which a political identity emerged out of the colonial encounter with Italy. To my mind, these contrasts and ambiguities over what we mean by nationalism and ethnicity — and when they can be classified as such — could have been brought to the fore. In sum, Joireman has provided an informative and accessible introduction to the fields of ethnicity and nationalism, which recaptures the important role of sub-national mobilization within the study of International Relations. It is important to bear in mind the more mundane and everyday aspects of ethnicity and nationalism, but this book is a good introduction to the field.

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The Party's Over: Blueprint for a Very English Revolution
Keith Sutherland
Imprint Academic, Exeter, 2004, 202pp.
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Incisive critiques of democracy began with Plato and Aristotle and burgeoned in the last three centuries when representative democracy became a possibility or, increasingly, a reality. Some critiques are based on normative considerations: for example, it is irrational to have the ignorant masses taking decisions rather than the wise elite (Plato and James Mill). The 20th-century evaluations focused mainly on practical considerations, on the ways in which democracy had proved defective when put into practice. Keith Sutherland follows the practical criticism tradition, arguing not against democracy itself, but against the instantiation of democracy as a system which gives a monopoly of power to party leaders, and against the corrupting effect of partisanship on deliberation and informed choice.

An initial impression might be that Sutherland is against democracy in principle, but in fact his aim is to lance 'the boil of the all-consuming myth of electoral democracy' (p. 164). Electoral systems beget parties. Parties, far from being Burkean groupings of representatives with a shared view of the country's wellbeing, are organizations focused exclusively on gaining or maintaining power.

Sutherland proposes to abolish electoral democracy and political parties in his 'blueprint for a very English revolution'. Although the proposals are couched in terms of the British system ('the Crown in Parliament' etc.), his

prescription is applicable to democracies in general. The crucial constitutional principle proposed is the separation of the advocative and voting functions between two chambers. The second chamber would consist of 'Lords Advocates'; it should be 'unashamedly elitist in its composition' (p. 122), with experts appointed for life and membership quotas for the professions and interest groups. The Lords Advocates would debate and advocate for and against government-proposed legislation to an audience of MPs. The major practical change is that MPs would be selected on the jury principle (random selection from the electoral roll) and the Commons would thus embody the virtue of a jury, namely, that 'the verdict of the jury is fair *and that it 'represents' the considered view of the community*' (p. 125) through its cross-sectional nature. The MPs' role would be to listen to the debates of the Lords Advocates and then vote on their proposals. The fact that the final decision is taken by a representative body would give it democratic authority. Sutherland thus combines the virtues of deliberative democracy (recently advocated by Fishkin and others) with cross-sectional representation: the consequence would be the abolition of Party since the function of parties, to achieve electoral victory, would have withered away.

Some of this sounds familiar — Harrington and Rousseau were earlier advocates of separation of deliberation and voting, and the Downsian account of the power-maximizing nature of political parties is widely — if reluctantly — accepted. *The Party's Over* elegantly and frankly acknowledges many intellectual debts and draws eclectically on theories from across the political spectrum to make its case. While Sutherland favours Oakeshott's view that political activity and political theory do not mix, his own arguments are clearly grounded in a vision of what democracy should *not* be and in a theory of the nature and function of representation. His insistence on deliberation and informed decisions is absolutely right — MPs who do not hear the Lords Advocates' debate may not vote. Sutherland offers many qualifications to the jury selection principle (including a minimum age of 40 for MPs and certain educational qualifications), which would largely eliminate the cross-sectional representation which is (for me) its most appealing feature, but he convincingly argues that the random selection principle would effectively put an end to parties as institutions. Partisanship might occur and informal groupings might emerge, but there would be no career or power incentive for them to hold together. The final nail in the coffin of Party is the proposal that government ministers should be appointed like chief executives, using head-hunters. The best qualified, rather than the most successful career politicians, would rule.

This is a political essay in the best tradition — shrewd, erudite, polemical, partisan (sometimes), mischievous (frequently) and highly topical. It is provoking, annoying and seductive by turns. Sutherland himself rightly

describes it as 'a heady *compôte* of history, political science, philosophy and polemic' (p. 16). Above all, it is engaging, and challenges democratic truisms and received theories in a fashion that is both unsettling and salutary.

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The Future of Social Theory
Nicholas Gane
Continuum, London & New York, 2004, xii + 210pp.
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In the course of nine interviews, Nicholas Gane explores the present situation and future of social theory. The central theme is the changed significance of the social. The presuppositions of classical sociology — the notion of the objectivity of society, or the idea that sociology is concerned with objects that are to be understood only in relation to the intentions of social actors, for instance — have been undermined today as a result of developments especially in the nature of technology. Gane and his interviewees do not claim that this means the end of the social as such, although there are suggestions that we may be speaking of the end of society. The key thesis that Gane attempts to advance in his lucid and insightful interviews is that the social is changing its form rather than disappearing. This is explored in a different way with each of the theorists interviewed.

Zygmunt Bauman argues that the notion of postmodernity is no longer adequate to account for developments in the nature of modernity, the contemporary form of which he calls liquid modernity. This liquid modernity is characterized by social forms based on transience, uncertainty, anxieties and insecurity, and results in new freedoms that come at the price of individual responsibility and without the traditional support of social institutions. Judith Butler explores the language of theorizing about the social, noting that the social tends to fall away in the current concern with the political and the cultural. One way the social can be conceptualized is in the social organization of exclusions, such as in family and kinship structures. But this is always a way of speaking, a discursive constitution.

There appears to be general agreement that the social is not a fixed condition, but is also constituted in language. Bruno Latour argues that the