"The treatment of the recent past in nineteenth-century fiction,

with particular reference to George ^liot."

submitted by

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ABSTRACT

thesis examines a practice of nineteenth-century novelists which has often been mentioned by critics but never studied in detail - the setting of much of their work in a period a generation or two before the time of writing. Its main focus is on the fiction of George £liot set in the recent past: Scenes of Clerical Life (1&57-58), Adam Bede (1&59), The Mill . on the i'loss (i860), Silas Marner (1861), iV elix Holt, Jhe Radical (1866), and Middlemarch (1&71-72). However I begin by looking briefly at the pioneering novel in the field, ^averley (1814), and go on to discuss three more novels by Scott - Guy Manner ing (1815), '^he Antiquary (1^16) and-Hedgauntlet (1824) - as well as three by Thackeray: Vanity *'air (1847-48) Pendennis (1848-50) and '-^he Newcomes (1853-55)* Since I aim to discover the attitudes these writers adopted to the recent past, and conveyed to their first readers, this study involves discussion not only of the periods in which the novels are set, but also of the periods in which they were written, so as to establish the knowledge and preconceptions which the books' early readers brought to bear on the fiction. Where possible I quote the responses of actual contemporary readers, notably those of the early reviewers. This thesis draws attention to the various functions a setting in the recent past could serve in nineteenth-century fiction: to arouse nostalgic feelings for a vanished but remembered past, or sympathy for the people of the past, to point out that change is sometimes more apparent than real, to comment obliouely on contemporary issues, to highlight the unchanging features of human nature and human predicaments, to examine the role of the individual in effecting change.

CHAPTER JL.

INTRODUCTION

In her Novels of the 13.ghteen-fortieg, Kathleen Tillotson observed:

The modern reader tends to assume that any Victorian novel
which is not obviously 'historical* is intended to be roughly contemporary in setting; but in fact many writers were coming
to prefer a setting which was neither historical nor contem-
porary, but which lay in a period from twenty to sixty years
earlier, heading novels such as Wives and Daughters and Middlemarch without due recognition of their setting in an
England of forty years before the date of writing, the modern
reader misses much of their quality.

Since this was written almost thirty years ago, little attention has been paid to this aspect of nineteenth-century fiction, and the lacuna is parti-cularly surprising in the case of George Sliot, given the spate of books and articles about her which have appeared in the last twenty-five years or so. Hence the main focus of my thesis will be on her novels and stories published between 1857 a*id 1872 and set in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries: Scenes of Clerical Life (1857-58), Adam Bede (1859), The Mill on the J'loss (i860), oilas Marner (l86l), Felix Holt, the Radical (1866), and Middlemarch (1&71-72). I shall begin however by looking at four novels by Sir Walter Scott (1771-1832), a writer whose influence was still much felt in the Victorian period, and dealing with the period from 1745 till the 1790*3: Waver ley (1814), ^uy Hannering (1615), The antiquary (1816), and Redgauntlet (1824) - as well as three novels by Thackeray (l8ll-l863): Vanity Fair (1847-48), Pendennis (1848-50) and ^he Mewcomes (1853-55). Space forbids me to offer a more comprehensive treatment, including such novels as Mrs C-askell's ^ranford (1852), Sylvia^ Lovers (1863) and Wives and Daughters (1864-66), ^harlotte Bronte's Shirle.y (1849), and Bulwer Lytton's c axtons (1&49) and My Move! (1853), but I think the writers I have chosen provide

Kathleen Tillotson, Novels of the ^ighteen-B'orties (Oxford: Clarendon
Press, 1954), PP- 91-92.

ample evidence of the ways in which nineteenth-century novelists could approach the recent past.
The "recent past" is of course a difficult period to define exactly,
and my choice of novels may seem somewhat arbitrary, ^averley, for example/ is subtitled *Tis Sixty Years Sjnce, but although Scott began the novel in 1805, sixty years after the Jacobite rebellion of 1745 with which it deals, he did not complete or publish it till Itl4, so that the time-gap is really sixty-nine years. Only a few years later (1818) he published The Heart of Midlothian, wliich is set mainly in 1736-37, that is, just over eighty years before the time of writing. On the other hand St ftonan's Well (1823), usually described as Scott's only novel of contemporary life, deals with the period of the Peninsular War (l&09-14)» while a case could be made for including George Eliot's -^aniel -^eronda (1876) since it is set in the mid-1860's. rtaverley is I think a necessary starting-point because it presents the past as significantly different from the present, while at the same time drawing on Scott's own memories and those of some of his readers: although few people living in 1814 could recall the 1745 rebellion, many of Scott's age or older would remember the Jacobites themselves and their "lingering, though hopeless attachment, to the house of Stewart." ^ccor-ding to Mary Lascelles, Culloden was Scott s watershed, and that of his readers, because of the many changes which had occurred in Scotland since

2 1745* Similarly Adam Bede, which really is set "sixty years since," and hence also in a period beyond the recollection of the author and of most of its readers, introduces Adam in old age as a commentator on the growth of

Sir ^alter Scott, rtaverley; or, "Tis -Sixty Years Since, ed. Claire
Lament (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981), p. 340. All subsequent citations

will be from this edition, which is based on the first. i)
Mary Lascelles, The Story-teller Retrieves the Past (Oxford: Claren-
don Press, 19#0)» P« 36.

*«vangelicalism since his youth. Novels set in the recent past, as distinct

from a more remote age, draw on the readers 1 memories, or at least on their

sense, based on oral tradition, of what it was like to live at the time just

before they were born. On the other hand St ftonan's rtell and -Daniel ^eronda

are set too close to the time of writing for the narrators to create any sense

of the distance between past and present.

However an important reason why Scott, Thackeray, and George Eliot

turned to the recent past in the first place was I think that they all felt

strongly the effects of the great changes which had occurred in their own

lifetimes. In the last chapter of ""averley ^cott wrote:

There is no European nation, which, within the course of half a
century, or little more, has undergone so complete a change as
this kingdom of Scotland. Tne effects of the insurrection of
1745 - "the destruction of the patriarchal power of the Highland
chiefs - the abolition of the heritable jurisdictions of the Lowland nobility and barons - the total eradication of the Jaco-bite party, which, averse to intermingle with the -^aglish, or adopt their customs, long continued to pride themselves upon maintaining ancient Scottish manners and customs - commenced
this innovation. The gradual influx of wealth, and extension of
commerce, have since united to render the present people of Scot-
land a class of beings as different from*their grandfathers as
the existing English are from those of ^ueen Elizabeth's time
(p. 340)

^or ' hackeray, it was the advent of the railways during his lifetime which

divided the past irrevocably from the present: towards the end of his life

he wrote in the Roundabout Papers;

We who have lived before railways were made, belong to another
world ... It was only yesterday; but what a gulf between now and
thenl Then was the old world. -Hage-coaches, more or less swift, riding-horses, pack-horses, highwaymen, knights in armour, Norman
invaders, Roman legions, Druids, ^-ncient Britons painted blue, and
so forth - all these belong to the old period ... But your railroad
starts the new era, and,we of a certain age belong to the new
time and the old one...

Juventute," ^ornhill Magazine f 2 (i860) 501-12; rpt. The Oxford
Thackeray, ed. George ^aintsbury (London: Oxford University Press, 1908), XVII, 420-35» at 424.

The expansion of the railways from the 1630* s onward transformed the land-scape because of the cuttings and tunnels they required, the buildings they replaced, and the industrial development and urbanisation they encouraged: there is a famous description of the impact of railway construction on the ^arnden town of 1836 in Pickens 1 Bombey and Son (1848; Chapters 6, 15, 20). By 1855* when the last parts of The Newcomes appeared, there were already 6,280 miles of railroad. '^ravel was cheaper and much quicker than ever before (up from twelve to fifty miles an hour); the population became more mobile; agricultural and industrial products, as well as bulky raw materials, could be transported swiftly and cheaply, a change which then, facilitated the development of large-scale industry. In his biography of George £liot (1819-1880) her husband J.VJ. Cross attributed her "genius" to the fact that she had lived through a period of rapid change:

Her roots were down in the pre-railroad, p re-telegraphic period
- the days of fine old leisure - but the fruit was formed during
an era of extraordinary activity in scientific and mechanical
discovery. Her genius was the outcome of these conditions. It
could not have existed in the same form deprived of either in-
fluence.

As Walter ifoughton has pointed out, people living in the middle decades
of the nineteenth century often thought of themselves as living in an age
of transition, and their sense that old institutions were crumbling and accepted values being undermined frequently led them to turn to the past for guidance. In 1831 John ^tuart Mill claimed that the "idea of comparing one 1: own age with former ages, or with our notion of those which are yet to come" was the "dominant idea" of the age, because the nineteenth century

Dorothy Marshall, Industrial Jiingland 17/0-1831 (London: Rout ledge &
Kegan Paul, 1973), p. 14
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George -gliot * s Life as ^elated in her letters and Journals. 3 vole (Edinburgh and London: M/illiam Blackwcod and Sons, l8&5;>' I, 8-9.
The tf ictorian Frame of Mind 1830-1870 _(New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1957), ? 1-

an "age of change," set to be recalled as "the era of one of the greatest revolutions of which history has preserved the remembrance, in the human mind, and in the whole constitution of human society," although at present "Lm]ankind have outgrown old institutions and old doctrines, and have not yet acquired new ones." In the mid- 1840 's George Henry Lewes, reviewing the work of contemporary French historians, observed that it was

an age of universal anarchy of thought, with strong desire for organization; - an age, succeeding one of destruction, anxious
to reconstruct, - anxious, but as yet impotent. The desire of
belief is strong; convictions are wanting: there is neither
spiritual nor moral union. In this plight we may hope for the
future, but can cling only to the past: that alone is secure,
well grounded, 'i'he past must form the basis of certainty and
the materials for speculation.

^ nd although the 1850's and 1860's were less characterised than the two pre-vious decades by political and social upheavals, Matthew Arnold still felt in 1&57 that the modern age was in need of an "intellectual deliverance" involving a comprehension of the "copious and complex present, and behind it a copious and complex past," via a study of other ages and literatures - "^o knotv how others stand, that we may know how we ourselves stand" - while in 1865 John Grote, Professor of Philosophy at Cambridge and brother of the historian ^eorge Grote, noted the "tendency of questions and subjects of all kinds at this time to run to history," such that "the study of the his-tory of man is now put before us as that by means of which we are to under-

4 stand man himself, and know what we ought to do.

The Spirit of the Age (lfc31; rpt. Chicago: University of Chicago
Press, 1942), pp. 1-2, 6.
"'i'he -Hate of Historical Science in *'ranee," -^ritish and Foreign
ri eview, 16 (1844), 72-118;. at 73.
"On the Modern Element in Literature" (l£*7); rpt. Thg u omplete
Prose "dorks of Matthew Arnold, ed. K.H. ouper, I (Ann ArDor: University of Michigan Press, 1$60), pp. lc-37, at pp. 19-21.
flxploratio Philosophica (1865;, I, ix; quoted in J..-;. ^Hirrow,
^volution and Society (Cambridge; Cambridge University Pres;.., 196b), p. 96.

Since I am dealing with a group of novels written at different times
and covering different periods, I have naturally not been able to offer a comprehensive treatment of all the historical events and developments which the novels touch on, since subjects such as the decline of Jacohitism, pub-lic responses to the Napoleonic Wars, the impact of -Grangelicalism, and the Reform agitation of the early 1830's, have each generated many books and ar-ticles. Nor am I assuming that history can function as kind of grid on whicl: the accuracy or otherwise of literary works can be tested with incontrover-tible results, since historians themselves and the source material with whicl they deal are inevitably affected by the political, social and philosophical assumptions of their time. Moreover it was Scott's fiction which demonstra-ted how novels could reveal more about the daily lives, feelings and mental attitudes of the people of the past than the conventional historical account? of battles, political intrigues, and doings of mony,rchs and great men. This was the attitude adopted enthusiastically by '^hackeray, while George ^liot's well-known essay "The Natural History of German Life" uses an account of two pioneering works in German social history to judge the strengths and weaknesses of various nineteenth century novelists in their attempts to recreate past and present societies. My conclusions will necessarily be tentative, but I have tried to bear in mind George Eliot's strictures on sweeping generalisation based on insufficient evidence in "'^'he Natural His-tory of German Life," and also her awareness of the variations which existed in the ways of life to be found in different areas of England at the same period.

1 Westminster Review, 66 (1856), 51-79? rpt. £he Assays of George Eliot
ed. Thomas Pinney (New York: Columbia University Press; London; Routledge
& Kegan Paul, 1963), pp. ^66-99.

^cott's treatment of the past has already received much attention from critics, and several have dealt at length with A averley, his first novel-: and an important landmark in the history of fiction. 'i*he general consensus Waver ley criticism is that the novel aims to give a sympathetic treatment of the heroic Highland way of life, while through the experience of ^averley himself, it uhows why the Jacobite cause failed, and the factors within the clan system which made its disintegration inevitable. ^Ithough the peace and prosperity of Scotland over the succeeding sixty-nine years made life more drab, and people more likely to compromise their principles, they were on the whole beneficial, Since I agree with this general interpretation I intend to discuss ^averley very briefly. Approaches to ^uy Mann e ring, which has a vaguer historical setting than ^averley, have concentrated on

2 the substitution of law for warfare as a means of solving; disputes, and on

Godfrey -^ertram s eviction of the gypsies from -^erncleugh and his other activities as a J.P., as well as on Glossin's manoeuvres to gain the estate, as showing the replacement of traditional feudal relationships by a legalis-tic' conception of justice. I will also give some attention to the slightly nostalgic treatment of the Lowland store-farmer -^andie -^inmont, the effects of the American d'ar of Independence, and Scott's references to leading fi-gures of the Scottish Enlightenment. The antiquary, set only twenty years before the time of writing, has scarcely been discussed as a novel dealing

^avid -^aiches, "Scott s Achievement as a Novelist," Mneteenth-Centur; fiction, 6 (1951), 153-73; rpt. Scott's Rind and /Art, ed. A. Norman Jeff ares (Edinburgh: Oliver & Boyd, 1969), pp. 21-52; "Sir Walter S cott and ^istory," ^tudes Anglais es, 24 (1971), 458-77; Robert C. Gordon, Under ^hich King? (Edinburgh and London: Oliver & Boyd, 1969), 12ff; ^.O.J. Cockshut, The Achievement of Walter Scott (London: Collins, 1969), pp. 107-26; David Brown, Sj r ^alter Scott and the Historical Imagination (London, Boston, Henley: Rout ledge & Kegan Paul, 1979)> PP- 6-30; Mary Lascelles, '^he Story-teller ^etrigyos - the Past, pp. 36-41-
'"alter Scott and History."
Cordon, pp. 29-31; Brown, pp. 31-46.

with the recent past, but does in fact offer an interesting retrospective from the vantage point of 1&16 on the way people of the 1790 f s reacted to - and exploited - the fears and social unrest of the early years of the Napo-leonic "ars. ^'inally, ^edgauntlet, in which Scott describes the failure of an imaginary Jacobite conspiracy of about 1766, has been seen by -^avid JDaiches as a threnody on the final disappearance of the old "heroic" way of life embodied in ^edgauntlet himseif, and as an examination of the various possible Scottish attitudes to Scotland and the Scottish past in the second half of the eighteenth century. -^.D. Devlin and -^avid Brown ha.ve also drawn attention to the novel's treatment of the eocial and political changes which have made ttedgauntlet*s military courage and feudal values anachro-

2 nistic by the 1760's. rt hat has not been realised however is that Scott,

although dealing with a purely imaginary visit to ^ritain by the Stewart claimant, does in fact draw on the history and traditions of a real Jacobite family with the surname Maxwell and the title Herries.
My chapter on Vanity Fair is indebted to Kathleen '^illotson s comments
on Thackeray's treatment of the recent past in Novels of the -^ighteen-forties, and especially to her and Geoffrey Tillotson s Introduction and Notes to the 1963 Methuen edition of the novel. Pendennis and The Newcomes have however attracted little attention as recreations of periods in the recent past, although the reminiscent tone of Thackeray's later novels is often mentioned. John ^arey has discussed Thackeray's sense of time's des-tructiveness, and Jean Su<i rann has focussed on the characters' and the

- ^aiches, "Scott's -^edgauntlet," in -fr'rom Jane Austen to Joseph ^onrad: ^ssays Collected in Memory of James £. Hillhouse, ed. Robert C. Hathburn and Martin Steinmann Jr.(Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1958), pp. 46-59-
P
^.D. Devlin, "Scott and ^edgauntlet," ^eview of English Literature,
4 (1963), 91-103; Brown, pp. 151-72.
3 94ff.

readers' - experience of time passing in both, novels, while Jack P.
has analysed the complex internal chronology of The Newcomes. ^e shall find in fact that in "both Pendennis and '^he Mewcomes '-i-'hackeray can be in-consistent in his indications as to the period in which the events take place.

