Third Force and had the State Department's support for burden-sharing reasons. See Gaddis, 'The United States and the Question of a Sphere of Influence in Europe', op. cit., p.70; Winand, Eisenhower, Kennedy, op. cit., pp.15-8. Research into Anglo-American relations also attacks the hagiographic British assumption that Bevin skilfully lured America into the defence of Greece and Turkey in 1947. See also Terry Howard Anderson, 'Britain, the United States, and the Cold War, 1944-1947', Indiana PhD, (1978), pp.277-9; Edmonds, Setting the Mould, op. cit., pp.157-60; Hathaway, Ambiguous Partnership, op. cit., pp.299-302; Dimpleby and Reynolds, An Ocean Apart, op. cit., pp.171-2; Pelling, Britain and the Marshall Plan, op. cit., p.6; Perkins, 'Unequal Partners', op. cit., p.54; A. N. Porter and A. J. Stockwell, British Imperial Policy and Decolonisation, 1938-64: Vol.1, 1938-51 (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1987), p.47.

<sup>68</sup> The verdict of Eric Hobsbawm, quoted in Hennessy, 'The Attlee Governments', op. cit., p.29.

The second way in which academic specialisation and the rise of revisionism have been impinging upon historiographical interpretation is through the medium of academic biography. The last chapter showed the extent to which traditional political biography in Britain, especially official biography, has tended to operate on hagiographic lines, often interpreting events similarly to the subject. Recently, there has been a shift towards what Hamilton describes as 'contextualised' biography, studies which ground the individual in the broader context of the history of the epoch in which he or she lived and worked.<sup>69</sup> This style of biography resembles a history of the period that happens to centre on one individual rather than a study of an individual, containing incidental historical snapshots. Indeed, some such biographies split the areas of concern to their subject, taking a thematic not chronological approach. A chapter on 'Europe' in thirty pages tends to divulge more insights than sporadic mention of it over the course of a thousand.

Thus, in Peter Weiler's biography of Bevin, one might expect him to praise the Foreign Secretary for saving Western civilisation by signing the NAT.<sup>70</sup> Writing at the turn of the 1990s, however, Weiler, like Baylis, was apprised of the revisionist turn in scholarship and took Bevin's Third Force rhetoric more seriously.<sup>71</sup> He contextualised his research using revisionist literature which

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<sup>69</sup> Hamilton, 'In Defence of the Practice of Biography', op. cit., p.84. See also O'Brien, 'Is Political Biography a Good Thing?', op. cit., p.66; John Derry: *Political Biography: A Defence* (2), *Contemporary British History*, 10, 4 (1996), pp.75-80 (p.76).

<sup>70</sup> As a reminder, previous biographers who took the consensus interpretation include Bullock, *Ernest Bevin*, op. cit.; Stephens, *Unskilled Labourer and World Statesman*, op. cit.; Roberts, 'Ernest Bevin as Foreign Secretary', op. cit.; Williams, *Ernest Bevin*, op. cit., pp.266-7.

<sup>71</sup> Weiler, *Ernest Bevin*, op. cit., pp.144-87.

had taken a grip of the field. This resulted in a nuanced account that balanced Bevin's concern with security against what many now regarded as his genuine interest in building a 'Euro-African bloc' in the period 1945-9.<sup>72</sup>

A further example from the field of biography is that of David Dutton's *Anthony Eden: A Life and Reputation* and Rothwell's *Anthony Eden*, both published in the 1990s.<sup>73</sup> Taking a part thematic, part chronological approach, Dutton eschewed the usual biographic approach of tracing the subject's life from birth to death. The result is a fully contextualised study for which Dutton utilised a synthesis of sources: a smattering of Cabinet, Prime Ministerial and Foreign Office papers, many private papers, Eden's own records and secondary sources as background. What one finds in the section on Europe is, as with Weiler's approach to Bevin, a revisionist account which rescues Eden from charges that he was crudely 'anti-European'. Dutton saw little difference between the speeches by Eden and Maxwell Fyfe on 28 November 1951 which has led to much of the vitriol towards Eden. Revisionists had already argued that Maxwell Fyfe's speech was condemned by Belgium's Paul-Henri Spaak as "disappointing" and "derisory".<sup>74</sup> Dutton echoed this: 'there was no difference

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<sup>72</sup> Other studies of post-war co-operation in Europe to emerge at this time cite among others Fieldhouse, Kent and Young as key influences. See Charles P. A. de Brabant, 'Anglo-French Colonial Co-operation Principally in West African Affairs, 1943-1954', Oxford M. Litt, 1989; Martin Francis, 'Labour Policies and Socialist Ideals: The Example of the Attlee Government, 1945-51', Oxford PhD, 1992).

<sup>73</sup> Dutton, *Anthony Eden*, op. cit.; Victor Rothwell, *Anthony Eden: A Political Biography 1931-1957* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1992).

<sup>74</sup> Young, *Britain and European Unity*, p.38. See also Greenwood, *Britain and European Co-operation*, p.50. This betrayed his hostility to British European policy, which Aldrich traces back to his overthrowing of British leadership of the European Movement. See his 'European Integration', op. cit., pp.159-64.



in substance between the messages conveyed by the two men', a line towards which revisionist historiography has long been tending.<sup>75</sup>

Could it therefore be argued that political biography belongs to a different school of writing altogether? In terms of method, there is a distinction between biography and diplomatic history, especially if one examines the volume of oral history and private papers that are used more in the writing of the former compared to the latter. However, in terms of interpretation there is less to recommend placing political biography in a separate school from historical narratives. Despite the different sources used, there has always been cross-fertilisation from history to biography and vice-versa. Biographies are treated as historical sources along with the other sources scrutinised by historians. They inform historians of the political climate within which policy was made, of the personal animosity within the Whitehall machine and remind them of all the other actors on the stage. Biographies are in turn informed by the community of historians whose continuous reinterpretation of the past presents opportunities to reassess the outlook of biographic subjects.

Another example of this continual cross-fertilisation between biography and diplomatic history is to be found in the most recent biography of Heath, by Campbell.<sup>76</sup> He seems to want to revise existing interpretations of Heath, but only manages to flirt hesitantly with alternative explanations of his

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<sup>75</sup> Dutton, *Anthony Eden*, op. cit., p.293. See also Ramsden, *The Age of Churchill and Eden*, op. cit., pp.260-1, pp.304-5; George Wilkes, 'The First Failure', op. cit., p.8; Hugo Young argues, in *This Blessed Plot*, op. cit., p.115, that Macmillan was a 'European only of his time and place, which is to say a tormented and indecisive one'.

<sup>76</sup> Campbell, *Edward Heath*, op. cit.

'Europeanism'. He confronts the conventional wisdom about Heath's outlook on America and Europe.<sup>77</sup> Ultimately, though, he agrees with what has, if previous trends are a good indicator of which works set down the received wisdom, to be regarded as the orthodoxy in this area.<sup>78</sup> A future edition of Campbell's biography may be bolder, especially if other historians begin to reassess Heath's opinion of America, engaging with Campbell's claim that Heath in no way 'saw himself as...anti-American'.<sup>79</sup> By drawing out this constant tension between British policy-makers' perceptions of themselves and perception of them abroad, one could develop the revisionist contention that it is only with hindsight and generalisation that Heath 'inhibited the "special relationship"'.<sup>80</sup> Perhaps any British Prime Minister faced with problems over dollar convertibility, the International Monetary Fund crisis, nuclear burden-sharing, the Kennedy Round of GATT negotiations, the October war in the Middle East and Washington's declaration of the 'Year of Europe' would have had their enthusiasm for Anglo-American relations dampened.<sup>81</sup> As Robert Schaetzel, the American Ambassador to the EC, put it in 1971: the Americans

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<sup>77</sup> Ibid., pp.74-115.

<sup>78</sup> That Heath was a 'European' of long-standing and that the 'special relationship' was to be 'abruptly ended'. Ibid., p.115 and p.336. For exposition of this view see Anthony Barber, *Taking the Tide: A Memoir* (Norwich: Michael Russell, 1998); Brandt, *People and Politics*, op. cit.; Home, *The Way the Wind Blows*, op. cit.; Douglas Hurd, *An End to Promises: Sketch of a Government 1970-74* (London: Collins, 1979); Hutchinson, *Edward Heath*, op. cit.; King, *The Cecil King Diary 1970-1974*, op. cit.; Margaret Laing, *Edward Heath: Prime Minister* (London: Sidgwick and Jackson, 1972); Andrew Roth, *Heath and the Heathmen* (London: Routledge, 1972); Sainsbury, 'Lord Home', op. cit.; Thatcher, *The Path to Power*, op. cit.; Thorpe, *Alec Douglas-Home*, op. cit.

<sup>79</sup> Campbell, *Edward Heath*, op. cit., p.336.

<sup>80</sup> Henry Kissinger, *Years of Upheaval* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, Michael Joseph, 1982), p.140. See also Henry Kissinger, *The White House Years* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, Michael Joseph, 1979); Richard Nixon, *The Memoirs of Richard Nixon* (New York: Grosset and Dunlap, 1978); John Dickie, 'Special' No More: *Anglo-American Relations: Rhetoric and Reality* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1994); Alistair Horne, 'The Macmillan Years and Afterwards', in Louis and Bull (eds.), *The Special Relationship*, op. cit., pp.87-102 (p.101); Watt, 'Introduction: The Anglo-American Relationship', op. cit., p.13.

<sup>81</sup> Cromwell, *The United States and the European Pillar*, op. cit., p.71.

had come to see the Community 'as a hard bargainer, an adversary'.<sup>82</sup> Friction in relations between Heath and Kissinger and Nixon were perhaps the symptom of growing disunity in the Atlantic Alliance which started earlier, particularly with Britain's withdrawal from 'East of Suez' under Wilson, rather than the cause they have become in the history.

The debate, therefore, about whether biography is a 'good' or 'bad' thing is to falsely draw disciplinary boundaries around 'history' and 'biography'.<sup>83</sup> The one is intrinsically bound up to the other; cross-fertilisation across genres is crucial to historiographical development. To say that there is a distinctive biographic method of research overlooks other factors in the construction of narratives. Interpretation stems not just from the method one uses, but who one speaks to, the political climate of opinion about the subject, current academic views on the subject and how one arranges the evidence (chronologically or thematically). Method therefore only explains a fraction of how lives and histories are reconstructed. Rather than drawing up barriers between them, historians and biographers should use each others' work to increase our understanding of the past collaboratively. This would enrich the study of contemporary history.

This digression into the role played by fads and fashions in historiographical development raises the issue of break-out between schools. It has been admitted that some writers change schools of writing over time. It is,

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<sup>82</sup> Quoted in Cromwell, *The United States and the European Pillar*, op. cit., p.71.

<sup>83</sup> O'Brien, 'Is Political Biography a Good Thing?', op. cit.; Hamilton, 'In Defence of the Practice of Biography', op. cit.

moreover, conceded throughout this study that there are unresolved tensions and inner contradictions in many historical accounts which give them an implicit post-revisionist flavour. Does this not damage the secondary argument of this thesis that, despite innate individuality of narratives, it is possible to delineate distinct schools of writing on Britain and Europe based in part at least on sociological differences? Surely if we can include under the umbrella of 'revisionism' the explanations offered by foreign politicians and studies dating back to the 1960s, how can the current wave of writing possibly be termed a 'school'?

There are two responses to these challenges. First, this is not a zero-sum game. It does not necessarily follow from the acknowledgement of break-out between schools that no schools exist. One can draw general inferences about the impact of professionalisation on historiographical revisionism, without having to concede that the latter is *only* extant upon the former. Second, it is a distortion of the term 'school' to suggest that they can only exist within specific temporal contexts. The term encompasses generational change. When one school is supplanted by another, the first does not die out, but particular writers continue to expound its interpretation. It so happens that the most clear version of revisionism has been a product of the study of British European policy at university level in the 1990s. That is not to ignore the earlier manifestations of it in British and foreign accounts, or the numerous works, especially political memoirs, that continue to propound the orthodox interpretation. Earlier histories have not been excluded merely to fit an artificial framework which puts contemporary academic studies at the cutting

edge of revisionism. It in fact strengthens the claim put forward in this study, that one can identify interpretative overlap across communities and generations of historians, and yet still be able to identify schools. The overlap makes the resulting differences between schools even more poignant, their delineation more significant.

That writers come down on one side or the other, playing up the role of certain 'facts' over others is what divides them into schools. The prioritisation of some explanations over others- the crucial distinction between schools- rests,<sup>84</sup> it has been shown, in no small part on sociological factors. Specialisation and the professionalisation of the study of British European policy have played their part in determining the pace and timing of revisionism. This has been driven by academic researchers using shared sources and methods to develop new understandings of the past. The social construction of history is therefore of great significance to understanding historiographical evolution. Flowing from the professionalisation of the study of Britain and Europe have been a number of assumptions about how to study contemporary history. The chapter now seeks to analyse these assumptions, beginning with the assiduous use of PRO sources by revisionists.

### **3. The Allure of the PRO to Revisionists**

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<sup>84</sup> This draws on Viktor Shklovski's point that new hegemonies (or schools to use the language of this study) do not totally reject earlier explanations, but draw out neglected aspects of them to formulate a new approach. See Holub, *Reception Theory*, op. cit., pp.21-2.

Kevin Jefferys explicitly identifies 'revisionist historians with full access to official records at the Public Record Office'.<sup>85</sup> That primary sources are such an attraction for scholars is, Iggers argues, understandable. 'The assurance with which professional historians after Ranke had assumed that immersion in the sources would assure a perception of the past that corresponded to the past has long been modified. However, historians have not given up the basic commitment to historical honesty that inspired Ranke'.<sup>86</sup> Examining why the PRO has been such a draw for historians reveals the double impact of academic approaches and mundane personal influences on the study of history in Britain. It makes the constituent elements of 'method' harder to capture, because the factors involved in deciding which sources to consult can be as much down to matters of exigency, time and money, as to a considered choice of research design. Thus, to say one has a 'research method' can actually mask deeper influences at work on historical research, and necessarily requires reflection on which sources are not being consulted, as on those which are. The 'PRO method' constitutes a research design, but prompts as many questions about source coverage as it answers. However, that it has been so dominant requires explanation.

There are four reasons why the PRO has proved such a popular source for British historians. First, the PRO houses the 'official record' of events and is not ashamed to sell itself as such. It proclaims on the cover of its advertising brochure that inside the PRO are 'Centuries of history at your fingertips. The

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<sup>85</sup> Jefferys, review, *'The Myth of Consensus...'* Edited by Jones and Kandiah', op. cit., p.157.

<sup>86</sup> Iggers, *Historiography*, op. cit., p.144.

Public Record Office', it continues, 'is the archive of the United Kingdom. The records and images of a nation are preserved on its 167km of shelving, from Domesday book to the latest Government papers to be released to the public'.<sup>87</sup> Behind the rhetoric of this glossy advert lays a telling observation about how historians have tended to view the records contained in the PRO. That is, if one concentrates on the final part of the advert which trumpets the PRO's collection of government papers, PRO material appears to present the most likely way of recreating the 'truth' of what happened in the past. Alternative sources include the media, oral testimony, political diaries and memoir, autobiography, private papers and the records of parliamentary debate contained in Hansard. The ideology among British historians is, and always has been it seems, that none of these offer as much neutrality and as the papers in the PRO. Dominated by this ideology, revisionist school has been crucially dependant on the release of primary archive material, which is footnoted densely in their works.

It is no coincidence that a recent article in the Times Higher Education Supplement highlighted 'Integrity, the search and respect for truth' as the fundamental goals of a civilised society.<sup>88</sup> In this light, PRO sources fare better than others available to the historian. Iggers has also made the point that despite the postmodern challenge to the nature of history, historians still see their art as reliant on 'facts' and traceable sources of evidence. Despite an increasing awareness of the interconnectedness between history, literary

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<sup>87</sup> PRO introductory brochure, distributed at PRO academic induction days.

<sup>88</sup> James Armstrong, 'A Case of Pricking the Nation's Conscience', Times Higher Education Supplement, 14 January 2000, p.16.

discourse and reflectivist approaches to the social sciences there lingers, he argues, 'the conviction that the historian deal[s] with a real and not an imaginary past and that this real past, although accessible only through the medium of the historians' mind, nevertheless called for *methods and approaches* that followed a logic of inquiry'.<sup>89</sup> The key phrase here is the italicised portion: 'methods and approaches'. The historical method in Britain, following Cartesian logic, is ideally suited to the pursuit of 'facts' in the PRO mainly because they are testable, that is, written down. The historian can assert that in the margin of a particular document the British Foreign Secretary had commented 'X'. He or she can do this safe in the knowledge that others can go and check the veracity of this claim.

Such 'facts' appears to be 'harder' than many competing sources of evidence on offer. History written without 'facts' obtained in the PRO could be dismissed as a form of bias, a pungent critique usually reserved for reviews of political memoir and biography which lament their 'superficiality and superabundance'.<sup>90</sup> Take Grigg's verdict on 'instant history', or is it 'auto-hagiography'? He judges that 'there are degrees of partiality, and any account of a practising politician, given either by himself or by someone he has

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<sup>89</sup> Iggers, *Historiography*, op. cit., p.15. Italics added.

<sup>90</sup> Hollowell, review, 'Callaghan: A Life. By Kenneth O. Morgan', *Contemporary British History*, op. cit., p.129.



authorised, must necessarily [involve] partiality to an exceptional degree'.<sup>91</sup> 'Memoirs', he continues, 'make the worst of all worlds, being less reliable as source material than diaries or other strictly contemporary documents, while lacking any of the credentials of objective history'.<sup>92</sup> Evans is just as dismissive: most people, unless they are politicians, go to some trouble to make sure that they do express themselves in a reasonably consistent and non-contradictory way'.<sup>93</sup> Graf von Schwerin was of the opinion that memoir writers 'often wrote with the benefit of hindsight, not of the facts as they actually happened, but of the role they wished history to record of them in relation to the events in question, often allowing themselves the license of adjusting the facts'.<sup>94</sup> Harriet Jones also 'wonders to what extent we are being given enough material to understand the subject'.<sup>95</sup>

The media is not a trusted source in Britain. Even the Times and Economist are not scrutinised as much as the volume of evidence they contain might suggest they would. Professional historians prefer the judgement of other professional historians. It is not that historians believe everything written in the PRO, nor that they are blind to the many omissions and gaps in its documentation. But,

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<sup>91</sup> Grigg, review, 'Policies of Impotence', *International Affairs*, op. cit., pp.72-3. Wilson is an interesting exception to the hagiographic tendency of biography, and he has received, Kevin Jefferys notes, an 'anti-Wilson tirade' from certain biographers. This is in keeping with the general consensus on Wilson which has not been countered by biographic portraits by his friend Ernest Kay, *Pragmatic Premier: An Intimate Portrait of Harold Wilson* (London: Leslie Frewin, 1967), or by his official biographer, Philip Ziegler, *Harold Wilson*, op. cit.; See Kevin Jefferys, review, 'Harold Wilson'. By Austen Morgan; *Harold Wilson*. By Ben Pimlott', *Contemporary Record*, 7, 1 (1993), pp.198-200 (p.198).

<sup>92</sup> Ibid.. The 'objective history' to which he refers is presumably that penned by the professional historian. Such can be the arrogance towards the press and other historical sources.

<sup>93</sup> Evans, *In Defence of History*, op. cit., p.112.

<sup>94</sup> Quoted in Fursdon, *The European Defence Community*, op. cit., p.3.

<sup>95</sup> Jones, review, 'Bob Boothby...By Robert Rhodes James', *Contemporary Record*, op. cit., p.404.

with working on their own and with such an amount of material to survey, this leaves little time for reflection on the limitations of the PRO as a source of historical evidence. This makes historians even more inclined to take this primary material at face value.

To summarise, then, the first reason why PRO documents are such compelling sources for historians is that they represent a corpus of hard, traceable official 'facts' about the past. They would presumably concur with Fred Inglis who states that the life of the scholar 'is simply the pursuit of the virtues as embodied in the free search for truth, the struggle to achieve rationality, the honouring of the facts to be found in the fictions of our lives according to passable accounts of goodness and beauty'.<sup>96</sup> Other sources available to the contemporary historian have weaker claims to be 'hard' and for this reason tend to be used less by historians trained according to Rankean prescriptions.

This begs the question, would orthodox writers have produced different interpretations had they had access to (or used) the PRO for evidence? Can we split the schools according to the date of publication, pre-Thirty Year Rule studies making up the orthodoxy, post-Thirty Year Rule the revisionism? It would be neat if this were the case, but alas it is too simplistic a classification. Not all studies penned in the 1990s are revisionist, just as some, indeed many, penned decades earlier contained the seeds of revisionism. The schoolification

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<sup>96</sup> Fred Inglis, 'A Nanny No, A Medusa...Maybe', Times Higher Education Supplement, 3 March 2000, p.21.

process relies not just on dates but on the type of work written. Politicians writing their memoirs now are no more likely to take the revisionist approach than their colleagues writing in the 1960s. Camps, writing in 1993, was adamant that the official record ‘contained few surprises’ and reinforced her account from 1964.<sup>97</sup> Elisabeth Kane, meanwhile, consulted the files of the Western Organisation Department, released to the PRO in 1997, but interpreted British European policy in the 1955-7 period in orthodox fashion.<sup>98</sup> The pre- and post-Thirty Year Rule juxtaposition is useful, but only as long as we bear in mind the interpretative overlap across schools and the ideological predisposition that is brought to the writing of history which makes this a necessary but not sufficient explanation for the division between schools of writing on Britain and Europe.

Gustave Flaubert once commented that ‘writing history was like drinking an ocean and pissing a cup’.<sup>99</sup> The second reason why the PRO dominates revisionist historiography is bound up with the volume of evidence it houses: there is always the chance of finding something ‘new’. It can be argued that the choice of topics for doctoral and other forms of advanced research is strongly determined by pragmatic as well as academic concerns. Scholars are not shy of admitting that they become involved in particular research domains because their supervisors suggest there is a lacuna in the literature, or because it opens

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<sup>97</sup> Camps, ‘Missing the Boat’, op. cit., p.134.

<sup>98</sup> Liz Kane, ‘European or Atlantic Community?: The Foreign Office and “Europe” 1955-1957’, *Journal of European Integration History*, 3, 2 (1997), pp.83-97; Elisabeth Kane, ‘The Myth of Sabotage: British Policy Towards European Integration, 1955-6’, in du Réau (ed.), *Europe des Élités*, pp.291-301. See the next chapter for further discussion of her work.

<sup>99</sup> Quoted in Evans, *In Defence of History*, op. cit., p.23.

up the most career doors at a later stage, or because it was acknowledged that funding bodies were looking sympathetically on that particular domain at that particular time. The reasons vary from scholar to scholar but fundamental to all these concerns for the 'professional' academic is the drive to produce something original, to add a new theory, dimension, paradigm or source of evidence to the existing literature in one's field, boosting one's attractiveness in terms of publication and career options.

Historians, not being acutely interested in the development of new theories (that, the argument has traditionally gone, is for 'political scientists') tend to be judged on what fresh evidence they can uncover. In the field of Britain and European integration this has meant a rapidly expanding source base in the 1990s. From Cabinet, Foreign Office and Prime Ministers' files, historians are now beginning to analyse the records of the economic departments and what the Americans and Europeans had to say about British European policy. Whether this shift is rooted in the changing conception and study of International Relations at university level is, it has been argued above, debatable. Iggers supports this case: 'Historians felt compelled to go into the archives, which contained not only official documents of state but also much information of an administrative, economic or social nature, which they mostly ignored'.<sup>100</sup> There is a stronger case for arguing that acutely pragmatic concerns have been the motor force behind recent developments in the historiography. Stoker's observation in the context of political science is

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<sup>100</sup> Iggers, *Historiography*, op. cit., p.30.

equally applicable to history: 'different approaches within [history] emphasise different types of evidence, but none denies the *need* for evidence'.<sup>101</sup>

The twin demand for evidence and originality is a potent mix. Historians have the luxury of the PRO in their attempts to respond to that demand. Its shelves play host to numerous government documents and papers on all spheres of political, economic and social life. Hence, using PRO sources offers the attraction that one may uncover a previously unscrutinised source. If not, there is enough extra evidence to hold out the prospect that one will be able to bring a new perspective to existing historical thought. There is the added bonus that one gets to see how previous historians have handled and manipulated the evidence as one searches the documentation.

The third attraction of the PRO for historians is that it allows them to empathise with historical figures. Appleby, Hunt and Jacob capture this notion well: 'scholars in the practical realist camp are encouraged to get out of bed in the morning and head for the archives, because they can uncover evidence, touch lives long passed and "see" patterns in events that might otherwise remain inexplicable'.<sup>102</sup> When one asks 'what is in a method?' these factors further hamper our ability to answer it purely in terms of research design, epistemology and ontology. Most often in historical works the choice of method is dictated by the personal circumstances of the individual. Who is to say that the same concerns do not affect their colleagues in other social science

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<sup>101</sup> Stoker, 'Introduction', op. cit., pp.3-4. Emphasis in original.

<sup>102</sup> Appleby, Hunt and Jacob, Telling the Truth About History, op. cit., p.251.

disciplines? The key point is that there is a gap between the method, or research design, and output. That gap is filled by the interpretative ability and the historian's imagination. To argue one's method is, in this case, the archival historical method based on the principles of historical institutionalism,<sup>103</sup> gets us no nearer understanding the interpretative quality of one's output. The emphasis in the social sciences on methodological rigour is scientifically worthy but distorts how historical narratives are constructed. Under scientifically objective, laboratory conditions, the argument goes, gases act in a certain way in response to changing temperatures. How do we translate such conditions to, or recreate them in, the social sciences?

The postmodern challenge has not ignored the natural sciences.<sup>104</sup> In the social sciences its warnings are even more pertinent because of the properties of the variables under scrutiny. These 'variables' are human beings or bodies or organisations comprising them. Historians are every day faced with the prospect of uncovering motives, attitudes, beliefs and ideologies of a plethora of politicians, civil servants and diplomats. Laboratory conditions simply do not apply. To say that one utilises the historical method based on reading the Foreign Office papers for the period 1945-51, for example, only tells us a fraction of what is needed to understand how the research was carried out and what ultimate interpretation might be. Did the researcher go into the archives

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<sup>103</sup> Historical institutionalism being the traditional diplomatic historians' approach to explaining 'specific events, eras, people and institutions'. See Rhodes, 'The Institutional Approach', op. cit. This quote is from p.43.

<sup>104</sup> See for example Turney, review, 'Mystery of Mysteries', Times Higher Education Supplement, op. cit. Such books are strong indicators that postmodernism has affected the natural sciences.

already aware of existing debates about European policy in this period? Being alert to existing literature can influence which documents subsequently become important in the course of primary PRO research because one can, however unintentionally, begin to seek out documents which demonstrate a preconceived hypothesis about events.<sup>105</sup>

That the same primary document or speech is put to different uses by historians is evidence of this feature of historical research. As Carr put it: 'No document can tell us more than what the author of the document thought- what he thought had happened, what he thought ought to happen or would happen, or perhaps only what he wanted others to think he thought, or even what he himself thought he thought. None of this means anything until the historians has got to work on it and deciphered it'.<sup>106</sup> Understanding the interpretative mechanisms of the mind is crucial to understanding the process of historiographical evolution, and takes us beyond the research design element of 'method' as the paramount goal of historiographical reconstruction. That we have to expand the term to include the intellectual, psychological and intellectual pressures at work on writers is clear. Stoker's definition of method as a 'particular way of producing knowledge' in a widely used text on methods for political scientists falls some way short of capturing the diversity of opinion about events that can result from the use of a specified method.<sup>107</sup> Having a method is one thing, operationalising it is another.

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<sup>105</sup> The post-revisionist school to be analysed in the next chapter has developed strongly in this way.

<sup>106</sup> Carr, *What is History?*, op. cit., p. 16.

<sup>107</sup> Stoker, 'Introduction', op. cit., p. 13.

It is possible to explore conflict between the schools over the European Army speeches to demonstrate this point.<sup>108</sup> Orthodox writing has been driven by supposed 'European' British ministers who claim that Eden's speech in Rome on 28 November 1951 directly contradicted the positive reception of the European Army idea given by Maxwell Fyfe in Strasbourg earlier the same day, fitting neatly into the broader accusations that a narrow-minded Eden missed here another opportunity to board the European bus on one of its early journeys.<sup>109</sup> Orthodox writers thus gathered evidence from Eden's host of utterances on the import of the 'special relationship' and Commonwealth to Britain to boost their case which rested on Eden's clear but thinly disguised 'anti-Europeanism'. A favourite which often appears in orthodox works is his January 1952 warning that to get wholeheartedly in Europe 'is something we know in our bones we cannot do'. Here rests the orthodox case. Compared to Maxwell Fyfe's speech, Eden's 'frigid sentiments' 'shocked the federalists and the supranationalists'.<sup>110</sup>

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<sup>108</sup> Another example is Bevin's 'Western Union' speech of 22 January, 1948 which, because of its ambiguity, has been interpreted differently by the different schools. The ambiguity in Churchill's speeches on European integration at Zurich (September 1946) and Strasbourg (August 1950), have also had repercussions on the historiography.

<sup>109</sup> Boothby, *My Yesterday*, op. cit., pp.83-4; Kilmuir, *Political Adventure*, op. cit., p.186-7; Nutting, *Europe Will Not Wait*, p.40; Macmillan, *Tides of Fortune*, pp.410-413. In his biography Fisher- a self-confessed admirer anyway- is happy to swallow Macmillan's account. See Fisher, *Harold Macmillan*, op. cit., p.307. Macmillan also made this point to his official biographer: Horne, *Macmillan Volume 1*, op. cit., p.349. See also Butler who agrees, saying that Eden, in 'typically British' fashion was 'nervous of foreigners'; see Michael Charlton, 'How (and Why) Britain Lost the Leadership of Europe (2): A Last Step Sideways', in *Encounter*, 57, 3 (1981), pp.22-35 (p.23); On the secondary side see Barber, *Who Makes British Foreign Policy*, op. cit., p.47; Frankel, *British Foreign Policy*, p.166; Gilmour and Garnett use Maxwell Fyfe and Nutting's accounts in their criticism of Eden in *Whatever Happened to the Tories*, op. cit., pp.67-8; Manderson-Jones, *The Special Relationship*, p.106; Shlaim, 'Anthony Eden', p.89; Sked and Cook, *Post-War Britain*, p.112.

