

relativity had so fascinated Haldane that he had written a book called *The Reign of Relativity*.

Haldane achieved his mother's ambition for him since his childhood by becoming Lord Chancellor in 1912. In office, he laid the foundations for what became the Law of Property Act 1925 and shaped the future of Canada through his transformative presidency of the Privy Council's Judicial Committee.

Later, after despairing of the Liberals over educational reform, Haldane joined the Labour Party and became Lord Chancellor in their first government in January 1924.

Education was his third sphere of high achievement. He campaigned for a massive increase in education based on ability, not wealth. His greatest passion educationally was to reform the universities, reflecting the Scottish tradition of wider educational access than in England.

The University of London, for instance, in 1894, had no teachers and no students! He then co-founded the London School of Economics with Sidney and Beatrice Webb and they achieved a fully fledged University of London in 1898, relying on Haldane's warm relations with the Tory Arthur Balfour, then Leader of the House of Commons.

Perhaps Haldane's greatest educational achievement was – shocked by the damage to British industry resulting from defective technical education and scientific research, while science and business were cross-fertilising ever more closely in Germany – his central role in founding Imperial College.

The transformation Haldane engineered also led to the creation

of numerous universities outside London.

Haldane's other forgotten achievements include empowering women in the civil service, creating the Secret Service Bureau (forerunner of today's MI5 and MI6) and advocating the establishment of both the Medical Research Council and a Ministry of Health in his seminal 1918 Machinery of Government review.

Conclusion

Are today's Liberal Democrats forever condemned to the role of Sisyphus, laboriously rolling the stone up the hill in Everest-conquering by-elections, only to see it tantalisingly tumble back down the hill at the next general election?

Haldane saw that abstract principles (values) are vital, though only really useful if scientifically applied

to make life better for the many. His revolutionary, pragmatic values-based approach may show how the Liberal Democrats, despite the hostile voting system, can retain the loyalty of their voters at general elections.

Campbell combines a degree of passion for his hero unprecedented in the experience of this reviewer and lover of biographies, with a steely determination to remain objective. The figure who emerges is a towering platonic guardian, vibrantly alive, whose principled thinking still inspires about how governing could be done so much better.

Tony Paterson read law at Oxford University and stood as Liberal candidate for Finchley against Mrs Thatcher in 1979. He is a Richmond Liberal Democrat councillor and national chair of Liberal Democrat Friends of Ukraine.

Liberal parenting

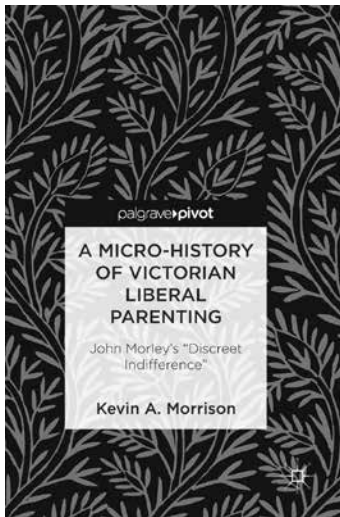
Kevin A. Morrison, *A Micro-History of Victorian Liberal Parenting: John Morley's 'Discreet Indifference'* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2018)

Review by Ian Packer

This book is part of Palgrave Macmillan's 'Palgrave Pivot' series of works of 25,000–50,000 words, which offers authors the opportunity to publish pieces somewhere between a journal article and a full-length book in length – a series that has the great advantage of allowing writers to explore new ideas in some depth without committing to a lengthy monograph.

Kevin Morrison's book definitely breaks new ground by exploring

the concept of 'liberal parenting' in Victorian Britain, through a detailed examination of the practice and ideas of the leading Liberal writer and politician, John Morley. Morley was an important example of the social mobility of the Victorian middle class. He was the son of a doctor in Blackburn, who sent the young man to public school and Oxford, before Morley struck out on his own as a journalist, essayist and biographer. In 1883 he became a Liberal



MP and served in Liberal Cabinets in 1886, 1892–95 and 1905–14. He moved to the Lords in 1908 as Viscount Morley of Blackburn, before retiring from the Cabinet in 1914 over his opposition to British participation in the First World War.

Morley was one of Liberalism's leading intellectuals and his ideas have received much attention, especially his agnosticism, early support for Irish Home Rule, controversial role as Secretary of State for India 1905–10, where he supported political reform but suspended civil liberties, and his opposition to the expansion of State welfare. However, nothing has been written on Morley's attitude to parenting.

In some ways this is an odd omission. Morley famously fell out with his father whilst he was at Oxford. Morley's father was an evangelical Christian and wished his son to become an Anglican priest; when Morley refused and revealed his religious scepticism, his father refused to provide further financial support for the young man. Morley left Oxford early and endured years of economic difficulties in London before finding success as a writer. As Morrison

points out, in some of Morley's early writings he criticised parental autocracy and argued in favour of parents 'not governing too much'; instead he suggested they should practice 'discrete indifference', which would allow children to develop autonomy. Morrison argues this not mean that Morley thought parents should not care about their children. Indeed parents should influence children's conduct, making use of children's natural desire to please their parents, and they should certainly inculcate a regard for truth and justice. But parents should also enable children to make their own choices in life, based on independent thought. The link between these ideas and Morley's own experiences is difficult to deny.