In the field of ^eorge -^liot studies there has been little discussion
of the setting of most of her fiction in the recent past, although writers often comment on the important - and related - theme of characters 1 relation-ships with their own pasts (especially those of Maggie Tulliver, Silas Harner, Mrs Tpansome, and Ailstrode). rt ork has also been done on specific themes relevant to George Eliot's fiction, and I shall be drawing on Patrici; Thomson's study of the Changing role of women in both fiction and real life over the middle decades of the nineteenth century, Valentine Cunningham's work on the treatment of Methodism in Adam Bede and of Congregationalism
in Felix Holt^ Alan Mintz's research into the expansion of the professions during the nineteenth century and the cottage-building schemes of the l830's

2 ^lisabeth Jay's book on Anglican Arangelicalism. A few writers have com-

mented on aspects of the historical settings of -^'elix Holt and Middlemarch. Michael ^olff , Peter Coveney, Valentine Cunningham and Patrick Brantlinger have discussed the way in which political events and views of the mid- i860 's affect George ulliot's approach to the aftermath of the 1832 Reform Bill in

John ^arey, Thackeray : Prodigal Genius (London: Faber & Faber, 1977),
PP- 53-54, 68ff, 125ff; Jean ^udrann, "The Philosopher's Property: Thackeray and the Use of Time," Victorian Studies, 10 (1967), 359-88; Jack P. Hawlins, ' ^'hackeray ' s Novels; .A Fiction That Is True (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 19747, 91ff
Patricia Thomson, The yictorian Heroine; £ u hang ing Ideal 1637-1873
(London: Oxford University Press, 1956); Valentine Cunningham, i
Spoken flgainst ; Dissent in tiie Victorian Novel (Oxford: Clarendon P
1975); ^ly-n Miritz, G eorge ailiot and the Novel of Vocation (Cambridge, Mass. and London: Harvard University Press, 197^); Elisabeth Jay, 'i'he ^eligion of the Heart ; Anglican ^varige 1 i c a 1 i s m and the IJ inet eent h-C entury Movel (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979)*

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Felix Holt . Jerome Beaty has drawn attention to the oblique portrayal of

political events in Middlemarch and their muted impact on the characters^

while Joy Hooton has commented briefly on how readers of 1&71-72 ;.ould have

been able to identify features of the society of the early 1630 f s which had

2 had ramifications for their own time. Medical and scientific developments

between It-29 ^nd 1872 have also been dealt with by ^-sa Briggs, C.L. Gline,

Patrick J. McCarthy and ^obert A. ^reenberg, while W.J. Harvey has v;ritten

on both the medi^cal background and Casaubon's mythography. Gillian Beer's

new book ^arwin'.s Plots discusses the impact of The Origin of Species (1859)

on the thought, imagery and structure of Middlemarch. ^'inally, Barbara

Hardy has pointed out how Middlemarch is not only a novel about history,

but also, in its treatment of -^orothea in particular, a novel about the his-

torical consciousness, the individual's sense of history.

1 Michael /Jolff, "The Uses of Context: Aspects of the l860 t s," Victo-
rian studies, 9 (1965), Supplement, pp. 47-63; Peter Coveney^s Introduction to the Penguin edn of the novel (Harmondsworth, 1972), pp. 23-36, 63-65; Cunningham, Everywhere Spoken ft gainst , 178ff ; Patrick Brant linger, 'Jhe Spirit of Reform; British Literature and Politics 1832-1867 (Cambridge, Mass, and London: Harvard University Press, 1977), esp. 206ff .

Jerome Beaty, "History by Indirection: The Era of Reform in Middle-
march," Victorian Studies, 1 (1957), 173-79- Joy rt. Hooton, Middlemarch and Time," Southern Review, 13 (19&0), 188-202.

Asa -^riggs, "Middlemarch and the Doctors," Cambridge Journal, 1 (194* 749-62; C.L. cline, "Qualifications of the Medical Practitioners of Middle-march," Nineteenth-Century Literary Perspectives: Essays in Honor of Lionel ^tevenson, ed. Clyde de L. Ryals et al (-^urham, N.C.: tfuke University Press. pp. 271-8]); Patrick J. McCarthy, "Lydgate, 'the New, Young Surgeon1 of Middlemaroh," Studies in English Literature, 10 (1970), 805-16; Robert A. Greenberg, "Plexuses and Ganglia: Scientific AHus ion in Middlemarch," Nineteenth-Century Fiction, 30 (1975), 33-52; W.J. Harvey, "The Intellectual background of the Novel: Casaubon and Lydgate," in Middlemarch; Critical Approaches to the Novel, ed. Barbara Hardy (University of London: Athlone Press, 196777 PP« 25-37.

Gillian -^eer, Darwin* s Plots; Evolutionary Narrative in parwin,
George Eliot and Ninet eent h-C ent ury Fiction (London, Boston, Melbourne and Henley: rL outledge & Kegan Paul, 19&3T* Unfortunately this book cume out too late for me to be able to take full account of Mrs Beer's insights.

Barbara Hardy, "I'Hadlemarch; Public and Priva/te Worlds," English, 2S (1976), 5-26.

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Scott had an immense knowledge of history, especially of Scottish history, while both Thackeray and ^eorge -^liot, partly because of the impact of his novels, sometimes cast their narrators in the role of historian. Therefore, before discussing the novels and stories themselves, I shall briefly attempt to set them in the context of late eighteenth and nineteenth-century histo-riography.
AS a student in Edinburgh in the late 17bO's S C ott Has influenced by
the work of philosophers and historians of the Scottish Enlightenment, such as Adam ^mith, Adam ^'erguson, John Millar, ^illiam ^obertson, David Hume, Dugald S-fcewart and John ^ruce. !£hey saw mankind as developing through several stages from a savage to a polished state, with each stage manifesting the laws, manners, customs and ethical systems suited to it. Societies like the Highland clans with which rtaverley deals would have been seen as belong-ing to the rude or barbarous stage of historical development - organised into mutually hostile groups based on the family under chieftains, and at-taching great value to military valour and to loyalty to the leader and to
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other members of the group. More civilised commercial forms of society tended to give rise to selfishness, effeteness (because of dependence on a professional army), and excessive specialisation. Overall however the de-velopment of society was progressive, and David Hume often attacked the bar-barity, violence, superstition and bigotry of earlier periods, particularly the middle ages. Another important -^lightenment belief was that, despite

1 ru. following discussion is based on Peter D. Garside, "Scott and the 'Philosophical Historians, 1 " Journal of the History of_ Ideas, 36 (1975), 497-512, and "Scott, the Homantic Past and the Nineteenth Century," Review of English S-tudies, NS 23 (1972), 147-61; Brown, l?3ff; and Uraham McMaster, °cott and Society (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 19&l), pp. 49-77 ^dam i?erguson, ^n -^ssay on the History of Civil Society (London: A.
Millar & J. Caddel; Edinburgh: Ai. Kiricaid & J. Bell, 1767), pp. 152-55; John Millar, Observations Concerning the Distinction of Ranks in Society (London: John Murray, 1771), pp. 115-18.
^ciam Smith, Lectures of ^dam Smith on Justice, Police, Kevenues and
^rms, quoted in Garside, "Scott, the Romantic Past and the Nineteenth Century," pp. 151-52; also ^dam '-''erguson, pp. £4-85.

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changes over time in habits, customs, forms of government, and so on, human

nature remained fundamentally the same. In his Enquiry Concerning Human

Understanding Hume, who was later to write a History of England, observed;

It is universally acknowledged that there is a great uniformity
among the actions of men, in all nations and ages, and that human
nature remains the same, in all its principles and operations.
lj-he same motives always produce the same actions, '^he same events
follow from the same causes...

From this point of view, history's record of "wars, intrigues, factions, and

revolutions" provide the historian with "so many collections of experiments"

from which he can discover "the constant and universal principles of human

nature." In Robertson s view "the human mind whenever it is placed in the

same situation will in all ages the most distant and in countries the most
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remote assume the same form and be distinguished by the same manners."

These ideas help to explain why, in the first chapter of rtaverley, the

narrator declares that the story will focus on

those passions common to men in all stages of society, and which
have alike agitated the human heart, whether it throbbed under
the steel corslet of the fifteenth century, the brocaded coat of
the eighteenth, or the blue frock and white dimity waistcoat of
the present day (p. 5)

effect of the "state of manners and laws" is only to cast a "necessary

colouring" on these passions, such that "the proud peer who can now only

ruin his neighbour according to law, by protracted suits, is the genuine

descendant of the baron who wrapped the castle of his competitor in flames,

and knocked him on tiie head as he endeavoured to escape from the conflagra-

tion" (p. 5)« However ^cott's novels of the recent past do give more empha-

1777 edn; rpt. David Hurne, inquiries Concerning the Human Understan-
ding and Concerning the Principles of Morals, ed. L.A. ^el^y Big,ge (Oxford; Clarendon Press, 1902), p. 63.
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quoted by McMaster, p.

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sis than these comments suggest to the way in which character is affected by political and social conditions. In this his novels differ from other his-torical novels of the period, such as Jane Porter's The ^cottish Chiefs (181 a long chauvinistic novel about the struggles of William Wallace and Hobert the Bruce against the English, or Mrs Jane ^est's 'Jhe Loyalists (1612), a pro-Hoyalist, pro-Anglican novel set in Civil ^ar -England, '^'he love scenes which occupy much of Miss Porter's novel are written in the style of the eighteenth-century sentimental novel, while the author's introduction points out that in her historical research for the novel she "found those virtues in the fathers, which have attached [her] to their posterity." Mrs West's novel, by showing how seventeenth-century attempts at political reform led to anarchy and despotism, and the proliferation of new religions to infide-lity, was explicitly written as a lesson for the England of 1812, which, according to Mrs ^est, was threatened by "calamities" from ''noisy reformers, 1 "popular demagogues" and attitudes of "insubordination" towards national institutions. Hence she feels her novel can £ive "instruction to the present times, under the form of a chronicle of the past."
In the General Preface to the tfaverley Novels Scott claimed that he
had hoped to do for Scotland what Karia ^dgeworth, in her novels of the recent past (notably Castle ^-ackrent, 1800) had done for Ireland - present her people to the -^glish "in a more favourable light than they had been placed hitherto" so as to "procure sympathy for their virtues and indulgence for their foibles." As a result of the Union with England in 17^7 and the quashing of the Jacobite rebellions of 1715 and 1745» Scotland had become The point was well made by Lukacs, of ^cott's fiction in general'
(Georg Lukacs, The Historical IJovel, trans. Hannah and Stanley Mitchell, London: Merlin Press, 1962, pp. 19, 35)

2 / Jane Porter, The ^cottish ^hief'Sj .5 vols [London: Longman, Hurst,
fiees, and Orme, 1610), I, vii.
i'he Loyalists: An Historical iJovel, 3 vols (London: Longman, Hurst,
Rees, Orme/ and Brown, 1812), I, 5~9»
Ib29; rpt. Claire Lament's edn of «'j averley, p. 353.

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more dependent, both politically and economically, on the larger and weal-thier kingdom. One response to this was exemplified by the Enlightenment philosophers, who tried to write in an Augustan English denuded of Scotti-cisms, and to make their reputations in England and Europe, ^nother res-ponse however was an increasing interest in the Scottish past and the use of Scottish dialects, reflected in the poetry of Burns and in collections of old Scottish ballads by David Herd, John Pinkerton, Joseph Ritson, John Graham ^alzell, Robert Jamieson, John Finlay, and Scott himself, in his three-volume Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border (1802-3), Moreover, the violence and social upheaval of the French Revolution and the subsequent Napoleonic Wars led to a questioning of eighteenth-century values and a revival of interest in and respect for traditions, customs, established beliefs, and
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even superstitions of the past. By 1814, people in Britain had seen much of Europe submit to Napoleon's despotism in the name of progress and impro-ving principles, and were more willing to see the tragedy implicit in social revolution and the value of the older kind of close-knit hierarchical society like that of the Highland clans. The ideas expressed in Burke f s Reflections on the Revolution in. France in 1790» which stressed the debt of the present

H to the past, were hence still influential. »Ve wish, Burke wrote, ~to derive all we possess as an inheritance from our forefathers," since u [p]eople wil! not look forward to posterity, who never look backward to their ancestors.'

°ee the 1830 Introduction to the Minstrelsy, in Poetical rtorks of
^ir Walter Scott, Bart,, (Edinburgh: Adam and ^harles Black, i860), I, 71- 83; also David Daiches, The Paradox of Scottish Culture; The Eighteenth-Century Experience (London: Oxford University Press, 1964), PP- 1-35
2
See H.R. Trevor-Roper, The Romantic Movement and the Study of History
(John Coffin Memorial Lecture, University of London: The ^Hhlone Press, 1969;; "Sir "alter S C ott and History," Listener, 19 August 1971, pp. 225-32, at pp. 229-30.
Reflections on the [Revolution in ^ranee (179^); rpt. dorks of the
Right Honourable Edmund (Burke (London: John C. Nimmo, 1887), III, 231-563, at p. 272. Emphasis Burke's.
Reflections, p. 274-

Even flawed institutions are worth preserving because

they have cast their roots wide and deep, and where, by long
habit, things more valuable than themselves are so adapted to
them, and in a manner interowoven with them, that.the one cannot
be destroyed without notably impairing the other.

The same sense of the value of tradition, as we shall see, underlies

treatment of Codfrey -Bertram's reforms as a J.P. in ^uy Mann e ring.

Scott's contemporary critics did not always approve of his use of his

torical characters and events in his novels, believing that he had created

a hybrid form in which the different kinds of interest aroused by history

and fiction worked against each other, -^or the reviewer of Ivanhoe in the

Eclectic ^eview, "historical romances" tried to combine

two apposite kinds of interest; that arising from general views
of society connected with moral and political considerations,
and implying a certain degree of abstraction, which is the proper interest of history, and that resulting from an engrossing sym-
pathy with the feelings and fortunes of individuals, which is
the appropriate charm of fictitious narrative.

However other writers saw Scott has having made an important contribution

to historiography, by showing hov; the past could be brought to life, and

also how history was not simply a record of battles, political events and

the exploits of rulers. AS early as 1817, Francis Jeffrey wrote that

^cott's novels had shown how misleading was so-called "authentic history":

great public events of which alone it takes cognisance, have
but little direct influence upon the body of the people, and do
not, in general, form the principal business, or happiness or ^
misery even of those who are in some measure concerned in them

Reflections, pp. 439-40.

*" ^clectio fteview, 2nd ser. 13 (l&20}$ 526-40; rpt. Scott: The ^ritical Heritage, ed. John 0. Hoyden (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1970), pp. 188-194, at pp. 190-91.

3 "Tales of My Landlord," Edinburgh Review, 28 (1817), 193-^59, at
216.

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The point is all the more telling in that the main subject of Jeffrey s review is Old Mortality (1817), a novel which deals more directly and co-piously with the events and important historical figures of the time in which it is set (the late 1670*s - 1690's) than do any of the novels I will be discussing. *'or uarlyle, writing in 1838, Scott had taught that "the bygone ages of the world were actually filled by living men not by protocol! state-papers, controversies and abstractions of men," while in 1828 the young Macaulay praised Scott for using "those fragments of truth which his-torians have scornfully thrown behind them," for concentrating, not on the vagaries of politics and war, but on the

circumstances which have most influence on the happiness of man-
kind, the changes of manners and morals, the transition of com-
munities from poverty to wealth, from knowledge to ignorance,
from ferocity to humanity.