<sup>110</sup> Macmillan, *Tides of Fortune*, op. cit., p.463; Barker, *Britain in a Divided Europe*, op. cit., p.109. See also Beloff, *The General Says No*, op. cit., p.63. She argues that the statements of the two were 'totally opposite'.



Revisionists, by contrast, reassesses the hypocrisy of the British 'Europeans' in criticising Eden. To argue that Eden's speech was the antithesis of Maxwell Fyfe's is, they claim, a distortion of the evidence. Carlton argues that only by the use of 'selective quotation' have those with an interest in denigrating Eden made Maxwell Fyfe's speech seem so forthcoming. He observes that Macmillan only quotes the following extracts of the Strasbourg speech in his memoirs: 'I cannot promise full and unconditional participation but I can assure you of our determination that no genuine method shall fail for lack of thorough examination which one gives to the needs of trusted friends'. However, Carlton continues, 'what Macmillan did not admit was that the speech *as a whole* was open to an interpretation that did not please the non-British "Europeans"'.<sup>111</sup> To this end, he quotes Peter Calvocoressi's damning analysis, that Maxwell Fyfe merely 'told the Consultative Assembly that it was quite unrealistic to expect Great Britain to join a European federation and held out no hope that Great Britain might establish anything more than some minor form of association with a European Defence Community'.<sup>112</sup> Young agrees, writing that the Home Secretary's speech went 'no further than the much vilified [Herbert] Morrison had done in September in expressing the desire to associate with the Six'. Maxwell Fyfe's words were, he observes, 'condemned by Belgium's Paul-Henri Spaak as "disappointing" and "derisory"'.<sup>113</sup> Dutton cites the equally uncomplimentary verdict by former French premier and

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<sup>111</sup> Carlton, Anthony Eden, op. cit., p.309. Italics added. See also Eden, Full Circle, op. cit., p.33.

<sup>112</sup> Carlton, Anthony Eden, op. cit., p.309.

<sup>113</sup> Young, Britain and European Unity, op. cit., p.38. See also Greenwood, Britain and European Co-operation, op. cit., p.50; Rothwell, Anthony Eden, op. cit., p.198.

‘convinced European’ Paul Reynaud.<sup>114</sup> ‘Maxwell Fyfe might insist that Britain was “not closing the door”’, writes Charlton, ‘but Eden spoke for the reality- no fundamental changes in the British position of “close association”’.<sup>115</sup> Dutton agrees, and in doing so provides an apt summary of the stance taken by the revisionist school: ‘there was no difference in substance between the messages conveyed by the two men’.<sup>116</sup> This is a far cry from Nutting’s claim that the speech was well received.<sup>117</sup> Contemporary historians have been persuaded by the revisionist interpretation.<sup>118</sup>

This reveals two influences on historiographical progression. First, it is important to recognise how factual sources of evidence can be put to different uses according to the ideological, personal or political motivations of the observer. This is a clear instance of intentional manipulation of the evidence for political and personal reasons, yet it is not always as obvious. Telling evidence from speeches, for example, can sometimes be innocently overlooked because one is looking for particular portions of the speech for material.

The second is that political, personal and intellectual conflicts have a crucial bearing on the writing of contemporary history. That many in the school, most notably Maxwell Fyfe, Macmillan and Boothby, neglected to understand that their own strain of Europeanism was no more acceptable to the Monnetists

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<sup>114</sup> Dutton, *Anthony Eden*, op. cit., p.294. Spaak’s reaction is given on p.295.

<sup>115</sup> Charlton, *The Price of Victory*, p.148.

<sup>116</sup> Dutton, *Anthony Eden*, op. cit., p.293.

<sup>117</sup> Nutting, *Europe Will Not Wait*, op. cit., pp.40-6.

<sup>118</sup> Ramsden, *The Age of Churchill and Eden*, op. cit., pp.260-1, pp.304-5; Wilkes, ‘The First Failure’, op. cit., p.8; Young, *This Blessed Plot*, op. cit., p.115. He notes that Macmillan was a ‘European only of his time and place, which is to say a tormented and indecisive one’.

than Eden's, has had considerable repercussions on the literature. It has become inextricably intertwined with the secondary analysis of Camps and her contemporaries who chastised Eden for missing opportunities to lead Europe while conveniently ignoring the paucity of people in Whitehall who proposed plans that would have been acceptable to the continental and American Monnetists in the 1950s. Crude charges of 'anti-Europeanism' have been levelled at successive Prime Ministers and Foreign Secretaries. However, on very few occasions do the accusers explain how their own concept of 'Europe' could have put Britain at the heart of European integration. Supranationalism, after all, was the method perceived most likely on the continent to extinguish the flames of national passion that had led to two world wars in the first half of the century. That so-called 'Europeans' in Britain had only hazy or muddled conceptions of the sort of Europe they wanted Britain to lead, makes one suspect that it would not have been any more acceptable to the Monnetists.

The major point of departure in this section is, remember, that the PRO is so liked by revisionists because it allows them to engage directly with primary archival material. It allows them to 'get inside the heads' of the individuals whose policy they are attempting to piece together. It is problematic to assert that this is the prime factor in scholars' decisions to use the PRO for historical research, but it suggests that they prefer to narrate British European policy by consulting the original record of events. Physically handling the documents gives the impression that one is, literally, 'bringing history to life'.

This may seem unduly romantic but it is an interesting postscript to the Eden example. They have discovered, on reading the records of events, that Eden was constrained by a Cabinet which was lukewarm to supranational integration and which reinforced his own preference for intergovernmental solutions to European unity. They have little sympathy for the Maxwell Fyfe position precisely because beneath the rhetoric they find him no more Monnetist in his *Weltanschauung* on Europe, frivolously and retrospectively criticising Eden for a policy he himself may well have pursued, or been forced to pursue had he been premier. By the time of the European Army discussions British European policy was already laced with vitriol, according to the supranationalists. Any proposal shorn of supranational structures would have received short shrift on the continent.

It is not simply that the orthodox school criticises, revisionists rehabilitate. Indeed, on Eden, revisionist writers are in general agreement that, as Young puts it, 'his tone too often gave the appearance of being anti-European'.<sup>119</sup> Implied in many revisionist texts is that the presentation of British European policy left much to be desired. In diplomatic exchanges, which rely fundamentally on negotiation and concession as much as co-operation, rhetoric can hide reality. This is especially so across different countries which have different benchmarks about what is an acceptable international solution to particular problems. Understanding others' positions in advance can be

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<sup>119</sup> Young, *Britain and European Unity*, op. cit., p.40; Greenwood, *Britain and European Co-operation*, op. cit., p. 78. See also Kaiser, *Using Europe*, op. cit., pp.42-3.

advantageous in the conduct of international relations. The revisionist position on Britain and Europe is sympathetic to some extent, but consistently makes the point that Whitehall's presentation of European policy was flawed. The empathy scholars have taken to their study of PRO records, instilled in them by the historical training they have received in traditional British universities, has replaced the ideological dogma displayed by orthodox writers in their discourse on Britain and Europe. One cannot underestimate the centrality of this relationship between training and the methods employed in the practice of history by academic historians. As Jordanova argues: 'university courses have a... far-reaching effect on the values, attitudes, and intellectual frameworks of professional historians'.<sup>120</sup>

The PRO aims in the next few years to go on-line with a 'virtual PRO' on the World Wide Web. In theory, all the documents currently available at Kew will soon be accessible on the Internet. The most obvious offshoot from this will be an increased output on all periods of British history. Scholars will no longer have to travel to London, order files and wait for them to be collected; they will have much speedier access to the array of documents housed in the PRO. Volume is one thing, quality another. So it is worth reflecting on what implications a 'virtual PRO' might have for the writing of history based on empathy. Will this approach to the documents (unconscious as it may be) still prove fruitful in the years ahead as historians begin to scrutinise documents scanned onto the Web?

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<sup>120</sup> Jordanova, *History in Practice*, op. cit., p.8.

It can be argued that it will be harder to empathise with historical figures when researching is done wholly or mostly on the Web. Looking at a document on a monitor comes nowhere close to handling it personally. More research needs to be done into the role of empathy in the process of historical narrativity. But whichever of the two it is, some of the quality of historical analysis may be lost in a virtual PRO. The other reason one might argue this, is that a virtual PRO may unravel some of the sociological ties between writers in the various schools. The use of e-mail and academic conferences will still promote dialogue between writers in the same field. Scholars attend conferences, Harvey Kaye notes, for 'the most basic of human reasons- to see old friends, have a few drinks together, share a good meal and tell a few tales...Conventions afford annual reunions'.<sup>121</sup> Yet, conferences could in the near future be screened live on the Internet and so lose their interpersonal dimension. If we accept the sociological underpinnings of the revisionist and post-revisionist schools of writing these might also be lost as scholars and historians no longer meet up at the PRO. The impromptu conversations over lunch there, and at academic conferences, have played important parts in binding together a community of researchers who work alone. Had such a community not developed, researchers might have been more hesitant about publishing 'new' interpretations without the benefit of discussing them first with others in the field to gain confidence in their explanatory powers.

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<sup>121</sup> Harvey Kaye, 'Conference Notes to Spend', Times Higher Education Supplement, 18 February 2000, p.9.

In this context, the cement holding up the wall of revisionism appears to be sociological. The prospect of a 'virtual PRO' brings into doubt the long-term prospects for a discipline which so benefits from dialogue among its practitioners. Even more worrying is the retardation it may bring to dialogue *across* disciplines. The separation of history from political science, economics, sociology and psychology has long been recognised. Although it is slowly being realised that synthesis across disciplines, involving dialogue as well as the exchange of ideas and methods of research, is beneficial to all, it is only hesitantly occurring in Britain. As more and more research is carried out in the comfort of one's home, and the sheer volume of potential material to devour becomes greater, the prospects of practitioners within these various disciplines looking beyond the confines of their area of specialisation look bleak. The third reason why the PRO is such an attractive source to historians is that it helps historians empathise with their research subjects; a virtual PRO brings into doubt whether such empathy will still be as forthcoming in the future.

The final reason why the PRO has such a hold over revisionist historiography takes us even deeper into the pragmatic methodological considerations of the current generation of historians: time and money. Whatever is said about different generations of historians possessing different methods or theoretical perspectives on how best to undertake the study of history, one cannot escape the pressing factor in the choice of method: cost effectiveness. This is not to reduce the value of historical scholarship to absurd levels. It is a reminder that methods and research designs are often constrained by purely pragmatic

concerns. One can put a gloss on mundane factors in the pursuit of scholarly knowledge, but only with hindsight, or with a careful manipulation of the evidence. When one chooses a research design and method of analysis time and money have to be considered crucial variables. Hitherto they have been overlooked in academic discussion of what makes a methodologically acceptable study.

Harriet Swain has recently commented that the whole community of academics are 'obsessed by research ratings'.<sup>122</sup> The significance of the time factor in history-writing has long been pertinent with the deadlines imposed by the Research Assessment Exercise (RAE).<sup>123</sup> Historians are under pressure both from funding bodies and departments to produce publishable monographs in the shortest time possible. Doctoral research students are under similar pressures to convey honour on their supervisors and satisfy the requirements of PhD criteria within a three year period, when external sources of funds run dry. Looking at the range of sources available to contemporary historian, the PRO is extremely attractive because a vast amount of hard material can be gathered in a few days. Once the complex ordering procedures have been fully mastered and research conducted at the most efficient rate, it is possible in two or three days to glean enough material to write for up to two months. Compare this to the time it takes to amass two months writing out of interview material, private papers or statistical analysis. The only source comparable in time effectiveness is the use of secondary sources, but in the field of contemporary history it is no

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<sup>122</sup> Harriet Swain, 'Blair's Capital Hearing Aides', op. cit.

<sup>123</sup> A point taken up in Jordanova, *History in Practice*, op. cit., pp.23-4.



longer acceptable to use secondary texts as primary sources when there is such an array of primary documentation waiting to be devoured. The emphasis is on 'new' or 'original' research.

The effectiveness of the PRO over, say, interviews and the consultation of other sources such as private papers with respect to time applies equally in the context of funding. It is, quite simply, cheaper to visit the PRO than it is to use these competing sources. It is expensive to travel all over the country (or world) interviewing eye-witnesses and the insights one gleans can sometimes be disappointing. Private papers are crucial historical sources. That they are spread around the country makes them less appealing to the cash-strapped scholar than the PRO. As Jordanova observes: 'The costs of travelling to work on sources of which there are no copies... should not be underestimated'.<sup>124</sup> They suffer, moreover, from differing levels of accessibility and copyright laws. It can be costly to cite them or difficult to gain permission to do so at all. The PRO is near London, and one can scrutinise a lot of material there in a short space of time.

Hence, one can discuss why the PRO has proved attractive to historians on two levels. On the first level one find the first three reasons given above: it houses the 'official' record of events; there is the chance of discovering a new source of evidence; and it offers the opportunity of empathising with the predicaments facing historical figures. These represent historians' epistemological and

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<sup>124</sup> Jordanova, *History in Practice*, op. cit., p.24.

methodological considerations. On a second, personal level, one finds equally compelling explanations for why the PRO has been so important in the historiography of Britain's relations with Europe. The PRO, in sum, is a cost effective source. In an area of research in which funds are tight and publication deadlines pressing the PRO offers a method of publishing a highly original study in a short space of time.

Paul Anand has commented that 'Perhaps science is like riding a bike- thinking deeply about the process, as opposed to the performance, just does not help'. He continues: 'That models mediate between theory and the world does not, of itself, tell us very much'.<sup>125</sup> What both these quotations show is the growing awareness in the natural and social sciences that saying what one does and actually doing it, are two quite different things. Modelling events or phenomena according to a given 'method' in theory, is different from the process of conducting research, where personal and intellectual factors enter the equation. A historical narrative is more than the sum of its methodological parts. Ex post historiographical arguments about methods and academic shifts in the study of history and International Relations can obscure as much as they reveal. It is time to understand the mundane pressures at work on scholars and, by extension, the historiographical process. They are too often eschewed in favour of ornate explanations about methodological, epistemological and ontological choice. These can only reveal so much about a discipline rooted in the personal search for knowledge in an era of financial stricture.

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<sup>125</sup> Paul Anand, 'A Manual of Model Behaviour: *Models as Mediators: Perspectives on Natural and Social Science*. Edited by Mary S. Morgan and Margaret Morrison', Times Higher Education Supplement, 17 March 2000, p.26.

#### 4. Revisionist Assumptions

'It is a truism', argue Smith and Smith, 'that the facts never speak for themselves and that any account of social phenomena or processes will be based on decisions about what to include, about what is significant and about causes and consequences of events and behaviour. Such decisions, though, are not always made explicit'.<sup>126</sup> That historians of British foreign policy have been reticent about explaining the conceptual lenses through which they view the process and content of British foreign policy should not deter one from trying to understand the implicit assumptions behind their work. To return to Smith and Smith, and this is worth quoting at length: 'The dichotomy between the "traditionalist" [orthodox] and "transformationalist" [revisionist and post-revisionist] views of the subject is in many ways overstated and artificial but it does expose the essentially contested nature of the field. It also exposes the ways in which different schools of thought use historical evidence and analytical devices, by confronting the "traditionalist" emphasis on continuity and the "special" status of foreign policy with the "transformationalist" stress on discontinuity and interconnectedness. Whilst this case cannot be pushed too far, it is one that emerges from alertness to the links between subject-matter and method and between the academic and the practical world'.<sup>127</sup> It can reasonably be argued, contrary to Smith and Smith, that the argument does need to be 'pushed' because of the significance of understanding the implicit

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<sup>126</sup> Smith and Smith, 'The Analytical Background', *op. cit.*, p.22.

<sup>127</sup> *Ibid.*, p.23.

assumptions behind the interpretations offered by the competing schools of writing. Indeed, their very emphasis on the term 'school' suggests that it is far from 'artificial' to uncover these influences at work on writers. Schools are united first and foremost by interpretation, but what lays behind that is often an implicit assumption about the workings of the international system, the rationality or otherwise of actors and so on. Hence, for the historiographer, it is far from 'artificial' to search for the linkages among writers.

Orthodox writers were wedded to a realist conception of foreign policy. They saw the goals of European policy in the context of Britain's efforts to maintain economic, military and political security and influence after the Second World War. Revisionists have taken a different approach which emphasises the incremental nature of foreign policy-making and the plurality of policy-makers and bureaucracies within the Whitehall machine, all pressing their own interests. There is no unitary position among revisionists on who were the most important actors. One reviewer has noted, for example, that 'According to Young, British approaches to the Europe were determined by civil servants, whereas Deighton and Ludlow...dwell mainly on the personal diplomacy by Macmillan'.<sup>128</sup> Such differences occur less frequently than Ruggero Ranieri suggests. The other texts by these writers assert that foreign policy emerged

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<sup>128</sup> Ruggero Ranieri, review, '*Building Post-War Europe: National Decision-Makers and European Institutions 1948-1963*. By Anne Deighton (ed.)', Journal of Common Market Studies, 34, 3 (1996), p.485.

from a close relationship between ministers and mandarins. On specific times and issues the power-balance shifted, but on the whole there is a consensus that foreign policy outcomes were determined by a combination of many variables.<sup>129</sup>

Revisionists have been sympathetic to the predicament of British policy-makers who, they argue, developed policy in a volatile and uncertain environment. A particular problem, they argue, was American and European suspicion about British intentions towards the integration process.<sup>130</sup> Julian Bullard describes this as a 'lively awareness of the realities of modern government and of the part played in international relations by such factors such as chance, instinct, habit and personality'.<sup>131</sup> This section will explore these two interconnected assumptions, addressing the question of whether it was the new range sources leading revisionists in this direction, or whether paradigmatic shifts in international relations theory in the post-Cold War era were at work on their approach to British European policy.

- **Foreign Policy Analysis**

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<sup>129</sup> Deighton, *The Impossible Peace*, op. cit. This is an excellent example of the way in which, on other periods and issues, Deighton assesses the impact of official views on foreign policy. She argues on p.78, for instance, that 'It is abundantly clear that the influence of Harvey, of Roberts in Moscow, and in particular of Orme Sargent were decisive in convincing their political master [Bevin] that the moment had arrived to take a firm stand and to act as a great power to defend Britain's interests on the continent'. See also her conclusion, pp.224-34 where this is dealt with in more depth. Ludlow's *Dealing with Britain* and Young's *Britain and European Unity* also assume a symbiotic relationship between minister and mandarin.

<sup>130</sup> The importance of this shift is underscored by the finding by Steve Smith and Michael Clarke that 'the implementation process determines foreign policy'. Quoted in Michael Smith, review, 'Foreign Policy Implementation. Edited by Steve Smith and Michael Clarke', *Journal of Common Market Studies*, 25, 1 (1986), pp.85-6 (p.85).

<sup>131</sup> Sir Julian Bullard, review, 'Britain and the World. Edited by Lawrence Freedman and Michael Clarke', *Contemporary Record*, 6, 3 (1992), pp.584-5 (p.584).

After the sociological, the second divide between the orthodox and revisionist schools can be elucidated by exploring further how that latter approach the process of British foreign policy-making. Orthodox writers implied that the state is a black box, by stressing the role of geostrategic factors in determining Britain's aloofness from Europe in the post-war era. Revisionists, by contrast, are sensitive to what Keith Johnson describes as 'the complex political dynamics and pragmatic considerations of foreign policy decision-making during a period of profound systemic change'.<sup>132</sup> Crude charges of 'negativity' towards Europe are exchanged for more sympathetic reflections on the problems facing policy-makers and how they dealt with them in a difficult political and financial period after the Second World War. It is not that structural influences are entirely absent from revisionist accounts, but that the individual and nation-state levels of analysis are more appealing. In short, revisionist stress the role of agents in the formation of foreign policy, rejecting 'deterministic explanations which seek to account for specific events and outcomes in terms of theoretical abstractions...in favour of explanations couched in terms of the directly observable events themselves'.<sup>133</sup>

As Deighton explains this approach in the following way: 'The second perspective lies at the level of the domestic environment of state actors. Research on foreign policy analysis, the cybernetics of decision-making, perception and misperception, belief-systems and operational codes [has been] breaking down the assumption that governments respond in a rational and

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<sup>132</sup> Keith Johnson, *'Britain and the Origins of European Unity, 1940-1951'*. By Avi Shlaim', *Journal of Common Market Studies*, 18, 1 (1979), pp.83-4 (p.84).

<sup>133</sup> Hay, 'Structure and Agency', op. cit., p.196.

coherent fashion to clearly understood problems...Decisions taken were not simply driven by inexorable external forces'.<sup>134</sup> It is worth repeating that neither school is committed to analysis purely in terms of structure *or* agency; they are to a large extent 'two sides of the same coin',<sup>135</sup> an observation shown in the mixture of implicit theories used in the historiography. One can also draw the general inference, however, that orthodox writers placed more weight on structural factors in the process of foreign policy development, revisionists (and post-revisionists) on agency.<sup>136</sup>

Revisionist writers are commonly said to handle and scrutinise their sources with 'empathy', a critical element of historical methods training in Britain. Historians use empathy as a way of 'getting inside the heads' of the people whose legacy they are now studying. Their legacy is, Brivati succinctly points out, policy discussion that survives in the memos and notes now in the PRO.<sup>137</sup> But it is even more. It is the sometimes illegible scribbles in the margins of policy documents, it is the irascible comments to colleagues or officials. It is, in sum, what Brivati terms 'the ordinary humanity',<sup>138</sup> epitomised by these off-the-cuff remarks which have been left to us to historicise. For diplomatic historians this is the legacy around which accounts of Britain's relationship to the continent must be built, not bland critiques based on hindsight and political prejudice. When Hopkins stated that Young's was one of the first

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<sup>134</sup> Deighton, 'The Cold War in Europe', op. cit., p.86.

<sup>135</sup> Hay, 'Structure and Agency', op. cit., p.197.

<sup>136</sup> Burke's observation that 'narrative historians' couch their explanations in terms of 'individual character and intention' rather than in the structures that shaped them, echoes this point well. See Burke, 'History of Events', op. cit., p.236.

<sup>137</sup> Brivati, 'Cd-Rom and the Historian', op. cit., p.477.

<sup>138</sup> Ibid.

'sympathetic' accounts of Britain and Europe, he might equally have mentioned that it was one of the first 'empathetic' accounts.

So why do revisionists base their accounts on the lower levels of analysis? One could put it down to the post-Cold War era and the dissatisfaction in the academic world with realism as an explanatory tool of international relations. The 'Velvet Revolutions' in Eastern Europe and the dissolution of the Soviet Union brought with them greater fluidity in the international system than the relatively stable bipolarism that characterised international relations between 1945 and 1989. That individuals such as Bush and especially Gorbachev were credited with 'ending the Cold War' was a reminder of the impact individuals could have on momentous political and economic events. How, then, could political structures be taken as the major determinants of state behaviour, when so many bureaucratic and individual agencies hastened events in 1989-90?

In Britain the question was particularly poignant because of the impact Thatcherism was having on British political, economic and social life. In the European arena she found herself in the paradoxical position of extolling the economic virtues of the Single European Market while maintaining that Britain was unwilling to share wholeheartedly in the political dimensions of the Single European Act. Her juxtaposition of antipathy to 'Brussels' against enthusiasm for closer unity in the economic sphere was not lost on a generation of students avidly trying to come to terms with how Britain got where it was in the EU. There was never full agreement in the academic world either on the explanatory power of realism, which level of analysis best explains foreign



policy behaviour, or the importance of structure and agency in the making of foreign policy. The end of the Cold War and the individual impact of Thatcherism on British life confirmed and exaggerated the unease in academic circles about rigidly adhering to one or other side of the debate. The dominance of realism was challenged and with it the value of structures, the international system level of analysis implicit in so many orthodox works on Britain and Europe. The role of agents in determining the course of world politics was upgraded accordingly. This is shown in a recent article by Colin Hay and David Richards on policy networks. They set their approach against the determinism of earlier ones. 'The former body of literature tends to emphasise the structural character of networks of organisational forms...we hope to have demonstrated the utility of a perspective which emphasises the strategic content of networking as a social and political practice and networks as dynamic institutional forms'.<sup>139</sup> Individuals and bureaucracies, it seems, have been receiving greater attention from political scientists and historians in the last decade.

But there are several reasons to doubt that post-1990 academic theorising provides the whole explanation for the revisionist emphasis on individuals and departments in shaping foreign policy. The most obvious is that the rise of revisionism was not a post-Cold War historiographical development. It has been shown how revisionist approaches to British European policy can be found in studies dating back to the 1960s. In Britain, orthodox historiography

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<sup>139</sup> Hay and Richards, 'The Tangled Webs of Whitehall and Westminster', *op. cit.*, p.25.

sowed the seeds of what is now the revisionist interpretation, but was cautious about offering it as the first choice explanation. Revisionism has always been latent in the historiography and although we cannot date it to a particular time, studies that have had the most dramatic impact on the revisionist turn in the historiography of Britain, the Cold War and the origins of European unity were published in the mid to late 1980s.<sup>140</sup> That these same writers did not publish monographs until the early 1990s should not fool us into believing that they were stimulated only by the end of the Cold War. The date of publication is just that- a date. It generally takes several years to research a book and even longer until it is published,<sup>141</sup> and one has to look to earlier manifestations of writers' work to achieve a full picture of how they perceived the events they later gathered together in book form.

So for the second, more compelling, reason why revisionists eschew realism and the international system level of analysis in their accounts of British European policy we have to look at the evidence they scoured to construct their accounts. The empirical revelations in revisionist historiography have coincided with the use of new primary sources to argue that the evolution of British European policy was more complex than orthodox historians asserted. One could, of course, question whether revisionists were travelling to the PRO with preconceived ideas about what they wanted to find there- evidence to

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<sup>140</sup> Deighton, 'The "Frozen Front"', op. cit.; Greenwood, 'Bevin and "Western Union"', op. cit.; Kent, 'Bevin's Imperialism', op. cit.; Warner, 'The Labour Governments and the Unity of Western Europe', op. cit.; Young, 'The Foreign Office, the French and the Post-War Division of Germany', op. cit.

<sup>141</sup> There is, inevitably, a delay between finishing writing and the book reaching libraries and bookstores.

debunk the conventional wisdom. That certain documents and speeches have been interpreted in different ways by different schools suggests that historians can manipulate evidence to prove many points of view. However, the reconstruction of events necessitates imaginative reconstruction of fragmentary relics left to us by their originators. Revisionists have been able to build a distinctive new interpretation based on documentary sources either unavailable to or not consulted by orthodox writers.

What this shows is the impact of sources on British historiography. Enlightenment prescriptions about hard evidence leading to 'the truth' still grip British historians. The revisionist school has made use of the political sources in the PRO to challenge the conventional wisdom on Britain and Europe, reconstructing events from the perspective of ministers and officials involved in the making of policy. Reading how policy was constructed has presented an extra area of concern to them. There is little documentation in the PRO, it seems, on the precise structure of decision-making within Whitehall. Committees rise and fall, appear and disappear over time, allusions are made to a host of them, but there is rarely archival evidence on, precisely, the *reasons* for these changes and developments in the Whitehall machine.

Reading the remnants of intricate policy discussion and draft papers on policy within Whitehall naturally leads archival researchers to the lower levels of foreign policy making. In the light of the sources, they argue, decisions were not the product of an invisible hand directing foreign policy, but the culmination of individual disagreements, the sending of minutes, debate in

sub-committees and discussion over the Cabinet table. Explanations set on the highest level of analysis simply do not speak to revisionists who try consistently to empathise with the individuals they study. Governments come and go, they conclude, but the civil service in London and in its Embassies abroad, was intricately involved in the policy process at all times. British European policy, moreover, was not as negative when we look at the oft-forgotten advances and gestures London made to the Europeans. They were especially common in the period 1950-4 where revisionists find that it is a non sequitur to argue that Britain's reluctance to involve itself in supranational integration *necessarily* implies an awkward or obstructive European policy.<sup>142</sup>

In sum, there are two potential explanations for why revisionist historians have analysed British European policy on the level of agents and departments rather than international structures. It seems that the sources they use explain this phenomenon better than the date of writing. This is because revisionism has been more heavily dependent on the release of sources than it has been a specific post-Cold War development. The groundwork was evident in many orthodox accounts. But there is more to consider in explaining the evolution of the revisionist school than either dates or sources. What also has to be explored is the approach taken by revisionists to the issue of intentions and outcomes. The latter, they argue, cannot be taken as a function of the former.

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<sup>142</sup> Young, "The Parting of Ways?", op. cit.

- **Defining 'British Foreign Policy'**

Michael Smith has observed that 'the stress [in foreign policy analysis] has been laid on the formulation of policy and on decision-making rather than on what Joseph Frankel calls the "post-decisional phase"'.<sup>143</sup> The orthodox school was driven by the politics of blame. That is, its writers took 'British foreign policy' to be the intentional outcome of an orderly process directed by the executive. British foreign policy, they assumed, was what policy-makers in London intended it to be. This fitted the highly politicised nature of their argument, that British policy-makers misguidedly neglected to involve Britain in European integrative endeavours after 1945, preferring instead to cling to outdated notions of the special relationship and Empire. In short, they argued, the three circles of British foreign policy were only partially and belatedly eclipsed in the 1960s as the Macmillan and Wilson governments recognised the futility of continuing to ignore the 'promised land' of supranational integration on the continent. The conclusion drawn is that 'it is Britain, not Germany, which has taken a *Sonderweg* in the last two centuries and with uneasy consequences'.<sup>144</sup>

Revisionists give this approach short shrift, emphasising instead the dynamics of policy presentation abroad. 'This leads', Smith argues, 'to an emphasis on the evaluation of performance and to the generation of questions about the

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<sup>143</sup> Smith, review, '*Foreign Policy Implementation*. Edited by Steve Smith and Michael Clarke', *Journal of Common Market Studies*, op. cit., p.85.