Morley never had any children of his own, but he still had the opportunity to practice his philosophy. He married Rose Ayling in 1870 and thereby took on the responsibility to care and provide for Rose's two children, John (known as Johnson) and Florence. Rose's background before she married Morley, and the identity of the father of her two children, have remained a mystery. But Morley took his responsibilities seriously. Johnson at least received some instruction from Morley, who lent him books from his extensive library. Johnson also had a private tutor and attended a day school, before training as a printer, with Morley's support. He later moved to Edinburgh and became a partner in the long-established firm of T. and A. Constable. Florence also received some home education before being placed with a tutor, Marie Souvestre, a liberal intellectual. Morley at least considered whether Florence might benefit from higher education, before deciding against this option.

Johnson and Florence were joined in the Morley household in 1874 by his nephew, Guy, one of the children of Morley's brother who had committed suicide in India when in financial difficulties. Morley pressed to effectively adopt Guy, and paid for him to attend Clifton College, a public school, before supporting Guy's ambition to train as a solicitor. This kind of blended family was not unusual in Victorian Britain, as Morrison points out, and the household was often made even more complicated by the presence of Morley's sister, Grace, and Rose's sister, Ellen.

However, whether Morley felt his parenting had been successful must at least be open to doubt. Guy Morley failed to show any intellectual promise at school and made an early marriage of which his uncle disapproved. The two men do not seem to have been close once Guy left the Morley home. A greater shock to Morley's principles came when Florence announced she wished to become a Roman Catholic nun, eventually enrolling in an order in Dublin. Most disappointing of all for Morley, Johnson was convicted of forgery in 1907 – he had got into debt whilst trying to meet his liabilities as a partner in his firm and had taken desperate measures to try and salvage the situation. Johnson was sentenced to ten years in prison, the case becoming a major embarrassment for the Liberal government of which Morley was a prominent member.

It is at least possible to argue that Morley practised what he preached in regard to the children of whom he had the care. There is no evidence that he tried to compel them to follow in his career footsteps, endorse his ideas, or to join the intellectual world of which he was so important

a part. He at least accepted their choices as adults and did not stand in their way, even when Florence decided to become a nun. While Morley could not endorse Johnson's criminality, he did not abandon his family, providing a home for Johnson's children in 1907–11; Morley may even have played a behind the scenes role in Johnson's early release from prison in 1912. Morley certainly did not replicate the harsh treatment he had received from his own father.

Morrison's book provides a fascinating glimpse of Morley's home life and his family relationships, making good use of the Morley papers in

the Bodleian Library, Oxford; and it is a powerful reminder of the importance of seeing leading politicians in the context of their entire life and experiences. However, the concept of 'liberal parenting' that Morrison seeks to explore is problematic. Morrison does not clearly define what the key elements of 'liberal parenting' were, or how these might have been distinct from 'conservative parenting' or 'socialist parenting'; nor does he compare Morley's parenting with that of other prominent Liberals. This makes it difficult to judge how typical Morley was and whether his attitudes were widely

shared amongst Liberals. 'Liberal parenting' may just be the term that Morrison uses to define what Morley did, rather than a distinctive attitude to parenting that was part of living one's life as a Liberal in Victorian Britain. In that sense, this short book should be seen as suggesting further important areas for research, rather than as conclusively demonstrating the significance of 'liberal parenting'.

Ian Packer is Associate Professor in History at the University of Lincoln and the author of *Lloyd George, Liberalism and the Land* (2001) and *Liberal Government and Politics, 1905–15* (2006).

Letters to the Editor

Michael Steed

I last heard from Michael Steed about three years ago when he wrote to me, outraged by the errors in the report of the Independent Inquiry into Child Sex Abuse.

He had been to Rochdale at the time of Cyril Smith's first adoption as Liberal candidate for the 1972 by-election, and knew that the filed police enquiry into him had been since seen by more than one DPP and that they had always agreed that there was insufficient evidence to proceed against Smith. I thanked him for his continued good wishes and commiserated with his declining health. He is a great loss, not just to the Liberal Democrats but to the country.

David Steel (Lord Steel of Aikwood)

Uxbridge

Barry Standen's article on the 1972 Uxbridge by-election brought back memories of that campaign and of the late Ian Stuart. I remember staying with a stalwart called Sid, who had been a councillor for three years when many Liberals were swept wholly unexpectedly on to councils in the 1962 aftermath of the Orpington by-election. I have heard tell that the then local government officer, one Michael Meadowcroft, was rung up more than once to hear the words: 'We've taken control of the council. What do we do now?'

I campaigned for Ian at that by-election delivering thousands of leaflets called 'Impact' because Ian didn't like the name Focus. It rained most of the time. Barrie didn't mention that many of us went to the Labour

candidate Manuela Sykes' election meetings and pointedly took off our coats and turned them inside out (turncoat), as she had done to Hugh Foot when he deserted the Liberals for Labour. She was not happy.

Barrie is not correct in his tale about the candidate being hung upside down from a railway bridge to paste up election posters. It was his youngest son being held by his older brothers!

Incidentally, Ian had discovered by accident that a mixture of glue and size brushed on to *both* sides of a poster made it almost impossible to remove. Those posters, albeit somewhat faded, remained on the bridge for many years.

Mick Taylor