' j_ '""-v

Twenty years later Macaulay was himself to trace the changes in British society between 16&5 and his own day in the famous third chapter of his History of .England from the Accession of James the Second (1848), focussing on developments in economics, technology, trade, agriculture, communications, standard of living, and morality, as well as politics. -^y 184? a writer
in ffraser*s could say that it was almost a "literary canon' that Scott had served historians by showing them how to substitute "life-like portraiture and clear, intelligible description, for philosophical comparison and an-

, . ,,3 alysis.
' ^'hackeray's explicit comments on the nature of history show that he
had derived from Scott's novels the same meaning as had Jeffrey, Carlyle, London and Westminster Review, 2b (1838), 293-345; rpt. Scott; 'J-'
Critical Heritage, pp. 345-73, at p. 367.
2 "History," Edinburgh ^eview, 47 (1828)5 331-67$-rpt. The Miscellane-
ous Writings of Lord Macaulay (London: Longman, Green, Longman and Roberts, l860~]7 I} 232-81, at zi$--7ff,
""""alter ^cott - Has History uained by His Writings?" *''rimer's, 36
(1847), 345-51; rpt. Scott: The Critical Heritage, pp. 382-93, at pp. 384-85

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and Macaulay - that the important aspects of the past were not the political and military events, nor the actions of the leading public men, but the manners, customs, and everyday lives of the people. In his lecture~series 'i'he Four Georges, given in l855» he claims that he intends to tell "[n)ot about battles, about politics, about statesmen and measures of state ... but to Sketch the manners and life of the old world," the lords and ladies hunting and dancing, the servants waiting at table, the coachmen , posti-lions and footmen, the burghers and their wives and daughters. Morecrver the best sources for this kind of information are not the so called histo-ries, which are, as he had put it in the Paris ^ketch-Book of 1840, "mere contemptible catalogues of names and places," but novels, which are "a great deal more agreeable, life like; and natural," and give the reader an "acquaintance with people and manners whom he could not hope otherwise to

2 know." He cites as evidence Ivan no e and idaverley, as well as 'Pom Jones,

which he says "gives us a better idea of the state and ways of the people, than one could gather from any more pompous or authentic histories," and the Pickwick Papers, which he predicts will be used as an historical source in a hundred years' time. fiction, he claims in his other lecture-series on The -^nglish Humourists of the Eighteenth Century (1851), is "the expres-sion of the life of the timej of the manners, of the movement, the dress, the pleasures, the laughter, the ridicules of society," and in support of this argument he adduces the essays of the Tatler and Spectator. It is characteristic that in reviewing Carlyle's ^'rench ^evolution (l&3?)> he praised it mainly for the vividness of his descriptions and its capacity fro arouse and move the reader.

1 "George the First," in The Oxford Thackeray, XIII,6^ -IZ^at TOO, 711
"On -"ome French -^'ashionable Novels," in '-I'he Oxford '^ hack e ray, II,
» a* 92-93.
"On ^ome French Fashionable Novels," p. 9l.
4 "oteele," in The Oxford 'i'hackeray, XIII, 5^-z-i 8 , at 543.
5 T imes, 3 ^ugust 1837, in The Oxford Thackeray, I, 67-79.

important development in nineteenth-century historiography to which
£>cott contributed was the growing belief that periods in the past were worth studying for their own sake, and not just as stages leading towards the present, and that people of the past should be judged by the standards of their own day rather than according to modern criteria. In 1821 Sir James Mackintosh had argued that the historian should be able to "antiquate his feelings, so as to become for a moment the contemporary" of the ages with which he is dealing, divesting himself of modern passions and preju-dices, for " JJLJ t is on the sympathy which History excites that its moral effect depends." '^he great German historian Barthold Niebuhr wrote in the Preface to the second edition of his History of Rome (3 vols, 1827-32):

a historian is reviving former times, his interest in them
and sympathy with them will be the deeper, the greater the events
he has witnessed with a bleeding or a rejoicing heart. His fee-
lings are moved by justice and injustice, by wisdom, or folly, by
coming or departing greatness, as if all were going on before his
eyes; and when he is thus^moved, his lips speak, although ^ecuba
is nothing to the player.

Another great German historian, Leopold von Ranke (1795-1886) also laid great stress on the need for the historian to be impartial, avoiding the temptation to allow the prejudices of the present to colour his appraoch to the past. In 1844 John ^tuart Mill attacked historians who transposed the notions of the present back into the past, and judged the leading figures

1 "Sismondi*s History of France," Edinburgh Review, 35 (1821), 488-
509, at 492-93-
Quoted in ^'he Varieties of History; From Voltaire to the Present, ed.
sel. and intro. *'ritz Sternj 2nd. edri (London and Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1970), p. 53.
See Stern, 54ff > a.nd G.P. Gooch, History and Historians in the Nine-teenth Gentury^ 2nd edn (London, New York, Toronto: Longmans, Green and Co., 1952), 73ff.

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accordingly, praising Niebuhr, ^arlyle, and French historians such as
iji
hierry and Michelet for aiming to "realize a true and living picture of the past time, clothed in its circumstances and peculiarities." '^'he "Liberal Anglican" historians, '^homas Arnold, Connop 'fhirlwall, Julius Hare, Henry Hart Milman and A. P. Stanley also believed in a sympathetic approach to the past: in Guesses at Truth Hare argued that "the very process of endeavouring faithfully and carefully to enter into the minds of others, as it can only be effected by passing out of ourselves, out of our habitual prepossessions and predilections, is a discipline both of love and humility." By the end of our period John Morley felt that people were more concerned with the pe-digree and genealogical connections of a custom or idea than with its good-ness of badness, strength or weakness.
George ^liot too was concerned that the people, habits, and ideas of
the past should be treated sympathetically, and not looked down on from the vantage point of modern progress. In 1861 in a letter to Sara Hennell she expressed her hope that

we are well out of that phase in which the most philosophic view
of the past was held to be a smiling survey of human folly, and
when the wisest man was supposed.to be one who could sympathize
with no age but the age to come.

and writing to ^ichard Holt Hut ton in 1863, she described the "religious and moral sympathy .with the historical life of man" as "the larger half of cul-ture. 1 In the well-known passage from "The Natural History of ^erman Life, 1

"Michelet 's History of France," Edinburgh ^eview, 79 (1844), 1-39;
rpt. in Vol. II °f ni s dissertations and Discussions Political, Philosophica and Literary (London: John W. Parker and bon, 1859), pp. 120-80, at pp. 124-
27-

2nd edn, 2nd ser. , 1&4^> quoted in ^uncan Forbes, The Liberal ^ngl
Idea of History (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1952), p. 164.
On Compromise (1874); rpt. as Vol. Ill of The wbrks of Lord Morley
(London: Macmillan and Co., 19^1), p. 14
12 July 1861, in ^he George Eliot Letters, ed. ^ordon J. Haight (9
volsj London: Oxford University Presr:. ; New Haven: Yale University Press, 1954-56, 197$), III, 1-37. c ited henceforth as ^liot Letters.

in which she explains that " [tj he greatest benefit we owe to che artist, whether painter, poet, or novelist, is the extension of our sympathies," since art is "a mode of amplifying experience and extending our contact with our fellow-men beyond the bounds of our personal lot," she cites among her examples of great art in this respect the scenes in Luckie Muckle backit's cottage in The Antiquary, thus suggesting that fiction can extend her contemporaries' understanding not only of people lower down in the so-cial scale, but also of people who lived before their own time. Moreover not only a contemptuous or condescending attitude to the past, but also the idealising tendency which creates the "heroic artisan or the sentimen-tal peasant" militates against this understanding. In her review of >'est-ward H6! ^eorge Eliot attacks Kingsley for idealising the Elizabethan period:
he can undertake to depict a past age and try to make out that
it was the pattern of all heroisms now utterly extinct; he can
sneer at actual doings which are only a new form of the senti-
ments he vaunts as the peculiar possession of his pet period

iHt Kingsley has failed to do, according to George Eliot here, is to
see the connections anci similarities between past and present. A few years before, in a review of H.W. Mackay's 1'he Progress of the Intellect, she had spelt out the qualities necessary in an historian: they included a mind with a "susceptibility to the pleasure of changing its point of view, of mastering a remote form of thought, of perceiving identity of nature under variety of manifestation." George Eliot's response to the Bible had after all involved seeing what was common to past and present: through

Essays, pp. 270-71.
"Westward Ho * and Constance Herpert," Westminster Review, 64- (1655) 288-96; rp.t.Essays, pp. 123-36, at p. 127.
Tne Progress of che Intellect", ^estminster Review, 54
353-68; rptr. Essays, pp. 27~45, at p. 2Q.

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reading Charles Hennell *s Inquiry Concerning the Origin of Christianity (1641) and translating David ^trauss's Das Leben Jesu (1835; trans. 1846) and Ludwig Feuerbach's -^as ^esen des Christ entums (lc41$ trans. 1854) she had reached the conclusion that the Scriptures were not revealed truth but historical documents to be judged critically as reflecting the knowledge, beliefs and values current at the time in which they were written. *or all this however, the Gospels are, according to Hennell, valuable as a statement of the genuine and sincere faith of the early Christians, while Christ ianity) freed from fable and miraculous foundations, was "the purest form yet exist-ing of natural religion," reflecting the elevated thoughts and feelings of the human mind itself. For Strauss, Christ's supernatural birth, miracles, resurrection and ascension remain eternal truths because of their basis in
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human belief, however doubtful their reality OS historical facts. The Chris-tian is the sublimest of all religions and contains the deepest philosophi-cal truthsi In 1859 George -^liot wrote to Charles -"ray that she wa,s con-cerned to bring out in her books "that which is essentially human in all forms of belief." Her novels show the differences between the people of the recent past and her contemporary readers, and then point out, with vary-ing degrees of subtlety, their "identity of nature under variety of manifes-tation."

George Eliot's ideas about how change occurs, how the past has become
the present, are explained in "^'he Natural History of German Life." In the essay she attacks the assumption that social or political change can be

Hennell, Inquiry, Preface, p. viii, quoted in %sil Willey, Nineteentl Century Studies - Coleridge to Matthew Arnold (1949; rpt . London: Chatto & "Indus, 1964), p. 216.
2 Willey, p. 222.
3 » y illey, pp. L'25-26.
4 5 July 1859, in Eliot Letters, III, 111.

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effected on the basis of general theories rather than a detailed and first-

hand knowledge of the people to be reformed, criticising

tendency created by the splendid conquests of modern gene-
ralisation, to believe that all social questions are merged in
economical science, and that the relations of men to their neigh-
bours may be settled by algebraic equations, - the dream that
the uncultured classes are prepared for a condition which
appeals principally to the.ir moral sensibilities, - the aristo-
cratic dilettantism which attempts to restore the 'good old
times' by a sort of idyllic masquerading, and to grow feudal
fidelity and veneration as ye grow prize turnips, by an arti-
ficial system of culture...

Here her targets seem to be the theories of political economists, the

socialist and communist ideau which inspired the European revolutions of

1&48, and, in Britain, the communities set up by Robert Owen, and -^israeli s

"Young England" movement which aimed to revive the feudal, paternalistic

role of the aristocracy towards the lower classes as a cure for poverty and

class hostility engendered by industrialisation. Riehl's studies of the

German peasantry in Die burger liche ^esellschaft and Land und Leute had

shown how their society could not be reorganised successfully on a communist

model because of their selfishness and, especially, their unthinking adhe-

rence to custom:

He sees in European society incarnate history, and any attempt
to disengacje it from its historical elements must, he believes,
be simply destructive of social vitality. dhat has grown up
historically can only die out historically, by the gradual operation of necessary laws. ^he external conditions which society has inherited from the past are but the manifestation of inherited internal conditions in the human beings who com-pose it; the internal conditions and the external are related to each other as the organism and its medium, and development can take^place only by the gradual consentaneous development
of both.

^ssays, p. 272.
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^53 ays, p. 287.

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And although, on account of the effects of Protestantism and commerce, thi "vital connexion with the past is much more vividly felt on the Continent than in -^gland," ^eorge iiiliot was still to argue several years later that

Our sentiments may be called organised traditions; and a large
part of our actions gather all their justification, all their
attraction and aroma, from the memory of the life lived, of the
actions done, before we were born.

George -^liot's organicist view of the development of society, the idea that change could only be a slow, gradual process involving no break with the past, both looks back to the ideas of Burke, and reflects an outlook which was becoming increasingly common in the mid-ninetaenth century: legislation such as the 183^ ^eform -dill, the New Poor Law of 1834* and the Municipal Corporations Act of 1835, na<i been inspired by Bent ham s Utilitarian ideas about the need for radical change in government and the law, but the econo-mic depression of the late 1830 's and 1840' s, together with the revelations in Blue -^ooks and statistical enquiries of the complexity of social problems meant that simple, sweeping solutions came to appear suspect. ^ith the collapse of Ohartism in 1848 and the economic upturn of the It^O's, the resulting optimism and satisfaction gave rise to a belief in slow, natural

2 growth through self-help and laissez-faire policies. In ^ocial Statics (1651), a book which George -^liot recommended to Charles Bray, Spencer ar-gued that change occurred through the gradual modification of human beings until they became adapted to their conditions. Social development was pro-gressive, and the murders, enslavings, robberies, tyranny, class oppressions,

"The Influence of national! cm," fort nightly Review, IS May 1665, pp.
43-33; rpt' ^ssays, pp. 397-414, at p. 409.
This is the general argument of Brantlinger 1 s The Spirit of Reform...
4 October- 1&51) in ^liot Letters, I, 364.
Herbert Spencer, Social Statics (London: John Chapman, 1851 J, S9ff.

and sect and party persecutions only happened because man retained the con-stitution of the savage in conditions for which it was not fitted. ^*he result of the process of adaptation is the complete manifestation of every-one's individuality, and this also means the end of evil and immorality. Society as a whole, like an organism, develops from the simple to the comple: from a homogeneous to an increasingly heterogeneous structure, and the incre< sing individuation of the parts also makes them more interdependent. As a result of this complexity and interdependence, attempts to accelerate the growth of the organism in one part would only disturb the balance of if$ or-ganisation and cause atrophy in another.
A confident belief in progress wac, of course very charact eristic of the mid-nineteenth century. ^'he most popular historian of the period, Macaulay, continually extols the advances the present has made over the past. At the beginning of the first volume of his History of -England, he declares, "the history of our country during the last hundred and sixty years is eminently the history of physical, of moral, and of intellectual improvement." In her essay M^he Progress of the Intellect" George iSliOt had mentioned as one of the qualities of the ideal historian "a profound belief in the progressive character of human development," and was later to call herself a "melio-
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rist. #ut elsewhere she seems far less sure that progress is inevitable. in the essay on ^iehl she writes of the need for a similar "natural

- Statics, p. 413»

2 Social Statics, pp. 67-69* 434*
^ocial Statics, 441ff See also his later essay, "Progress: Its Law
and ^ause," Westminster Review, 67 (l&57)» 445-^5? rpt. in his -^ssays: Scientific, Political and Speculative (London: Williams & Norgate, 1866), I, 1-60.
£>ee ^alter rioughton's section on "Optimism" in The Victorian -^rame
of Mind, pp. 27-53. *""
lid. Charles Harding i''irth (London: Macmillan, 1913), p* 2.
i^ssays, p. <^9-
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"Letter to James Sully," 19 J^nu. ry Io77> in ;"liot Letters, VI, 333-34

^s~

history" of the English social classes, she mentions as one of the featur< to be studied "the tendencies in their position towards disintegration or towards development," and later, when discussing &iehl's findings about the German peasantry, notes that "many disintegrating forces have been at work on the peasant character, and degeneration is unhappily going on at a
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greater pace than development." The question of degnneration vs. develop ment had become important with the spread of Darwinian evolutionary ideas, which were in the air before the actual publication of The Origin of Speci< in 1859 - the issue of whether natural selection, the "survival of the fit-test" favoured the fittest in the moral sense, or merely the strongest. Spencer, with his idea that the eventual complete adaptation of the organis to its environment assured the evanescence of evil, the less adaptable hav-ing failed to survive, took the optimistic view, while Tennyson s vision of "Nature, red in tooth and claw," carelessly letting the best of men die before their time, in In Memoriam (l&50)^ evokes the fears to which the al-ternative prediction gave rise. ^eorge Eliot however was also to explore societies which seemed to show no marked tendencies for either degeneration or development: Spencer assumes that when the organism is not adapted to conditions, it is because its development has lagged behind that of its con-ditions, while George Jilliot in the ^iehl es^ay speaks of the two kinds of development being "consentaneous" - yet in both The Mill on the ^loss and Middlemarch she shows the tensions which arise when individuals are morally and/or intellectually ajjove the general level of societies which are rest-rictive and resistant to change.