<sup>144</sup> Margaret Shennan, review, '*National Histories and European History*. By Mary Fulbrook', *Journal of Common Market Studies*, 32, 1 (1994), pp.111-2 (p.111). This is exactly why Kaiser criticises the 'awkward partner' thesis in *Using Europe*, op. cit., pp.16-8.

control of policy in complex settings'.<sup>145</sup> The crux of their interpretation is a sympathetic evaluation of the constraints under which foreign policy is devised. They take a nuanced approach, which highlights the key role of officials and the constant interchange of ideas with Foreign Secretaries. Revisionists are intent on reconstructing the process of policy-making to the best of their ability given the evidence available. If this involves criticism of policy intent, such as the claims that many in Whitehall wanted to 'sabotage' the nascent EEC in 1955-6, then so be it. They are content to agree with Monnet's view if they find documentary evidence to support his view. He was quite right about British policy in the mid 1950s, remarks Deighton. 'Plan G', the proposal for a free trade area in Western Europe was not an innocent attempt to foster co-operation in Europe or an attempt to build bridges between the Six and the Seven, but an 'engine of war'.<sup>146</sup> On the basis of policy in the winter of 1955-6, Young neatly concludes, 'British policy pursued since 1950, based on *benevolence* towards but *non-involvement* in, supranational discussions, was abandoned'. The policy emphasis evolved instead into one of sabotage.<sup>147</sup>

The criticisms of British European policy by revisionists do not just centre on 1956. But rather than concentrating on content, it is the 'tone' of European policy pronouncements that leave revisionists room for admonishment. The

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<sup>145</sup> Smith, review, '*Foreign Policy Implementation*. Edited by Steve Smith and Michael Clarke', *Journal of Common Market Studies*, op. cit., p.85.

<sup>146</sup> Anne Deighton, 'La Grande-Bretagne et la Communauté Économique Européenne (1958-1963)', *Histoire, Économie et Société*, 1 (1994), pp.113-30 (pp.113-9).

<sup>147</sup> Young, "'The Parting of Ways'?", op. cit., p.217. See also Kaiser who uses the same language in *Using Europe*, op. cit., p.53.

tone of a politicians' speeches is, it seems, a vital part of how it is received. Political oratory for public consumption tends to be thick on form but thin on substance and sketchy on detail. Confusion among orthodox writers arose, he argues, because they took government rhetoric to stand for reality.

Churchill's Strasbourg speech on the European Army in 1950 is an apt example of the content of British European policy being criticised in the basis of a grand speech. As Keith Robbins puts it, 'it should not be supposed that Churchill's consistent advocacy of a "United Europe", at home and abroad, indicated any belief that the United Kingdom could or should join in the enterprise of European reconciliation at an institutional level'.<sup>148</sup> After all, he said, he did 'not become the King's First Minister in order to preside over the liquidation of the British Empire'.<sup>149</sup> Political rhetoric about Britain's world role in the post-war era often belied a more constructive European policy, revisionists claim, than such rhetoric suggests. Even more problematic is the confusion surrounding the term 'European'. The term is essentially contested in Britain, but one which has rarely been defined in political tracts.

Recriminations about 'anti-European' British leaders, revisionists assert, have too often flowed from conflicts outside the European arena. Some of the individuals (especially Macmillan, Boothby and Maxwell Fyfe) who criticised Attlee, Bevin, Churchill, Eden, Macmillan and Wilson, were no more

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<sup>148</sup> Keith Robbins, *Churchill* (New York: Longman, 1992), p.153.

<sup>149</sup> Quoted in Anthony Adamthwaite, 'Introduction: The Foreign Office and Policy-Making', in Young (ed.), *The Foreign Policy of Churchill's Peacetime Administration*, op. cit., pp.1-28 (p.11).

Monnetist in their European outlook, and were hazy about how much supranationalism they were prepared to accept vis-à-vis European integration. This debate has been played out both in biographies and histories of the Eden and Macmillan governments. On the biographic side David Carlton puts the recriminations mainly down to 'personal and political antagonisms'.<sup>150</sup> Even Macmillan's official biographer had to concede that it was down to Macmillan's resentment at being sacked from the Foreign Office by Eden as premier. 'The fact remains that they simply did not like each other'.<sup>151</sup> Away from personal animosity another of Eden's biographers, Rothwell, has argued that his opponents' vision of Europe was 'hopelessly inconsistent'.<sup>152</sup> Eden's Private Secretary Evelyn Shuckburgh agreed: 'It is very nice to have been right in hindsight, but Maxwell Fyfe and Duncan Sandys didn't carry the nation with them, did they?'.<sup>153</sup> Hence, Dutton surmises, 'the debate between the two men was never as clearly defined along pro- and anti-European lines as Macmillan...later implied'.<sup>154</sup>

Revisionist historians have generally sympathised with the view that Eden's opponents were intellectually muddled on the question of Europe. 'Even those Conservatives...who regarded themselves as better Europeans than Eden were',

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<sup>150</sup> Carlton, *Anthony Eden*, p.310. 'Fyfe considered that he had been let down', observes Robert Rhodes James in *Anthony Eden*, op. cit., p.350. See also Seldon, *Churchill's Indian Summer*, op. cit., p.413.

<sup>151</sup> Horne, *Macmillan*, Vol.1, op. cit., pp.374-5. See also Nigel Fisher, *Harold Macmillan* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1982), p.148, where the 'friction' in their relationship is noted, as it is in John Turner, *Macmillan* (London: Longman, 1994), p.96.

<sup>152</sup> Rothwell, *Anthony Eden*, op. cit., p.112.

<sup>153</sup> Oral evidence quoted in Charlton, *The Price of Victory*, p.149.

<sup>154</sup> Dutton, *Anthony Eden*, op. cit., p.297.



Greenwood asserts, 'no more willing to adopt supranational solutions to European co-operation than was Eden' and that 'the differences between the views of the 'pro-European' Conservatives and those of the Foreign Secretary and his predecessor were largely illusory'.<sup>155</sup> Young concurs. 'To blame Eden and the Foreign Office alone for "missing the European bus" would certainly be unfair, since even those ministers who did show some sympathy for European co-operation were unwilling to carry this very far'.<sup>156</sup> John Turner also remarked that Macmillan's preference for European unification 'of a sort' was not sufficiently well thought through to appeal to the federalists.<sup>157</sup>

This is absolutely crucial, for it challenges all the evidence put forward by the orthodox school to explain Eden's antipathy to the 'European' ideal. It draws upon a considerable body of evidence that there was very little support in Britain, among the public and political elite alike, for Britain to enter a federal European body in the early to mid 1950s. 'Boothby and Macmillan singularly failed to translate into practical terms their idea of a middle course between Eden's notion of intergovernmental co-operation and the federalism of Spaak and Monnet, which they themselves rejected'.<sup>158</sup> Thus, Young writes, 'it is

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<sup>155</sup> Greenwood, Britain and European Co-operation, p.43 and p.50. See also James R. V. Ellison, "'Perfidious Albion'?: Britain, Plan G and European Integration, 1955-1956', Contemporary British History, 10, 4 (1996), pp.1-34 (p.22).

<sup>156</sup> Young, 'The Schuman Plan', op. cit., p.131.

<sup>157</sup> Turner, Macmillan, op. cit., p.74. Robbins observes the analogous tensions in Churchill's position: 'although he caught a glimpse of a new Europe, he could not bring himself to contemplate the reorientation of national identity which its creation would entail'. Robbins, Churchill, op. cit., p.171.

<sup>158</sup> Dutton, Anthony Eden, op. cit., p.313. Emphasis added.

significant that none of (Eden's) three critics themselves advocated a surrender of British sovereignty at this time'.<sup>159</sup>

Revisionist historiography has on one hand, then, investigated the hypocritical accusations levelled at European policy-makers by political opponents. On the other, it has shed light on the consistently benevolent aims of British European policy, even though they were aims not amenable to Monnet and his followers. Thus, revisionists take British foreign policy as a combination of what British policy-makers willed but crucially also *how policy was perceived abroad*. Kaplan made an extremely apposite remark in this context. 'That individuals often produce the opposite of what they intend, that results are often inadvertent, or that accidents often determine history is not something that should surprise anyone'.<sup>160</sup> What London perceived as an inoffensive policy could and often was viewed with suspicion by the Monnetists. One of the central planks of the revisionist interpretation is that orthodox writers allow these suspicions to colour their approach to the entirety of British European policy. Revisionists assert that while we are right to chastise policy-makers on

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<sup>159</sup>Young, Britain and European Unity, p.38. Dutton quotes a note from Boothby to Eden that highlights this. See Dutton, Anthony Eden, op. cit., p.312. Sainsbury argues the same about Macmillan. 'There is little evidence...that he markedly differed from Eden on the main basis of policy'. See Keith Sainsbury, 'Harold Macmillan', in Shlaim, Jones and Sainsbury (eds.), British Foreign Secretaries, op. cit., pp.110-6 (p.110).

<sup>160</sup> Kaplan, On Historical and Political Knowing, op. cit., p.98.

some counts, we have to be chary of erecting a damning indictment of policy on the evidence of hindsight.<sup>161</sup>

It has therefore been established that revisionists define 'British foreign policy' in a different way from orthodox writers. The crucial point to understand is that the schools treat the intentionality issue differently. Orthodox writers took British policy as a direct function of what policy-makers intended. For revisionists the matter was less clear cut. British policy was subject to a host of distorted interpretations at home and abroad. They look to the British documentation in the PRO to construct the case that London's European policy was both more constructive and 'European' minded than orthodox writers hold. This begs the question, of course, *which* sources in the PRO? The answer exposes much about the research methods employed by contemporary British historians.

- **Sources Used by Revisionists**

Cabinet minutes, Prime Ministers' files and Foreign Office correspondence are the most commonly used sources by revisionists. What, then, of the economic departments, the Treasury, Bank of England, the Board of Trade, a neglect which validates Wallace's point that: 'The separation of foreign economic policy from the traditional concerns of foreign policy has been deeply

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<sup>161</sup> On each of the debates about British European policy they propose instances of British European policy being more constructive than orthodox historiography allows. The most prominent cases include the widespread support for the Third Force, association agreements with the ECSC and the EDC, the development of the Western European Union, exclusion (not withdrawal) of Britain from the Messina negotiations, Selwyn Lloyd's 1957 Grand Design, Macmillan's Grand Designs in December 1959 and Wilson's 'conversion' to Europe during his tour of EC capitals 1967.

embedded in British policy and practice'.<sup>162</sup> Why has there been this essentially 'political' definition of foreign policy? The obvious explanation is that the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) has traditionally had the role of being the co-ordinating department of foreign affairs. 'The most important agency is', remarks Northedge, 'the Foreign Office'.<sup>163</sup> Smith and Smith argue that 'traditionalists' focus on the dominance of 'Number 10' and the FCO over the foreign policy process. Revisionists (whom they call 'transformationalists') have also been taken by the central role of the Downing Street-Whitehall axis. It is a sentiment that can be captured as follows: 'When it comes to the implementation of foreign policy, that is essentially the task of the FCO...one of the "great departments of state" which takes the lead on all matters of external relations'.<sup>164</sup> Clarke is of the same opinion: 'the administration of foreign policy is concentrated around the centre of government and directed through the cabinet system'.<sup>165</sup>

There is also a pragmatic concern for historians. With the documentation for all branches of government available for scrutiny in the 1980s, how could they justify applying for funding to study British European policy using papers from the Treasury, Bank of England or the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries, when the Foreign Office correspondence had yet to be scrutinised? Out of sheer exigency it was always likely that the study of British European policy

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<sup>162</sup> Wallace, *The Foreign Policy Process*, op. cit., p.156. See also Beloff, *New Dimensions in Foreign Policy*, op. cit., especially pp.22-33.

<sup>163</sup> F. S. Northedge, review, '*The Foreign Policy Process in Britain*. By William Wallace', *Journal of Common Market Studies*, 15, 3 (1977), pp.219-20 (p.219).

<sup>164</sup> Smith and Smith, 'The Analytical Background', op. cit., p.18.

<sup>165</sup> Clarke, 'The Policy-Making Process', op. cit., p.73.

would be led by studies based on Foreign Office correspondence. This tells us much about the role of funds in determining historiographical interpretation: what the funding bodies deem desirable and worthy areas of study have powerful repercussions within the discipline of contemporary history. One can infer that had the British Academy at the turn of the 1980s been intensely interested in the input of economics to the British foreign policy process, we would have seen many more of the economics-first studies we are currently witnessing in this field. The key role of money can never be overlooked as a determining factor in the direction of historical research.

Surely, it could be argued, the use of papers from the economic branches of government shows that revisionists are well aware of the economic dimension of foreign policy? That economic hardship in Russia and increased interdependence in the international system proved vital to the end of the Cold War might explain scholarly interest in the economic dimension of foreign policy. It could even be interpreted as Marxist historians paying attention to the economic stimuli behind foreign policy. Perhaps, but it could also be a case of exigency. The need to fill in gaps in the literature and satisfy the agendas of funding bodies could also explain the current trend towards using papers from the major economic departments to explain the policy process. An extra concern that deserves attention centres on the historian's wish to interpret the past in the light of new sources.

Scholars know that the pioneers in the field have long been using Foreign Office correspondence, so how better to write an original study than to use government sources in the PRO which have yet to be analysed by others in the field? Thus, the term 'method' is ambiguous. Saying that one's research design is driven by theoretical conceptions of who makes British foreign policy, for example, could in fact hide the mundane reality that it is academically pragmatic to use economic sources. In Britain, where historians have little theoretical awareness, the mundane explanation is the more likely. Rhetoric in both the political and academic worlds can obscure as much as it reveals about individuals' motivations and intentions. As Kaplan observed: 'there are surely few social scientists who are unaware that the very choice of which projects to carry out involves some kind of value choice, if only with respect to what interests them or to what advances their professional career (or to some other criterion)'.<sup>166</sup>

## **5. The Inevitable Rise of Revisionism?**

To date this chapter has discussed the features of revisionist historiography which distinguish it from its orthodox predecessor. It has been argued that the schools centre on different communities of writers; that the levels of analysis on which each bases its analysis of British foreign policy are lower for

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<sup>166</sup> Kaplan, On Historical and Political Knowing, op. cit., p. 130.

revisionist than orthodox writers; that revisionists stress the fluidity, the uncertainty within the international system while orthodox writers assumed European policy outcomes were intended by policy-makers. In general, it has been argued that revisionist historians hold greater sympathy for the individuals whose actions and motivations they attempt to reconstruct. Taking these key distinctions between schools together add up to considerable interpretive conflict between the schools.

This section will consider two remaining questions that help us understand historiographical progression in this field: was revisionism preconceived? and why did it take so long to come emerge? There is a strong argument to suggest that in the ultra-competitive world of academic scholarship revisionist works might all be artificial intellectual constructs designed and written to make names for the authors rather than contribute seriously to the historiography on any particular subject. It is dangerous (and libelous!) to issue such a strong falsifying claim against historical scholarship. It is useful instead to examine the weaker form of this judgement by reflecting further on the generational context of the revisionism on Britain and Europe.

Consider this observation from Kaplan: 'older scientists have built their reputations on the theories they have developed, accepted and based their work upon. Thus it is plausible that they would resist new theoretical formulations'. He goes on: 'scientists, particularly theoretical scientists, seem by psychological inclination to be disposed to reject established beliefs. The incentives for this to operate upon young scientists would seem greater than

upon older scientists, who have become members of the scientific establishment... [I]t is easier for a young scientist to establish his reputation by means of a theoretical innovation than by building on the work of an established figure. All these considerations would make it more likely that young, rather than old, scientists would be innovators'.<sup>167</sup> Beloff also argues that 'Young people seeking to get their foot on the academic ladder in history as in other disciplines must show their capacities for research. While some topics for these arise from the overall view and requirements of the young researcher, supervisor or patron... it is probable that more attention will be paid to his work if it is of a kind to challenge accepted notions'.<sup>168</sup>

Kaplan and Beloff have highlighted one of the motivating forces behind historiographical progression: generational change. It is in the tradition of scholarly inquiry for successive generations to contest the established orthodoxies out forward by their academic forebears. It is only a short way from Kaplan's terminology of 'scientists', 'theoretical' frameworks and 'establishment', to understand the relevance of his comments to the historiography of Britain and Europe. He picks out the in-built resistance of 'older scientists' to new theories. The work of writers such as Camps, one of the 'older' players in the writing of British European policy, supports this argument. Even after visiting the PRO, she maintained, 'What I have seen so far has contained few surprises'.<sup>169</sup>

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<sup>167</sup> Kaplan, *On Historical and Political Knowing*, op. cit., pp.13-4.

<sup>168</sup> Beloff, *An Historian*, op. cit., p.32.

<sup>169</sup> Compared to the interpretation she set out in *Britain and the European Community*. See Camps, 'Missing the Boat at Messina and Other Times?', op. cit., p.134.



Here is a good example of a historian so dominated by one conception of events, that a morass of evidence used to construct an alternative set of truth-claims does nothing to shift her belief-system. For the self-styled 'mother' of the OEEC,<sup>170</sup> federalism was, and remains, the solution to world peace. She is hardly likely to develop a new ideology overnight just because official documents are released. Quite the contrary, she was devoted to changing establishment opinion. For professional historians, on the other hand, keeping up with the ebb and flow of advanced academic debate is a crucial way of keeping your name at the cutting edge of the field. It has thus been easier for professional historians such as Baylis to discard their early beliefs about Bevin's European policy in favour of the 'new' approach.

Successive generations which construct their own 'truths' about how to explain historical events. The question of intent, or falsehood, in the development of new theories is to some extent misleading. Who is to say one account is any more 'truthful' than another? Each individual presents his or her version of the truth. As long as one is aware of the different forces at work on writers, as well as their reason for writing, one can accept several competing truth claims about the past. History is accessible only through the fragmentary evidence left to us by its creators. Reconstructing exactly what each individual and bureaucracy intended at any particular time is impossible. The moment when decisions were taken is unclear. The input from numerous possible sources is hard to

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<sup>170</sup> Ibid.

quantify. The importance of imaginative reconstruction of events is, therefore, crucial.

The second question to be discussed in this section is why did it take so long for revisionism to take off? It has been shown how it was latent in many orthodox works, so why did it take until the late 1980s to become so popular? The answer sheds further light on the sociological context of history-writing in Britain as well as on the methodological limitations of British contemporary historians. The pertinence of this question arises from the understanding that the Thirty Year Rule released most of the official documentation on the Attlee Labour governments by 1982. Even allowing for a lag between the release of archives and their scrutiny and the inevitable delay in publishing findings, it is surprising that the revisionist approach to Bevin's Third Force concept of British foreign policy only gripped the historiographical field in 1989. To be sure, the seeds of a revisionist approach were planted in several early works, the example of Bullock being particularly relevant here. The Third Force, he argued, was in Bevin's thinking for a short time, but events soon directed him to overlook such ambitious schemes. His 'unrealistic' flirtation ended almost as soon as it started.<sup>171</sup> One cannot compare these hazy conceptions of the Third Force with the much bolder claims of writers such as Kent and Young. The two approaches clearly merit these writers being placed in different schools, especially because the latter place *themselves* in opposition to historians who previously dismissed Bevin's Third Forcism.<sup>172</sup>

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<sup>171</sup> Bullock, Ernest Bevin, op. cit., p.153, p.358, pp.395-6.

<sup>172</sup> Greenwood, 'Ernest Bevin', op. cit.; Kent, 'Bevin's Imperialism', op. cit.; Kent and Young, British Policy Overseas, op. cit.

Primary sources, and therefore the lag in historical understanding produced by the Thirty Year Rule, are not the sole factors rousing revisionist accounts into life. Historical interpretation is not produced in a vacuum. Historical narratives are extremely complex multilayered texts containing multiple internal tensions. Interpretation is the result of the individual's ability to imaginatively reconstruct events from the vantage point of the present. Collecting 'facts' is one thing. It is quite another to assemble those facts into a meaningful interpretation of the past. Interpretation and all that it entails in terms of the reasons for writing and publishing is reliant on a host of external and internal pressures, and it is therefore only partially correct to argue that historians' interpretations are as good as the sources they use. Ultimately, interpretation results from a constant interplay between the historian, his or her sources, background and personal and academic connections, the aim of writing, time constraints and accessibility to funds for research.

Of all these factors the social construction of this field is especially revealing. Greenwood's 1986 article on Bevin and Western Union built on Bullock's conception of the Third Force in Bevin's thinking, and Newton's economic history studies in 1984 and 1985 subsequently came to enhance the growing scepticism about the consensus approach to British European policy in the period 1945-50. But without the strident criticisms of the school from Kent and Young at the end of the 1980s and beginning of the 1990s the revisionist approach to Bevin's foreign policy may not have evolved as it has done into a clearly defined, distinctive approach. The key to understanding this is partly

source-oriented. Colonial Office documentation was the bedrock of Kent's analysis, a new departure in the historiography which long ignored the imperial and strategic inputs to European policy-making. But the school was also crucially developed by two scholars- Kent and Young- who knew each other well, who obviously discussed their archival findings and came to a shared understanding about the significance of the Third Force to the Foreign Secretary. The sociological links among writers and the developing community of scholars who have come to form the backbone of the revisionist school have been factors in the *timing* of revisionism. The similar training they have received and methods they have employed are important, but cannot be the whole story. Few scholars are willing to set out on a brand new interpretive adventure without confidence in its merit gleaned from others in the field.

Without the security of being part of a community of researchers all sharing similar outlooks on events, perhaps the nearest historians could get to revisionism before 1989 was Bullock's wavering approach. Thus, to answer the question of why revisionism did not emerge for more than four years behind what one might expect in a country such as Britain which has a tradition of writing history using primary sources, one has to conceptualise and define what a 'method' of research entails. It incorporates explicit choice of research design, sources and agenda. But there is also a hidden dimension which tells at least as much about historiographical evolution. That scholars came to be researching in particular areas is due to a number of factors, of which the political climate of opinion, lacunae in the literature, publication needs and funding constraints all play their parts.

Could revisionism have emerged sooner by consulting press sources? At first sight the *Economist* may appear to be a good example of the orthodoxy on Britain and Europe. The majority of its post-war editors and contributors appear to have been of Monnetist outlook,<sup>173</sup> their leading argument, since the announcement of the Schuman Plan,<sup>174</sup> being that Britain should play a fuller role in European integration. An article on 9 December 1950 is exceptionally revealing both about the views of 'Europeanists' in Britain about British European policy and the generic criticisms which came to dominate orthodox historiography. The confluence with the views of other contemporaries such as Barker, Beloff, Camps and British 'Europeans' in Whitehall who later set the orthodox school on its path is stark: 'The British have frittered away an immense amount of goodwill on the continent since 1945. By hanging back at Strasbourg, rejecting the Schuman Plan and, to some extent, siding with the Americans over German rearmament, they have appeared to show themselves unwilling to treat Europe's problems as their own. People on the continent are hardly to be blamed if they react by condemning the British attitude with the vigour of despair'.<sup>175</sup>

Amidst the failed attempts to create a European Army the *Economist* in 1951 complained that the British government was 'wrongly sceptical of the whole

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<sup>173</sup> As shown by the contributions of Christopher Layton.

<sup>174</sup> 'The Schuman Scheme', *Economist*, 20 May 1950, pp.1105-8; 'Inverted Micawbers', *Economist*, 10 June 1950, pp.1257-9; 'Socialism *Contra Mundum*', *Economist*, 17 June 1950, pp.1313-5; 'Thoughts Behind the Schuman Offer', *Economist*, 17 June 1950, p.1335; 'Ripples from the Schuman Pool', *Economist*, 24 June 1950; 'Schuman Plan in Perspective', *Economist*, 2 December 1950, p.953.

<sup>175</sup> 'Closing the Ranks in Europe', *Economist*, 9 December 1950, p.988.

drive towards European integration'.<sup>176</sup> By the spring of 1952 it had concluded that the Foreign Office 'has a sworn vendetta against Europe'.<sup>177</sup> By October 1954 Britain was being blamed for the collapse of the EDC.<sup>178</sup> When the negotiations on forming the EEC were in full swing in November 1955 one finally finds the 'missed bus' approach to describe British European policy. 'Those who are most deeply committed to the "European" approach have now begun to refer to these two new proposals as the "third chance" to "build Europe"' 'Unless', the article warned, 'the British government will say what it will do, not simply what it will not do, a time may soon come when it will find that it has missed a bus that it will wish it had caught'.<sup>179</sup> This prophetic warning could have come Monnet himself.

This reveals two fundamental things about the historiography of Britain's relations with Europe. First and most obviously the interpretation and language of the orthodoxy is born in live political debate and contemporary journalistic comment on British policy. The community of individuals working on the *Economist* clearly had a shared outlook with Monnetist Europeans, many of whom later narrated histories of Britain and Europe. Second, the same internal

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<sup>176</sup> 'Towards Europe's Army', *Economist*, 28 July 1951, pp.194-6 (p.195). See also 'The Defence of Britain', *Economist*, 31 March 1951, pp.723-4; 'Small Expectations', *Economist*, 22 December 1951, pp.1509-10; 'Three Years Ahead', *Economist*, 29 December 1951, pp.1561-4; 'The Six Power Army', *Economist*, 5 January 1952, pp.3-4; 'Defence of the Defence Community', *Economist*, 2 February 1952, p.265.

<sup>177</sup> 'Vendetta in Downing Street', *Economist*, 12 April 1952, pp.79-80 (p.80). See also 'Major and Minor Risks', *Economist*, 19 April 1952, pp.142-4; 'Europe in a Hurry', *Economist*, 12 July 1952, pp.67-8; 'Challenge from the Capital', *Economist*, 24 January 1953, pp.183-5.

<sup>178</sup> 'Britain was an Island', *Economist*, 9 October 1954, pp.132-3; 'A Vote for Paralysis', *Economist*, 4 September 1954, pp.711-3. See also Beloff, *Europe and the Europeans*, op. cit., p.165.

<sup>179</sup> 'Britain and Europe's "Third Chance"', *Economist*, op. cit., pp.633-4.

inconsistencies of argument that pervade orthodox texts are also to be found in the *Economist*. Like historical texts, the weekly is riddled with intellectual inconsistency, as the leader writers and editors grappled with competing explanations but lead with their favoured, Monnetist ones. Alongside the *Economist*'s bombastic comment on British European policy one discovers alternative explanations which are relegated below that of 'missed opportunities'. Revisionists would later exploit these inconsistencies, which operated on two levels.

On the level of interpretation, its analysis of the collapse of the EDC is revealing. Throughout 1951-4 the *Economist* bemoaned British reluctance to be involved in the process of European integration heralded by discussions about a European Army and EDC. It concluded that 'The failure of the EDC is as much the failure of Britain's willingness to take matters to their logical conclusion as it is the failure of France'.<sup>180</sup> Yet over the previous years the weekly had toyed repeatedly with the major problems France was having coming to terms with a defence entity, at a time when its troops were being sucked into Indochina and which involved German rearmament, no British counterweight and unsubtle American pressure to rearm. It was also critical

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<sup>180</sup> 'Britain was an Island', op. cit., p.133. See also 'A Vote for Paralysis', *Economist*, 4 September 1954, pp.711-3.

also of the military logistics of the proposed schemes.<sup>181</sup> On the intellectual level, the *Economist* repeatedly warned that Britain should only join loose, intergovernmental forms of European integration, not supranational designs. It was clear about this: 'Britain cannot and should not be a full member of Western European federal structures'.<sup>182</sup> It was also aware of 'the suspicion of British motives that still plays an important part in relations between this country and the continent'.<sup>183</sup>

The *Economist* appears to have been as confused as the Tory Strasbourgers. Revisionist accounts of the demise of the EDC have been built on French domestic upheaval at the thought of joining the EDC. 'The British', observes Greenwood, 'although they were to receive a full share of the obloquy for the failure of the EDC were, in fact, never the central players- these were France, Germany and the United States'.<sup>184</sup> For revisionists- and writers on American-European relations since 1945-, the British role was peripheral, though they agree that its willingness to participate and a positive rhetorical reception of

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<sup>181</sup> 'Collective Defence', *Economist*, 4 November 1950, pp.679-80; 'Germans and Russians', *Economist*, 23 December 1950, pp.1125-6; 'A Political Authority for Europe', *Economist*, 5 July 1952, pp.10-1; M. Schuman's Chances', *Economist*, 20 September 1952, p.678; 'Between Devil and EDC', *Economist*, 25 October 1952, pp.215-6; 'The Case for France', *Economist*, 28 March 1953, pp.849-50; 'Hard Choice for Europe', *Economist*, 23 May 1953, pp.493-5; 'Minuet in Paris', *Economist*, 30 May 1953, p.584; 'France's Crisis of Confidence', *Economist*, 20 June 1953, pp.795-6; 'Those Against the Treaty', *Economist*, 18 July 1953, pp.183-4; 'EDC and the Antis', *Economist*, 17 March 1954, p.796; 'Those in Favour', *Economist*, 25 July 1953, pp.264-5.

<sup>182</sup> 'The New Voice of America', *Economist*, 31 January 1953, pp.257-8 (p.257); 'The Six Power Army', op. cit.

<sup>183</sup> Review, 'Atlantic Crisis: *American Diplomacy Confronts a Resurgent Europe*. By Robert Kleiman; *Préhistoire des États-Unis de l'Europe*. By Achille Albonetti', *Economist*, 17 October 1964, p.264.