Fssays, pp
2 ., r
p. 2ol.
Social Statics, 37&ff

4 ,-Stanza LV.

George idiot's concern that the study of society should be based on careful study of evidence rather than on theoretical generalisation was shared by many nineteenth-century historians - notably Ranke, who stressed the importance of making extensive use of primary sources and of adopting a critical attitude to all his sources - while in ^ngland both government and private archives became more organised and accessible to historians.
A major impetus behind this kind of concern for evidence was the scientifi outlook, and from about the 1640*3 onward writers such as Mill and Lewes, following the lead of Comte in France, demanded that history should be stu 2 died in a scientific fashion. Crucial to this was not only a careful stud; of evidence but also a generalisation from that evidence to establish the underlying laws governing social development. The fundamental problem, ac-cording to Mill, was to "find the laws according to which any state of soci-ety produces the state which succeeds it and takes its place." In 1844 Lewes predicted that history was likely to Become as exact a science as geology, when the general laws governing the evolution of society were dis-4 ^ covered and organised. In ^pencer's vision of social progress there are

No accidents, no chance; but everywhere order and completeness ... Throughout ... the same vital principles, ever in action, and em-
bracing the minutest details. Growth is unceasing; and though
slow, all powerful ...

J.P. Kenyon, The History Men; The Historical Profession in England
since the Renaissance (London; "'eidenfeld and Nicolson,1983)» 91ff»
2 -I -fr'or Comte's influence on George Eliot, see Terence R. Wright, "George Eliot and the Religion of Humanity," MS D.Phil., Oxford, 1977
A System of Logic Ratiocinative and Inductive (1843); rpt. as Vols
VII and VIII of The Collected '^orks of John ^tuart Mill, ed. J.M. Robson (Toronto; University of Toronto Press; London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1974),
912.

4 "The State of Historical Science in France," pp. 77-7$, 85.
Social Scatics, p. k

2-7

For the anthropologist Henry Maine, " [i] f history indeed be true, it must

teach that which every other science teaches - continuous sequence, inflex-

ible order, and eternal law." Sometimes statistics were used to prove the

existence of uniform laws controlling human behaviour, as in the case of

the historian H.T. ^Hickle, who cited them to show that the annual number of

murders, suicides - and misdirected letters - remained constant, while the

2 rate of marriages bore a fixed relation to the price of corn.

' Phis approach tended to minimise the impact of the individual on soci-

ety, of the great man on the progress of history, " ccording to Spencer,

xve must look upon social convulsions as upon other natural pheno-
mena, which work themselves out in a certain, inevitable, unal-
terable way ... These changes are brought about by a power far
above individual wills. Men who seem the prime movers, are merely
the tool with which it works; and were they absent, it would
quickly find others.

In Miiddlemarch George Eliot was to register the increasing prevalence of

this view in the period after that in which the novel is set (1829-32)} in the narrator's comment on Lydgate:

considering that statistics had not yet embraced a calculation
as to the number of ignorant or canning doctors which absolutely
must exist in the teeth of all changes, it seemed to Lydgate
that a change in the units was the most direct mode of changing
the numbers.

The implications of the "scientific* approach to history did arouse

opposition mid-century. In his inaugural lecture as Professor of History

Village Communities in the East and ^est (1671), p. 266; quoted in
J.H. Burrow, ^volution and Society, pp. 111-12.

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History of Civilization in England, I (London: John ™. Pa-rker and.
Son, 1657), 23ff.
Social Statics, p. 433.

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*" Mida.lema.rch ^ S-fcudy of Provincial Life (6 parts; Edinburgh and London: William Blackwood and °ons, 1^71-72), II, 259-60.

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at Cambridge in 1861, Kingsley argued that moral phenomena could not be explained by economic and physical laws: the invariable laws are those of right and wrong, and they do not result in inevitable sequence or irresist-ible growth. In any case, by breaking such laws as do exist, a man can seriously disturb the so-called inevitable sequence, even if he is later punished by the consequences. Moreover the true history of mankind is that of great men, the men of genius. In "'i'he ^cience of History" J.^. Froude claimed that men's acts could not be predicted, that the temper of each new generation was a continual surprise, and that history would best resemble life, when least explicable by laws. The historian should concentrate on "the illustrious natures who have shaped the fortunes of the world." ^ut the main exponent of the "great man" theory of history was Fr0ude's mentor Carlyle, whose lecture series of 1840, On Heroes, Hero-Worship and the Heroic in History argued that :

the history of what man has accomplished in this world is at bottom the History of the Great Men who have worked here, '^'
were the leaders of men, these great ones; the modellers, patterns, and in a wide sense creators, of whatsoever the general mass of
men contrived to do or to attain; all things that we see standing

accomplished in the world are properly the outer material result, the practical realisation and embodiment, of Thoughts that dwelt in the Great Men sent into the world; the soul of the whole
world's history, it may justly be considered, were the story of these.

The passage I have already quoted from "The Natural History of German Life" refers to historical change occurring from "the gradual operation of

"£he Limits of Sxact Science as Applied to History," rpt. The floman

a.?.d the Ae.uton: A ^eries of Lectures delivered before the University of Cpnibri dge (London ; Macmillan and C OV, 1889), pp. 307-43. Lecture of 5 *'ebruary 1864; rpt. in v ol. i O f his ohort Studies on Subjects (London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1897), pp. l-3fcT ttPt. Uarlyle's ^orks (London: Chapman and Hall, n.d.). tfll, 1-23S at 1-2.

necessary laws." In "'i'he Progress of the Intellect" ^eorge Eliot argues that the key to the revelation provided by the "history of human develop-ment" is

the recognition of the presence of undeviating law in the material
and moral world - of that invariability of sequence which is
acknowledged to be the basis of physical science, but which is
still perversely ignored in our social organisation, our ethics
and our religion

It is this "inexorable law of consequences" which gives the "seal of prohi-bition and of sanction to "human deeds and aspirations," so that "human duty is comprised in the earnest study of this law and patient obedience to its teaching." We can learn from seeing this law operating throughout his-tory:
every past phase of human development is part of that education
of the race in which we are sharing; every mistake, every absur-
dity into which poor human nature has fallen, may ..be looked upon
as an experiment of which we may reap the benefit

In George -tCliot's fiction characters often suffer because they fail to act with due regard to the consequences of their actions, and readers living one or two generations later can benefit from this experience of the past. On the other hand George Eliot does not I think illustrate the operation of the "necessary laws" governing historical change - how the Milby of the early l&30's becomes the Milby of 1857, or the Hayslope of 1800, the Hay-slope of 1859* Commenting on 'i'he Origin of Species, she wrote:

to me the Development theory and all other explanations of pro-
cesses by which things came to be, produce a feeble impression
compared with the mystery that lies under the processes.

Assays, p. 31

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"Letter to Mme ^ugene -°odichon," 15 Pecember lfc-59» in ^liot Letters,.
Ill, 221.

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is I think more interested in exploring the capacity of the individual
to effect social change. The power of the laws controlling the external world and the "inexorable law of consequences" governing human conduct do not render the individual helpless. Writing to John Korley in 1867 she spoke of the power of love to "mitigate the harshness of all fatalities" and of the capacity of "growing moral force to lighten the pressure of hard non-moral outward conditions." There is a "moral evolution" distinguishable from "mere zoological evolution." A few years later she urged Mrs Ponsonby not to feel that the conditions of the material world made human efforts towards good meaningless, as "the consideration of molecular physics is not the direct ground of human love and moral action." She goes on to say that "[tJhe progress of the world ... can certainly never come at all, save by the modified action of the individual beings who compose the world." Her stories and novels of the recent past look back on the people of earlier generations, and examine how they have contributed to this "progress of the world."

1 14 May 1867, in Eliot Letters, IV, 364-65.
2 10 December 1674, in *liot Letters, VI, 99.

C H'A P T E R £

SCOTT - I. WAVERLflY

self-conscious tone of the opening of rtaverley shows how innovatory
Scott was being in setting a novel in the recent past. It is assumed that the subtitle " A Tale of Other -^ays" would evoke not so much an historical setting as the trappings of Mrs rtadcliffe s Gothic romances (see p. 3), while the novelist faced with "the court dress of George the Second's reign, with its no collar, large sleeves, and low pocket holes," and "the splendid for-mality of an entertainment given Sixty Years since" (p. 4)> can exploit neither the glamour and exotic appeal of a distant period x nor the topicality of a modern setting in the fashionable world. The unprecedented popularity of ^ aver ley showed however that the reading public was very interested in a novel not only set sixty-nine years in the past, but also laying more stress on the differences between past and present than on the characteristics shared by the people of 1745 a^d 1614 '-Their appetite for Scottish history

2 in general had been whetted by The Scottish Chiefs, and by Scott's poems

Lay of the Last Minstrel (1605) and Marmion (1&08), and their interest
in Highland life in particular stimulated by his The Lady of the Lake (l6lO) as well as by Anne Grant's Assays on the Superstitions of the Highlanders of Scotland (l8ll) and -Elizabeth Hamilton's '-'ottagers of Glenburnie (l608)
- both mentioned by Scott in the last chapter of riaverley. kil hat the novel does is to capture Lowland feudal society in the last few years before feudal tenures were abolished (in j.7i": 8), the centuries-old Highland way of life just before it disintegrated, Jacobitism just before it became a hope-

Robert "-. Colby notes some of the tales of fashionable life Scott
probably had in mind, in his -fiction ^ith a Purpose; Major and Minor Nineteenth-Century Novels (Bloomington and London: Indiana University Press, 1967), PP. 33, 65-
°ee * x ndrew Hook's Introducti -n to the Penguin edn of ^.vei'l.--^ , (Harmondsworth, 1972), pp. 16-17.

lessly lost cause.
As has often been noticed, Scott s treatment of both Lowland and High-
land life from the point of view of 1814 is very even-handed. Contemporaries would have realised that the agricultural advances in the Lowlands since the 1740's - enclosure of fields, enlargement of holdings, draining of bogs and marshes, cultivation of turnips, grasses, clover, potatoes, and of a greater variety of vegetables, had helped alleviate the "misery and dirt" of villages like Tully-Veolan, with their ' unprofitable variety" of crops. By 1814 too the standard of clothing and housing had much improved, with the wretched, irregularly-laid-out houses of places like '^ully-Veolan superseded by larger, cleaner, dryer dwellings, sometlines in model villages such as that built by Scott's relative John Scott of Gala. ^mong the gentry meanwhile excessive drinking, especially tavern parties like that described in Chapter 11 of
111 ayerley, had declined, and their habits had become more polished than those of ^alconer and Killancureit, on account of increased contact with English

2 and -Edinburgh society. Meanwhile the abolition of hereditary jurisdictions

had meant that a laird could not "imprisom, try, and execute his vassals" as the -^aron claims to be able to do (pp. 41-42), and the money paid in compen-3 sation could be used to finance agricultural innovations." On the other hand, landlords 1 paternalism towards tenants, exemplified in the novel by tfl£

t*'or the state of the rural Lowlands before the f 45» see ^ir John
Sinclair, Analysis of the Statistical Account of Scotland, Part 1 (Edinburgh: Archibald Constable and C o., 1825), pp. 174-76, 229ff, 249-53; for improve-ments after the '45 see George ^obertson, Hural Recollect ion:: (irvine; Cunninghame Press, 1629), passim; T.C. -^rnout, fl History of the Scottish People 1560-1830 (London: Collinc, 19&9)/ 240ff; for model villages, Hanry Hamilton, An -^cononyic History of Scotland in. the Eighteenth Century (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1963), pp. 31-34
Smout, 285ff5 Scotland arid Scotsmen in the Eighteenth Century, prom
the KoS. pi John Pyamsay, -^sq., of Ochtertyre, ed. A. AHardyce (nidinburgh arid London: tfilliam Blackwood and Sons, 1868), I, 179ff» II, 46ff, 308ff Ramsay, II, 212-13; McMaster, S C ott and Society, pp. 102-103.

support of Davie ^ellatly and his protection of Janet Gellatly v;hen
she is tried for witchcraft (p. 61 j had also decayed, such that when farming became more profitable, landlords put up rents, and often offered land to the highest bidder regardless of whether his family had traditionally been tenants on the estate. Consolidation of holdings meant too that small te-nants and cottars could be dispossessed and forced to become landless labou-

rers.

'i'he bond between clan and chieftain in the Highlands was closer than
that between landlord and tenant in the Lowlands, and its strength and limi-tations are brought out in two well-known scenes in the novel: the first, where ^averley seeks to help his former Serjeant who is dying in a miserable hut, and can only get -f'ergus Mac-Ivor to accept this by explaining that iloughton is the son of one of his uncle's tenants (that is, one of his following"), since the Highlanders have no sense of "general philanthropy" (p. 2l£); the second, at -^'ergus's trial, when Svan Phu offers in good faith to provide six of the best of the clan to suffer execution in place of the chief, only to be laughed at by the people in court (p. 320). It is this strong sense of loyalty to the chief which makes bearable the wretched po-verty of Highland life, brought out in 'the account of ponald Bean Lean and his followers (pp. 60-83) and. the descriptions of ^lan Ivor e.nd their feast

2 (see esp. pp. 94? 101) This social system broke down rapidly after the

defeat of the rebellion, with the disarming of the clans, the suppression of cattle-lifting, the Hereditary Jurisdictions Act , and the abolition of both military services and tenures based on them, ^s in the Lowlands, farming

Ramsay, II, 3^4~^5> 3mout . pp. 3^0-301.
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Cf. also one of ocott s sources, ^dward Airt's Letters f rojn a uentle-
man _in the i-J o rt h of Scotland to His ^'riond in London (1726-30; London: 3. Birt, 1754), I, 98, 109-10, 301; II," 121, 126-27.

became more profitable, especially the cattle-trade and, later, sheep-farming and many, farms were converted into sheep-walk. Ait this meant that clan leaders, with no longer any military incentive to maintain large numbers of tenants paying low rents, tended to let land to the highest bidder, while, since sheep-farming required fewer workers than agriculture, tenants could be dispossessed and forced to seek work in the Lowlands or abroad. On account of these developments, combined with the great population increase in the Highlands during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, the Highlanders of 1&14 were r.ot necessarily better off than those of 1745-In his treatment of the Jacobite campaign, ^cott eschews descriptions
of well-known events: he summarises Prestonpans, after the Highlanders' initial onslaught (p. 225), and introduces the account of the rebels' march into -^igland with the disclaimer, " [_i] t is not our purpose to intrude upon the province of history" (p. 263). Most notoriously, of course, the novel does not describe Culloden. Instead, the novel shows tony Jacobitism failed: the half-starved, badly-armed, unenthusiastic recruits among the inferior ranks (p. 214), the poverty and selfish motives of supporters like Jinker (pp. 166-89), the greed and disunity among the leaders, including Fergus (see esp. p. 254)» Nor do real historical figures play a major role.
v harles ^dward appears occasionally, and in conversations with fictional characters which do not relate to the military campaign, while the death of Colonel Gardiner, referred to merely as "Colonel G " till the 1829 edition (see Scott's note, p. 391) mainly serves to affect tfaverley with the sense that he has betrayed his company of o.ragoons (p. 226). Scott is perhaps

tfamsay, 3&7ff ; rt illiam Law Mathieson, '1'he ^wakening of Scotland;
A History ^'rom 1747 to 1797 (Glasgow: James Maclenose and "'ons, 1910), p.
294-

35"

suggesting that this private influence of famous Historical figures is as much a part of history as their public role. He is not so much interested in actual historical figures, however, as in showing, as Lukacs put it, "the typically human terms in which great historical trends become tangible."
It is pointed out that

Had ^ergus Mac-Ivor lived sixty years sooner than he did, he
would, in all probability, have wanted the polished manner and
knowledge of the world wnich he now possessed; and had he lived
sixty years later, his ambition and love of rule would have
lacked the fuel which his situation now afforded (pp. 91-92)

he -^ron has the "prejudices of ancient birth and Jacobite politics," a lawyer's pedantry going unchecked because his politics do not allow him to practise his profession, and the "military pride of the soldier," on account of the career he has had to adopt instead (p. 41) Colonel i'albot is "in every point the English soldier," patriotic, but, since he is affected by the anti-r^cottish prejudices of his time, refusing to try and save Fergus's life (p. 316) ^ir -^erard "'averley's Jacobitism is decaying for want of any encouragement in the -^gland of his period, while his brother is one of the many men of Jacobite families brought over to the Government side by -'ir Robert "alpole's unparalleled system of political corruption. ' 'he character of l/J averley himself is largely the product of Oir Everard's and ^achel's Jacobite sentiment, coloured by unrestricted reading in romantic literature.

' i-'he Historical Novel, p. 35*
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' the decline of English Jacobitism, see ^ir Charles Petrie, The
Jacobite Movement; The Last Phase 1716-1607 (London: tfyre & Spottiswoode, 1950)> 30ff; George Milton Jones, The Main ^tream of Jacobitism (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1S'54)» PP« 144> 156-57-

36

SCOTT - 2_. GUY MANMflRING In his introduction to the first edition of The -^nt iguary -^cott claims that his first three "fictitious narratives" were "intended to illustrate the manners of ^Gotland at three different periods." He explains that "WAVERLEY embraced the age of our fathers, GUY MANNE:lING that of our own youth, and th ANTIQUARY refers to the last ten years of the eighteenth century." Some contemporaries however doubted that he had any such plan when he began to write novels: John tfilson C roker in the Quarterly Review argued that Oldbuck and the characters in The xxntiquary could have lived before those of Guy

2 Mannering, while a writer in the Monthly Review thought that the main

action of The -^ntiquary could have taken place "as well within the last half century as the last twenty years." The statement in ^hapter 36 of ^u Mannering that "the period was near the end of the American IVqr," and the opening of Tne Antiquary ("It was early on a fine summer s day, near the end of the eighteenth century " 1 combined with this novel f s periodic refe-rences to the French ^evolution, popular discontent in Scotland, and the war against ^ ranee which began in 1793, make it clear that ocott did intend to set each novel at a specific time. Yet unlike ^averley, the^e novels nei-ther contain historical figures who participate in the action nor show the fictional characters engaged in historical events, and the reader is not kept continually aware of the specific period of the setting.
^uy Mannering opens with the first visit of the eponymous hero to Ellar. gowan, which is said to occur in the beginning of the month of November

1st edn (Edinburgh: Archibald Constable and Co.; London: Longman,
Hurst, ^ees, Orme, and Brown, 1&16), p. v. -^11 subsequent citations will be from this edn.
r)

Quarterly ^eview, 15 (1816), 1^5-39? rpt. ocott ; The Critical iierita^
pp. 9&-103, at pp. 9^-99*
3 Monthly fteview, &2 (ifcl?), 3c-52, at 39-
1st edn (Edinburgh: Archibald Constable and Co.; London: Longman,
Hurst, Rees, Orme, and Brown, l£l5), II > ^55- UH subsequent citations wil! be from this edn.

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17 " (l»3), and no more precise date is mentioned until Mrs Mac-Candlish's allusion, on the occasion of his next visit, to "'this weary American war 1 " (2, 194)» In the interim about twenty-one years are supposed to have passed and, given Glossin's comment to Hatteraick that "'peace is now so much talked of 1 " (II, 228) and the later reference to "near the end of the Ameri-can war" (which ended in 1783), it would appear that the novel opens in about 1760. However since this has to be worked out retrospectively, it is unlikely that ^cott is concerned at this stage to evoke a specific period. Two important subjects of the opening chapters - the state of the Bertram family, and Mannering's practice of astrology - are in fact presented in re-lation to a more remote past, rather than from the perspective of 1815.
The second chapter traces the history of the Bertram family from the
^ark Ages up to Godfrey Bertram's time, explaining how they invariably ad-hered to the weaker side in all civil conflicts, thus losing a large part of their estate. Finally Godfrey embarrasses the property still further by employing Glossin, "a man of business," who increases its debts and encum-bers him with lawsuits. Since Bertram is described as "one of those second-rate sort of persons that are to be found frequently in rural situations" (l, 15) - that is, as a type still prevalent in 1615 - it appears that Scott is contrasting a period, extending up to about Lewis Bertram's time, when military concerns and conflicts predominated, with the more recent period, when lawsuits are the means by which property is xvon and lost. Lewis is the transitional figure in that he adopted the losing side (in the '15), but did not forfeit any of his estate as a direct result of this: rather, having left it in the hands of trustees, he had to fight a lawsuit after-wards in which he lost part of it (I, 21). Later in the novel Lawyer Pley-dell, confronted with ^andie Dinmont's trivial lawsuit against Jock o' Dawston Cleugh, comments on how lawsuits have replaced fighting as a means

of settling disputes over property: ^andie has flf feuds in the court of Session/ 11 whereas his ancestors had "'manslaughters and fire-raisings" (II, 323). The novel is, as the reviewer in the Scots Magazine pointed out, set in the Lowlands "as they existed thirty or forty years ago, while sub-siding from the tumult of half-civilized times, and border warfare, into

2 their present tranquil and orderly state.'" For Pleydell legal means of resolving disputes represent however some advance over warfare:
"In civilised society, law is the chimney through which all that
smoke discharges itself that used to circulate through the whole
house, and put every one's eyes out." (II, 326)

But as far as the Bertram estates are concerned, the result of both war and law is the same - continual debt and diminution.
Mannering is said to be convinced of the "absurdity" of astrological predictions, and, having boasted of his powers at Sampson's expense, under-takes to cast the young heir's nativity in order to preserve appearances
and to see if he can remember wha,t his old tutor had taught him* His scepti-cism is set against the belief in astrology which is said to have been uni-versal in the mid-seventeenth century, and to have persisted among some
11 [g]rave and studious men" at universities into the beginning of the eigh-teenth century, despite general disbelief and ridicule (l, 52). The narra-tor assumes too that Mannering's scepticism is shared by the reader of 1815, and asserts that "we lay no weight whatever" on the coiacidence of Manner-ing's horoscopes of both Harry Bertram and aophia tfellwood, suggesting a couple of rational explanations for it (I, 55~6). ^hat this assumption was well-grounded waS demonstrated by the reaction of contemporary reviewers;

cf. Chapter 1 of rtayerley; "the proud peer who can now only ruin his neighbour according to law, by protracted suits, is the genuine descendant of the baron who wrapped the castle of his competitor in flames, and knocked him on the head as he endeavoured to escape from the confla^r /tion" (p. 5) Scots Magazine nnd Edinburgh Literary Miscellany, 77 (1815), 608-14,
at 609.

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Mannering's predictions of a series of crises in Harry Bertram's life in his fifth, tenth, and twenty-first years (coinciding also with the predic-tions of Meg Merrilies), and of the death of Sophia Wellwood in her thirty-ninth year (i.e. in Bertram's twenty-first) are fulfilled, and several re-viewers commented on how improbable and unconvincing all this was. Scott was to outline one of his sources for the astrological aspect of the novel in the 1829 Introduction - a story told lay an old Highland servant of his father - but the "Astrologer" in this tale is a grave, mysterious, elderly figure who takes his art seriously, while the story is not set at any par-ticular period, and the crisis faced by the young man, the struggle against religious despair embodied in the -Devil, suggests a time before that of eighteenth-century rationalism. Another possible source, the ballad of the " Durham Garland", concerns an astrological prediction made by a noble lord at the birth of a forester's son, involving a crisis to come in his eigh-teenth year, and is closer to the novel in that, instead of being assailed by religious doubts, the hero is threatened with hanging for robbing the astrologer figure, a crime he did not commit, is identified by a cabinet containing a gold chain and the horoscope, and marries the astrologer's daughter. But again, astrology is taken seriously, and the historical set-p ting is indeterminate. Scott seems then to be adapting legendary material relating to the seventeenth century or earlier^ to a novel set at a time in which astrology was no longer credible to most people, and written for an audience for whom it was even less so. It is not even likely that Mannering could have known a clergyman from the Oxford of the eighteenth century who

1 MonthlyJ>eview, 77 (1815), &5-94i at 86; British Critic, 3 (1615) 399-409, at 409; Port Folio, 4th ser. 2 (1816), 159-?8, at 178} Quarterly Review, 12 (1815), 501-9, at 507.
2
Joseph Train sent the ballad, to Lockhart after Scott's death, and it
is reprinted in the i850 1-volume edn of the Life (pp. 765-68). '^rain had mentioned it in a letter to Scott of 4 September 1829 - it had been current at least sixty years earlier (National Library of Scotland, MS 874* f 163)

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seriously believed in astrology, as the subject had been rejected by the students as early as 1659*
Other subjects taken up in the early chapters also serve to suggest the similarities between the 1760's and the time of writing, ^odfrey Bertram eventually becomes a J.P. because of Glossin s machinations at an election which occurs about four years after Mannering's first visit (i.e. in c. 1764)j Bertram s candidate is elected because Glossin

went to work, making votes, as every Scottish lawyer knows how,
by splitting and subdividing the superiorities upon this ancient
and once powerful barony ... by dint of clipping and paring here,
adding and eiking there, and creating over-lords upon all the
estate which Bertram held of the crown, they advanced upon the
day of contest, at the head of ten as good men of parchment as
ever took the oath of trust and possession (l, 89)

'^hese practices were particularly common after 1770, such that by 1790 nearly half the votes in Scottish counties were fictitious. '^hey continued however right up to 1832 (the year of the Reform Bill), and Scott himself in a letter written a few months after Guy Mannering was published, com-plained of a "stupid cause which had come up in his own professional work, concerning a small area of land worth almost nothing in rent but forming part of a freehold qualification, such that "the decision may wing a voter."
And just as lawsuits replaced war as a means of settling property disputes, "caballing in elections and soliciting neighbours ... to accept of fictitious

Keitji 'Jhomas, Religion and the Decline of Magic (London: ^eidenfeld
and Nicolson, 1971), PP- 353-57»

2 Mathieson, The ^wakening of Scotland, pp. 19-20; S mout, p. 219.
Mathieson, p. 101.
"Letter to J.B.S. Morritt," 22 ^ecember 1815? in '•'•'he Letters of Sj
Walter Scott, ed. H.J.C. Grierson (London: Constable & G o., 1932-37), IV, 146-47. ^ited Henceforth as ^>cott Letters.

41

votes'! became, according to Ramsay, the means by which a "great man", when malcont.ent, diowed his resentment of the political situation, whereas his ancestors would have summoned their friends and^dependants to rise against the throne.

Similarly, the comments on Godfrey Bertram's activities as a J.P. re-
late as much to 1&15 as they do to the 1760's. ^ertram dispatches beggars to the workhouse and the local idiot to the county bridewell, and abolishes the pedlar's annual rounds - but the "daft Jock" pines away and dies within six months, deprived of air and sunshine, while the local people miss their bartering with itinerant dealers, 'the local gossip, and the "self-applause" for distributing alms (I, 92-97). The narrator argues that " fejven an ad-mitted nuisance of ancient standing should not be abated without some caution," since

We are not made of wood or stone, and the things which connect
themselves with our hearts and habits cannot, like bark or
lichen, be rent away without our missing them (I, 95)

This was written at. a-'. time when the spread of industrialisation had led to the rise of a new group of paupers, people who had come to seek work in the towns and then been thrown nut of employment by the periodic shocks to trade during the second decade of the century* In 1812 a "Society for the Suppression of Public Begging" had been formed, advocating the establishment of more Houses of Industry and Houses of Hefuge for the poor. Scott is arguing however for a non-institutionalised system of poor-relief, since
it gives the poor some human contact and exercises the charitable impulses

Scotland and Scotsmen II, 4&«
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of. the quotation from Burke in the Introduction (see above, p. 15) Smout, p. 401> Henry ^rey ^raham, The ^ocial Life of Scotland in
the Eighteenth Century, 2nd edn (London: Adam and °harles Black 1900)"T"l,
255-

42

of the better-off. Apart from this, he favoured a voluntary assessment of the heritors in country areas, to make up deficiencies in the parish
2 funds 9 while his solution.,for the towns was one which sought to create in the manufacturing classes some sense of responsibility towards the unem-ployed: writing to Morritt in August, 1&17» he attacks manufacturers for overpaying workers and then turning them off when speculations failed, and advocates taxing manufacturers according to the number of workmen they em-ploy on average, in order to provide a fund for maintaining the manufacturing poor. Within the time-span of the novel however a paternalistic attitude towards the poor on the part of the individual proprietor is still seen as sufficient for country areas - seventeen years after their father's high-handed measures, have jeopardised the lives of the local poor, iVcy Bertram tells Harry that she hopes he can regain the estate so as to protect the poor and destitute dependants of the family (lll> 262).
The dispossession of the gypsies from ^erncleugh is related more expli-citly to events occurring round the time of writing. The destruction of the cottages is described as a "summary and effectual mode of ejection still practised in some remote parts of Scotland, when a tenant proves refractory" (I, 117) ^he notorious evictions of tenants on the Sutherland estates in northern ^cotland to make way for sheep-walks had occurred in 1&14, and in 1816 the Countess of Sutherland's agent Patrick Sellar was to

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be tried for burning tenants 1 houses, one with an old woman still inside. David Stewart of Garth in his Sketches of the Character, Manners and Present State of the Highlanders of Scotland (1822) was to assume that Scott was

of. Wordsworth's attitude in his "The Old Cumberland Beggar," written
in 1797,
2
McMaster, p. 125
* 11 august 1817, in ^cott Letters, IV, 495~96.