<sup>184</sup> Greenwood, *Britain and European Co-operation*, op. cit., p.49. See also Young, 'German Rearmament', op. cit.; Young, *Britain and European Unity*, op. cit., pp.35-43; Samuel F. Wells, 'The United States, Britain, and the Defence of Europe', in Louis and Bull (eds.), *The Special Relationship*, op. cit., pp.129-49 (p.130).



the EDC *may* have helped its cause. But in the final analysis, they approach the material from a different perspective. That is, Britain could never have joined supranational integrative efforts.

The example of the Economist provides a microcosm of the processes by which historiographical evolution occurs. It offers a multitude of 'facts', interpretations, insights and dogma. Current historical texts offer a similar interpretive blend of general observations under which one can find internal contradictions. What separates the two schools of writing is not complete disavowal of the evidence on which competing interpretations are based, or a dialogue of the deaf in which the merits of one school go unheard, shouted down by the other. The difference between schools is, paradoxically, stark yet fascinatingly subtle when one searches beneath the headline rhetoric of each. Submerged beneath the broad interpretation of events is more sympathy for the opposing position than one might suspect.

This is why the academic, methodological and sociological contexts are central to any explanation of the process of historiographical evolution. It is necessary but not sufficient to recognise the significance of new 'facts' gleaned from PRO sources. Other elements also have an impact. They include the empathy the second generation historians on Britain and Europe have managed to achieve, consciously or intuitively; the detail and degree of specialisation in the subject matter accorded them by the release of primary source material; last, and not by any means least, there has developed a shared will to draw out the inconsistencies in the orthodox approach. This is hard to quantify, but the

community of scholars now dominating the field seem to have greater confidence in the alternative explanations of events. They have developed a (slightly more) globalist perspective which has freed them from the shackles of the politics of blame that spurred the reports in the *Economist* and Monnetist integrationists. The agendas of the two schools are different. But so is their treatment of the evidence, the mental processes by which they construct their narratives and the sources which influence their judgements. The 'facts' of history have been in the public domain for some time. How these 'facts' are treated, manipulated and imaginatively reconstituted as 'history' is the crucial distinction between the interpretations which characterise the schools of writing on Britain and Europe.

Why, it might be asked, is there a caveat to the statement that revisionists have been '(slightly more) globalist'? The reason is to be found in the dearth, until recently, of 'Grand Design' explanations for foreign policy outcomes which have characterised foreign studies of European relations for forty years.<sup>185</sup> This further reinforces the conclusion that in theory a revisionist school could have emerged much sooner than it did. To get to the heart of this statement we need to discuss firstly what 'Grand Design' interpretations of British European policy are and, secondly, at what stage they have impacted on the historiography. It will be shown that much of the foreign literature on post-war European politics, American-European relations, Anglo-American relations

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<sup>185</sup> The term is taken from the historiography of Bevin and the Third Force and from other Foreign Secretarial and Prime Ministerial initiatives (notably Selwyn Lloyd in 1957 and Macmillan in December 1959) intended to solve Britain's economic and strategic ills by deepening the links between Britain, America and the other West European states. Discovery of such initiatives has stimulated revisionist historiography.

and biographies of key Europeans have been alert to the global explanations for British European policy for decades. That British writers have been engrossed in relatively introspective studies of what could Britain have done to immerse itself sooner in European integration has blinded them to some bigger explanations that have little grounding in British actions alone. Carr remarked thirty years ago that 'I am much concerned with our failure as historians to take account of the widening horizon of history outside this country and outside Western Europe'.<sup>186</sup> Only now are historians coming to terms with the implications of global events, freeing themselves from the intellectual shackles imposed by the orthodox school's obsession with the politics of blame.

First, one needs to understand the dynamics of 'Grand Design' approaches to British European policy. Their essence is best elucidated in the historiography of de Gaulle's first veto on British membership of the European Community. Macmillan's own reflections on the veto set the trend for the orthodoxy: 'I felt hopeful that...[he] might be persuaded to allow...the emergence of a Western Europe in which Britain could play an equal part'.<sup>187</sup> Orthodox writers focus on whether Macmillan could have done more to persuade the General that Britain was positively attuned to the 'European idea', that London was not subservient to Washington and that Britain could bring important economic,

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<sup>186</sup> Carr, *What is History?*, op. cit., p.150.

<sup>187</sup> Macmillan, *Riding the Storm*, op. cit., pp.410-1. See also Macmillan, *At the End of the Day*, op. cit., passim; Horne, *Macmillan Vol. 2*, op. cit., pp.328ff; Anthony Sampson, *Macmillan: A Study in Ambiguity* (London: Allen Lane and Penguin, 1967), pp.212-23.

political and strategic benefits to the EEC. They concede that the chances of success were not good and that de Gaulle was a huge obstacle. But they are in broad agreement that despite the many obstacles the first bid failed at least in part because of Macmillan's own failings, especially in his personal meetings with de Gaulle at Rambouillet and Chateau du Champs in 1961-2.<sup>188</sup>

The revisionist school is less convinced that summitry between the two leaders could have worked, that the Brussels negotiations were on the verge of success,<sup>189</sup> as Heath complained,<sup>190</sup> or that Macmillan was ever convinced that his application would succeed. They have been challenging the received wisdom that Macmillan could have done more to secure entry, exploring domestic constraints on the bid, especially from the National Farmers Union

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<sup>188</sup> Barker, Britain in a Divided Europe, op. cit., pp.166-97; Beloff, The General Says No, op. cit. passim; Camps, Britain and the European Community, op. cit., passim; Evans, Downing Street Diary, op. cit., pp.172-242; Frankel, British Foreign Policy, op. cit., pp.221-42; George, An Awkward Partner, op. cit., pp.33-5; Gilmour and Garnett, Whatever Happened to the Tories, op. cit., pp.161-214; Kitzinger, Diplomacy and Persuasion: How Britain Joined the Common Market (London: Thames and Hudson, 1973); Lamb, The Macmillan Years, op. cit., pp.145-202; Pinto-Duschinsky, 'From Macmillan to Home', op. cit., pp.151-65; Sanders, Losing an Empire, op. cit., pp.139-40; Sked and Cook, Post-War Britain, op. cit. pp.164-73.

<sup>189</sup> Their misgivings about Heath's claims reflect the media opinion at the time. One can trace the growing pessimism in the Economist. See 'Brussels Auguries', Economist, 7 July 1962, pp.13-4 (p.14). See also 'Foglamps in Brussels', Economist, 19 May 1962, pp.650-2; 'Mr. Menzies's Mouse', Economist, 9 June 1962, pp.971-2; 'Political Europe', Economist, 23 June 1962, pp.1190-1; 'Europe's Dog Days', Economist, 11 August 1962, pp.506-10; 'A Commonwealth at Sea', Economist, 22 September 1962, pp.1080-1; 'Dangerous Corner', Economist, 3 November 1962, pp.435-6; 'Who Picks the Music?', Economist, 1 December 1962, pp.888-9; 'The British Alternative', Economist, 15 December 1962, pp.1088-90; 'One is One and All Alone', Economist, 12 January 1963, pp.101-2 (p.101).

<sup>190</sup> Heath, The Course of My Life, op. cit., pp.225-37; Campbell, Edward Heath, op. cit., p.129. See also George, An Awkward Partner, op. cit., p.34; Sanders, Losing an Empire, op. cit., p.139; Barker, Britain in a Divided Europe, op. cit., p.182; Morgan, 'Commercial Policy', op. cit., p.526; Reynolds, Britannia Overruled, op. cit., p.220.

and the plethora of other factors that went against Macmillan.<sup>191</sup> To see the different approaches of the schools we only have to note John Ramsden's finding in the Conservative Research Department archives that by July 1961, a full eighteen months before the veto was announced, the Conservatives were designing a 'Plan B' for British European policy should the negotiations fail.<sup>192</sup> Take also Deighton's observation that Macmillan, though supportive of Blue Streak during his time at the Ministry of Defence and as Foreign Secretary, was 'losing interest in the project in 1957'.<sup>193</sup> This calls into question the conventional wisdom that the Nassau accord was a shock reaction to the loss of one of the pillars on which Britain's claims to Great Power status rested in 1960.<sup>194</sup> Both are central pillars of orthodox interpretations of nuclear defence diplomacy in this period.

Revisionist approaches 'present a stiff challenge to the conventional attribution of responsibility for the breakdown to de Gaulle or Macmillan alone'.<sup>195</sup> Importantly, they note, de Gaulle's press conference on 14 January 1963 was

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<sup>191</sup> Richard Aldous, "'A Family Affair': Macmillan and the Art of Personal Diplomacy', in Richard Aldous and Sabine Lee (eds.), *Harold Macmillan*, op. cit., pp.9-35; Constantine A. Pagedas, 'Harold Macmillan and the 1962 Champs Meeting', *Diplomacy and Statecraft*, 9, 1 (1998), pp.224-42. He expanded on this in Pagedas, *Anglo-American Strategic*, op. cit., pp.56-273. See also Greenwood, *Britain and European Co-operation*, op. cit., pp.72-90; Kaiser, *Using Europe*, op. cit., pp.174-203; Ludlow, *Dealing with Britain*, op. cit., passim; Reynolds, *Britannia Overruled*, op. cit., pp.215-21; Young, *Britain and European Unity*, op. cit., pp.74-85; Young, *This Blessed Plot*, op. cit., pp.129-69. Their pessimism about the state of the Brussels negotiations reflects the Economist's growing pessimism though 1961-3.

<sup>192</sup> John Ramsden, *The Making of Conservative Party Policy: The Conservative Research Department Since 1929* (London: Longman, 1990), pp.212-3.

<sup>193</sup> Deighton, 'Harold Macmillan, Whitehall, and the Defence of Europe', op. cit., p.242.

<sup>194</sup> Horne, 'The Macmillan Years', op. cit., pp.93-8.

<sup>195</sup> Wilkes, 'The First Failure', op. cit., p.27.

not just about the British application. He ranged over many problems in world affairs. The Grand Design approach to the veto rests on the General's aversion to American influence in Europe. De Gaulle's 'Non', it is said, was directed at Kennedy's proposal for a nuclear Multilateral Force (MLF) as much as Britain's attempt to join the Community. It was, in Oliver Bange's words, a 'double veto',<sup>196</sup> or, to take an even less British-centric appraisal, a 'rebuff of the Polaris offer'.<sup>197</sup> Writers analysing broader American-European or Franco-American relations in this period have a different set of questions and thus different answers about what de Gaulle was vetoing. They relegate the significance of British foreign policy below that of America. Macmillan's application, they argue, was the victim of Franco-American rivalry and growing Franco-German partnership in the politico-strategic field, shown by the poignantly-timed Élysee Treaty of 22 January 1963.

What is interesting is that American, French and German writers, and those in Britain concerned with Anglo-American and Franco-German relations, have

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<sup>196</sup> Bange, 'Grand Designs', op. cit., p.207. See also Pierre Gerbet, 'The Fouchet Negotiations for Political Union and the British Application', pp.135-43; Gustav Schmidt, "'Master-Minding" a New Western Europe: The Key Actors at Brussels in the Superpower Conflict', pp.70-90; Maurice Vaisse, 'De Gaulle and the British "Application" to Join the Common Market', pp.51-69; Wells, 'The United States, Britain, and the Defence of Europe', op. cit., p.132.

<sup>197</sup> Cromwell, The United States and the European Pillar, op. cit., p.23.

long assessed these global dimensions of the veto.<sup>198</sup> It was only in 1997, with the publication of Wilkes' edited volume *The First Failure* that British historians began to take seriously the Grand Design approach to the veto. It built on Frank Costigliola's study in 1984 in which he articulated just this approach to the veto.<sup>199</sup> Why this article remained on the periphery for so long is hard to tell. The most likely reason is that it was published in an American journal. British historians tend to be more aware of the British than foreign writing in this area, and have a set of key journals in which debates about Britain and Europe have developed, including *Contemporary British History*, *Historical Journal*, *International Affairs* and *Review of International Studies*. Where one publishes is a determinant of the profile of one's work. What one can conclude from this is that revisionism in Britain was an inevitable development in the scholarship. The *nature and timing* of revisionism, however, have been crucially dependent on social factors, the Thirty Year Rule on the release of official documentation, the developing of British interest in European studies and the gradual incorporation of foreign sources and outlooks into British scholarship. Revisionism could theoretically have risen sooner. Such are the structural determinants of interpretation in contemporary history,

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<sup>198</sup> Markus Schulte, 'Industry Politics and Trade Discrimination in West Germany's European Policy 1957-1963', PhD (LSE, 1996), pp.305-30. The veto, he argues on p.330 was not simply French, it was joint Franco-German policy'. See also Ball, *The Discipline of Power*, op. cit., pp.198-220; Crozier, *De Gaulle*, op. cit., p.539; Dickie, 'Special' No More, op. cit., pp.105-32; Dobson, 'The Years of Transition', op. cit., (pp.243-6; Grosser, *The Western Alliance*, op. cit., pp.183-208; Hoffmann, *Decline or Renewal*, op. cit., pp.283-399; Kissinger, *Diplomacy* (London: Simon and Schuster, 1994), pp.594-619; Lacouture, *De Gaulle*, op. cit., pp.334-75; Ledwidge, *De Gaulle*, op. cit., pp.259-84; Macridis, *De Gaulle*, op. cit., Nunnerley, *President Kennedy and Britain*, op. cit., pp.164-6; Andrew Shennan, *De Gaulle* (London: Longman, 1993), pp.118-24; Alexander Werth, *De Gaulle: A Political Biography* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1965); Winand, *Eisenhower, Kennedy*, op. cit., pp.210-338.

<sup>199</sup> Frank Costigliola, 'The Failed Design: Kennedy, de Gaulle and the Struggle for Europe', *Diplomatic History*, 8, 3 (1984), pp.227-51. See also Frank Costigliola, *France and the United States: The Cold Alliance Since World War Two* (New York: Twayne, 1992), pp.118-59.

however, it has taken a change in the sociological context to decisively reject the orthodoxy.

## 6. Conclusion

Jordanova observes that 'Each country tends to privilege its own history'.<sup>200</sup> Put another way, each country- like each historian- has its own set of concerns, its own questions to ask and its own methods of discovering the past. What one seeks has a powerful say over what one finds out about history. The approach taken by what has been described by Michael Shackleton as the 'British school'<sup>201</sup> of scholars on Britain and Europe has been to concentrate, not unnaturally, on the role of British politicians and officials in the process of European integration. Many of them have, after all, lived through the events they now describe. It is only natural that they will want to critically analyse the actions of key British players. What makes this tendency even harder to escape in Britain is that the orthodoxy was intent on analysing the other options open to British diplomats, alternative routes by which Britain could have led the process of integration.

In this sense, revisionism can only ever be as good as the orthodoxy to which it replies. It is the orthodox school which sets the rules of the game, the

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<sup>200</sup> Jordanova, *History in Practice*, op. cit., p.12.

<sup>201</sup> A term used by Michael Shackleton to describe the whole community of scholars which this thesis analyses. See 'Organising Europe. By Clive Archer; *Understanding the European Communities: The Institutions of Integration*. By William Nicholl and Trevor C. Salmon', *Journal of Common Market Studies*, 29, 2 (1991), pp.329-30 (p.330).



parameters of the debate and the questions to answer. Revisionists have been content to play orthodox writers at their own game. They have been sucked into the detail of the debate about British actions at the expense of a broader perspective which takes in the other available explanations for British foreign policy outcomes. There is, then, a specifically British approach to the study of European integration history which focuses on parochial questions of intent and quality of policy. Alternative explanations which set British European policy in the context of Britain's multilateral web of global relationships have not been ignored. But they have not until recently been accorded the prominence within the construction of historical narratives that foreign scholarship and writers examining other dimensions of British foreign policy give them.

It would surely be fruitful for historians and political scientists to be more reflective about what questions they are asking and when they are asking them, for these close off other avenues of inquiry which may proffer equally fascinating insights. Even the date at which historical stories begin can have a bearing on the interpretation offered. Being 'methodologically aware' does not necessarily open up avenues for dialogue with others in one's own field and across fields. It is, after all, interpretation, not method, upon which historiographical evolution is dependent. Interpretation lies not in theory, but in the practice of research.

Deighton, writing on the origins of the Cold War, has speculated that 'for historians, the sheer quantity of new archival material...now ironically raises questions about whether a total history that recounts and explains the beginnings of the Cold War could be written at all, unless by a multilingual team of historians'.<sup>202</sup> In America, Elizabeth Cobbs Hoffman has remarked that 'It baffled me that historians, whose *raison d'être* is to see connections between events, could see little connection between the United States and the rest of the world'.<sup>203</sup> Both comments are poignant in the context of what has been argued above about the limits to historical understanding necessarily imposed by a focus on national issues as the focus of analysis of issues in international relations which, by their very nature, can be examined from many different perspectives depending on the nationality of the historian and the historical agenda to which he or she is working.<sup>204</sup>

Cross-national collaboration is becoming more common in the study of history, reinforcing the tendency to multilinguality among British historians. Deighton's own involvement with European colleagues in a research project entitled 'Les Identités Européennes au XXème Siècle: Diversités, Convergences et Solidarités' is evidence of the growing willingness of British historians to

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<sup>202</sup> Deighton, 'The Cold War in Europe', *op. cit.*, p.93.

<sup>203</sup> Elizabeth Cobbs Hoffman, 'Bernath Lecture: Diplomatic History and the Meaning of Life: Towards a Global American History', *Diplomatic History*, 21, 4 (1997), pp.499-518 (p.499).

<sup>204</sup> It is a key theme of Collini, *English Pasts*, *op. cit.* On p.36, for instance, he argues that 'future narrators of "our island story" will probably opt for forms that are more essayistic, more frankly selective, more visual, and perhaps in some ways more overtly polemical and self-reflective as well'.

connect with their colleagues abroad.<sup>205</sup> The prospects for global perspectives taking a firmer grip on the field of British European policy will surely depend on this trend continuing. It would be helped by the greater availability of financial and other research resources and the ability and willingness of British historians to investigate European sources of evidence.

Discussion of the role of transnational communities in determining the direction of historical research is a most apt postscript to this chapter. The core argument advanced in this thesis is that it is communities of researchers who have been driving forward the historiographical process. The shift from politically-oriented to academic accounts has resulted in a shift in the interpretation of British European policy. The charges that Britain missed the boat in Europe have been replaced by deeper reflection on the process of foreign policy-making, mixed with an empathetic appraisal of the predicament in which British policy-makers found themselves after 1945.

Having grasped the social construction of history, it has been argued, one can deduce the implicit, but nonetheless discernible, theoretical assumptions in revisionist historiography. From the middle of the 1980s onwards 'Britain and Europe' developed into an area of research among university historians. This brought with it new standards of practice, the aspiration to uncover new sources and a fresh perspective on the debates about British European policy.

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<sup>205</sup> Du Réau's edited volume, *Europe des Élités?*, op. cit., containing articles from historians across Britain and Europe, including Deighton herself, is one of the first fruits of this co-operation. She is also involved, amongst other things, in a University of Munich project on Britain and Europe in the twentieth century.

The approach to intentions and outcomes in the foreign policy and the empathetic approach to the reconstruction of historical events bear the hallmarks of professional historical treatment. The wish to de-bunk conventional wisdoms and examine the minutiae of policy have become inextricably intertwined in revisionist historiography. The community of historians which now dominate the field are asking different questions of the history from their predecessors.

This observation leads one to reflect on the emergence of post-revisionism, which is the subject of the next chapter. It is a much newer development in Britain, compared to the place it established for itself in American historiography, and is only evident in one particular debate in the history: British European policy, 1955-8. Its existence, even in a single area of debate, is revealing about the core and secondary arguments advanced in this thesis. Post-revisionism has been developed by a younger generation of scholars, suggesting the importance to the historiography of changing communities. Moreover, it has been developed in the context of an awareness by its leading members of the conflict among the previous schools. Just as in America, then, there is strong evidence to suggest that the identification of schools of writing is a crucial part of our understanding of historiographical change.

## **Chapter 4**

# **THE EMERGING POST-REVISIONIST SYNTHESIS**

**Table 4: Key Writers in the Post-Revisionist School**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Institution/Background</b>	<b>Sources</b>
James Ellison	Queen Mary and Westfield College, University of London	PRO, especially T, FO371, CAB
Wolfram Kaiser	University of Vienna, University of Portsmouth	PRO, especially T, BT, FO371, CAB
Martin Schaad	University of Glasgow	PRO, especially T, CAB, FO371

One can infer from the above table the significance to James Ellison, Kaiser and Martin Schaad of the archives of the economic branches of government. The sources used by historians can be crucial determinants of the interpretation they place on events, as this research has already shown. But what of the other variables that work upon the construction of historical narratives? Can one argue that, given the use by post-revisionist writers of Treasury and Board of Trade archives, the sources consulted by historians have the biggest influence on interpretation? The core argument of this thesis is that the historiography of Britain's relations with Europe has been driven by other factors. The most significant amongst these is the social factor. Developments in historiographical interpretation, which have been consonant with the rise and fall of competing schools of writing, are linked strongly to different communities of writers coming to dominate this field.

Thus, it has been shown, the evolution from the orthodox to revisionist schools

of writing took place in the context of a change in the type of writer ascendant in the field. The interpretation of the orthodox school was based largely on political polemics about the failings of post-war policy-makers to come to terms with Britain's rapidly declining status in the world. This outlook was supported by many of the early commentators on British European policy, not least because they shared this assumption about the decline of Britain's political and economic power after 1945. The revisionist school, by contrast, challenged both the broad interpretation and detailed commentary on individual policy-makers offered by orthodox critics. That Britain and Europe emerged in the mid-1980s as an area of historical inquiry in its own right, meant that professional histories came to replace political tracts as the dominant type of study in the field. Bringing with them traditional approaches to historical research, they analysed the minutiae of policy discussion, the influence of officials and inter-departmental rivalry in the foreign policy process. This has influenced both the interpretative nature and texture of the writing of British European policy.

It is argued in this chapter, that to explain the emergence of post-revisionism requires analysis of more than just the sources consulted by the current researchers of British European policy. The chapter is divided into four sections to achieve this. The first establishes a definition of post-revisionism, drawing on those provided by Cold War historiography. It goes on to establish the existence of post-revisionism in Britain, arguing that it is most clearly evident in the historiography of British European policy 1955-8. It compares the third phase in British historiography strongly to the balance and detachment

achieved by post-revisionists in the United States. Having established its existence, the second section explores the reasons behind the emergence of post-revisionism. It points to the fundamental influence of generational change on historical interpretation. That is, there has been great awareness by historians new to the field, of the scope for synthesis across the previously competing orthodox and revisionist interpretations. It reinforces this point by examining the internal tensions within the most widely used texts on Britain and Europe. It follows these with analysis of the roles played by methodological eclecticism and the type of study written in generating interpretative balance. The third section speculates on the texture of a broader post-revisionist account of Britain's relationship with Europe between 1945-73. The foundations, it argues, are in place in many existing accounts. The final section reflects on the thin barriers between schools of writing, which post-revisionism exploits, and the introspectiveness of British historians who are only now escaping the framework of reference imposed by the orthodoxy.

### **1. Defining Post-Revisionism**

Cold War historiography in the United States reveals that conflicting orthodox and revisionist interpretations are eventually brought together in a post-revisionist synthesis, defined by Gaddis as 'a third stage...in the historiography'.<sup>1</sup> J. Samuel Walker expands on this, defining post-revisionism

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<sup>1</sup> Gaddis, 'The Emerging Post-revisionist synthesis', *op. cit.*, p.172.



as 'a new consensus' which 'draws from both traditional and revisionist interpretations to present a more balanced explanation of the beginning of the Cold War'.<sup>2</sup> McKercher, studying the writing of American foreign relations in the interwar years, found the same pattern: 'the developmental historiographical typology of the work in the United States mirrors that of the Cold War: the evolution of an orthodox school, the emergence of a revisionism that questioned the methodology and basic assumptions of the older school, and the advent of recent post-revisionist analyses'.<sup>3</sup> Thus, concludes Deighton, 'two antithetical approaches [were] synthesised by post-revisionism'.<sup>4</sup>

The historiography of Britain's relationship with Europe is now entering the post-revisionist phase. Evidence for this appears in the literature on the development of 'Plan G', 1955-7.<sup>5</sup> Admittedly a relatively short period in the history, the latest interpretations of Plan G nonetheless permit broader conclusions to be drawn about the interpretative content of post-revisionism in Britain and the reasons for its emergence. Before analysing what lies behind post-revisionism in Britain, it is necessary to establish its existence, for it is a relatively recent phenomenon in the historiography. Kaiser's 1996 *Using Europe* was the first to expound this interpretation. He was followed in 1997

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<sup>2</sup> Walker, 'Historians and Cold War Origins', op. cit., p.207. Elsewhere in the article he uses the terms 'even-handed' and 'synthesis' to convey the positioning of post-revisionism between orthodox and revisionist interpretations, words which echo the emphasis on 'balance' and 'consensus'. See for example p.227. See also Melanson, *Writing History*, op. cit., pp.214-5.

<sup>3</sup> McKercher, 'Reaching for the Brass Ring', op. cit., p.567. For other American accounts of post-revisionism see Geoffrey Smith, "'Harry, We Hardly Know You": Revisionism, Politics and Diplomacy, 1945-54', *American Political Science Review*, 70 (1976), pp.560-82.

<sup>4</sup> Deighton, 'The Cold War in Europe', op. cit., p.83.

<sup>5</sup> Britain's proposal for a Free Trade Area (FTA) across Western Europe, announced in November 1956.

by Ellison and in 1998 by Schaad.

Orthodox writers used what Nora Beloff calls the 'officially approved metaphor' that the FTA would act as a 'bridge' between the states involved in setting up the Common Market and the remainder, led by Britain, who wanted closer but not supranational integration.<sup>6</sup> The parliamentary justification was later repeated in the memoirs of major players such as Harold Macmillan.<sup>7</sup> In *Riding the Storm* he put forward this innocent version of Plan G: 'I was anxious that the Free Trade Area...should develop an institutional basis within which the ideals of United Europe could be fostered and developed'.<sup>8</sup> He reiterated this in his next volume, claiming that Plan G was proposed 'with the hope of bridging the gap which threatened to develop between two groups of European powers, and thus preserving, in a vital field, the concept of European unity'.<sup>9</sup> Alistair Horne's official biography reiterated Macmillan's line that Plan G 'would provide an institutional link with the EEC', an example of the 'morphing of biographer and subject',<sup>10</sup> and evidence of the strong association that often exists between biographies and orthodox interpretations of British European policy.<sup>11</sup>

A second strand to orthodox historiography claimed that the Six had agreed to

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<sup>6</sup> Beloff, *The General Says No*, op. cit., p.84.

<sup>7</sup> Foreign Secretary April-December 1955; Chancellor of the Exchequer to January 1957. Of his four volumes the relevant ones here are *Tides of Fortune*, op. cit.; *Riding the Storm*, op. cit.; and *Pointing the Way*, op. cit.

<sup>8</sup> Macmillan, *Riding the Storm*, op. cit. p.441.

<sup>9</sup> Macmillan, *Pointing the Way*, op. cit., p.44. Prime Minister Anthony Eden was revealingly quiet in his memoirs *Full Circle: The Memoirs of Sir Anthony Eden* (London: Cassell, 1960).

<sup>10</sup> Steyn, review, 'Is Hillary Hurting?', *Sunday Telegraph*, op. cit.

<sup>11</sup> Horne, *Macmillan: Volume 2*, op. cit., p.30. For further details see Horne, *Macmillan: Volume 1*, op. cit., pp.385-387.

negotiate a FTA only then to criticise the British proposal.<sup>12</sup> Reginald Maudling<sup>13</sup> complained that 'it had been explicitly agreed by the heads of the French and German Governments that as soon as possible after the signature of the Treaty of Rome, negotiations should take place to bring Britain and the other Western European nations into a system of European free trade'.<sup>14</sup> The sense of injustice about the French and German attitudes to the FTA negotiations would later resurface in post-revisionist historiography.

British policy-makers formed a symbiotic relationship with early historians of the period who, while on the whole critical of British European policy, took the official government line on this issue. Camps sowed the seeds of later controversy when she wrote that despite all evidence to the contrary Plan G was 'not maliciously conceived'.<sup>15</sup> That hers was a semi-official account, written in cahoots with Whitehall officials like Frank Lee and Russell Bretherton,<sup>16</sup> surely explains its general congruence with the interpretations of

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<sup>12</sup> It was not without grounding Camps argued, in *Britain and the European Community*, op. cit., pp.140-1, that a deal had been struck to undertake FTA negotiations after the signing of the Rome Treaty. See also Lee, 'German Decision-Making Elites and European Integration', op. cit., pp.43-4; Schulte, 'Industry Politics', op. cit., pp.93-127.

<sup>13</sup> Chair of the Organisation for European Economic Co-operation (OEEC) negotiations on the FTA.

<sup>14</sup> Reginald Maudling, *Memoirs* (London: Sidgwick and Jackson, 1978), pp.68-9. See also Sainsbury, 'Harold Macmillan', op. cit., p.113. Nutting likewise argued that the British were willing to make many concessions on the FTA 'still the French were not satisfied'. See Nutting, *Europe Will Not Wait*, op. cit., p.98.

<sup>15</sup> Camps, *Britain and the European Community*, op. cit., p.510.

<sup>16</sup> She freely admitted that her book had been read by key officials. See Camps, 'Missing the Boat', op. cit., p.134. There is a fascinating comparison to be drawn with the role of Herbert Feis in orthodox American historiography. Revisionists across the Atlantic have accused him of being the State Department's 'Court Historian' and while Camps has not endured this sort of acid judgment the parallels are clear. On Feis see Melanson, *Writing History*, op. cit., p.36. For the astute verdict on Camps see S. C. Leslie, 'Britain and the European Community, 1955-1963, By Miriam Camps', *International Affairs*, 41, 1 (1965), p.121.