43

drawing attention to the Sutherland clearances in Guy Mannering. In Gallo-way itself by the 1820's the destruction of cottages due to consolidation of farms had led to an exodus of dispossessed tenants to villages and towns. But if the eviction of the gypsies is used to point to an issue of
Scott'^ own day, the prominent part played in the novel by gypsies and smug-glers can be seen as an evocation of the past. In the introduction to The Antiquary Scott explains that in both this novel and Guy Mannering he has taken his main characters "in the class of society who are the last to feel the influence of that general polish which assimilates to each other the manners of different nations" (v-vi). #irk Hatteraick and especially Meg Merrilies were often mentioned by reviewers as striking and memorable cha-racters. Recording to the account of the gypsies in ^hapter 7 there had been about a hundred thousand of them in Scotland up to the early eighteenth century, but by the time of writing their numbers had declined to about five hundred (I, 98-104). '^he original of Meg Merrilies, Jean Gordon, whom Scott discusses in the 1829 Introduction to the novel, had actually died
in 1745- However the ^umfriesshire-Galloway area in which the novel is set was still a backward and remote region in the early nineteenth century, and, according to Train, was still inhabited by gypsies, but in 1821 William Chambers noted that the gypsies in areas closer to Edinburgh (i.e. in places likely to be more familiar to the novel's readers), were largely assimiId-ted with the local peasantry.
The kind of smuggling dealt with in Guy Mannering, based in the Isle

1 McMaster, pp. 158-60.
2
George Chalmers, Caledonia, III (London: V. Caddel; Edinburgh: A. Constable & Co., 1824), p. 300.
See the Dryburgh edn (Edinburgh and London: Adam and Chcirles Black, 1892), xiv-xvii.
^'Letter to Scott," 3 July 1817, (National Library of Scotland, MS 874,
ff. 20V-22 r).
ffgploits and Anecdotes of the Scottish Gypsies (ijklinYm-na-vi • n~ •> i •= -
•Brown. 1886), n - 46

44

of Man (I,. 127) and involving contraband goods such as tea, cognac and Mefchlin lace brought into Scotland from thy Continent, was, as Scott's 1829 Introduction points out, destroyed by Pitt's commutation law which reduced the duties on excisable articles. This came into effect in 1764, very soon after the time in which the main action of the novel is set, but smuggling had already been undermined by the Crown's annexation of the Isle of Man in 1765* Puring the period in which the novel is set, the trade had been prac-tised by the common people, tolerated by the gentry, and even connived at by judges in their private capacities (I, 127). John Gait's Annals of the Parish (l82l) describes in the entry for 1761 the great smuggling trade cor-rupting people all along the west coast of Scotland, and causing battles

2 between smugglers and excisemen. Smuggling is later said to revive in 17^6

(about the time ^irk Hatteraick reappears in the Ellangowan area), but in Gait's account it is more easily controlled by this time because the American War has meant that there are more Kavy ships about. Moreover the practice became increasingly discredited among landed proprietors, since it was seen to distract tenants from work on the land and from industrious pursuits, as well as encouraging dissipated and reckless habits among the men.
ivith Mrs Mac-Candlish's reference to "'this weary American War"1 in
Chapter 12, the setting of the novel becomes more precise, but in this and many subsequent chapters the focus is not on the changes between c. 1760 and 1615 9 or on any major public events which have occurred in the seventeen years between Harry Bertram's disappearance and Mannering's return, but

William Ferguson, Scotland; 1689 to the Present (Edinburgh & London:
Oliver & Boyd, 1968), p. 160.

2 Oxford English Novels edn, ed. James Kinsley (London: Oxford Univer-
sity Press, 1967), pp. 11-12.
3 Gait, pp. 91-94-
[.William Alexander], Notes and ^ketches Illustrative of Northern
Rural Life in the Eighteenth Century (Edinburgh: David Douglas, 1877)> p.

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rather on the characters 1 memories. The discussion of the -Bertram family history at the inn shows how unreliable memory can be: the deacon thinks Harry Bertram disappeared twenty/years before, rather than seventeen (I, 179 and the precentor recalls Mannering as "'an ancient man, strangely habited111 who predicted that the "&ril One" would have power over the boy (I, 183-84)>-" Mannering 1 s letter to Mervyn slightly later on shows him too ruminating about the past, and regretting that he had been misled by his friend Archer into believing that his wife was involved in an intrigue with Brown (l, 196- 207). For him there is a great gulf between past and present:

landscape was the same; but how changed the feelings, hopes,
and views, of the spectatorl f^hen^ life and love were new, and
all the prospect was gilded by their rays. And now, disappoin-
ted in affection, sated with fame, and what the world calls
success, his mind goaded by bitter and repentant recollection,
his best hope was to find a retirement in which he might nurse
the melancholy that was to accompany him to his grave (l, 211)

Mannering seems to believe that he killed Brown in their d^iel, but later Julia's letters to Matilda Marchmont reveal that he is still alive (l, 266- 7&) Yet neither she nor Brown himself (who gives his account of the past to his friend Delaserre, I, 326-41) is aware of the real reason behind Mannering 1 s initial enmity towards him, attributing it to his prejudices in favour of high birth. Brown also mentions his Scottish background and the attachment he feels for the Scottish landscape, so that the reader may suspect even at this early stage that he is the long-lost Harry Bertram, Having a more accurate knowledge than any of the characters about what has really happened in the seventeen years since Bertram's disappearance, the reader is aware of the inadequacy of their interpretations of the past.

of. the tale on which the astrological part of the novol was based.

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sense of period is created by scattered references to Indian
affairs. Manner-ilia's career in India attracts the admiration of the people assembled at the inn, who have read in the papers iiow he '"relieved Cuddie-burn, and defended Chingalore, and defeated the great Mahratta chief, Ram Jolli Bundleman"1 (l, 190). Tne period from the 1760 f s to the 1790 's was one of continural warfare between the British and various native chiefs who were usually supported by the ^'rench. The early 1760* s had seen a series of British victories, but during the American War of Independence the French instigated further risings against the British, culminating in Hyder Ali's invasion of the Carnatic in 1780-81. This last is no doubt the crisis men-tioned in the novel which facilitated Brown's enlistment as an army volun-teer (I, 200). One of the crowd at the reading of Margaret -Bertram's will questions Mannering about future trouble to be expected from Tippoo *>aib (Hyder /Ili's son), with the aim of gleaning some advice about prospects for Sast India Company ^tock (ll, 296) - a reference to the threat posed to the

2 British by Tippoo 3aib from the early 1780 's on. However Mannering himself

is preoccupied with his chequered personal and family life, rather than with his military achievements, and deliberately eschews the "ostentatious dis-play of wealth" characteristic of "nabobs" returning to Britain from India with great fortunes in the late eighteenth century.
However if Mannering *s behaviour on acquiring an estate is unconventi-
onal for a man of the period who had made a successful career in India, Bertram s loss of his is partly due to conditions peculiar to the period. He has difficulty in getting a good price for it, or any purchaser other

^incent T. Harlow, The Founding of the Second -British i)mpire 1763-
1793 (London: Longmans, Ci reen and Co., 1967)7 I» 370; II, 32, 48, 114. Harlow, I, 363; II, 70. '^he Company was actually on the verge of bankruptcy in 17&1
On nabobs, see iSmout, p. 263; Bruce Lenman, Integration, ^nlighten-
ment , and Industrialisation; Scotland 1746-1632 (London: Edward Arnold, M8 1), p. 81} Philip Woodruff, T he' Men >%o Huled India, Vol. 1 The ^'ounders (London Jonathan Cape, 19S3, p/b 196377 P« ^3.

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than Clossin, because of the dearth of capital available on account of the war (l, 194)» '*'he tobacco trade stagnated because imports of raw tobacco from America were cut off, while markets for sugar, cotton and linen were uncertain. Shipping around Scottish coasts was harried by French and Ameri-can privateers, and by 177^ there had been a drain of money from the banks. In 1779 it was still difficult to borrow, even on the best security. It was also common in the late eighteenth century for lawyers to profit from convey-

2 ancing and land disputes, as Glossin does on the -Sllangowan estate. But the

main causes of Bertram's downfall are his own inertia (contrasted with his father Lev/is 1 s energetic attempts to improve farming practices), his trust in Glossin, and the latter's unmitigated villainy. And of course the long series of fortuitous encounters which lead to Harry Bertram's recovery of the estate are highly improbable, and are not related to the historical setting. Nevertheless, with the account of Brown/Bertram's experiences with ^andie Oinmont in Liddesdale, and of Mannering's visit to Pleydell in Edinburgh,
Scott widens his range of characters and begins to draw attention explicitly to changes which had taken place between c.1780 and 1&15 in both rural and urban life. As we have noted, Dinmont is seen in relation to his ancestors - he shows to some extent the aggressive tendencies of the old lawless Borderers, but channels this aggression into a lawsuit. However he is also the product of circumstances pertaining to his own time, and hence differs from the store-farmers of 1815. i'he account of life at Gharlie.l s-hope begins,

Hamilton, An Economic History of Scotland in the Eighteenth Century,
pp. 327-29. The tobacco shortage is mentioned in the account of one of Mrs Bertram's relations, a tobacconist, who had tripled his prices to everyone except her.
2
Smout, p. 363.
'^wo real-life inheritance cases full of coincidence may have contribu-
ted to Bertram's story, but neither came before the courts in the 1760's - 1780 1 s period. One, the Annesley case, discussed in the Gentleman's Magazine of July 1840, (reprinted by I*:>ckhart in the 1850 1-volume Life pp. 768-9) - it was tried in 1743* ^*he other, the -^ormont case, was recounted by ^cott in a letter to Lady Abercorn of May 1613 (ocott Letters, III, 275-78) was heard in 1M1, and not finally resolved till 1620. In neither car.e did the heir gain the estate.

The present store-farmers of the south of Scotland are a much more
refined race than their fathers, and the manners I am now to des-
cribe have either altogether disappeared, or are greatly modified
(II, 37)
narrator goes on to point out that the store-farmers preserve a "rural simplicity of manners" but also have "more commodious"1 houses, better-regulated habits^ greater knowledge, and a more refined sort of hospitality, accompanied by less drinking than formerly, The late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries had certainly seen an increase in wealth and refinement among Low-land farmers: tenants of larger farms had come to resemble country gentlemen in knowledge, education and manners. They began to build large Georgian houses which they filled with mahogany furniture, mirrors, feather-beds, carpets, pianos and Wedgwood china. They also began to dress in cottons from Lanarkshire and Lancashire, and to read more secular books. Most popular were books on agriculture, and in the description of Dinmont's farm the nar-rator draws attention to its deficiencies:

was rough and neglected in the neighbourhood of the house; -
a paltry garden, no pains taken to make the vicinity dry or com-
fortable, and a total absence of all those little neatnesses
which give the eye so much pleasure in looking at an English farm-
house (II, 48)

In the land nearby there are "[njo inclosurec, no roads, almost no tillage" (II, 34). Scott is dealing here with a period when agricultural improvements like drainage and the cultivation of a wide variety of vegetable* had begun, but had by ho means made the advances which were to occur by 1&15- It was on-ly after 1780 that tenants (as distinct from landlords) began to take a lea-

2 ding role in improvements, such that in 1810 Malthus could attribute advances in Scottish husbandry to the "improving capitals and skills of the tenantry^ 11

Smout, pp. 312-14
, pp. 29&-99.
Smout, p. 308.

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Ait certainly a comparison between ^inmont f
noble cow-house, well filled with good milk cows, a feeding-house,
with ten bullocks of the most approved breed, a stable, with two
good teams of horses ••• an air of liberal though sluttish plenty
(II, 49)
and the state of Tully-Veolan in 1745 suggests that great progress had been made*

Moreover, despite the narratorial assertion of the superiority of con-*- temporary store-farmers over t/iose of thirty years before, the liveliness and generosity of the Dinmont family make them attractive characters, and there is some suggestion that the increase in sophistication since c. 1780 has been a loss as veil as a gain: when Ailie Dinmont says farewell to Brown, she" offers him- her cheek with "an affectionate simplicity which
marked the olden time" (II, 74) And the salrnon-spearing, presented as a sport enjoyed by all concerned, also provides a "savoury addition" to the usual winter food of the shepherds and cottars (II, 68) - but, according to Ramsay, salmon had become a luxury by the early nineteenth century. Perhaps too Dinmont f s later comment that he cannot buy another farm with his spare money because his landlord the Duke "' canna bide to put away the auld tenan-try 1 " (ill, 224) is an oblique criticism of the tendency of contemporary land-lords to sell or rent land to the highest bidder, regardless of whether they and their families traditionally held land on the estate, tie have already noted too how enclosure was one cause of the dispossession of tenants. Francis Jeffrey was to write enthusiastically of Scott's treatment of Dinmoni;, that he was

Scotland and Scotsmen, II, 68.

the best rustic portrait that has ever yet been exhibited to the
public - the most honourable to rustics, and the most creditable
to the he*.rt, as well as the genius of the artist - the truest to
nature - the most interesting and the moct complete in all its
lineaments

There is again a sense of nostalgia I think in Scott's approach to the Edinburgh society of the 1780 f s. He is dealing with a period when the buil-ding of the New Town had just begun - "ttihe desire of room, of air, aid of de-cent accommodation, had not as yet made very much progress," and most of the upper classes still lived in cramped "flats or dungeons" in the Old Town (II, 355-56). Different social classes lived on different floors of the same block % of flats, and the buildings themselves, like the one where Pleydell lives, were very high: Edward Tophara, an -English visitor of 1776, was astonished at the height of the houses, at the steep wynds and closes, and also at the contrast between these and the elegant Georgian houses of the emerging,New
2

Town. Some of the Old Town survived up to Scott's own day (I, 257) - as it still does - but by 1815 the flats formerly occupied by lawyers and aristo-
o-

crats were filled with the lower orders. By then there were about two thou-sand houses in the New Town, a number which continued to rise, In c, 1780 Mannering and Sampson had stayed at an inn in Edinburgh, as there were no hotels, but by l8l6 there were fifteen in the New Town.
Conneoted with Pleydell*s predilection for life in the Old Town is the survival into the early 1780 f s of the custom of lawyers seeing clients in taverns. This practice, the narrator explains, had been general fifty years before, but by this time was retained only by a few old-fashioned lawyers (ll, 256). ^nd by the time the novel was written, combining drinking with

"Tales of My Landlord," ^dinbur^h Review, 28 (1817), 193-259, at 198.
2
Smout, p. 370.
K5.chc.el Joyce, Edinburgh; The Golden Age 1769-1632 (London: Longman*;.
Green and ^o., 195l)> Pp/v'-fS"
, p. 371.

51

business was even less respectable. Ramsay recalled in the early nineteenth century that late in the eighteenth, drinking at taverns was "in much more repute with men of all professions and characters than at present." He is discussing in particular the drinking hcibits of the elder President Dundas of Arnistoun, and in a note of 1&29 ^cott tells an anecdote of the same man which he says is the basis for Pleydell 1 s account of how he himself drew up an appeal case in the midst of a revel (II, 337-38; note in -Oryburgh edn,
p. 430). Henry Cockburn was also to notice the decline of swearing and drunkenness among the uppsr ranks since the eighteenth century, when getting drunk in a tavern had been "a natural, if not an intended consequence of

2 going to one," and to connect this and other changes in Scottish manners

with the rise of the New Town and the accompanying increase in population - these developments "obliterated our old peculiarities with the greatest rapidity and effect." He found the alteration in manners, the disappear-ance of the "picturesque peculiarities*1 of the Scottish character, in "rapid and visible progress" by the 1790 f s, but it had started some years earlier. By the time he is writing, in the l&20's; the transformation is complete, ^ertainly in the novel Pleydell, devotee of habits uhich are pldfashioned
in his own time and obsolete by l8lp; is held up for the reader's admiration on account of his immediate willingness to help Mannering and Lucy despite his drunken revelry, c,nd his persistent efforts on their and Hurry's behalf. Mannering 1 s meeting with Pleydell also puts him in contact with the leading literary and intellectual figures of the Scottish Enlightenment.

Scotland and Scotsmen, I, 71»
2 Memorials of His Time, 1779-1830, ,ed. Harry A. Gockburn (Edinburgh
and London: T.N. Poulcs, 19^9), P» 29.
Memorials, p. 26.
Memorials, p. 25

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When Pleydell offers to accompany him to church, Mannering declares that he "'should wish much to hear some of your Scottish preachers whose talents have done such honour to your country - your Blair, your Robert son, or your Henry 1 " (II, 284), and although he is able to hear only the "colleague of
t

Dr R " - whom Scott identifies in a note to the 1829 edition as ^r ^rskine'
- the latter*s sermon is described as

fraught with new, striking, and entertaining views of scripture
history, in which the Calvihism of the Kirk of Scotland was ably
supported, yet made the basis of a sound system of practical
morals, which should neither shelter the sinner under the cloak
of speculative faith or of peculiarity of opinion, nor leave him
loose to the waves of unbelief and schism (II, 286-87)

Mannering reflects that he "had seldom heard so much learning, metaphysica.1 acuteness, and energy of argument, brought into the service of Christianity" (II, 287). According to Pleydell ^rskine also "*has nothing of the souring or Pharisaical pride which has been imputed to some of the early fathers of the Calvinistic Kirk of Scotland*" Later Pleydell gives Mannering notes of introduction to "some of the first literary characters of Scotland" - David Hume, John Home, Dr ^erguson, ^r Black, Lord Kaimes, Mr Hutton, John Clerk of .Sldin, Adam Smith, and Dr Robert son (II, 328).
These men, together with Blair, Henry and ^rskine mentioned earlier, comprise most of the leading figures in law, religion, history, science and literature in Scotland in the latter part of the eighteenth century. Hugh Blair (1718-1800) and Robert Henry (1718-90) were both churchmen, but the former was to become famous for his Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres (1783) as well as for his five volumes of sermons (1777 -)> while the latter was celebrated for his History of England (1771-93). &lso known for his

II, 283 - an instance of hospitality noted as old-fashioned for the
period and presumably unheard of in 1615*
2 "Dr R-r-" was also identified in the Il2£ edn as "Dr Robertson".