Macmillan and Maudling.<sup>17</sup> Another contemporary observer, Barker, also took the view that Plan G was a defensive reaction forced on London by the creation of the EEC on the continent. 'In the end, a FTA seemed the only course open to Britain'.<sup>18</sup>

By contrast, many continentals were virulently critical of this new development in British policy. Monnet saw the FTA proposal as an effort 'to dominate Europe from the outside', questioning 'the spirit in which [British initiatives] were conceived'.<sup>19</sup> French Foreign Minister Maurice Couve de Murville echoed his sentiments, criticising Plan G as a 'desperate move in order to prevent the entry into force of the Rome Treaty'.<sup>20</sup> De Gaulle reflected the dominant foreign perception of British European policy at this time with the observation that Britain's initiatives 'were calculated to submerge the Community of the Six at the outset in a vast FTA together with England and eventually the whole of the West'.<sup>21</sup> They were joined on the British side by self-styled 'Europeans' such as Roy Jenkins who describes it as 'a foolish

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<sup>17</sup> Both were intimately involved with the question of Europe, Bretherton as the British representative in the Spaak committee charged with forming the Common Market and Lee, in 1960-1, as one of the main impulses behind Macmillan's entry bid.

<sup>18</sup> Barker, *Britain in a Divided Europe*, op. cit., p.153.

<sup>19</sup> Monnet, *Memoirs*, op. cit., pp.449-50.

<sup>20</sup> Couve is quoted in Charlton, 'How (and Why) 2', op. cit., p.33. See also Paul-Henri Spaak, *The Continuing Battle* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1971), p.236; Robert Marjolin, *Architect of European Unity* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1989), pp.317-22. Richard Mayne likewise suggested that the FTA would have dissolved the EEC 'like a lump of sugar in an English cup of tea'. Richard Mayne, *The Recovery of Europe*, op. cit., p.252.

<sup>21</sup> While certainly not Monnetist in his approach to unity, de Gaulle's position is interesting in that it shows the deep suspicion of Britain's motives even from those who were opposed to supranational integration. Charles de Gaulle, *Memoirs of Hope: Renewal 1958-62*, trans. Terence Kilmartin (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1971), pp.179-80. De Gaulle's is a telling criticism given George's observation that in preferring Plan G to the tighter EEC approach to integration 'Britain risked appearing as the mouthpiece of the United States', bolstering de Gaulle's suspicions of 'les Anglo-Saxons' and Britain's 'subservience to the United States'. See George, *An Awkward Partner*, op. cit., p.27.

attempt to organise a weak periphery against a strong core' and of Heath who remains irritated by Britain's persistent inability to see the political dimensions to integration which rendered the essentially economic FTA so contrary to the objectives of the Six.<sup>22</sup>

Academic historians in the 1990s have- on this issue- joined the 'good Europeans', criticising Plan G in a number of ways. They base their accounts on evidence found in the Foreign Office, Cabinet Office and Prime Ministers' files in the PRO. Charlton's relatively muted 'last attempt by Britain to square the circle with the Continental Europeans and Britain's traditional interests in the Commonwealth by an alternative design for European co-operation' is in a minority.<sup>23</sup> More agree with Lamb's stronger critique of Plan G as a "diversion" which the British hoped to keep going for some time to prevent the Six agreeing to a formal treaty'.<sup>24</sup> Clearly the writers adopt differing postures, some are more acerbic than others, but the essence is the same: 'It was designed', writes Milward, 'to appeal to German opponents of the common market of the Six, to all in Belgium and the Netherlands anxious about a Franco-German hegemony, and to win American support by offering a larger framework for integration than the Six and one in which Britain would

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<sup>22</sup> Roy Jenkins, A Life at the Centre (London: Macmillan, 1991), p.105; Heath, The Course of My Life, op. cit., p.202.

<sup>23</sup> Charlton, 'How (and Why) 2', op. cit., p.24. See also Michael Pinto-Duschinsky, 'From Macmillan to Home', op. cit., p.163; Maclean, British Foreign policy Since Suez, op. cit., p.80; Milward, The European Rescue, op. cit., p.429; Robert Holland, The Pursuit of Greatness: Britain and the World Role, 1900-1970 (London: Fontana, 1991), p.286.

<sup>24</sup> Lamb, The Failure of the Eden Government, op. cit., p.95. Greenwood's 'spoiling tactic' echoes Lamb who he uses for his evidence. See Greenwood, Britain and European Co-operation, op. cit., p.68.

be a leading member'.<sup>25</sup> Greenwood summed up the revisionist stance, directly challenging Camps' argument: 'The view that "the period of British hostility to the plans of the Six was short-lived" is not easy to sustain in the light of recent research'.<sup>26</sup>

Post-revisionist writers have blended elements of these conflicting interpretations into a new account.<sup>27</sup> They argue that a malicious policy in 1955 had, by 1957, mutated into a genuine policy of co-operation with the continent. James Ellison puts the case that 'Plan G evolved from consideration of a counter-initiative to the Common Market in Autumn 1955 but that it eventually became an attempt to come to terms with the Six'.<sup>28</sup> Kaiser agrees that although Plan G 'retained a destructive function for some time' it did 'undergo an astonishing functional metamorphosis during 1956'.<sup>29</sup> Richard Griffiths and Stuart Ward are not quite as sympathetic, arguing that by October 1957 when negotiations on the FTA started, 'The British had modified their position somewhat but not in crucial areas'.<sup>30</sup> This is evidence of the

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<sup>25</sup> Milward, *The European Rescue*, op. cit., p.429. Given the disputes on economic policy in the German government between Ludwig Erhard (Minister for Economic Affairs) and Chancellor Konrad Adenauer, it is easy to see how suspicion of British policy developed among Adenauer and his network of contacts in Washington and Paris. See Lee, 'German Decision-Making and Europe', op. cit.

<sup>26</sup> Greenwood, *Britain and European Co-operation*, op. cit., p.67.

<sup>27</sup> The three key works are Ellison, 'Perfidious Albion?', op. cit.; Kaiser, *Using Europe*, op. cit., pp.61-87; Martin Schaad, 'Plan G- A "Counterblast"? British Policy Towards the Messina Countries, 1956', *Contemporary European History*, 7, 1 (1998), pp.39-60. See also Piers Ludlow's brief post-revisionist synthesis *Dealing with Britain*, op. cit., pp.26-9 and Reynolds' in *Britannia Overruled*, op. cit., pp.216-9.

<sup>28</sup> Ellison, 'Perfidious Albion?', op. cit., p.1.

<sup>29</sup> Kaiser, *Using Europe*, op. cit., p.61.

<sup>30</sup> Richard T. Griffiths and Stuart Ward, "'The End of a Thousand Years of History": The Origins of Britain's decision to Join the European Community, 1955-61', in Richard T. Griffiths and Stuart Ward (eds.), *Courting the Common Market: The First Attempt to Enlarge the European Community 1961-1963* (London: Lothian Foundation Press (1996), pp.7-37 (p.13).

interpretative nuances in interpretation exist in all schools- post-revisionism is no exception. However, the overarching theme of the third stage in the historiography is that the motivations behind Plan G became less malicious towards the Six during 1956. This 'balanced judgment' as Schaad describes his approach,<sup>31</sup> is the defining feature of the third interpretation to emerge on Plan G. It is poignant that they even employ the *language* of American Cold War post-revisionism to mark the shift in interpretation.

## 2. Explaining the Rise of Post-Revisionism

Post-revisionism in Britain is more than just a 'new orthodoxy', an 'orthodoxy plus sources', or 'revisionism without teeth'.<sup>32</sup> Accounting for why it has emerged in this area needs to take account of four factors: the social construction of the school rooted in generational change; the slim boundaries between the orthodox and revisionist schools and the unconscious transgression of those boundaries by many writers; methodological eclecticism;<sup>33</sup> and the focus on narrower periods of the history.

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<sup>31</sup> Schaad, 'Plan G', op. cit., p.59.

<sup>32</sup> This is a question that has been asked of post-revisionism in the United States. See the collection of articles on Cold War origins in Diplomatic History, 17, 2 (1993). The latter quote is from Deighton, 'The Cold War in Europe', op. cit., p.83.

<sup>33</sup> 'Methodological eclecticism' means using an array of primary sources, not just political files in the PRO but economic files, private papers, oral testimony, media opinion and archives abroad.

- **Generational Change and the Social Construction of the Post-Revisionist School**

It is troublesome to associate the post-revisionist school with particular institutions or sociological linkages. The three key exponents came from different universities. Ellison was at Queen Mary and Westfield College, University of London, Kaiser was then at the University of Vienna, Schaad at the University of Glasgow. One has to look elsewhere, to generational not institutional factors.

Gaddis' model of historiographical typology is well known to university students who studied in the 1980s and 1990s. This has, it seems, had a direct effect on Ellison, even as much as the sources he consulted. Investigating with him about how he developed his interpretation one has the sense that he is acutely aware of his relationship to his predecessors in the field and the artificiality of previous historiographic representations of Plan G. He revealed that, in addition to the documentary evidence in the PRO, 'I was also motivated by a sense of historiographical evolution more generally. For those of us writing now, US Cold War historiography has taught that extreme arguments are just that; sophistication in explanation and balance in judgment have proven to be scholarly watchwords in post-revisionism in general. I can't say that this was in my mind like some kind of dogma, but it was definitely a consideration'.<sup>34</sup> This self-awareness would appear to support one of Dunne's

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<sup>34</sup> Email correspondence with James Ellison, 1 March 2000. Permission received to quote this directly. Schaad is also well aware of the debate among orthodox and revisionist writers, as his introductory pages show. The importance of historiographical awareness to the development of post-revisionism is also alluded to in Kent, review, *The End of Superpower: British Foreign*



constituent elements of a school.<sup>35</sup> New generations of historians seeking to establish their reputation in the field have to be alert to the contributions of their more illustrious predecessors. If one can challenge them with new evidence and sharper intellectual tools there a greater chance of finding a distinctive place for oneself in the field.

There is a suggestion that the revising of orthodoxies and the revising of those revisions into post-revisionism, is a natural tendency, built into the historiographical process regardless of political climate, the use of a wider array or new sources, or theoretical advances. Generational change has therefore to be considered a significant motor force of post-revisionist interpretations. This is particularly persuasive when we understand that the scope to develop post-revisionist interpretations has long been in existence. It has taken a generation detached from the events it now narrates to draw out the consensus that exists across previously polarised interpretations. That such synthesis exists can be seen by returning to the original texts.

- **The Impact of Derridan ‘Double Reading’**

Steve Smith argues that one of Derrida’s key aims is ‘to show how there is always more than one reading of any text’ and that a ‘double reading’ can be a profitable way of deconstructing histories.<sup>36</sup> This is not an indicator that

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*Office Conceptions of a Changing World*. By Stuart Croft’, *Contemporary Record*, op. cit., p.478.

<sup>35</sup> Dunne, *Inventing International Society*, op. cit., p.7.

<sup>36</sup> Steve Smith, ‘New Approaches to International Theory’, in Baylis and Smith (eds.), *The Globalisation of World Politics*, op. cit., pp.165-90 (pp.182-3).

*anything* can be read into texts, but is an extremely prescient remark on the density and complexity of historical narratives, the subtle but nonetheless detectable internal inconsistencies of interpretation and argumentation within particular texts. It is possible to say that one author is 'orthodox', another 'revisionist', but still recognise the similarities across the interpretations they place on events. In this light, Derridan 'double reading' reminds us that returning to the original texts offers crucial insights into how authors really perceived events below the broad level of interpretation that has become the received wisdom about them. This serves as a reminder that secondary texts cannot unambiguously be taken as primary historical sources.

With this and Ellison's words in mind, the second impulse behind the post-revisionist interpretation of Plan G is plain to see. Camps' analysis is generally accepted as the 'starting point' of the controversy over Plan G.<sup>37</sup> Yet her account displayed deep ambiguities which have been overlooked. Post-revisionists have exploited her confusion (though they used primary sources rather than the 'double reading' approach), alerting us to the potential for a synthesis that existed even before they consulted the primary documentation. To expand the most regularly cited of Camps' justifications on Plan G, she argued that it 'was ineptly presented and badly negotiated but it was not maliciously conceived'.<sup>38</sup> She also admitted that despite the political and economic benefits that would surely accrue to Britain from successfully

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<sup>37</sup> Ellison, 'Perfidious Albion?', op. cit., p.2. Schaad also cites Camps' studies of the FTA as the 'most comprehensive account of British policy towards European integration'. The implication is that both writers are interrogating her interpretation. See Schaad, 'Plan G', op. cit., p.39.

<sup>38</sup> Camps, Britain and the European Community, op. cit., p.510.

FTA 'the line between the desire to induce the Six to negotiate by bringing economic pressure to bear upon them and the urge to retaliate is an almost impossible line to draw'.<sup>39</sup> In another article she even admitted that at the end of 1955 'the British tried to stop the Six from going ahead by pointing out the dangers that would be done to relations in the OEEC and elsewhere'.<sup>40</sup> Here one sees one of the main architects of the orthodoxy admitting the plausibility of alternative readings of British motives in 1955-6.

Such ambiguity is also in evidence on a closer reading of Macmillan's memoirs. He noted, for instance, that 'we believed that our scheme could be made to hold the field',<sup>41</sup> vacillating similarly over EFTA<sup>42</sup> between claims that it 'was conceived of as a temporary measure preceding the final unification of Europe' and the pernicious vision of it as an 'opposition group'.<sup>43</sup> Even key exponents of the orthodoxy, therefore, were not certain of the strength of their claims.<sup>44</sup> The boundaries between schools of writing on Britain and Europe are narrow. That writers can and do transgress the

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<sup>39</sup> Ibid., p.217.

<sup>40</sup> Miriam Camps, 'The Marshall Plan and European Economic Integration', in Armand Clesse and Archie E. Epps (eds.), Present at the Creation: The Fortieth Anniversary of the Marshall Plan (New York: Harper and Row, 1990), pp.31-43 (p.37). See also Camps, European Unification in the Sixties, op. cit., pp.3-4.

<sup>41</sup> Macmillan, Riding the Storm, op. cit., p.81.

<sup>42</sup> The European Free Trade Association, formed by 'the outer Seven' who were not signatories to the Treaty of Rome.

<sup>43</sup> Macmillan, Pointing the Way, op. cit., pp.51-3.

<sup>44</sup> The Economist in 1956 advocated action by London and expounded the benefits of a free trade area to the British economy but was extremely unsure of how to present this innovation to the Six. This incoherence can be traced through its various Leading Articles. 'Mr. Macmillan and Europe', Economist, 18 February (1956), pp.450-52; 'Britain's Trade Defences', Economist, 2 June (1956), pp.871-72; 'Opportunity in Europe', Economist, 14 July (1956), pp.105-06; 'Free Trade- Gain or Pain?', Economist, 13 October (1956), pp.155-58.

boundaries between schools reminds us that history-writing is subject to the vagaries of the human memory and pressures associated with narrative reconstruction.<sup>45</sup>

Is there not an onus on historians to pick up on these internal inconsistencies? For it can reasonably be argued that revisionism did not need to be based on primary sources. With a little imagination historians could have taken Camps to task and asserted that Plan G was offensive to the EEC before the official records were released? Post-revisionists could have then argued, as they do now, that the motivations behind Plan G differed across departments and individuals, and that over time even the latter changed their outlook as the EEC was seen to be more and more of a success. Here are three distinct interpretations based on no more than a reading of orthodox histories, memoirs and biographies. This shows the boundaries between schools are extremely flimsy in places, but also that distinct schools of writing are in place: it is only with hindsight that one can identify the boundaries between schools so clearly. At the time, historians of the period were operating under different conditions, using a different method and with different studies in mind. One can chastise them for missing inconsistencies in orthodox texts, but only if one also

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<sup>45</sup> Take the big overlap between revisionism and post-revisionism on Plan G. For Ellison it is clear that despite the motivations behind Plan G mutating towards a more conciliatory goal in 1956 there was still, particularly emanating from Macmillan, 'discussion of less than honest tactics' with respect to the Messina process as late as spring 1957. Thus, he argues, 'whilst Plan G was designed to accommodate the European Common Market, it would be inaccurate to suggest that British attitudes had dramatically altered from the traditional opposition to Continental forms of integration'. Ellison, 'Perfidious Albion?', *op. cit.*, pp.27-8. President of the Board of Trade David Eccles' echoed Macmillan in a speech to Commonwealth businessmen in which he warned the EEC was attempting to do 'what, for hundreds of years, we have always said we could not see with the safety of our own country' Quoted in Griffiths and Ward, "'The End of a Thousand Years of History'", *op. cit.*, p.13.

observes that historical interpretation is extant upon time, the changing climate of opinion, the political situation and methods of historical research and writing. The question remains, therefore, what exactly has been the role of sources in the historiography of Plan G? The answer reveals a lot about the positivist nature and practice of history in Britain.

- **Methodological Eclecticism**

British historians relied essentially on Foreign Office correspondence, Cabinet Office files and the papers of the Prime Minister to construct the revisionist interpretation of Plan G. The ostensive methodological link among post-revisionists, echoing the finding in America that ‘balanced accounts’ are ‘based on extensive research in newly opened sources’,<sup>46</sup> is that they searched the files of the Treasury and Board of Trade for extra evidence. These were crucial in establishing the changing motives over time of key players such as Macmillan who moved from the Foreign Office to the Treasury in December 1955. As Ellison explained the significance of sources to his interpretation: ‘The evolution of my ideas was really inspired by the inconsistency that I saw between the literature (pre-Schaad and Kaiser) and the documents I was reading at the PRO. It seemed to me that the development/implementation of policy was too complex to be either purely an attempt to associate with the Six, or, an effort to delay/deter/sabotage...their efforts’.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> Walker, ‘Historians and Cold War Origins’, op. cit., p.207.

<sup>47</sup> Email correspondence, 1 March 2000.

It was an innovation made even more important given the revisionist observation that 'European policy was now dominated by the Treasury and Board of Trade'.<sup>48</sup> Given the narrower range of sources utilised, revisionists only focussed on his motives as Foreign Secretary, missing the input to the FTA proposal from the economic departments. Immersed in the files from the political branches of government, they had neither the time nor energy to dwell on the economic stimuli behind foreign policy. Such are the constraints on historians who research alone, not as part of a team. One reviewer of Kaiser's *Using Europe* explained: 'The strengths in this book are to be found in its economic sections. Kaiser's use of both Treasury and Board of Trade files makes a valuable contribution to the knowledge of the British policy making machinery in this period as well as providing a thorough understanding of the economic background of British policy'.<sup>49</sup> Methodological eclecticism, one can argue, results in 'interpretative eclecticism'.<sup>50</sup>

So how does one weigh up the relative significance of sources and generational change in historiographical progression? Gaddis argues that 'what the post-revisionists have done is to confirm, on the basis of the documents, several of the key arguments of the old orthodox position, and that in itself is a significant development'.<sup>51</sup> Yet, to put Ellison, Schaad and Kaiser in the orthodox school is to misunderstand the strength of their conviction that Macmillan and the

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<sup>48</sup> Young, *Britain and European Unity*, op. cit., p.50.

<sup>49</sup> Elizabeth Kane, review, 'Using Europe, Abusing the Europeans: Britain and European Integration, 1945-63. By Wolfram Kaiser', *Contemporary British History*, 11, 4 (1997), pp.134-6 (p.136).

<sup>50</sup> Melanson, *Writing History and Making Policy*, op. cit., p.214.

<sup>51</sup> Gaddis, 'The Emerging Post-Revisionist Synthesis', op. cit., p.

President of the Board of Trade, David Eccles, harboured pernicious ambitions for the FTA until spring 1957.<sup>52</sup>

Neither can sources alone explain the orthodox approach to Plan G taken by Elizabeth Kane, who uses papers of the Foreign Office's Western Organisation Department, suggesting- on previous trends in the historiography- she would offer a revisionist or post-revisionist interpretation. Not at all: her work is an example of the difficulty of locating writers in schools, because she marries primary sources with an orthodox interpretation. 'It is possible', she claims, 'to interpret that the British decision to establish a free trade area was not a decision to sabotage the common market...but to improve relations with the Six and associate with the Messina plans. Indeed, far from attempting to destroy the work of Six, the British government knew that the free trade area improved the chance that the common market would be formed'.<sup>53</sup> Her interpretation rests on a sympathetic appraisal of the bureaucratic in-fighting which led to Plan G being adopted as the basis of policy, and of Selwyn Lloyd's 'Grand Design' of January 1957.<sup>54</sup> This, she argues, is evidence that Britain was trying to come to terms with the EEC, not destroy it, as the Monnetists maintained.<sup>55</sup> Yet she is not alone in taking this approach to the

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<sup>52</sup> See Ellison, 'Perfidious Albion', op. cit., pp.27-8; Kaiser, Using Europe, op. cit., p.74; Griffiths and Ward, "'The End of a Thousand Years of History'", op. cit., p.13.

<sup>53</sup> Kane, 'The Myth of Sabotage', op. cit., p.291 and p.300.

<sup>54</sup> Kane, 'European or Atlantic Community?', op. cit., pp.92-7.

<sup>55</sup> 'Albion in the Dock', Economist, op. cit., p.474. A recent restatement of this line is to be found in Hugo Young, This Blessed Plot, op. cit., p.116.

Grand Design.<sup>56</sup> Unfortunately, complains Ellison, it seemed to the Europeans that 'the "Grand Design" did just the opposite at a time when [they] hoped the Suez experience would turn Britain towards Europe'.<sup>57</sup> Where one begins a historical story and where one ends it are therefore crucial influences upon one's interpretation of historical events.<sup>58</sup>

For interpretation depends fundamentally upon how historians weigh up the conflicting evidence from primary sources and the importance they attach to each source consulted. At different stages of policy development, different officials and ministers had different aims for Plan G, it seems. The ambiguity and temporal changes in their outlook is reflected in the deep divisions in the literature over which motivations were guiding policy-makers in the period 1955-7. Ellison, Young, Schaad and Kaiser all choose to place Plan G in the context of Foreign Office strategy at the end of 1955, hence the underlying sense of sabotage which pervades their accounts. Kane, by contrast, assigns greater weight to the period 1956-7.<sup>59</sup> For the same reason, it appears, Rothwell took a more orthodox approach to the Third Force than revisionists such as Kent and Young have done. His study ended in 1947, whereas they went

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<sup>56</sup> See Young, "'The Parting of Ways'?", op. cit.; Young, Britain and European Unity, op. cit., p.59; Kaiser, Using Europe, op. cit., p.98; Greenwood, Britain and European Co-operation, op. cit., p.71.

<sup>57</sup> Ellison, 'Perfidious Albion?', op. cit., p.21.

<sup>58</sup> She is heavily critical of Kaiser for placing undue emphasis on Foreign Office strategy in June to December 1955. See Kane, review, 'Using Europe...By Wolfram Kaiser', Contemporary British History, op. cit., p.136.

<sup>59</sup> Ellison argues, in 'Perfidious Albion', op. cit., p.3, that 'The search for a new British initiative in Europe which eventually produced the FTA proposal had its origins in the Eden government's Autumn 1955 decision to block the development of a European Common Market'; Young, "'The Parting of Ways'?", op. cit.; Young, Britain and European Unity, op. cit., pp.47-8; Schaad, 'Plan G', op. cit., pp.44-7; Kaiser, Using Europe, op. cit., pp.48-54.



through the records to 1948 and 1949, crucial years in the rise and fall of the strategy within Whitehall.<sup>60</sup>

What this shows is that although research methods and the sources writers use can explain a lot about their interpretation, there is much more one has to consider when analysing the production of historical accounts. It is not just the facts used by writers, but the way in which these facts are *interpreted* which determines the positioning of writers in historiographical debates. To say that one has a 'method' of research utilising this particular body of evidence, does not even begin to explain the complex intellectual and psychological processes in the brain which combine to form one's ultimate interpretations of events. As Southgate suggests: 'the "facts" we select as significant, the way we interpret them and compose them into a coherent and meaningful whole- these historical procedures will derive from the very personal character of the individual historian'.<sup>61</sup> This is the main lesson of psychology for history.

- **Interpretation and the Type of Study Written**

The personal, intellectual and psychological inputs to historical interpretation shed light on two further observations about what drives the historiography to a post-revisionist stage. First, the changing position of writers over time suggests that the historiography has long contained elements of a post-revisionist interpretation. Writers regularly transgress the boundaries between schools

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<sup>60</sup> Compare Rothwell, *Britain and the Cold War*, op. cit. with Kent, 'Bevin's Imperialism', op. cit.; Kent and Young, 'British Policy Overseas', op. cit.; Kent and Young, 'The "Western Union" Concept', op. cit. Where one starts and ends narratives, and the stress on events within the period studied, has a significant impact on interpretation.

<sup>61</sup> Southgate, *History*, op. cit., p.67.

both within studies and in different studies. The vacillating stances taken by Camps and Macmillan on Plan G heralded the revisionism and post-revisionism which followed. By the same token, key revisionist writers such as Young have not maintained a consistent intellectual position within this debate. In 1985 Young pioneered the revisionist approach to Plan G.<sup>62</sup> Eight years later, in *Britain and European Unity*, he viewed the FTA proposal in a more orthodox manner. His approach now was, to paraphrase one commentator, to view Plan G as 'a sincere, if naïve, attempt to redefine trade relations with Europe'.<sup>63</sup>

The switch between schools can be put down, Young later explained, to the exigencies of writing a textbook, or survey history of relations between 1945 and 1992 as opposed to an article specifically on policy development in a short period. 'As to the Macmillan full-length book, well there I'm conscious that, although I've a right to express a view on certain issues, I'm also presenting a snapshot of current thinking on the issues, so at times my own views get blended in with those of others- or sometimes I just set out opposing interpretations and don't really resolve them. In doing the second edition...I've been very aware of time constraints and sometimes, quite simply, haven't had time to think my own views through'.<sup>64</sup> Stephen George, reviewing this text, was less kind: 'The distinct impression given by this book is that it was written and produced too hurriedly'.<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> Young, "'The Parting of Ways'?", op. cit.

<sup>63</sup> Schaad, 'Plan G', op. cit., pp.42-3; Young, *Britain and European Unity*, op. cit., pp.57-9.

<sup>64</sup> Written correspondence, February 1999. Permission granted to quote letter.

<sup>65</sup> George, review, 'Britain and European Unity, 1945-1992. By John W. Young', *Journal of Common Market Studies*, op. cit., pp.307. The reviewer of another of Young's textbooks made

Textbooks are required 'to be reasonably up to date, clear and accurate', notes David Cesarani.<sup>66</sup> Jordanova recognises a further constraint: 'There is a certain innate conservatism in the very notion of a textbook, not just in terms of content, but in pedagogic philosophy'. That is, 'textbooks present a viewpoint which, by the very nature of the genre, readers are discouraged from contesting, whereas a monograph, that is, a specialised scholarly study presenting the findings of original research to those who are pretty expert already, can evaluate diverse approaches to a subject, and acknowledge the depth of intellectual dimensions, even if, in the end, it puts a particular case with a distinctive type of authority'.<sup>67</sup>

Writing general texts, as opposed to specialised studies, requires a degree of understanding of the general historiographical debates which naturally leads to the exposition of even-handed and, by extension, post-revisionist interpretations. Jordanova continues, tellingly using the word 'synthesise' to explain the text book approach to the writing of history. 'Because textbooks generalise, synthesise and seem to speak with one authority, they can be somewhat bland. Since they seek to be fair, and uncontentious, the sparkle, the sense of what the stakes are in divergent views of the past, sometimes gets

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the generic point that 'Inevitably, in a book of 250 pages covering 100 years there are going to be oversights'. Lucas, '*Britain and the World in the Twentieth Century*. By John W. Young', *Contemporary British History*, op. cit., p.125. Deighton's review of Walter Laqueur's text *Europe in Our Time: A History, 1945-1992* betrays a similar worry: 'the reader is left wondering whether the territorial scope of the book is not too ambitious, and its time span too long'. See *International Affairs*, 69, 1 (1993), p.149.

<sup>66</sup> David Cesarani, review, 'When Hens and Hitler do not Mix: *Understanding the Holocaust: An Introduction*. By Dan Cohn-Sherbok', *Times Higher Education Supplement: Textbook Guide*, 25 February 2000, p.6.

<sup>67</sup> Jordanova, *History in Practice*, op. cit., pp.18-9.

lost'.<sup>68</sup> Just as Young felt compelled to dilute his sabotage approach to Plan G so as to present a balanced account, there is evidence that other works contain similar ambiguity.<sup>69</sup> Ian Gilmour and Mark Garnett condemn Labour's non-participation in the Schuman Plan which 'set Britain on the wrong road'.<sup>70</sup> Later, however, they use Dutton, Young and Seldon to argue that there may not have been opportunities to miss because 'the chances of agreement between [Britain] and the Six of the Schuman Plan in 1951-2 were slender'.<sup>71</sup> That a politician and scholar jointly wrote this text perhaps explains the mixture of normative judgment with historical perspective.

The most recent manifestation of this is in David Gowland and Arthur Turner's *Reluctant Europeans*.<sup>72</sup> In the introduction they show their awareness of the changing historiographical landscape in this area: 'Britain has not played a uniformly laggardly role in the EC/EU'.<sup>73</sup> This is a direct, if un-referenced, allusion to the revisionist school of writing which excuses British decision-makers from the crude charges of 'negativity' traditionally levelled against them. On Plan G the interpretation they put forward is, unsurprisingly given the reference to Ellison, that it was not as offensive as the Monnetists assumed. Under the influence of Kaiser a few pages later they shift to a less sympathetic position.<sup>74</sup> The point is clear: textbooks tend to switch between interpretations

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<sup>68</sup> Ibid., p.19.

<sup>69</sup> George, *An Awkward Partner*; Greenwood, *Britain and European Co-operation*, op. cit.; Reynolds, *Britannia Overruled*, op. cit.

<sup>70</sup> Gilmour and Garnett, *Whatever Happened to the Tories*, op. cit., p.46.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid., p.70.

<sup>72</sup> David Gowland and Arthur Turner, *Reluctant Europeans: Britain and European Integration 1945-1998* (Harlow: Pearson Education, 2000).

<sup>73</sup> Ibid., p.4.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid., pp.106-7 and p.112.

from competing schools of writing rather than presenting the considered views of the author(s).

The demands made of textbook writers are becoming greater. Steven Gunn presents the dilemma as follows: 'Should they try to cater for both A-Level students and undergraduates in need of an introduction, when the demands of A-Level now include formal exercises in the interpretation of primary sources and a structured understanding of historiographical change?'.<sup>75</sup> As Manchester University Press' 'Documents in Contemporary History' series shows,<sup>76</sup> the emphasis in textbooks is increasingly towards letting *students* decide on the most appropriate interpretation from the range of options set out for them by the author.<sup>77</sup>

This demand for textbooks to be written according to the principle of 'say it with documents' is a reflection of two contradictory approaches to the study history. On one hand it suggests the continuing lure of primary material. How long will it be before transcripts of oral history are included in such series? On the other hand there is more than a suspicion that such series have been

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<sup>75</sup> Steven Gunn, review, 'Short on Pope-Burning: *The Tudor Monarchies*. By John McGurk; *Stuart England*. By Angus Stroud; *Culture and Power in England 1585-1685*. By R. Malcolm Smuts', Times Higher Education Supplement: Textbook Guide, 25 February 2000, p. 6.

<sup>76</sup> As the précis makes plain it 'is a series designed for sixth-formers and undergraduates in higher education: it aims to provide both an overview of specialist research on topics in post-1939 British history and a wide-ranging selection of primary source material'. See for example John Baylis (ed.), Anglo-American Relations Since 1939: The Enduring Alliance (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1997); Stephen Brooke, (ed.), Reform and Reconstruction: Britain After the War, 1945-51 (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995); Sean Greenwood (ed.), Britain and European Integration Since the Second World War (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1996).

<sup>77</sup> This, Nigel Steele points out, is a trend in other subjects such as mathematics: 'It is now seen as desirable for students to take responsibility for their own learning'. In Nigel Steele, 'Method is More than the Sum of its Parts', Times Higher Education Supplement, 17 March 2000, p. 38.

affected by postmodern reflection on the interpretative content of history. It is as if letting the documents speak for themselves will circumvent postmodernism by ignoring historians' roles in the construction of stories about the past. Yet, where is the reflection on how the primary sources were chosen, or analysis of their limitations as factual sources about the past?<sup>78</sup> This is evidence of the dearth of reflection by historians on source limitations, which belies the heavy impact 'accident' and 'chance' can have on historical events and their narrativisation.<sup>79</sup> Such demands now being placed on the writing of textbooks will exaggerate the problems that have always faced textbook writers trying to convey their own interpretation in a general survey of events over a long period of history.

The main point is that there is a methodological eclecticism to textbooks which produces consensus interpretations, even if the authors themselves do not realise it.<sup>80</sup> Just as methodological eclecticism vis-à-vis primary sources led to Ellison's recognition that 'extreme arguments are just that',<sup>81</sup> so textbook writers' use of a range of opinions seems to lead them in the same direction.

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<sup>78</sup> Turning to Baylis' Anglo-American Relations Since 1939, there is on pp.16-7 a brief statement to how the sources were chosen but no lengthy commentary. Greenwood's Britain and European Integration contains no notes on sources at all.

<sup>79</sup> It would be appreciated if historians analysed gaps in the documentary record and what this tells us about their approach to the reconstruction of events. Helen Parr has commented on the destruction by rain of two months' worth of Department of Economic Affairs files in 1967 in 'Gone Native: The Foreign Office and Harold Wilson's Application to Join the EEC', paper presented at *The Second Try: Harold Wilson and Europe, 1964-67*, Institute of Historical Research, London, 13 January 2000. Jim Tomlinson has also observe that 'Despite the Thirty Year Rule, many of the files from the early 1960s have not yet reached Kew'. See his review, *The Great Alliance: Economic Recovery and the Problems of Power*. By Jim Phillips; *Managing the British Economy in the 1960s*. By Alec Cairncross', Contemporary British History, 10, 3 (1996), pp.142-4 (p.143).

<sup>80</sup> Michael Dockrill has noted in another field of scholarship that the use of an array of secondary and primary sources led John Dunbabin 'to produce a thorough synthesis of international relations since 1945'. See M. L. Dockrill, review, 'The Cold War: The Great Powers and their Allies. By J. P. D. Dunbabin', International Affairs, 71, 2 (1995), pp.395-6.

Methodological eclecticism is also a feature of the textbooks by Reynolds who used a smattering of primary material but largely secondary sources and media opinion,<sup>82</sup> and George who relied on secondary sources plus media opinion. For obvious reasons it is easy to see George as the founder of the 'awkward partner' thesis about Britain and Europe, and as taking the orthodox stance.<sup>83</sup> Yet on a searching reading of his text he proposes, or at least hints at, revisionist explanations which reflect the historiographical trend then in vogue due to the work of Kent, Young and others.<sup>84</sup>

Textbooks could perhaps even be placed in a school of writing of their own. Implicit in them is a post-revisionist synthesis born of a distinct method and eclectic historical interpretation. The questions textbook writers ask of history are different from those asked by them in other contexts. They are concerned to discover what the competing interpretations of events are, rather than what new light can be shed on particular issues. For authors such as Reynolds, who wrote a general text on Britain's foreign relations from an Anglo-American background, one also has the impression that Anglo-American relations feature

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<sup>81</sup> Email correspondence, 1 March 2000.

<sup>82</sup> On Plan G see Reynolds, *Britannia Overruled*, op. cit., pp.217-20.

<sup>83</sup> An interesting footnote to this is that 'awkward partner' was never the intended title. His publishers, however, wanted a catchier name than 'Britain and Europe'. The ultimate choice has inspired a generation of scholars, showing that the way we eventually interpret texts can be massively influenced by the symbolic nature of key words in titles and at the start of chapters. George disclosed this during questions in the 'Britain and Europe' panel at the UACES Research Conference, University of Lincolnshire and Humberside, 10 September 1998.

<sup>84</sup> Take these examples from George, *An Awkward Partner*, op. cit. On the Third Force issue, p.17, he sympathetically references Young's work; on the Schuman Plan see pp.20-2; the current historiographical trend towards discussing the impact of American policy on Anglo-European relations is evident in pp.22-7 on the sections on EDC, Messina and the founding of the EEC. Global considerations behind the applications are hinted at on pp.28-39. This is not full-scale revisionism but the hints are there if one looks away from the sections devoted to Camps and Barker.

more prominently in his thinking than Anglo-European. Thus, he relies on evidence from his peers working in European studies as a complement to his stronger focus on Britain's American and other global relationships.<sup>85</sup>

There is certainly something to recommend the construction of a different school of writing around textbooks. However, this study does not pursue this distinction for three reasons. First, it is interpretation which is the defining link among writers. To define schools in terms of questions and answers, that is, method, is a necessary but not sufficient condition for the evolution of schools. Textbook writing is certainly a sub-set of the post-revisionist school, but not separate from it on the level of interpretation. Second, textbook writers also publish other types of study. To label Young, for instance, a post-revisionist on the basis of his *Britain and European Unity*, overlooks the strength of his revisionist claims to the contrary in earlier articles and other books. That, it seems, is the interpretation he prefers to place on events. Underscoring all this, finally, is the need to keep the schools as broad as possible for the purposes of clarity. Constructing schools purely on the grounds of the type of study would be even more problematic than inferring links backwards from interpretation, which is the method employed in the thesis. This research has been able to discover links among writers according to the genre of study penned, without raising its a priori significance above the many other factors that go into the choice of study and methods and sources used. In sum, interpretation is the key to understanding the links across writers. Textbook writers often fall into the

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<sup>85</sup> Reynolds, *Britannia Overruled*, op. cit. Other Anglo-American specialists betray a similar approach to the European sphere of Britain's foreign relations, repeating the conventional wisdom on Europe at their time of writing.



post-revisionist school for that reason, but have to be classed 'implicit post-revisionists', a sub-set alongside their historiographically aware counterparts such as Ellison who explicitly portray their accounts as 'balanced'. This approach to schoolification allows analysis of the many influences on interpretation, not just the type of study, and can highlight the flimsy boundaries between schools and yet their distinctiveness which is what makes the historiography of Britain's relations with Europe so fascinating.

The second point of contact between the type of study and historiographical evolution extends the impact of the general over the specific still further. Genuine post-revisionism of the type we are currently witnessing on Plan G is fired by articles and books on shorter periods and specific themes in the history. Ellison and Schaad's balanced interpretations were first presented in articles analysing the history of a one and two year period respectively. Kaiser's was in a book covering the period 1945-63 period which afforded him the space to develop depth and sophistication of argument that a text on Britain's relations with Europe to the present day, or the entire range of multilateral relations since 1945, would not have given him.<sup>86</sup> The development of revisionism and post-revisionism is, therefore, associated strongly with analysis of specific periods and themes. Kaplan points out that 'new' theories tend to operate in a smaller domain but there is no reason why they should not become accepted in other areas, spreading their influence

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<sup>86</sup> Even so, Kane criticises Kaiser as follows: 'in covering so many areas of dispute it fails to concentrate on any one and this leads to gaps in analysis and supporting evidence'. Kane, *Using Europe...By Wolfram Kaiser*, op. cit., p.136.

across a field of research.<sup>87</sup> If the current trend continues, and there is more exploration of shorter periods in the history using new sources, this raises questions about what a post-revisionist account of Britain's relationship with Europe in the entire period 1945-73 might look like.

### **3. The Prospects for a Broader Post-Revisionism**

On the general level of interpretation a post-revisionist interpretation of Britain's relations with Europe would be situated between the missed opportunities orthodoxy and the sympathetic approach taken by revisionists. It might run as follows. The British elite since 1945 remained largely aloof from the process of European integration, preferring intergovernmental over supranational forms of integration. This was for reasons associated with political dogma, the weight of history, economic pragmatism and perceptions of its world power status and 'special relationship' with the United States. Charges of 'missed opportunities' are, however, misplaced, because they assume that key decision-makers in London were offered, or wanted, opportunities to lead the integrative process. By contrast, the continentals were adept at making advances even in the wake of setbacks such as the collapse of the European Defence Community, demonstrating an enterprise and will to succeed which Britain underestimated. Moreover, they managed skillfully to control the pace of integration through careful management of the enlargement

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<sup>87</sup> Kaplan, *On Historical and Political Knowing*, op. cit., p.17. For 'theory' read 'interpretation' and the link to historiographical progression becomes clear.

agenda and by collaboration with key officials in the American State Department. Britain, in this light, was not as 'negative' as has been portrayed. Neither were the 'founding fathers' as keen to include Britain as they later made out. In sum, the political controversy surrounding British European policy obscures constructive advances on London's part and ignores the strength of the bilateral Franco-German relationship, the role of other European policy networks as well as the part played by the United States in determining British European policy outcomes.

Where revisionists analysed the negative 'tone' of British pronouncements on Europe which obscured what they saw as the constructive dimensions to policy,<sup>88</sup> a post-revisionist account would also explore the process of integration from the point of view of Washington and the European capitals in more depth, to show that debates about the minutiae of British policy are to some extent false. That is, whether policy was as 'negative' as orthodox writers maintain or as 'constructive' as revisionists respond, other factors, notably the impact of American policy, Franco-German relations and the attitude of the European Commission, need to be examined to explain British European policy outcomes. Post-revisionism is necessarily concerned with the uncertainty of individual's positions within the debate, more aware of the fluctuating national negotiating positions and the systemic forces hindering the projection of policy abroad.

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<sup>88</sup> As Young put it: 'If Eden can be criticised for anything it is that (like Ernest Bevin before him) his tone too often gave the appearance of being anti-European'. See Young, Britain and European Unity, op. cit., p.40.

The globalism of a post-revisionist synthesis could therefore be achieved by integrating previously separate European and American historiography into British historiography. For example, on the 'rejection' of the Schuman Plan by Britain, domestic literature has been dominated by an orthodoxy examining why London suffered from a 'myopia that made [policy-makers] dismiss the Schuman Plan and the whole ideal of Europe as airy-fairy nonsense',<sup>89</sup> and a revisionism responding that British appreciation of the Plan was greater than the orthodoxy suggests,<sup>90</sup> allied to analysis of the official view that France intentionally excluded Britain.<sup>91</sup>

<sup>89</sup> Michael Howard, review, *Sunny Days: Never Again: Britain 1945-51*. By Peter Hennessy and Churchill on the Home Front 1900-1955. By Paul Addison, *London Review of Books*, 15, 3 (1993), pp.14-5 (p.14). This interpretation is to be found in 'Inverted Macawbers', *Economist*, 10 June 1950, pp.1257-9 (p.1257); 'Socialism Contra Mundum', op. cit., p.1314; 'Repairing the Damage', *Economist*, 24 June 1950, pp.369-70; Acheson, *Present at the Creation*, op. cit., p.502; George W. Ball, 'Introduction', in Brinkley and Hackett (eds.), *Jean Monnet*, op. cit., pp.12-22; Barker, *Britain in a Divided Europe*, op. cit., pp.67-88; Bullock, *Ernest Bevin*, op. cit., esp. pp. 734-90; Peter Calvocoressi, *World Politics Since 1945*, 6<sup>th</sup> edn. (London: Longman, 1991), p.91; Charlton, *The Price of Victory*, op. cit., p.212; Croft, 'British Policy Towards Western Europe', op. cit., p.619; Dalton, *High Tide and After: Memoirs 1945-1960* (London: Frederick Muller, 1962), p.135; Dell, *The Schuman Plan*, op. cit.; Denman, *Missed Chances*, op. cit., pp.185-9; Gilmour and Garnett, *Whatever Happened to the Tories*, op. cit., p.45; Heath, *The Course of My Life*, op. cit., p.355; Horne, *Macmillan Volume 1*, op. cit., pp.303-24; Robert Marjolin, 'What Type of Europe?', in Brinkley and Hackett (eds.), *Jean Monnet*, op. cit., pp.163-83; Milward, *The Reconstruction of Western Europe*, op. cit., p.400; Monnet, *Memoirs*, op. cit., p.312; Northedge, *British Foreign Policy*, op. cit., pp.135-9; Pimlott (ed.), *The Political Diary of Hugh Dalton*, op. cit., 16 June, p.476; Sked and Cook, *Post-War Britain*, op. cit., pp.87-101 and p.148.

<sup>90</sup> Young, *Britain and European Unity*, op. cit., pp.28-35; Geoffrey Warner, 'The Labour Governments and the Unity of Western Europe', in Ovendale (ed.), *The Foreign Policy of the British Labour Governments*, op. cit., pp.61-82; Greenwood, *Britain and European Co-operation*, op. cit., p.27-37; Melissen and Zeeman, 'Britain and Western Europe', op. cit., p.93; Deighton, 'Say it with Documents', op. cit., p.400.

<sup>91</sup> Jay argues 'the whole operation had been so devised that the British government was bound initially to decline', in *Change and Fortune*, op. cit., p.199. See also Charlton, *The Price of Victory*, op. cit., p.90; Donoghue and Jones, *Herbert Morrison*, op. cit., p.481. Deighton, 'Say it with Documents', op. cit., p.400; Greenwood, *Britain and European Co-operation*, op. cit., p.27-37; Melissen and Zeeman, 'Britain and Western Europe', op. cit., p.93; Geoffrey Warner, 'The Labour Governments and the Unity of Western Europe', in Ovendale (ed.), *The Foreign Policy of the British Labour Governments*, op. cit., pp.61-82; Young, *Britain and European Unity*, op. cit., pp.28-35.

A 1997 study by William Hitchcock exposes the positioned nature of both interpretations.<sup>92</sup> Using French foreign ministry papers and private archives,<sup>93</sup> he argues that Schuman's personal concerns were at the heart of the proposal. He wanted to 'rescue his foreign policy and boost France's fading influence in Europe. The plan for a coal-steel pool would provide him with the means to do both'.<sup>94</sup> He continues in the same vein: 'Through the means Monnet had devised, France could capture the diplomatic initiative from the Anglo-Americans, subvert British objections to continental unification schemes, and strike a bargain with Germany on a bilateral basis: equality of rights in exchange for a balance of power'.<sup>95</sup> More subversively, Robin Edmonds and Walter LaFeber saw a plan by Paris to exclude Britain *and* America from European affairs.<sup>96</sup> The impact of developments abroad are also found in the interpretations of Watt and Raymond Aron who took the Schuman Plan as an

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<sup>92</sup> Hitchcock, 'France, the Western Alliance', op., cit. This reflects the prescient comment by Beloff that the Franco-German axis has been the crux of integration, not the Anglo-French or Anglo-German. Beloff, *Dialogue of the Deaf*, op. cit., p.7.

<sup>93</sup> Notably Georges Bidault, French Prime Minister October 1949 to June 1950.

<sup>94</sup> Hitchcock, 'France, the Western Alliance', op. cit., p.606.

<sup>95</sup> Ibid., p.628. Young, who also consulted French sources, came to a similarly detached view of the Plan: 'The idea of a French "plot" goes too far...Rather it seems that British membership was not a priority for Monnet'. See Young, *Britain and European Unity*, op. cit., p.33. Monnet's memoirs appear to back this up. 'I knew that the essential prize had already been won, irrevocably. Europe was on the move. Whatever the British decided would be their own affair'. Monnet, *Memoirs*, op. cit., p.306. And as he reportedly told Chancellor Stafford Cripps: 'I hope with all my heart that you will join in this from the start. But if you don't, we shall go ahead without you'. Bullock, *Ernest Bevin*, op. cit., p.778; Dell, *The Schuman Plan*, op. cit., p.127; Milward, *The Reconstruction of Western Europe*, op. cit., p.401.

<sup>96</sup> Robin Edmonds, *Setting the Mould: The United States and Britain 1945-1950* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986), pp.210-1. LaFeber was nearer to Hitchcock: 'exclusion of England and the United States from the Plan would increase the ability of France to influence all of Western Europe'. See his *America, Russia, and the Cold War 1945-1992*, 7<sup>th</sup> edn. (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1993), p.86.

‘American decision that Britain must be coerced, or driven by neglect, willy-nilly into a closer relationship with Europe’.<sup>97</sup>

The obsession by British historians with what Britain could have done, or did do, to get involved in the Schuman Plan, pale into insignificance when compared to the strategic concerns uppermost in the minds of its architects, for whom it was, the Economist observed, ‘the last chance of solving the German problem’.<sup>98</sup> A post-revisionist account of Britain’s non-participation in the Schuman Plan would combine analysis of the failings of British diplomacy from the orthodoxy with the constructive appraisal of revisionists. It would also blend in American, French and German enthusiasm for the Plan which accounts for the complex international environment within which the Plan was developed and received. It would conclude that Britain *could* have joined the scheme, but that in the end the will to succeed on the continent and in America scuppered Britain’s hopes of making ‘association’ seem a viable alternative to membership. This account echoes Young’s suggestion that the ‘notion of a French “plot” goes too far’,<sup>99</sup> but takes it further by examining in greater depth the domestic concerns in Paris, Bonn and Washington. Others who are alert to Monnet’s ambitions for the Plan include Bullock and Milward.<sup>100</sup> Ludlow is

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<sup>97</sup> Watt, Succeeding John Bull, op. cit., p.122; Raymond Aron, ‘The Historical Sketch of the Great Debate’, in Daniel Lerner and Raymond (eds.), France Defeats EDC (London: Thames and Hudson, 1957), pp.2-21 (p.3). See also Winand, Eisenhower, Kennedy, op. cit., p.23.

<sup>98</sup> ‘Thoughts Behind the Schuman Offer’, Economist, 17 June 1950, p.1335.

<sup>99</sup> Young, Britain and European Unity, op. cit., p.33.

<sup>100</sup> Despite considering what more London could have done to join, Bullock also argued that this was not an entirely one-sided exclusion, highlighting Monnet’s desire to exclude the ‘awkward British’ until the Six had successfully made the first step towards European integration. Bullock, Ernest Bevin, op. cit., pp.770-85; Milward, The Reconstruction of Western Europe, op. cit., p.401.

similarly intrigued by the consensus between the first two interpretations: the decision not to attend the ECSC negotiations, he argues, 'was not primarily a result of either the brusque behaviour of the French or negligence and inattention on the part of the Labour government. Instead, it reflected profound difference in both economic and political circumstances between Britain and the Six as the 1950s began'.<sup>101</sup> Ludlow is an example of a methodologically eclectic historian, using Commission archives as well as British sources. This is further evidence that interpretative eclecticism can be linked to methodological eclecticism. The wider the range of opinions consulted, the harder it becomes to propound one line or the other.

One could examine the other key debates on Britain and Europe to make the same point. On the collapse of the EDC the scope is there for a synthesis between British historians examining Britain's non-participation,<sup>102</sup> and

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<sup>101</sup> Ludlow, *Dealing with Britain*, op. cit., pp.16-7.

<sup>102</sup> The tone was set by the *Economist*: 'It remains true', it noted, 'that if Britain had been willing to go a little further into Europe, more could have been made of the idea of European integration'. See 'A Vote for Paralysis', *Economist*, 4 September 1954, pp.711-3 (p.713). Its damning verdict on British policy continued into the next month, with the criticism that the failure of the EDC was the failure of Britain's willingness to 'take matters to their logical conclusion' after the Dunkirk and Brussels Treaties in 1947-8. 'Had Britain', it continues, 'gone even part of the way it went at Lancaster House [with the WEU commitment] there is a good possibility that EDC would have been accepted in Paris'. See 'Britain was an Island', *Economist*, 9 October 1954, pp.132-3 (p.133). See also 'Small Expectations', 22 December 1951, pp.1509-10 (p.1509). The hope that Britain would take the lead in the European Army project also comes through strongly in 'Arms and Diplomacy', *Economist*, 20 January 1951, pp.113-4; 'The Defence of Britain', 31 March 1951, pp.723-4; 'Towards Europe's Army', *Economist*, 28 July 1951, pp.194-6; 'Three Years Ahead', *Economist*, 29 December 1951, pp.1561-4; 'The Six Power Army', *Economist*, 5 January 1952, pp.3-4; 'Europe in a Hurry', *Economist*, 12 July 1952, pp.67-8; 'Challenge from the Capital', *Economist*, 24 January 1953, pp.183-5. This interpretation is echoed in Barker, *Britain in a Divided Europe*, op. cit., p.107; Beloff, *Britain and the European Union*, op. cit., p.56; Charlton, *The Price of Victory*, op. cit., pp.151-62; Charmley, *Churchill's Grand Alliance*, op. cit., p.255; Macmillan, *Tides of Fortune*, op. cit., p.220; Nutting, *Europe Will Not Wait*, op. cit., p.75; Keith Robbins, *Churchill* (New York: Longman, 1992; Seldon, *Churchill's Indian Summer*, op. cit., p.413; Sked and Cook, *Post-War Britain*, op. cit., p.112.

American and continental writers assessing the non-British factors.<sup>103</sup> On the first application the current literature displays a strong global perspective reminiscent of the foreign historiography of de Gaulle's veto.<sup>104</sup> On the second application and veto, the historiography is shortly to incorporate such dimensions.<sup>105</sup> On Heath and Europe we are some way off even a revisionist account, but the *Economist* at the time and the biography by Campbell, for

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<sup>103</sup> The contrast with the focus on London's failings is clear: 'For some people, responsibility for the failure of the EDC rests with France; for others the blame is entirely with the UK; yet others are more specific and mention individuals. The issue is complicated by so many and varying and dissimilar factors...the story spells out the facts of a long drawn-out case which some would call manslaughter; some, death by default; and some, plain murder'. Fursdon, *The European Defence Community*, op. cit., p.342. See also Young, *Britain and European Unity*, op. cit., pp.38-9; H. Young, *This Blessed Plot*, op. cit., p.76.

<sup>104</sup> See the earlier chapter on Revisionism, pp.145-51, for further discussion of this.

<sup>105</sup> See Oliver Daddow (ed.), *The Second Try: Harold Wilson and Europe, 1964-67* (Macmillan, forthcoming). The contributions set the apparent inevitability of the second veto in the context of French, German and American policies, as well as providing more discussion than hitherto of the domestic context of European policy-making.



example, raise doubts about the received wisdom of Heath's vision of 'Europe' and his attitude to America.<sup>106</sup>

#### 4. Conclusion

<sup>106</sup> If previous trends are a guide the following works have set out the orthodoxy: Anthony Barber, Taking the Tide: A Memoir (Norwich: Michael Russell, 1998); Brandt, People and Politics, op. cit.; Heath, The Course of My Life, op. cit., Home, The Way the Wind Blows, op. cit.; Douglas Hurd, An End to Promises: Sketch of a Government 1970-74 (London: Collins, 1979); Hutchinson, Edward Heath, op. cit.; Cecil King, The Cecil King Diary 1970-1974 (London: Jonathan Cape, 1975); Henry Kissinger, The White House Years (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, Michael Joseph, 1979); Henry Kissinger, Years of Upheaval (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, Michael Joseph, 1982); Laing, Edward Heath, op. cit.; Richard Nixon, The Memoirs of Richard Nixon (New York: Grosset and Dunlap, 1978); Andrew Roth, Heath and the Heathmen (London: Routledge, 1972); Roussel, Georges Pompidou, op. cit.; Sainsbury, 'Lord Home', in Shlaim, Jones and Sainsbury (eds.), British Foreign Secretaries, op. cit.; Thatcher, The Path to Power, op. cit.; Thorpe, Alec Douglas-Home, op. cit. By contrast, reading the Economist one gets a clearer picture of the obstacles facing Heath and the other individuals active in negotiating Britain's way into the Community, which many of these accounts ignore: 'His Europe-Or Europe's?', Economist, op. cit., p.930; 'How Europe Never Happened', Economist, 7 February 1970, pp.15-6; 'Showing Their First Cards', 14 February 1970, pp.22-7; 'Weekend Skirmish', Economist, 7 March 1970, pp.64-8; 'Filling in the Map', Economist, 14 March 1970, pp.37-8; 'It's Not What You Do, It's the Way That You Do It', Economist, 25 April 1970, pp.36-9; 'The Size of Two Men's Hands', Economist, 2 May 1970, pp.35-6; 'EEC: Timetable for Next Tuesday', Economist, 27 June 1970, pp.54-5 (p.54). 'Here We Go Again', Economist, 25 July 1970, pp.14-5 (p.14). See also 'On the Wrong Foot?', Economist, 4 July 1970, pp.14-5; 'Not so much a Community, More Like Them and Us', Economist, 4 July 1970, pp.30-3; 'Rippon on Stage', Economist, 3 October 1970, pp.16-7; 'Into a Bog at Brussels?', Economist, 24 October 1970, pp.68-9; 'Well, Nothing's Gone Wrong So Far', Economist, 31 October 1970, p.29; 'Shaping up for Europe', Economist, 26 December 1970, pp.11-3; 'The Year for Europe', Economist, 2 January 1971, pp.9-11; 'Bending with the Breeze', Economist, 9 January 1971, p.28; 'Talking as Equals', Economist, 23 January 1971, p.28; 'How to Make Jokes and Still Get In', Economist, 30 January 1971, pp.28-9; 'Road Cleared', Economist, 13 February 1971, pp.29-30; 'Build-Up for the Big Fight', Economist, 13 March 1971, p.29; 'Understanding Mr. Pompidou', Economist, 27 March 1971, pp.14-5; 'Morale-Boosting in Rome', Economist, 3 April 1971, p.39; 'Will they Lay an Egg?', Economist, 10 April 1971, pp.17-8; 'The Time When Hearts Beat Together', Economist, 24 April 1971, pp.12-3; 'Me Voicil', Economist, 15 May 1971, pp.11-3. Despite the limitations on sources, the following contain greater depth and detail, suggestive of a revisionist interpretation in the near future: Campbell, Edward Heath, op. cit., especially pp.108-38; Christopher Lord, Britain's Entry to the European Community Under the Heath Government of 1970-4 (Aldershot: Dartmouth, 1993); Robert Taylor, 'The Heath Government, Industrial Policy and the "New Capitalism"', in Ball and Seldon (eds.), The Heath Government, op. cit., pp.139-59; John W. Young, 'The Heath Government and British Entry into the European Community', in Ball and Seldon (eds.), The Heath Government, op. cit., pp.259-84; Young, Britain and European Unity, op. cit., pp.107-19; Young, This Blessed Plot, op. cit., pp.214-56.

What this chapter has shown is that, as with the two earlier schools, explaining the emergence of a post-revisionist turn to the historiography requires consideration of a plethora of variables. The most significant seems to be an understanding of generational change, the social dimension of the historiography. The social context is crucial, given that awareness of pre-existing historical debate can influence one's own approach to the sources. Ellison's comments given above highlight just this awareness. The sources he consulted were, of course, important. But so too was his awareness of the polemics of earlier debate. The orthodoxy justified British policy, revisionists- and key continental politicians- attacked it. Given the complexities of the formation and development of Plan G, post-revisionists argue, rigidly adhering to one side of the debate or the other did not appear tenable. This is particularly true when analysing the vacillating positions of key individuals, such as Macmillan and Eden, in the foreign policy process at this time. This approach serves a reminder of one the major epistemological foundations of historical inquiry in Britain: one should be wary of making generalisations, even about short periods of history.

One can draw three additional conclusions from this chapter. First, it has been shown that post-revisionism is closely allied both methodologically and interpretatively to revisionism. Similar sociological ties bind writers in the two schools, which are dominated by professional historians using primary material. Ellison in particular is adamant that, despite the Free Trade Area proposal mutating to take on a less hostile purpose by the end of 1956, for some in Whitehall, an appealing outcome of the negotiations would have been

for the Six to abandon their interest in forming a common market. Hence, it can be argued that the interpretative boundaries between the revisionist and post-revisionist schools are thinner than those between the orthodoxy and revisionism. Kaiser's placement as a key writer of both schools illustrates this point. On this issue, he presents a post-revisionist interpretation. On other issues, notably his analysis of the missed opportunities and interpretation of the first British application to join the EEC, his is a revisionist account.<sup>107</sup> It will be interesting to see whether future publications on Britain and Europe, 1945-73, opt for a broader post-revisionist approach.