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historical works was $r William Robertson (1721-93), leader of the Moderate party in the Kirk of Scotland and Principal of Edinburgh University, whom Pleydell calls "'our historian of Scotland, of the Continent, and of America 1 (II, 286). His History of Scotland (1759), History of the Reign of Charles V (1769) and History of America (1777) were translated into all the major western European languages,and show a combination of narrative form, careful citation of authorities, and a penetrating analysis of s>ajor issues, invol-ving mastery of a great mass of material.
Meanwhile Scott's presentation of Robertson's colleague John £rskine
(l721 l803) is also borne out by contemporary accounts. Cockburn calls him the best-known Edinburgh figure of his time, reverenced by all because of his "fine spirit, operating in all the walks in which liberal religion and active benevolence can be engaged ... There was nothing that this man would

2 not do for truth or a friend." In church he preached with great earnestness^ but "with none of the Presbyterian roar or violence.""* Alexander Somerville noted particularly his lack of dogmatism, calling him the most ""'practical

4: and useful preacher 1 " he had ever heard. ^cott as a child would have heard him praach, since his parents supported -^rskine's evangelical views and pat-ronised Old Greyfriars church, but Scott himself later became an Episcopalian like Pleydell. He draws attention to Erskine's emphasis on "a sound system of practical morals" and his treatment of the seventeenth-century Cameronians in his later novel Old Mortality (1817) was to show his dislike of a theolo-

Lenman, Integration, flightemaent> and Industrialisation, pp. 37-3&.
2
Memorials, p. 49*
Memorials, p. 50«
'' Life and ^irnes, p. 62; quoted in Mathieson, 'Jhe ^-wakening of Scot land f
p. 230.

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gioal dogmatism which did not encourage moral behaviour (rather the reverse). John Home, author of History of the Rebellion of 1745 (1802), was famous for his tragedy Douglas (1756), the most celebrated Scottish play of the late eighteenth century. We' have already had occasion to notice the work of Adam Ferguson, whose £3say on the History of gjvil Society (1767) was a pio-neering work of social theory, setting out to explain the different stages through which societies progressed from rude ages to times of refinement
and civilisation and into decline. David Hume is of course the celebrated philosopher, acknowledged doyen of the Edinburgh literati by 1772 but best-known for his History of England (1754-56). ^he reference to him in the novel however shows the risk which Scott ran in making the dating more spe-cific in this part - Hume actually died in 1776. His great friend the eco-nomist Adam Smith (1723-90) succeeded him as the great arbiter of literary taste in Edinburgh - his book The Wealth of Nations (17?6) gave him much influence and status with the leading politicians of the day, and Mannering no doubt attends one of his Sunday supper-parties which became famous as a resort of talent and intellect after 177&
Prominent in science was Dr Joseph Black (1728-99), Professor of
Chemistry at Edinburgh University from 1766 to 1795, who discovered carbon dioxide and helped to make possible the work of Priestley, Scheele, Caven-dish and Lavoisier. He also formulated the theories of latent heat and of specific heat which helped James Watt, inventor of the steam engine, towards the idea of a separate condenser. James Hutton (1726-.97) was a pioneer
of modern geology, explaining the phenomena of the earthJs crust by means of the changes still in progress, while John Clerk of dldin (1728-1&12),

Lenman, p. 86; Joyce, p. 25

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father of Scott's friend William Clerk, was* famous mainly for his essay on naval tactics, but, according to Cockburn, possessed scientific knowledge of a more general kind, and gave advice to the philosophers of his day.
In the context of the novel, the most interesting figure whom Mannering meets is probably Lord Kaiiaes (Henry Home, 1696-1762). A judge of the Court of Session, he was seen as the ideally-cultivated raan of law of the period, since he promoted philosophy, belles lettres, arts and manufactures, while his treatise on farming, The Gentleman Farmer, was the most popular book

2 among improving landlords before the 1790*s. His conversation was "rich and fascinating," while his humour was very versatile* Indeed at this period the pursuit of law was seen as a guarantee of a liberal mind, and lawyers saw themselves as leaders' of both society and national thought. In the novel Pleydell, although hardly so famous or versatile as Kaimes, owns portraits bjr Jamieson/ the Caledonian Vandyke," as well as "the best editions of the best authors, and in particular an admirable collection of classics," and declares that

"a lawyer without history or literatiire i& a mechanic, a mere
working mason; if he possesses some knowledge of these, he may
venture to call himself an architect" (II, 289-9°)

Hence through his own literary tastes as well as through his acquaintance with leading intellectuals of the period, Pleydell is seen as playing a minor part in the Scottish Enlightenment, while his behaviour as a lawyer qualifies the view of the law suggested by the character of Glossin.

Memorials, p. 263-
2 Smout, pp. 374-75; Daiches, The Paradox of Scottish ^ulture, p. 60.

Scotland and Scotsmen, I, 201.
•L>aiches, Paradox, p. 5T«

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After mentioning all these figures, the narrator praises them as

a circle never closed against strangers of sense and information,
and which has perhaps at no period been equalled, considering the
depth and variety of talent which it embraced and concentrated
(II, 329)
'^heir contemporary the ^ev. Alexander Carlyle recalled in his Autobiography, "a fine time it was when we could collect -^avid Hume, Adam Smith, Adam ^erguson, Lord Elibank and Drs. Blair and Jardine, on an hour's warning" for a lively intellectual discussion over drinks at a tavern. But the nar-rator laments that "it is not in our power to give the reader an account of the pleasure and information" which Mannering received from all the talented men he met (II, 329). Except for Ferguson, who survived till 1816, they were all dead by the time the novel was written. In the l820 f s Gockburn, writing of Black, ^rskine, Robertson, Ferguson and Henry, was to express the fear that

no such other race of men, so tried by time, such friends of each
other and of learning, and all of such amiable manners and such
spotless characters, could be expected soon to arise, and again
ennoble Scotland.'"

He felt that "by about the year 1&20 the old thing was much worn out, and there was no new thing, of the same piece, to continue or replace it," and that over the 1790-1810 period the calibre of the clergy and the standard of Kirk leadership had declined. Scott himself had known Black, Perguson, ^rskine, Smith and Home in his youth, and was to tell Lookhart in 1819 that he wished he or someone else had written a work twenty-five or more years

Quoted by Smout, p.
Memorials, p. 52.
3 Memorials, pp. 197-9&* 224-26

57

before which would "have handed them down to posterity in their living colours." By describing ^rskine and his preaching, and by mentioning the main figures of the Scottish ^nlightemnont only to point out that he cannot give an account of their conversation, Scott's narrator is drawing attention to what has been lost since c. 17&0, creating a sense of nostalgia. On the other hand it is difficult to imagine what role any discussion involving ^avid Hunre, Adam Smith et al could have played in the novel. Scott does evoke a certain lively social and intellectual environment, but at the
same time indicates the limits of his concerns in the novel. He is more interested in gypsies, smugglers and store-farmers than in -^dinburgh intel-lectuals, more interested in private life than in the real historical figure of the period. The writers of the Scottish Enlightenment were after all often concerned to avoid Scotticisms in their works and to produce books which would make their mark in ^-ngland and -^urope as well as in ^Gotland,
2

which they usually referred to as "North Britain", and in this way contri-buted towards the disappearance of manners and customs peculiar to Scotland, the spread of "that general polish which assimilates to each other the man-ners of different nations."

28 July 1819, in Scott Letters, V, 430.
2
^>ee Niches, Paradox, 20ff, 73.

SCOTT - 3.. THE ANTIQUARY.

As we have noted, the historical setting of The Antiquary - "near the end of the eighteenth century" - is established in the first sentence of the novel. No more specific date is mentioned, but events referred to later suggest that the story takes place in about 1794. One hypothesis about Lovel in Fairport is that he is an "emigrant noble, summoned to head an insurrection that had broken out in La Vendee" (I, 328), that is, the leader of a revolt by anti-revolutionary forces or Ghouans in the west of i4'rance which erupted in March, 1793> was largely put down in -^ecember of the same year, but smouldered on in guerilla warfare during 1794* Trouble broke out

2 again in 1795> but was suppressed in November, when the leaders were shot. Very near the end of the novel Lovel recalls his meeting with his former nurse Teresa D'Acunha in a convent in a town which his regiment had occupied in -^'rench Flanders the year before. He had been unable to hear the full story of his parentage and rank, however, since the French Republicans had pillaged the town and burnt down the convent, killing several nuns including Teresa (ill, 347-48). ^his incident could have been part of the republicans 1 campaign to expel all the foreign invaders from their own territory, which began in 1793 and culminated in the Battle of Fleurus on 25 June, 1794» re-opening their way to Belgium. Oldbuck's reference to the '"set of furious madmen 1 " in possession of the government of France (ill, 123) suggests that he is speaking during the Reign of Terror, which lasted from October 1793 till July 1794» a*id had been partly precipitated by the insurrection in La

1 War and Peace in an Age of Upheaval 17^3-1050, ed. C.W. Crawley; Vol.
IX of the New Cambridge Modern History (Cambridge; Cambridge University Press, 196577 pp. 176-64.
p
dar and Peace..., p. 288.
War and Peace...* pp.

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Vendee. In Chapter 5 "the volunteer corps of citizens in Fairport is des-cribed as "lately embodied" (I, 92), and later Oldbuck mocks the military fervour of the similar group in Edinburgh - his lawyer, agent, mercer, ban-ker's clerk, surgeon and physician have all joined (I, 126-27).
These voluntary corps of citizen militia had been formed for the defence

2 of the country in the event of a French invasion as early as 1794- On the

other hand, fears of such an event were more acute over the 1795— 9& period: in November 1795 "the *'rench Directory contemplated invading Britain, but by ^ebruary 179&> Napoleon, whose influence was increasing at this time, had come to oppose the scheme, while the British victory in the -Battle of the Nile (l August 179S) forced the ^rench to turn their attention elsewhere
for a few years. Fears revived in the early nineteenth century, and, accor-ding to Cockburn, from 1803 to 1814 Edinburgh was a camp - "the parade and the review formed the staple of meris talks and thoughts," as the invasion

O,

threat united all parties in defence of the country. ™he false alarm on which the events at the end of the novel are based actually occurred in Feb-ruary 1604, as Scott was to point out in a note to the 1629 edition. More-over the "powder-tax" (or tax on hair-powder) which has undermined Caxon's business in wigs (llT, 14) was not introduced till 1795* In anv case the use of a quotation from Wordsworth's '"-^he ^'ountain: A Conversation" early in the novel to express Oldbuck's .response to the change from youth to old age (I, 212), suggests that Scott is willing to sacrifice strict chronological con-

War and P eac e • » • , pp. 280— 81, — — — . - — — —
See Scott's letters to Charles Kerr, 30 June 1794 (Scot^ Letters, I,
33) and to Miss Christian Rutherford, 5 September 1794 (I, 35)> on the ^din-burgh militia.
Henry »J. Meikle, Scotland and the French Revolution (Glasgow: James Maclehose and Sons, 1912), pp. 161, 177 •
^ Memorials, pp. 179-80.
e

See Dryburgh edn (Edinburgh and London: Adam and Charles Black, 1893), pp. 419-20.
of. Mannering's feelings on his return to ^

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sistency for the sake of making his characterisation more subtle, revealing Oldbuck as capable of self-analysis and deep feeling, and as responsive to contemporary literature as well as to relics of the distant past. A foot-note points out that Wordsworth's Lyrical ballads had probably not been pub-lished - that is, that Oldbuck could not really have quoted the poem at the time the novel is supposed to be set.
Allusions to democratic movements and to popular discontent also evoke
the atmosphere of the 1790*s< In Chapter 5 reference is made to "the two parties which then divided ^"airport, as they did more important places," and Lovel is described as "too little of an aristocrat to join the Club of Royal ^rue Blues, and too little of a democrat to fraternize with an affiliated society of the soi disant friends of the People, which the borough had also the happiness of possessing" (I, 92). ^axon talks of the commons 1 being discontented and rising above the law, and Sir Arthur Wardour holds forth about the aims of the French

"an enemy who comes to propose to us a whiggish sort of govern-
ment, a republican system, and who is aided and abetted by a sort
of fanatics of the worst sort in our own box^els (•!, -124)

- albeit his identification of Edie Ochiltree as one of these "fanatics" is very wide of the mark. Saunders Kucklebackit in conversation with Oldbuck refers to " f thue times when they were ganging to raise up the puir folk against the gentles'" (III> 95)> while Bailie Littlejohn, who has imprisoned Ochiltree at Dousterswivel's instigation, speaks importantly of his corres-pondence with the Under Secretary of State, ' on putting down political societies/" ""hen Oldbuck hints that Dousterswivel's story of hidden treasure

or that he could have heard it from Wordsworth himself? The poem, was written in 1799 a^d published in the second volume of Lyrical Ballads in l&Ou,

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in the ruins of £>t. Ruth may have been concerned with a bribe from the i'rench for a great man, or funds for a seditious club, LittleJohn declares that any plot must have "'treason in it, or sedition at least 1 " (ill, 179, 199)• Oldbuck's renewed intercourse with the ^arl of Glenallan, meanwhile, causes him to be suspected by both sides - the democrats believe that Glen-allan is consorting with Oldbuck over bringing down his H/ghland tenantry to put down the meetings of the -^'riends of the People, while the volunteers and Loyalist club fear the £arl as a Catholic with French friends, and suspect that Oldbuck is "*no a gude friend to government 1 " as he had not encouraged the petition about the peace, or the one in favour of the new tax, nor sup-ported bringing in the yeomanry to break up the "meal mob" (ill, 145-46). The outbreak of the French ^evolution had led to the formation in ^ng-
land and Scotland of groups aiming to promote its principles, influenced particularly by Tom Paine f s phenomenally successful ^ights of Man (1791-92). Groups called the Associated Friends of the People grew up in Edinburgh and other Scottish towns throughout 1792, and the government became alarmed at the spread of these organisations, especially as the year had seen various disturbances. There was a riot in Dundee over the high price of meai - (presumably the "meal mob" mentioned in the novel), which involved the plan-ting of a "liberty tree" in support of French Revolutionary ideas.* Groups expressing loyalty to the government began to be established, and 1793 saw the decline of such middle and upper-class support as the Friends had attrac-ted, as well as the radicalisation of their aims, u/hen war broke out between Britain and *' rance, they published resolutions against it. Meanwhile the

Mathieson, Tke f\ wakening of ocotland, pp. 123-24.
'•L'he editor of the Centenary edition of the novel (Edinburgh: ^dam and Charles -Black, 1866), claims that Fairport is thought to be based on ^rbroath, near ^undee (p. 26).

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~* Meikle, ^cotland and the French.devolution, 1

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authorities began to take action against the agitators, ^arly in 1793 three printers were imprisoned for proposing a seditious toast, and in ^ugust the advocate '^homas Muir was sentenced to fourteen years 1 transportation to Botany Bay for making seditious speeches and circulating seditious writings, (including Paine*s), but his real crime had been advocating parliamentary reform. '-Thomas Fysche Palmer, a Unitarian clergyman, was transported for seven years for publishing a pamphlet which opposed the war against France
o

and advocated universal suffrage. Their fate however roused the Friends of the People to new life and vigour, and at their Convention in October they passed resolutions in favour of manhood suffrage and annual elections, as well as adopting the French form of address "citizen", calling their meeting-places Liberty Hall and Liberty Court, proposing to divide the country into departments on the French model, and inscribing the minutes of their meeting "1st Year of the British Convention. 1 In 1794 however Joseph ^errald and Maurice Margaret (two delegates £-rom the London Corresponding Society, an organisation in ^gland with similar aims) and the Scottish radical rt illiam Skirving were each transported for fourteen years, while the printer of the •^dinburgh Gazetteer was outlawed. In the summer of the same year the Scot-tish agitators tfatt and Downie v:ere tried on a charge of high treason, for planning an insurrection based in Paisley and other manufacturing towns, and involving the kidnapping of the Edinburgh garrison and the surprise of the Castle. Both were convicted, and rt att was sentenced to death. As a result of these blows the Fri ends of the People were inactive after about 1796.