The second broader conclusion to emerge from this chapter is that the barriers between the revisionist and post-revisionist schools are extremely low, but nonetheless identifiable. This observation can be made in light of the argument developed above, that the prospect for a post-revisionist account of this period of the history was long in existence. The unresolved contradictions in many key historical texts, notably in the work of Camps, have, however, yet to be picked up by historians. The impact of Derridan 'double-reading', the attention to the detailed- but not always consistent positions- taken by historians, might therefore have a significant role to play in the development of new historical understandings of British European policy. The development of post-revisionism on Plan G, which has only taken place in the last four years, reinforces the core argument of this thesis that the evolution of schools of

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<sup>107</sup> Kaiser, *Using Europe*, op. cit., pp.15-8, introduction and pp.108-203.

writing is intimately connected with many factors, but especially sociological and generational factors.

The third broader conclusion one can draw from this chapter is the importance of primary evidence to historians of Britain and Europe. Just as revisionists scrutinised the interpretations placed upon events by orthodox writers, post-revisionists have been investigating the revisionist position, as well as orthodox interpretations. Just as revisionists have been drawn to the PRO in search of primary documentary evidence, so post-revisionists have also been drawn to the PRO in search of still more evidence with which to explain the making of foreign policy. The need to find new evidence, combined with the volume of sources still to be scrutinised in the PRO, also means that it is likely to remain at the centre of the attention of British historians for a time longer. It is both cost effective and easily accessible, more so than sources abroad, for obvious reasons. In a discipline in which money is a scarce resource, historical accounts of Britain and Europe by British researchers will remain heavily dependent on evidence in the PRO.

Concurrent with this continued emphasis on evidence from the PRO, historical training and practicing historians need to pay greater attention to the process of narrativisation. As Jordanova observes: 'is research primarily about the investigative process, through which sources are gathered and read? What about the process of writing, through which interpretative frameworks are

developed?’<sup>108</sup> Historians are, after all, in a privileged position from which to discuss the limits to human understanding of the past. Further dialogue with philosophers of history about the sources they use and methods of historical reconstruction and narrativity can only be of benefit to both communities of researchers. The concluding chapter that follows reflects more on this point, as well as on the core and other wider conclusions to emerge from this thesis.

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<sup>108</sup> Jordanova, History in Practice, op. cit., p.23.

# **CONCLUSION**

Postmodern philosophies of history are bringing into sharper focus the debates about the ontology, epistemology and methodology of historical research. Their concern with the epistemological dimension of historical understanding is proving an especially potent challenge to the practice of history. It is, arguably, of even greater prescience to scholars of contemporary history, for whom living through the events they describe make 'objectivity' even harder to attain. This concluding chapter aims to analyse further the core and wider arguments developed in this thesis. It will go on to reflect on the different approaches to the historiography of Britain and Europe that could have been employed, and on the wider points of historical and political interest that emerge from this study.

The chapter is split into five sections to achieve these aims. The first restates the primary argument advanced above, that the historiography of Britain's relations with Europe has been driven by a plethora of forces. Prime amongst these is the different communities dominant in the field at particular times. From here, one can deduce all the other factors at work on interpretation, notably the type of study written, the level of foreign policy analysis on which explanations are advanced, the approach to intentions and outcomes in the international arena, the use of hindsight, myth-making and which sources dominate historical works. It is argued in this section that postmodern approaches to history, notably that by White, have served to heighten pre-existing debates about the role of interpretation and bias in historiography. However, they have done so with such force, and been so misunderstood, that the time is most propitious for a restatement of their key tenets.

The second section analyses the supporting argument made in the thesis, that three schools of writing can be identified in the historiography of British European policy. These schools, it is shown, have been developed in accordance with the definition of schools offered by Tim Dunne,<sup>1</sup> another British writer who has approached historiographically a given corpus of literature. After analysing the nature and relevance of identifying schools of writing, this section continues by analysing two alternative approaches to historiographical analysis of the writing of British European policy that could be taken by future writers. The first involves taking a chronological rather than thematic, schools-based approach, perhaps over a shorter period of time: 1945-51, 1951-57 or 1957-63, for example. This would have the benefit showing the relationship between writers in more detail and allowing sharper contrasts to be drawn between political scientists, contemporary historians and international relations scholars to be drawn out in greater depth. The second alternative approach would be to admit the plethora of influences at work on historians, but reject that they can be 'schoolified'. It will be argued that while both containing merits, none of these alternatives offers the conceptual clarity or appeal to philosophers, historians and political scientists of the approach taken in this study.

The third section analyses two other wider conclusions to be drawn from the thesis. The first is that there is much to be gained from historians being more

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<sup>1</sup> Dunne, Inventing International Society, op. cit., p.5.



critical, more reflective about the nature of the sources they use and about those they might use. The second is that there is genuine scope for cross-fertilisation between historians, political scientists and policy-makers in the area of foreign policy projection. The rhetoric about foreign policy developments, it has been shown, is as important as the content of policy itself. This demonstrates that more attention needs to be paid in the literature not just to the making, but presentation of foreign policy.

The fourth section continues the theme of wider conclusions, by considering three broader points of interest to emerge from this study. The first is that the questions one asks of history determine the questions one elicits from history. In this light, and this is the second point, there needs to be more attention paid in the teaching of research methods to the practice and writing up, not just theory, of research. Seeking historical evidence is one matter, interpreting it and constructing narratives involve quite different issues. They are, however, issues which methods training courses have yet to address in detail. The third broader point of interest to emerge from this thesis concerns Britain's continuing attempts to define its relationship with Europe and the wider world. It considers the historical evidence that has been uncovered on French, German and American designs for the integration process in the 1950s and 1960s. It allies this to consideration of one of the broader themes in European integration history, the centrality of the Franco-German axis to advances in integration. In this light, the debates about what role Britain *should* be playing in the world are less prescient than what role it *can* play. The final remarks in the fifth section highlight the appeal of this thesis to philosophers, historians

and political scientists, combining as it does insights of a theoretical and empirical nature stemming from the historiography of Britain and Europe, 1945-73.

### **1. The Symbiosis of Historiography and Postmodernism**

Grigg is not being uncontroversial when he argues: 'Of course all history is partial, both in the sense that it never reveals the whole truth (because the whole truth can never be known) and in the sense that it is bound to be coloured by the author's own opinion'.<sup>2</sup> George Brown also observed that 'facts are not always facts; facts are not always absolutes. They depend so much on like beauty on the eye of the beholder, on one's involvement in the event'.<sup>3</sup> 'La neutralité absolue est impossible et au demeurant peu souhaitable', concurs Éric Roussel.<sup>4</sup> Kaplan was also certain that 'the phrase "the truth of history" is too strong; perhaps history provides us instead with "truths". Yet even these "truths" illuminate matters for us successfully only to the extent that our knowledge of the context from which the "truth" is seen enables us to evaluate it against other perspectives'.<sup>5</sup>

Earlier than all these reflections on the importance of interpretation in history, one finds an intensely revealing passage in Herbert Butterfield's *History and*

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<sup>2</sup> Grigg, review, 'Policies of Impotence', *International Affairs*, op. cit., p. 72.

<sup>3</sup> Brown, *In My Way*, op. cit., p. 12.

<sup>4</sup> Éric Roussel, *Georges Pompidou*, (Poitiers/Ligugé: Jean-Claude Lattés, 1984), p. 12.

<sup>5</sup> Kaplan, *On Historical and Political Knowing*, op. cit., pp. 93-4.

*Human Relations*, published in 1951. He is worth quoting at length on this: 'If we consider the history of the historical writing that has been issued, generation after generation, on a given body of events, we shall generally find that in the early stages of this process of reconstruction the narrative which is produced has a primitive and simple shape. As one generation of students succeeds another, however... the narrative passes through certain typical stages until it is brought to a high and subtle form of organisation. It would be difficult to give names to these successive stages in the development of the historiography of a given theme'.<sup>6</sup> His words are revealing both about the core and secondary arguments advanced in this thesis. It is important first of all to reflect on his words and those of Grigg, Brown and Kaplan, in the context of the primary argument advanced. That is, there are many influences at work on the construction of historical narratives.

The reason all these observations about the essentially contested nature of history are quoted here, is that they are forerunners of the postmodern position. White, Jenkins, Southgate, Appleby, Hunt and Jacob are not the first to question the notion of objectivity in history. What they have done, and what this thesis aims to do, is bring greater analytical content to the debate by assessing the role of historians in shaping the events they describe. The particular issue they confront, White especially, is the epistemological problematic in history: what kinds of knowledge can one discover about the past and how does one present that knowledge to others effectively?

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<sup>6</sup> Butterfield, *History and Human Relations*, op. cit., p.10.

The use and abuse of postmodernism by those who either misunderstand its central tenets, or who willingly distort them for political ends, make this an area in urgent need of attention. The reason why this assertion holds is that postmodernism has many useful insights to offer historians on the practice of history. Similarly, historians are in a privileged position from which to inform philosophers about the everyday issues they confront as they attempt to reconstruct past events. More cross-fertilisation of ideas and practices across communities would be beneficial to both.

This is where this thesis fits in. It agrees with Ankersmit's claim that: 'Historiography truly is the postmodernist discipline *par excellence*, since in historiography reality yields to the depictions of itself so that we are left with mere appearances, that is, with representations mirroring an ever absent past reality'.<sup>7</sup> By clarifying the postmodern position taken by White and others, and applying the assumption that there is no single 'neutral' account of the past to a given body of historical writing, this thesis has found that there is room for a complementary relationship to develop between historians and philosophers of history.

This point has been developed in the core argument of the thesis. That is, the historiography of Britain's relations with Europe, 1945-73, has been influenced by several factors at work on the interpretation placed on events by different

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<sup>7</sup> Ankersmit, 'Reply to Professor Zagorin', op. cit., p.294.

writers. While it is difficult to elicit a direct relationship between cause and effect in the context of influences upon historical interpretation, the thesis has found that one can place the influences in an order as follows. The most significant factor, from which most of the others flow, is sociological. Different communities of writers, it has been shown, place different interpretations on events. A dividing line was thus drawn between politicians and officials who dominate the orthodox school and professional historians who dominate the revisionist and post-revisionist schools.

The different communities of writers bring with them different assumptions about how to study foreign policy and write history. That these assumptions are often implicit makes them none the less important. The thesis went on to analyse six further divisions between the schools. Second was the level of foreign policy analysis on which writers based their accounts, orthodox writers preferring structural determinants of British foreign policy, revisionists and post-revisionists the two lower levels. Third came a division between the approaches to intentions and outcomes in the foreign policy arena. Orthodox writers, it was argued, were generally agreed that policy makers in London could be held responsible for the alleged failings of British European policy after 1945. Revisionists and post-revisionists were more sensitive to the expectations placed on Britain by the Monnetists who, they assert, have distorted what was essentially a more constructive approach to the continent in content if not in tone.

The fourth and fifth variables, hindsight and myth-making, are two sides of the same coin. Professional historians have been unhappy with the tendency of orthodox writers to look back upon the events they describe from the vantage of the present. They prefer empathetic reflection based on a consideration of the evidence through the eyes of the individuals they study, eschewing the generalising tendencies of the orthodoxy. This leads directly to the use of sources by each school. Orthodox writers, it was argued, tend to use eye-witness accounts and the arguments made during live political debate about British European policy at the time as the basis of their accounts. Revisionists and post-revisionists have been more heavily reliant on primary sources, especially those in the PRO. This revealed much not only about the division between the schools, but about the practical considerations governing the nature and practice of contemporary history in Britain.

The seventh and final influence on the interpretation placed on the key debates about British European policy was shown to stem from the type of study written. It was argued that it was intertwined with all the other influences, but deserved analysis because of what it demonstrated about the pressures associated with different genres of historical study. Memoirs, diaries, autobiographies, biographies, journalistic histories, survey histories, academic monographs, articles and textbooks were shown to place the author in different dilemmas vis-à-vis the organisation of his or her material. The different genres (and sub-genres with reference to biography- official, unofficial and 'contextualised') all asked different questions of British European policy, dictating to a large extent the interpretations placed on events. As an

underpinning to the core argument that historical interpretation is influenced by many different factors, the last factor seems an apt way of summing up the differences between the schools. It shows the change in the field from dominance by political tracts and general surveys to academic histories. Thus, the core argument of the thesis was that it is crucial to understand the social construction of history. From here, one can deduce other influences that are themselves products of the social background of the writers. The secondary argument was that the historiographic process can best be traced by identifying three schools of writing in the historiography of Britain and Europe. The second section will now reflect on the value of this approach and what it reveals about the nature of the term 'school of writing' in Britain. It will then consider two alternative approaches to the historiography of Britain's relations with Europe that might have been taken in this thesis.

## **2. Schools of Writing in Contemporary History**

The secondary argument developed in this study has been that the writers of British European policy can be grouped in three schools: orthodox, revisionist and post-revisionist. Using these labels, coined from American Cold War historiography, it has been argued, is a most apt way of demonstrating the changes in the dominant communities of writers within the field. Butterfield's words, quoted above, concerning the stages in historiographical progression come close to the way this thesis has used the terms used by American Cold War scholars to denote the stages in the writing of British European policy.

The argument can be made that there is a strong academic tradition of 'schoolifying' historical literature.

This in turn raises the issue of how one defines a 'school of writing'. For it has been argued that the strongly political overtones associated with the terms 'orthodox', 'revisionist' and 'post-revisionist' are less a feature of British historiography. Instead, the terms have been used to designate a time-line in historical writing, from an orthodox interpretation, through revisionism and post-revisionism. Stoker argues that it is misleading to use the term 'school' to describe competing methods of studying political science, preferring the looser label 'approach'. The term 'school', he observes, 'creates an exaggerated sense of cohesion and order within the various sub-divisions of political science'.<sup>8</sup> What, therefore, is the rationale for using the term 'school' to distinguish between the competing bodies of writing on Britain and Europe?

Dunne gets close to the way this study encapsulates schools of writing, by arguing that they contain writers linked by 'family resemblances'. Schools do not have to contain writers adhering rigidly to a single interpretation of historical events. Instead, there are 'aspects of their thinking which are interwoven and distinct'.<sup>9</sup> He goes on to give three defining characteristics of the 'English school' of International Relations: a common agenda, broad interpretive approach and use of theory. The defining characteristics of the schools identified in this thesis echo all three characteristics. This definition

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<sup>8</sup> Stoker, 'Introduction', op. cit., p.7.

<sup>9</sup> Dunne, Inventing International Society, op. cit., p.5.



echoes that of Roger Epp who argues 'any identifiable intellectual tradition or school is known by the dilemmas it keeps. It can be understood as an extended answer to a set of questions which, in turn, shape it in ways that open up certain types of inquiry and preclude others'.<sup>10</sup>

The notion of 'family resemblances' is also apt because human families do not generally consist of individuals who are all identical. Nor do family members all act exactly the same, with the same foibles and character traits. Hence, it has been argued in this thesis that debate not only occurs between writers belonging to different schools, but among writers within individual schools. The other advantage of the 'family' metaphor is that it allows interpretations to develop across time, supporting the argument that one has to understand different historical interpretations in the context of social and generational changes in the field. What this means is that one school might dominate for certain periods, but even during those periods there are always certain individuals keeping the other school(s) alive. Revisionists and post-revisionists may currently be dominating the field, but there are still publications that expound the orthodoxy on Britain and Europe, notably those by politicians.

Having established that the boundaries between schools are extant on interpretation, it is now possible to assess the reasons for breakout from one school to another. The most important factor is sociological. It has been shown how revisionist explanations, or the potential for them, were latent in many

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<sup>10</sup> Epp, 'The English School', op. cit., op.50.

orthodox works. Yet it took until the end of the 1980s for them to develop into a distinct, competing interpretation. That the potential for this to occur existed decades before, suggests that schools are extant upon not just the changing climate of opinion and communities of writing dominant in the field, though they cannot be discounted. It requires an individual or individuals to break out decisively against the received wisdom. These lead and others, as is human nature, then have the confidence to follow. Subsequent writers than refine and reinterpret elements of the new interpretation, but they belong to this new 'family' or school of writing. In the meantime, the earlier school continues to exist, but it fades into the background, a new generation fascinated with the new approach.

The second reason, therefore, why one school supplants another is historiographical awareness.<sup>11</sup> What this means is that one school tends to replace another when a writer enters into the archives aware of the current state of the historiographical art. It is not *necessarily* that they are seeking evidence with which to debunk the conventional wisdom, but they are alert to the main strands of interpretation then in fashion and can therefore set up their interpretations explicitly against them. Such historiographical developments involve, notes Holub, 'the recognition and praise of hitherto unnoticed factors'.<sup>12</sup> This was the case in Third Force scholarship from 1989, when historians, following Kent and Young, gained the confidence to challenge the Cold War-dominated accounts of their predecessors. It was also true of the

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<sup>11</sup> As the comments by Ellison in the last chapter showed.

<sup>12</sup> Holub, *Reception Theory*, op. cit., p.22.

post-revisionist turn in the historiography on Plan G which, for Ellison at least, was born out of the juxtaposition of the evidence he found in the PRO, with the polemics of existing interpretations. Establishing which came first in the historiographical shift from school to school is problematic- was it sources or the natural, in-built tendency for new generations to revise existing accounts? Kaplan observed that revisionism is not just extant upon presentism but 'is usually identified with scholars protesting other scholars' interpretations that revisionists consider to be abhorrent'.<sup>13</sup> This can be for a variety of reasons. Whichever it is, the second barrier between schools can be explained in terms of historiographical awareness and the confidence this instills in historians who approach fresh evidence with existing accounts at the forefront of their minds.

The importance of this word 'confidence' is perhaps in need of further explanation, for it leads on to the third explanation for the dominance of particular schools at different times. All histories are attempts by individuals to rationalise events about the past. In Britain, the use of theory by historians is, this thesis argues, implicit rather than explicit. However, underlying all schools are implicit assumptions about how to study the past and conceptualise the foreign policy process. That one school supplants another is as much due to the confidence groups of historians have in particular explanatory frameworks. When one explanatory framework comes to be seen as unable to deliver a comprehensive explanation of the past, it is rejected in favour of another. In this process the role played by 'confidence' is crucial. As Viktor Shklovski

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<sup>13</sup> Kaplan, 'The Cold War and European Revisionism', *op. cit.*, p.143.

argues: 'The new hegemony is...one involving the presence of features from other junior schools, even features (but now in a subordinate role) inherited from its predecessors on the throne'.<sup>14</sup>

Kaplan also remarked that: 'Many of our interpretations of history rest on apparent plausibility'.<sup>15</sup> If one admits that the scope for revisionism and post-revisionism was long evident in the historiography, the barrier between schools might seem flimsy. Yet they are massive in terms of the leaps of faith required to make the transition. This leap of faith comes from historians' confidence in the explanatory power of new interpretations which, however small in terms of the period they purport to explain, can catch on and set the agenda for a period in which the new theory captures the minds of historians. The labelling of approaches against which one argues,<sup>16</sup> can be crucial in setting up the linguistic basis on which subsequent historians work. In effect, the shift between schools relies on the changing discursive formations used to describe events. The confidence one gets from allying with others in the field makes it more likely that revisionism on one issue will snowball into revisionism on other periods of history, as a new generation seeks to debunk the 'old' discursive formation. Thus, 'although the domain of a new theory may be smaller than the previously accepted domain of the old theory, its new domain is larger than the now (often) zero domain of the old theory'.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Quoted in Holub, *Reception Theory*, op. cit., p.21.

<sup>15</sup> Kaplan, *On Historical and Political Knowing*, op. cit., p.64.

<sup>16</sup> Kent and Young, in 1992, coined the term 'consensus' to describe the literature on the period 1945-9 against which they set their account, in Kent and John Young, 'British Policy Overseas', op. cit., p.41.

<sup>17</sup> Kaplan, *On Historical and Political Knowing*, op. cit., p.17.

The language used to define the boundaries between schools can itself become the point of reference for historians, rather than the evidence used to construct the interpretation. This supports the Hans Georg Gadamer's observation that intentions are only intelligible against 'the prior existence of shared meaning'.<sup>18</sup> It was shown how the missed opportunities orthodoxy proved attractive to historians until the early 1990s, creeping in at the end of works which could plausibly have provided evidence for the revisionist interpretation. Fads and fashions in scholarship, the in-built dynamic of revisionism and post-revisionism, thus has something of an artificial air to it. Take this remark in a recent review by Raymond Keitch, a doctoral research student at the LSE. 'My only criticism would be of the theoretical approach taken in the concluding chapter which continues the overused "train" metaphor of a "federalising" EU with Britain being left behind'.<sup>19</sup> It is apparent from this that a new generation of historians are still reacting against the orthodox representation of British European policy- it is now seen as outdated. This shows that the language used by historians can be as decisive in determining the plausibility and longevity of their accounts as the evidence on which they reconstruct the past.

Taken together, what these three factors influencing the timing of the break-out from one school to another show, is the historiographic significance of sociological and generational changes. The historiography is not just dependent

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<sup>18</sup> Paraphrased in Roger Epp, 'The English School on the Frontier of International Relations', *Review of International Studies*, 24 (1998), pp.47-63 (p.51).

<sup>19</sup> Raymond Keitch, review 'Britain and Europe Since 1945. By A. May', *Journal of Common Market Studies*, 38, 1 (2000), p.183.

on new sources and methods of research but, crucially, on the bonding of particular individuals and sub-communities within the field which help produce these changes in the first place. But apart from the delineation of overarching schools of writing on the entire period 1945-73, there are two alternative ways in which one might analyse the historiography of Britain's relationship with Europe. It is to an analysis of the alternatives that this chapter now turns.

The first alternative would be to take a chronological rather than thematic approach. That is, one could organise analysis of the schools around the historical themes and debates in the order in which they usually appear in the literature. A representative work is Young's *Britain and European Unity*, which has chapters on 'The Birth of European Unity, 1929-49', 'The Schuman Plan, the European Army and the Treaties of Rome, 1950-7', 'Macmillan, the Free Trade Area and the First Application, 1957-63', 'Wilson's Entry Bid, 1964-70', 'Entry, Renegotiation and the Referendum, 1970-9' and so forth.<sup>20</sup> Many other historians, notably George, Greenwood, Hugo Young, Gowland and Turner have chronologically ordered their studies.<sup>21</sup>

The historiographer might therefore wish to examine the inter-relationship of writers to each other in a chronological context, organising one's study around historiographic analysis of each particular period in the history. One could then spend longer examining the intra-school as well as inter-school debates among

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<sup>20</sup> Young, *Britain and European Unity*, op. cit., contents, p.7.

<sup>21</sup> George, *An Awkward Partner*, op. cit.; Greenwood, *Britain and European Co-operation*, op. cit.; Gowland and Turner, *Reluctant Europeans*, op. cit.; Young, *This Blessed Plot*, op. cit.

writers. This would be of great benefit to all historians of the period under scrutiny, because it would surely provide more time for critical analysis of the differences in interpretation between historians, as well as those between historians and political scientists and the broader groupings of academics and politicians and officials. It would, in short, be attractive in terms of organisation, because it would reflect more accurately how historians have been thinking about these issues. Moreover, the chronological approach would be able to explore more fully the range of opinions to which this thesis, organised thematically around schools, has only been able to allude occasionally.

The second alternative approach to the historiography of Britain and Europe, 1945-73, would be to ignore the process of schoolification altogether. That is, one could examine the core argument about the multiple influences at work on historians yet define no schools at all. The intrinsic individuality of historical reconstruction constitutes a strong case against any attempt to delineate schools of writing in history. Identifying a pattern of interpretation in contemporary history is arguably even more hazardous. Our memory of contemporary historical events shapes contemporary attitudes and is all the time shaped by them in a continuous cycle of interpretation and re-interpretation. The interaction of the historian with contemporary history is therefore even more deeply defined by what Kaplan describes as 'the relationship of the observer to the observed'.<sup>22</sup> An extreme existentialist

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<sup>22</sup> Ibid., preface, pp. 11-2.

interpretation has it not just that historical understanding is extant upon class or social position, but that 'form is imposed by the human mind on external reality, that we play self-imposed roles in the world, and that reality is what we make it, if not an outright fiction'.<sup>23</sup> In this light, it might be argued, the positioning of one writer next to another, and in opposition to others, is to artificially simplify the multi-layered and complex texts they have produced. This thesis has uncovered evidence of writing that is hard to fit into any of the schools according to which it suggests we analyse this corpus of writing.

The writers it is hard to locate in any one school tend to be those who offer the most eclectic interpretations. One is Mark Deavin, who it is not possible to locate in any of the schools identified in this study. His approach to Macmillan's application suggests that it stemmed from a strong commitment to supranationalism and 'world government', in the context of a Communist-style European integration movement 'to reshape the wider international order on the part of a homogenous transatlantic and financial elite'.<sup>24</sup> His linkage between Macmillan's pro-planning goals, Communist sympathies and free-masonry, not to mention his consistent allusions to Macmillan's sexual preference as underpinning all this, make this a very hard thesis to locate in the framework of this study.<sup>25</sup> Revisionist accounts using primary sources are not nearly so convinced, on the theoretical level, that Macmillan controlled policy

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<sup>23</sup> Ibid., p.3.

<sup>24</sup> Deavin, 'Harold Macmillan', op. cit., p.18, p.13.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., pp.19-81, p.100. What is interesting is that it is the opposite argument of Jay who argues the Marxist line, in *Change and Fortune*, op. cit., pp.425-7, that the EEC was a capitalist club designed to meet the needs of transnational financial capital at the expense of labour. See also Sanders, *Losing an Empire*, op. cit., p.151.



so tightly, or, on an interpretative level, that it was his Communism which drove forward British European policy from 1957.

There are also writers who are difficult to locate in schools because of their inconsistency across issues. Kaiser places a post-revisionist interpretation on Plan G. In some debates in British European policy however, notably on Bevin's concept of the Third Force, he presents a revisionist account. On others, such as Macmillan's application to join the EEC, he presents a neo-orthodox view.<sup>26</sup> On specific issues, notably Baylis on the Third Force, writers have changed their interpretations across time. Does this make him a post-revisionist or just confused?<sup>27</sup> Likewise, Rothwell, Bullock and other 'waverers' hinted at Bevin's Third Force aspirations but refused to go further. Narrative reconstruction of historical events is, by its very nature, heavily dependent on the political climate of opinion and the mental processes of reconstruction in the minds of the individual historians.

The sympathy which one has for the idea of putting writers into schools depends on one's definition of a 'school'. If, like Beloff, one associates schools with particular institutions, the secondary argument developed in this thesis-

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<sup>26</sup> On Plan G, see *Using Europe*, op. cit., pp.61-87. On the Third Force see pp.1-14. On the first application Kaiser's view is that Macmillan pursued a 'dual appeasement strategy', attempting to join to appease Washington and the Conservative Party, see pp.108-73. In this sense he echoes the essentially 'negative' view of the application put out by orthodox writers.

<sup>27</sup> John Baylis, 'Britain and the Dunkirk Treaty: The Origins of NATO', in *Journal of Strategic Studies*, 5, 2 (1982), pp.236-47; John Baylis, 'Britain, the Brussels Pact and the Continental Commitment', *International Affairs*, 60, 4 (1984), pp.615-29. John Baylis, *The Diplomacy of Pragmatism: Britain and the Formation of NATO, 1942-49* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1993).

that schools must principally be defined in terms of interpretation not approaches to the study of history- will have had only limited appeal.<sup>28</sup> One also has to confront the issue of cohesion, which has a precedent in the debate between Kimball and Gaddis in the United States. Kimball asserted that to 'lump' writers together in schools 'suggests that [Gaddis] sees a high degree of unity' among them, which is not borne out by the evidence of substantial disagreements among writers, particularly of the New Left.<sup>29</sup> Taking the eclecticism of academic literature together with the supposed foundations of schools of writing, how can one schoolify British historians?

Gaddis responded to Kimball thus: 'sophistication does not...necessitate limiting ourselves to a single "lump" in our historiographical cup of tea'.<sup>30</sup> The secondary argument of this thesis is that, despite important exceptions and in the face of these objections, schools of writing on British European policy 1945-73 can be identified. It has been argued that British revisionism has not been as politically charged as its American counterpart, nor are the schools *necessarily* reliant on institutional affiliation.<sup>31</sup> Broad similarities across interpretation are sufficient to locate some writers in the orthodox school, others in the revisionist school and others in the post-revisionist school. Even the 'waverers' such as Bullock implicitly come down on one side of the debate

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<sup>28</sup> He railed, in interview, against trying to schoolify this literature, partly because he thought British scholarship immune from the shared outlooks that strong institutional ties can instill in historians. Interview evidence, 15 April, 1998. To take one example, political scientists at the LSE have developed the notion of 'third-way' politics which has had such an impact on Tony Blair. See Webster, 'Harnessing the Rampant Theory', op. cit.

<sup>29</sup> Gardner, Kaplan, Kimball and Kuniholm, 'Responses', op. cit., p.198.

<sup>30</sup> Gaddis, 'The Corporatist Synthesis', op. cit., p.362.

<sup>31</sup> Though it does make the point that historians associated with Oxford and LSE have been at the forefront of revisionism.

or the other by treating particular sources of evidence in a particular way, or by nuances of language, or by their general perceptions of the making of British foreign policy.

The writers who are hard to locate in any school serve to highlight the vibrancy of the discipline of contemporary history in Britain. This reinforces the theoretical emphasis placed in the thesis on the concept of individual interpretation. That one might choose not to schoolify the writers in this field may still leave the core argument of this thesis intact. However, it has been shown that, so strong is the case for analysing the social construction of history, there is also a case for identifying schools of writing. Depending on how one defines a 'school', one might arrange the thesis differently to how it has been arranged here. Since the aim of this study has been to show the general interpretative links among writers and historians of British European policy, some of the detailed debate among writers on the minutiae of policy has necessarily been overlooked. Analytical clarity demanded just such an approach, but that is not to say there are no other ways to approach this body of literature historiographically, as has been demonstrated by consideration of the two alternatives explored in this section. It is now necessary to move on from discussion of schools of writing, to explore two other broader conclusions to emerge from this thesis. Both show the relevance of this thesis not only to philosophers of history but to historians, political scientists and policy-makers alike.

### **3. Broader Conclusions to Emerge from the Thesis**

The introductory chapter to this study analysed the value of historiography in theoretical and empirical terms. In the latter context, it argued, historiographical analysis of a given body of literature is extremely useful to practitioners in the field. First, it elucidates the array of interpretations that have been placed on historical events. Second, it highlights avenues down which they might wish to travel in the future to develop historical and political insights into a given field of inquiry. The thesis has dealt mainly with the first of these findings, providing a comprehensive set of data for historians and political scientists- as well as philosophers of history- on the range of interpretations placed on the historical record. It is useful now to consider the importance of this thesis in the more traditional sense. For it has uncovered two new pieces of evidence which historians and political scientists may be able to use to refine their understanding of contemporary history and political science.

The first is that historians could be far more reflective about the sources they use. That there is so little methodological reflection in the accounts analysed in this thesis suggests either that historians do not feel it necessary, or that they have little awareness of the ontology, epistemology and methodology of the research they undertake. If the first explanation holds, that they smugly do not think it necessary to be reflective, then this is a comment on the Eltonian tradition of historical research in Britain which assumes that 'a philosophic concern with such problems as the reality of historical knowledge or the nature

of historical thought only hinders the practice of history'.<sup>32</sup> One suspects that they could also be reacting against the alleged 'nihilism' of postmodernism which undermines the concept of 'doing historical research'. In the hands of the Holocaust revisionists' approach to postmodernism, it can become a dangerous device for propaganda. One fears, if Evans' reaction is symptomatic, that this kind of distortion of White's position has served to heighten the barriers between historians and critical theorists rather than promote dialogue between them.

However, Evans admitted that: 'drawing up the disciplinary drawbridge has never been a good idea for historians'.<sup>33</sup> The second explanation, that historians are methodologically malnourished, might therefore be the more persuasive explanation for the lack of theoretical reflection in their work. What this implies is that, while they are aware of the interpretative content of history, they are less attuned to the opportunities and constraints of working with primary sources and, just as important, secondary texts. This is of absolutely crucial importance because it serves as a reminder that, just as we cannot treat secondary texts as primary sources, nor can we assume that primary sources are any less positioned.

Take the sources in the PRO on which so much British historical research is conducted. They are intrinsically positioned for three reasons: they have gone through a long process of weeding before they reach the shelves at Kew.

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<sup>32</sup> Elton, *The Practice of History*, op. cit., preface, p.7.

<sup>33</sup> Evans, *In Defence of History*, op. cit., p.9.

‘Archivists have often weeded out records they consider unimportant, while retaining those they consider of lasting value’. But ‘Documents which seem worthless to one age, and hence ripe for the shredder, can seem extremely valuable to another’.<sup>34</sup> There is the additional point, notes Nicholas Cox, that ‘what they contain had a particular significance at the time it was written, and in the circumstances of the time’. They cannot for that reason be taken as resembling ‘the truth’ about events.<sup>35</sup> Second, it is officials, government employees, who choose which survive and which are shredded. Finally, even the records that make it to the PRO contain gaps arising from files being ‘lost’ and in terms of specific sentences or words or names being cut out for ‘security’ reasons.

The suggestion is, that primary sources are as ‘positioned’ as secondary sources. To cling to them as the foundation of historical knowledge, Jenkins argues, ‘commits the fallacy of taking just one part of the technical instrumentation of history (source investigation etc.) as if it constituted its “essence”’. It is as if the complicated epistemological, methodological, ideological, problematical positionings of historical representation could be solved “technically”’.<sup>36</sup> Ironically it is Evans, a virulent critic of postmodernism, who notes that the process of archival weeding ‘could reflect a view that many historians would now find outmoded, a view which considered

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<sup>34</sup> Evans, *In Defence of History*, op. cit., p.87. See also Jenkins, *On ‘What is History?’*, op. cit., p.17.

<sup>35</sup> Nicholas Cox, ‘Public Records’, in Seldon (ed.), *Contemporary History*, op. cit., pp.70-88 (p.73).

<sup>36</sup> Jenkins, ‘Introduction’, op. cit., p.13.

“history” only as the history of the elites’.<sup>37</sup> From the findings in this thesis, historians working on Britain’s relations with Europe presumably do not find such a view ‘outmoded’, content as they have generally been to analyse the official version of events put into the PRO by employees of the very people whose legacy they are examining.<sup>38</sup> As Lucas observed in 1997: ‘The strength of the discipline [of contemporary history] in Britain continues to lie in studies of official policy-making and implementation. The surge in the USA of studies on the cultural dimension of foreign policy and on the cultural relationship between the state and private sector has not been replicated here’.<sup>39</sup>

The conclusions one can draw from this study about the methods of historical research in Britain thus all point in a similar direction. Since there is apparently widespread acceptance that archives are positioned, historians need to reflect on the limitations imposed on our historical understanding by the fragmentary and necessarily tainted evidence of the past which survives to us in oral and documentary form. There is real value to be gained from historians telling their readers where they have found gaps in the record because it serves as a reminder that ‘accidents’ are as much a part of history as rational actions. Such ‘accidents’ affect the making of policy, its implementation and subsequent reconstruction of it, especially in the light of evidence that months’ worth of archives have, for whatever reason, not made it to the PRO because

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<sup>37</sup> Evans, *In Defence of History*, op. cit., p. 87.

<sup>38</sup> This is interesting for the further reason that it sheds light on the financial and time constraints on historical research in Britain, a reminder that research methods courses have very little to say about the practicalities of choosing a research design.

<sup>39</sup> Lucas, review, ‘*Britain and the World in the Twentieth Century*. By John W. Young’, *Contemporary British History*, op. cit., p. 126.

they have been 'lost' or damaged in some way. It is useful to quote Kaplan on this: 'we can never acquire all the information necessary to arrive at a conclusion, in particular information contained within the privacy of a decision-maker's mind, we can never know that we have a genuine explanation; we can only know that we have something that meets some of the criteria of an explanation and some degree of confidence that it is not an artifact'.<sup>40</sup> Historians are in a privileged position to reveal the practical constraints on human understanding of the past. It is to be hoped that they will engage more critically with their material, though the time factor on the writing of academic histories cannot be overlooked as a barrier to such reflection.

Of particular interest has also been the discovery in this thesis that historians in Britain could make far more use of media sources which are, arguably, the first draft of history. The Economist- though not a source to be used uncritically- has been shown to offer deeply revealing insights into the British foreign policy process. That only a few historians use it as a source of history suggests again the dominance of the official record over historical research in Britain. Yet, interested as they are in the workings of the Whitehall machine, the Economist and other such establishment publications have often provided tacit support for the revisionist position, as its use by writers such as Young demonstrates. It also gives historians the opportunity to assess the European and American perspectives on events earlier in the historiographic process than

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<sup>40</sup> Kaplan, On Historical and Political Knowing, op. cit., pp.67-8.



they are generally brought in. Use of such media sources would add context and balance to studies based essentially on PRO sources.

The second wider conclusion to emerge from this study operates at the intersection of history and political science. It has been found that, in the field of foreign policy making, rhetoric can be as important as reality in determining foreign policy outcomes. That is, the different interpretations that have been placed on British foreign policy show the need for policy-makers to be absolutely clear about their intentions for policy, which requires attention to the *tone* of policy pronouncements as well as *content*. Kaplan captured the complexity of projecting foreign policy in a fluid international environment: 'The policy of a state may be related to constraints imposed by the nature of the international system, constraints imposed by technology and weapons systems, constraints imposed by the character of the domestic political system, constraints imposed by the bargaining conditions that make up the governments, constraints imposed by regime requirements, constraints imposed by personal relations, friendship or personality, constraints imposed by purely accidental factors or the particular order within which information is received'.<sup>41</sup> Smith and Smith have more recently been emphasising that it is not only the formulation but presentation of policy that determines outcomes: 'such policies as are decided must be implemented in the international context...a setting characterised by multilateralism, transnationalism and interdependence'.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> Kaplan, *On Historical and Political Knowing*, op. cit., p.68.

<sup>42</sup> Smith and Smith, 'The Analytical Background', op. cit., p.21.

This suggests that the process of foreign policy implementation is crucial to one's perception of its content, perhaps more than the content itself. This is especially true of the language used to describe a policy innovation and the diplomacy surrounding its projection in the international arena. These, it appears, can be critical determinants of the perception of a state's foreign policy. If one accept the findings of revisionists and post-revisionists, that British European policy was more constructive at both the planning and implementation stages than it later appeared when announced, it can be argued that it is not sufficient to develop a constructive policy in private, one must be *seen* to have a constructive policy in public. Of course, one might argue, foreign policy will always be interpreted differently by different people according to their ideology, expectations and country of origin. The constructive elements can conveniently be forgotten to suit a particular ideology. This is not in dispute.

What is, is the practical void that exists between the making and projection of foreign policy, what Michael Smith refers to as 'the control of policy in complex settings'.<sup>43</sup> What one discovers, according to this view, is that 'the implementation process determines foreign policy'.<sup>44</sup> This thesis reinforces this argument that accounts of the making of British foreign policy need to pay more attention not just to domestic constraints, the permeation of the British foreign policy process by governmental and non-governmental interests. They

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<sup>43</sup> Smith, '*Foreign Policy Implementation*. Edited by Steve Smith and Michael Clarke', *Journal of Common Market Studies*, op. cit., p.85.

<sup>44</sup> Smith and Clarke, quoted in *ibid*.

need to be more aware of the language of diplomacy, because it is through policy statements that British foreign policy is received, its direction perceived and later remembered in historical accounts. That British European policy was consistently perceived as contrary to the interests of the Six suggests that any proposal shorn of supranationalism would have been met with suspicion by the Monnetists. However, greater attention to the tone of pronouncements may have meant British policy receiving a more sympathetic hearing than it did then and does now.

It can thus be seen that this thesis has conclusions to offer not just philosophers of history, but historians and political scientists working in the areas of British and European history and on foreign policy-making. The study combines reflectivism, interpretationism and philosophical concerns about the nature and practice of contemporary history in Britain, with more traditional concerns of historical theses: the uncovering of new empirical evidence. What both these broader conclusions demonstrate is the essential vitality of academic study and the potential appeal it has for the policy-making elite. The findings on the language of diplomacy also open potentially fruitful avenues for dialogue between academics and policy-makers. This chapter will now turn away from conclusions and to three broader points of interest to emerge from this thesis.

#### **4. Broader Points of Interest to Emerge from the Thesis**

This chapter has so far analysed the core and secondary conclusions one can take from this study. What this section will do is take a step back and reflect on three other issues of interest that flow from it. The first concerns the relationship that has been found to exist between the type of study written and the interpretations historians offer about the past. In this light, more research needs to be carried out into the editorial demands, practices and policies of publishing houses, for they surely have an impact on the direction in which historians take their studies. The second point concerns the over-emphasis that has come to be placed in Britain and North America on possessing a method of study. What room, it is asked, does this leave for a thorough consideration by scholars of the process of narrative reconstruction? The third point moves into the empirical arena, addressing the issues raised by historians of Britain and Europe about Britain's role in the world. It argues that debates about 'decline' can to some extent be seen to miss the real issue. That is, whatever Britain's economic or political standing, the history of European integration suggests that neither the Americans, French or Germans will let Britain fatally hinder the process of integration on the continent. Britain will soon have to decide whether it wants to remain in the second speed of the integration process. Whether those in the first want Britain to join them, is quite another matter.

This thesis has shown the strong relationship between questions and answers in history. This is seen by analysing the parallel relationship between the type of study written and the interpretation placed on historical events. Eero Loone puts his views on the matter thus: 'The distinguishing feature of scientific historiography...is the putting by the historian of his own questions on the

subject of his research, and not mere acceptance of the questions implicit in his manuscript sources... The historian then draws conclusions from his answers to these questions (and not from the sources), these answers being based on facts for which the sources provide evidence'.<sup>45</sup> This conclusion itself turns on the observation that the study one writes is a strong dictator of the interpretation one places on historical events.

The reason for this is that writing different studies means asking different question of the past. Critical biographers are clearly asking different questions from official biographers. General studies of Britain's global relations since 1945 have less time to devote to European integration than texts surveying just the Western European dimension of Britain's foreign affairs. The development of Britain and Europe as an area of academic inquiry prompted a whole new set of questions to be asked of precisely this dimension. Yet even leading revisionists have had to dilute their explanations when they come to write textbooks.<sup>46</sup> Thus, the date of writing, sources, range of interviews used are all important determinants of interpretation. But none of them override the finding that it is ultimately the narrative use to which those are put that shape one's ultimate interpretation of events.

This can be seen by turning to the second issue under the heading of 'questions and answers': closure. Where one begins and ends the historical story, and therefore the emphasis placed on different events within the narrative

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<sup>45</sup> Quoted in Callinicos, *Theories and Narratives*, op. cit., p.77.

<sup>46</sup> Shown by the comparison between Young's articles and textbook on Britain and Europe.

framework, is crucial in determining interpretation. It is possible to interpret the same document in a number of ways, depending on the stress one places on words and phrases contained in it and the importance one assigns particular periods in the development of policy. Hence the numerous examples given in the thesis of historians examining the same theme in the same period using the same sources and yet placing competing interpretations on events.<sup>47</sup>

There is more work to be done on the pressures on interpretation stemming from the genre of study one writes. There is also research to be carried out into the agendas and editorial policies of publishing houses in determining the direction of historical inquiry. It seems harder to gain publishing contracts with the major publishing houses such as Macmillan, Longman and Routledge for analysis of short periods- two or three years- in the history. Articles on these periods tend to be published in specialist journals. Is this to the detriment of balanced historical understanding, when politicians and officials, it has been found, gain relatively easy access to publishing deals,<sup>48</sup> yet rarely offer as many insights into the inner workings of administrations as are revealed later by the documents released under the Thirty Year Rule? History for public consumption, it seems, is simply not as easy to digest, which perhaps tells us much about the British historical consciousness and the separation of academic

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<sup>47</sup> See the example of Kane compared to Ellison, Schaad and Kaiser and the revisionists on Plan G, discussed in the previous chapter.

<sup>48</sup> Take the example of Harold Wilson's two volumes of memoirs, A Prime Minister Remembers, op. cit., and The Labour Government. It must surely be more than a coincidence that these tepid accounts, even by politicians' standards, were published by a known associate of Wilson, George Weidenfeld's publishing house, Weidenfeld and Nicolson. See George Weidenfeld, Remembering My Good Friends: An Autobiography (London: HarperCollins, 1985). On pp.328-61 he outlines his long association with Wilson.

history from the type of history fed to the public on television and in the press.

The second point of interest to emerge from this study is that there is a gap between the practice of research and narrating one's findings. Learning how to research, by taking methods courses at university, for example, is one thing. One will then be able to construct a research design, choose which sources are to form the basis of the research and decide who will be interviewed. Together, this might constitute a chapter at the beginning of one's thesis, or monograph, explaining for the reader how the research was undertaken. What this thesis has shown, however, is the fundamental importance to historical research played by the issue of time and money. What a concern with method overlooks is the individual historian's input to the making of history. It is the practice of history which is actually the more interesting point of departure, the financial and strategic implications of examining certain issues and periods over others.

The focus of methods courses also seems to be on the need to *appear* scientific, at the expense of reflecting on the processes by which research findings are translated into texts. For it is in this domain that some of the most interesting interpretative developments occur. Historiography, because of its symbiotic relationship with postmodernism, is in a privileged position to address the additional questions left unexplored by research methods courses. The first concerns the individual historian: how does he or she reconstruct the chronicle of facts obtained from the morass of sources available? It is one thing to assemble historical data, quite another to envisage how all the individuals were interacting with each other over time, how different departments and

organisations came to decide on particular stances on issues and, finally, how policy emerged from the plethora of individuals, departments, institutions, organisations and pressure groups involved in the decision-making network. The issue of closure also reappears here. Where one begins and ends historical stories can, it has been shown, influence interpretation. So can giving some events more interpretative weight than others. These are rarely associated with designs or methods, but occur through the process of narrativisation itself.

It is common to stress the value of possessing a 'method' in the social sciences because it shows one's commitment to the search for objective facts about human interaction, giving an empirical base and therefore authority to one's research. But this equation of 'method' with 'science' misses the intrinsically human process of carrying out research. Behind the rhetoric of 'method' and 'design' lies the process of academic research which is driven by pragmatic concerns of time, money and career-building. The RAE, doctoral research deadlines and other such time constraints have, for example, had a massive impact on the use made by revisionist and post-revisionist historians of the PRO. Thus, while they have apparently been guided by the institutionalist perspective on how to construct causal chains of events over time, they have also been making intensely personal, exigent appraisals of what makes a viable three-year research project that will result in publications. The inputs to scholarship from interpretation and sources of funding and publishing are ones that need addressing if the study of history is to take full advantage of postmodern reflections on the nature and practice of history. Historians need also to open up dialogue with their colleagues in psychology and anthropology,



if they are to understand better the multifarious influences at work on the construction of narratives.

The third broader point of interest to emerge from this thesis concerns Britain's struggle to define a place for itself in the post-war world. The interpretation of British European policy put forward by the orthodox school, crystallised around the problems Britain was encountering economically and strategically in the first three decades after the Second World War. Arguing that Britain 'missed opportunities' to lead European integration was, for British if not Monnetist commentators, another way of asserting that Britain could be a world power if only it tried harder. The revisionist challenge centred on the fundamental inconsistencies in this position. It did not simply take the orthodoxy to task for its misrepresentation of the content of British European policy. Revisionists also countered the suggestion that Britain could have led the integration process at all. It is this latter point that is of interest in this section.

By challenging the assumption that Britain was in a position to lead European integration after the war, revisionists pose a double threat to the rhetoric of post-war British foreign policy. First, they undermine the assumption that Britain has had a privileged or 'special relationship' with the United States. While this may have held at certain moments, Washington, they argue, has consistently preferred that Britain join the Europeans in their integrative

efforts. The tacit, and occasionally not so tacit,<sup>49</sup> sponsorship of European integration by the Americans, and their enthusiasm for Britain to be involved are well known to historians of Britain and Europe. How can the relationship be portrayed as 'special' when the Americans have spent at least as much time cultivating links with Paris and Bonn?

The second observation concerns Britain's relationship with its European partners. Revisionists assert that British involvement in the process of integration was not considered by many leading players in the United States and Western Europe as necessary to the success of the various schemes undertaken in the 1950s. With the benefit of hindsight, Britain's confidence in the strength of the Empire and the 'special relationship' now seems anachronistic. At the time, however, those in London can hardly be held responsible for not predicting the course of future events. What is perhaps more culpable is their persistent inability to learn from history, their underestimation of the depth of feeling in Paris and Bonn about the need for integration as a means of securing peace in Europe.

Revisionist findings on the centrality of the Paris-Bonn axis to the pace and direction of European integration support broader arguments made in the field of European studies. Simon Bulmer and William Paterson have, for example, argued that 'Major policy initiatives stand little chance of acceptance if they

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<sup>49</sup> John Foster Dulles' threat in 1953 of an 'agonising reappraisal' of American foreign policy should the Europeans not show willingness to shoulder more of the defence burden, is perhaps the most memorable example.

they are not acceptable to France or Germany'.<sup>50</sup> If one assesses the major advances in integration since the war, this argument seems persuasive. The Schuman Plan, the (failed) EDC, The Rome Treaty, the Common Agricultural Policy, the SEA, the Maastricht Treaty have all been stimulated in no small part by Franco-German initiatives, and implemented on the basis of a complicated series of trade-offs between the two countries.

What role *could* Britain have played in European integration, therefore becomes a more important question than what role *should* it have played? Even if one does not subscribe to the theory that Britain was being intentionally excluded from integrative endeavours, there remains the argument that British membership of the club of the Six was not a priority for Monnet, Schuman or their successors. If Britain's ability to act on the world stage was being heavily constrained by American, French and German plans for Europe, can the British not rightly feel a little harshly done by Europe? Only if one also accepts that leading policy-makers wanted a European role for Britain. That many of them seem to have been 'bored' with integration by the mid-1950s, suggests they were happier attempting to sit at the intersection of all three of Churchill's 'circles' of influence, rather than undertake a radical reassessment of Britain's place in the world after 1945.

With this in mind, there is scope to be sceptical about the process of integration in Europe from a British viewpoint. What also comes through

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<sup>50</sup> Simon Bulmer and William Paterson, The Federal Republic of Germany and the European Community (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1987), p.14.

strongly in orthodox and revisionist accounts, however, is the sense that, because the integration process is strongly shaped by individuals, communities and transnational policy networks, Britain has little to fear from closer co-operation with the continent. Hazy notions of 'identity', 'sovereignty', of managing 'our own affairs', and controlling 'our destiny',<sup>51</sup> are but convenient rhetorical devices to avoid a serious debate about Britain's relationship to Europe and the wider world. When one examines closely the institutional configuration of the EU, the dispersal of power within it and the strategic direction provided by the member states, one finds a Union far removed from how the British people have been conditioned to perceive it.

In sum, the rhetoric about 'Europe' has overridden the reality. The constructive advances in British European policy have been overlooked in favour of debates about why Britain is 'awkward', why Britain is in 'decline', why the British economy lags behind the rest of the world. British public and policy-makers find themselves unable to let go of an imperial past. Yet they refuse to engage in serious debate about what this implies for the future of British foreign policy. Put in the historical perspective adopted in this thesis, foreign policy emerges as an incremental, almost haphazard process in which planning is almost entirely overridden by the exigencies of handling day to day, routine business. The very language used in the debate about Britain's place in the wider world, concentrating on the rights and wrongs of British policy-makers, suggests that the British have yet to fully grasp the implications of an

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<sup>51</sup> The latter two terms are taken from Nicholas Ridley, *My Style of Government: The Thatcher Years* (London: Hutchinson, 1991), p.136.

interdependent global political economy. The third broader point of interest in the thesis is, therefore, that 'integration' and 'world influence' are not mutually exclusive concepts. Indeed, entering into the former can be an aid to achieving the latter. If Britain does decide it wants a European future, policy-makers could do worse than learning from the past in this respect.

### **5. Final Remarks**

Ankersmit has argued that 'The wild, greedy, and uncontrolled digging into the past, inspired by the desire to discover a past reality and reconstruct it scientifically, is no longer the historian's unquestioned task. We would do better to examine the result of a hundred and fifty years' digging more attentively and ask ourselves more often what all this adds up to'.<sup>52</sup> Being alert to the crucial role language and symbolism plays in human interaction is not merely a theoretical observation. It is a vital consideration for anyone wishing to understand better the nature of historical and political events and subsequent interpretations of them.

Accepting this forces postmodern reflection on the conduct of human relations to the fore. It raises the a priori significance of historiography, the study of the historians who pen the accounts which still fascinate us, still stimulate us, and whose interpretations in time come to represent history itself. Historiography

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<sup>52</sup> Ankersmit, 'Historiography and Postmodernism', op. cit., p.152.

and postmodernism are locked in a symbiotic relationship based on critical reflection of the interpretative content of narrative reconstruction. They both involve what Carl Becker called 'the survey of imagination'.<sup>53</sup> It is not merely a process of uncovering documentary, ideological or intellectual constraints for the sake of it. For Jordanova, 'There is no such thing as unbiased history, but there is such a thing as balanced, "self-aware" history..[hence] the importance of knowing an author's position'.<sup>54</sup> More dialogue between historians and philosophers would be of great benefit to both disciplines. The same might be said of the relationship between historians and political scientists.<sup>55</sup>

The aim of this study has been to promote dialogue between historians and postmodernists on the nature of historical understanding, an aim which even White 'has not accomplished'.<sup>56</sup> It has succeeded by clarifying White's thinking on the existence of 'facts' about the past and by identifying the various communities of writers who have driven forward the historiography of British European policy. This has been used as the basis from to discuss their shared outlooks on events, methods and sources. It has shown how the identification of schools of writing alerts us to the positioned nature of all historiographic representations of the past. It is not that 'facts' about the past do not exist, but that it is always the individual historian who has to collate those facts into a composite whole. This process necessarily takes us into the

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<sup>53</sup> Quoted in Smith, *Carl Becker*, op. cit., p.211.

<sup>54</sup> Jordanova, *History in Practice*, op. cit., preliminaries, p.14.

<sup>55</sup> Kavanagh, 'Why Political Science Needs History', op. cit.

<sup>56</sup> Lustick, 'History, Historiography and Political Science', op. cit., p.613.

realms of the psychology of historians, the founding assumption of White's memorable observation that: 'one of the things one learns from the study of history is that such study is never innocent'.<sup>57</sup> It is hoped that this thesis buries once and for all Elton's mischievous verdict on historiography that 'All these booklets and pamphlets which treat historical problems by collecting extracts from historians writing about them give off a clear light only when a match is put to them'.<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> White, The Content of the Form, op. cit., p.82.

<sup>58</sup> Elton, The Practice of History, op. cit., p.154.

# **APPENDIX**



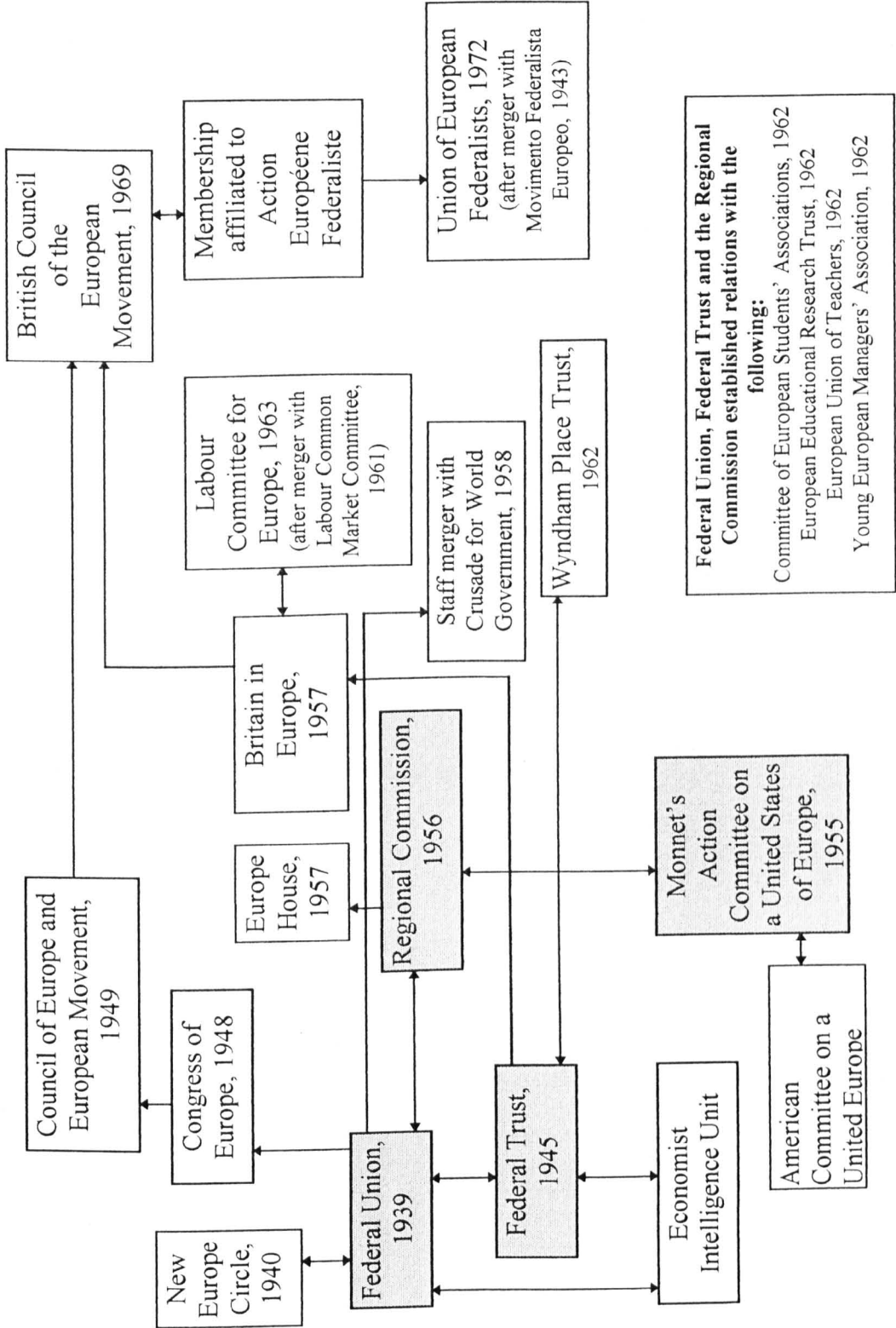
The Federal Union and related organisations have had a wide-ranging impact in Britain, Western Europe and the United States. There are two ways of defining its influence. The first is to draw up a list of key participants and activists from its inception in 1939. This suffers from the obvious failing that some change opinion over time, and apart from the kernel of long-standing federalists many names come and go, their precise outlook on the key question of federalism in Europe unclear.

A more appropriate way of representing the transnational impact of Federal Union is to trace its association with, and influence on, other key organs of federalism. This can be used to reinforce the argument advanced in this study, that orthodox historiography is strongly rooted in the federalist thinking of the British Monnetists, who had, and continue to have, multifarious political, economic, social and journalistic contacts around the world. Thus the pervasiveness of the missed opportunities critique of British European policy. Using Mayne and Pinder's history of the pressure group the diagram below charts this web of relationships.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Mayne and Pinder, Federal Union, op. cit. .

The Impact of Federal Union on the Push for Federalism in Britain, European and America



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