Mathieson, pp. 130-31.
2
Mathieson, p. 132.
Mathieson, pp. 133-36.
Mathieson, pp. 13&-39-

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In the novel it transpires that, despite evidence of political disaffec-tion, the people unite in defence of the country when they think themselves under attack from the Frencn> and give a "loud and cheerful acquiescence"
to -Bailie L.jttlejohn's declaration that Ml £w]e have made ourselves wealthy under a free and paternal government, and now is the time to shew we know its value 1 " (ill, 338). It is difficult to determine whether this enthusi-asm for the political status quo in the 1790's was as widespread as ^cott would have his readers believe, or whether the discontented were afraid to express their views because of what had happened to Muir, Palmer et al. The judge at the sedition trials, Lord Braxfield, had after all been blatantly partisan. Over the 1795—97 period tough measures were passed against sedi-tion in speech and writing, public meetings without a special permit were banned, newspaper stamp duties were raised, and printing presses were requ— p
ired to be registered. ^ockburn, a Whig but no revolutionary, felt that the 1790*8 were a period of great personal bitterness, when men expressing liberal opinions would encounter "insult and cold unkindness," and anyone supporting French Revolutionary ideals or measures for reform in Britain would be labelled a Jacobin. ^ven in 1&03 when fear of invasion had led
to greater unity in the country, John Younger, a farmer*s son and later a shoemaker, joined the volunteers only to avoid being drafted into the regular army, aid thought that the war was the result merely of the political machina-tions of the Government. He felt he was defending "our gentry's precious island," their estates and their repressive laws, while the gentry themselves were interested only in taxing the people, and were refusing him "the common

Lenman, Integration, Enlightenment, and Industrioili?,ation, p. 102

2 Mathieson, p. 11; Lenman, p. 104.
3 Memorials, pp. 73-74, 94-95-

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rights of common existence": the *'rench could be no: worse as masters. However this may be, the treatment of the military and politics.1 situ-ation of the 1790*3 in the novel has I think the overall effect of sugges-ting that it has little real importance in the lives of the characters. Lovel is not in fact involved in any insurrection in the vendee, and until he appears as Major Neville at the end, in charge of handling the alleged invasion, is preoccupied mainly with his love for Isabella rfardour and the handicap which his (supposed) illegitimacy poses for their union, '^he *%rl and Oldbuck discuss the French Revolution largely because it is the only recent event which has had enough impact for the Earl to have heard of it; and the renewed acquaintance between the two has nothing to do with politics, but has resulted from ^Ispeth's revelations and the ^arl's hope of tracing his son. Caxon complains of popular discontent only to attribute the current lack of respect for authority to the decline in the habit of wearing wigs among legal officials, and ^ir Arthur only directs the constables to take
up £die for "'spreading disaffection against church and state through the whole parish 1 " because the beggar has ridiculed the baronet himself, telling Caxon that "'^illie Howie's Kilmarnock cowl covered more sense than all the three wigs in the parish 1 " (I, 124)• ^aunders mentions " f thae times when they were gangng to raise up the puir folk against the gentles'" only to assure Oldbuck that he and ^teenie would not have let anyone harm the laird, while the "plot" involving -Dousterswivel which Oldbuck hints at, is not di-rected against the state but against Sir Arthur's fortune. -"-Ithough the adept is found to have h;~d "'some unlawful correspondence on the other side of the water 1 " (ill, 262), its nature is not specified, and Oldbuck's motive

^utobiography of John Younger, Shoemaker, St. Boswell 1 a (Ke)so: J. an(i
J.H. Hutherford, I8ol77 221ff. He also sees Scott's novels as showing con-tempt 'for the lower classes, presentin^, them as stupid and as preoccupied only with eating and drinking (pp. xvi-xviii, xxii).

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in discrediting him with Littlejohn had been simply to get ^die released. Finally, the beacon seen on the hill near the end is not of course a warning of a ^rench invasion but a bonfire of ^ousterswivel's mining equipment.
The characters remain basically unaffected by the highly-charged political atmosphere in which they live, but the context does mean that their actions can be wrongly interpreted in political or military terms, while also enab-ling them to rationalise a personal sense of injury, exploit the fears of others, or assert their loyalty to the status quo.
However Scott is I think also distancing his readers from the French Revolutionary wars and from the discontent of the period, '•'•his distancing effect arises partly from the mere passage of time - the novel was published in May Ifcl6, nearly a year after Waterloo, when the French had finally been defeated before they could invade Britain, Hence ocott can exploit the purely comic possibilities of the invasion scare, as in the scene where Oldbuck and his womenfolk fetch a series of old defective swords for him to wear (ill, 333-34)* IJ^he distancing is also geographical - the novel is set mainly in the country, whereas political discontent was centred on industria towns and involved mainly weavers, shopkeepers and artisans, the growth of trade and industry having led to more independence of thought among the middle and lower classes.
But Scott's main means of distancing his readers from the political and military situation of the 179°'s is through the detached and often ironical attitudes of Oldbuck himself. He is scornful of the military fervour which has gripped both Edinburgh and ^airport (l, 126-27), the sight of lawyers

Meikle, Scotland and the *'rench ^evolution, p. 6'<i.

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and agents and banker's clerks and doctors in uniform. Later he uses the fact that Hector K'lntyre could be asked to serve anywhere M| in the strange contingencies of the wresent war which agitates every corner of -i^rope"1 to urge upon him the importance of knowing about Runic monuments and other Scandinavian antiquities (ill, 16-19). When the rumour of a French invasion reaches him, he rejects it, and, on hearing that Caxon has been named to watch the beacon light, his first worry is about what will happen to his wig (ill, 311-12). ^ie arrives next morning to confirm the rumour, but Oldbuck is more interested in the old beggar's deception of Dousterswivel and in Level's efforts to relieve ^ir Arthur's financial difficulties (ill, 319-25). He is less preoccupied with defeating the French in c. 1794 than with encouraging Lovel to write a poem showing the Caledonians defeating the Romans in 64 A!) (i, 304ff)•
Scott as a young man in the 179°'s had reacted more strongly to events than does his middle-aged fictional character living at the same period. •a-fter watching the trial of datt, he had written to his aunt Christian Rutherford that it had revealed "the most atrocious & deliberate plan of villany which has occurrd perhaps in the annals of G. Britain," a plan which he thinks could have succeeded in part, "as far as concernd cutting off the soldiers & obtaining possession of the Banks besides shedding the Blood of the most distinguished Inhabitants." However he is pleased that the people "seem to interest themselves very little in the fate of their

2 soi disant freinds." In April of the same year he had been involved in a brawl with pro-democrat Irish medical students at a theatre and had to pay

1 5 September 1794, in Scott Letters, I, 34-35.
2

ocott Letters, I, 35» '^he echo of this in the novel ("soi disant
friends of the Papple") suggests that his attitude had not changed, even if his feelings had mellowed.

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bail to guarantee future good behaviour. "hen the Volunteers were embodied in Edinburgh, ^cott became Quarter-master, secretary, and briefly Paymaster of the ^oyal ^dinburgh Light Dragoons; he was very enthusiastic about the appearance and performance of his troop, and looked forward to the chance of

2 fighting the French. Having heard that the French Directory had raised an

army to invade England, he wrote to Murray on 21 December 1797, the day before his wedding, that he "would march tomorrow - mark me even tomorrow - with all earthly pleasure to cut One & Two" at the invading army.
Oldbuck may then provide a means for ^>cott to project into the past
the calmer and more detached attitude towards the wars of 1793-1815 which it was easier to adopt after they were all over. But if his contemporary readers could feel secure from the threat of invasion by 1816, they could not feel so confident that the suppression of the Friends of the People had put an end to discontent among the lower classes, or to agitation for poli-tical reform. From 1815 onwards networks of Hampden Clubs grew up, inspired by the speeches and writings of Cobbett and the veteran agitator Major Cart-wright. The period was also one of economic depression in both industry and agriculture, with periods of mass unemployment in the towns, aggravated by the huge influx of returning soldiers, Irish labourers, and dispossessed Highlanders, as well as distress in rural areas when a decline in prices for agricultural products had led to reduced wages for labourers. In this con-text, ocott's approach to the character and social role of -^die Ochiltree, and to Oldbuck f s relationship with the Mucklebackits, takes on added signifi-

cance.

1 "Letter to Patrick Murray," April 1794 > in Scott Letters, I, 30 and

n.l» •\ «i
Letter to Kiss Christian Hutherford," October-November 1794, in
ocott Letters, I, 37•
3 Scott Letters, I, 66-67.
Smout, p. 446.

have noted that the paupers whom Godfrey Bertram removes £rom the
parish in c. 1764 were valued by the community for the gossip they retailed and the useful articles they sold. In The ^ntiqur.ry Mie plays an even more valuable and prominent part: he helps to rescue Sir ^rthur and Isabella when they are trapped by the tide (l, 153ff), retrieves an urgent letter for Lovel from Davie Mailsetter and delivers it (l, 331-34), makes an eloquent attempt to dissuade Lovel and M'lntyre from fighting their duel (II, 131-33)> and coneeals Lovel from the authorities after he has wounded his opponent (II, 137ff)« Later he contributes to the downfall of Dousterswivel by luring him to the chapel of St. Ruth's at night to have him beaten by Steenie (II, 233ff), helping Lovel to relieve ^>ir Arthur's difficulties by engineer-ing the latter 1 s discovery of the silver ingots (II, 154ff)» and bringing
the letter and money from Wardour's son which solve his financial problems (ill, 292ff)• He also acts as a messenger between ^Ispeth and the Earl,
thus helping to bring about the confession which will transform the lives of the idarlj Lovel, and Isabella (II, zyjff). More generally, as Oldbuck acknow-ledges after the beggar has told him what the "Kaim of Kinprunes" really is, he is
"one of the last specimens of the old-fashioned Scottish mendicant,
who kept his rounds within a particular district, and was the news-
carrier, the minstrel, and sometimes the historian of the district""

who "knows more old ballads and traditions than any other man in this and the four next parishes 1 " (l, 67-88). He prefers to be given his food "'wi 1 the look o 1 kindness that gars it digest sae weel 1 " from the community at large, rather than settle at Knockwinnock and face the scorn of Sir Arthur's servants (l, 26l), or accept money from anyone (I, 262ff). AS a result of his close ties with his local com; amity, when the country seems threatened with an inva-sion, he feels he has a personal stake in it (ill, 326).

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By the time Scott wrote The Antiquary the Bluegowns or King's tfedesmen
were still in existence - there were fifty-nine in 1&32, the year of Scott's death, and the last did not die till 1864 - but there were far greater num-bers of less privileged paupers created by low wages and unemployment in town and country. In the towns especially many people had no-one to turn to for help — the churches could not cope with mays unemployment, and the able-

2 bodied were not entitled to any church relief at all. Scott is then trying

to e/oke a period when poverty could be handled by means of private charity and the beggar could both maintain the respect of the community and play a valuable social role: the early 179^ f s were the end of a prosperous period in rural areas which had lasted since the 175^' s > with wages rising more than prices and a greater quantity and variety of food being consumed "by farm-workers, as well as clothing and heating being improved. But from 1795 onwards there were periodic bad harvests, which meant a dearth of grain, high prices, and $ore poverty. Oldbuck's description of Sdie suggests that his kind were dying out even in the 179° f s, and in the 1829 Introduction to the novel Scott was to distinguish old Scottish mendicants like -^die from "the utterly degraded class of beings who now practise that wandering trade" (Dryburgh edn, p. vii). Robert Chambers' account of Scottish mendicants claims that although beggars at the end of the eighteenth century were still a "respectable sort of people, occupying an honourable place at once in the farmer's estimation and his ingle-nook," about a hundred years earlier some had had an "almost dignified character," were even contemptuous of the mer-chant class, and were employed as minstrels and envoys of great families.

1 National Library of Scotland, MS 574.
Smout, p. 402.
Smout, pp. 317-18.
^ Smout, pp. 318-19; also ^ockburn, Hemo rials, pp. 65-66.
^ "Scottish Beggars of the Old ochool," (n.d.), National Library of Scotland, t,3 911, ff- 273r- 287 r, at f. 2

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Scott in l8l6 was aware of contemporary rural poverty- and discontent: writing to Morritt in February/March he noticed the fact that rents were ceasing to rise, but that farmers were speculating in land, "bidding over each others heads not with reference too often to the real value of the subject but to some theorttical idea of what it would be worth if the prog-

2 ressive value of land continued to rise." (Tarly in May, the month in which

the novel was published, he told Morritt how both current and winter wages were down, but how the farmers could not afford to pay any more than they were doing, '^here was, he said, a "spirit of effervescence" about, and he feared that military force would be needed to put it down - yet the trouble might be averted since there were "a thousand complicated causes making an ensemble too great for our views to embrace." f^hree months later he ar-gued that the bad economic conditions would however

have the effect of teaching the landed interest that their con-
nection with their farmers should be of a nature more intimate
than that of mere payment and receipt of rent and that the largest
offerer for a farm is often the person least fit to be preferd as
a tenant.

^his stress on the importance of relationships between landlord and
tenant which are not based solely on money is also found in the novel, where it is applied to other connections between people of different ranks as well. By volunteering to carry the head of ^teenie Mucklebackit*s coffin to the grave, Oldbuck gains "more popularity than by all the sums which he had yearly distributed in the parish for purposes of private or general charity" (ill, 47)y and Saunders later says that he and his son would have resisted any violence offered the laird during any outbreaks of discontent against

cf. ^he Antiquary, I, 31: since Oldbuck had inherited his father's
estate, presumably in about 1760, "the rent of his small property rose with the improvement of the country," without his having to exert himself.

2 3oott Letters, IV, 183.
3 aoott. Letters, IV, 22b.
"Letter to J.B.b. Morritt," 21 August 1616, in ocotb Letters, IV, ii/j quoted by McMaster, ocott and Society, p. 160.

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the gentry, because he was " f aye kind and neighbourly 1 " (ill, 95). Oldbuck himself endorses the custom of the landlord*s attending the peasant's funer-al, since it "'comes from ancient times, and was founded deep in the notions of mutual aid and dependence between the lord and cultivator of the soil 1 " (ill, 6), echoing the sentiments of contemporary landowners such as Lord Gardenstone, who had declared in his Letter to the People of Laurencekirk of 1779 that the "relationship of master and tenant, like prince and people, implies a reciprocal duty and mutual affection ... beneficence to tenants is the best privilege of landed property'" -^die declines money from Isabella after helping to rescue her and her father from the waves, and in trying to persuade M'lntyre to desist from his planned duel against Lovel, urges his connection with the family as an old soldier of his father (ll> 130). M'lntyre tries to fob him off with money, but soon afterwards realises how pointless the duel really was, and when -Edie has been imprisoned through the machinations of Dousterswivel, goes off to try and have him released, explai-ning to Oldbuck, "'[hje was a soldier in ray father's company ...and besides, when I was about to do a very foolish thing one day, he interfered to pre-vent me'" (ill, 157)• Sir Arthur's servant also regrets swiftly that he
has seen his connection with the tfardour family in purely monetary terms, rihen the baronet, in great distress over his impending ruin, dismisses him for over-browning the toast, Robert declares that he is ready to go the moment his wages are paid - but as soon as Sir Arthur has collected together the money for him, he tells Isabella that he really "'had nae thoughts o' leaving the family in this way 1 " since he had been long in Sir Arthur's ser-vice, and the baronet and his daughter been a kind master and mistress (ill, 250-52), ""hen reinstated by ^ir Arthur after the recovery of the family's fortunes, and offered help by Isabella for his mother's rheumatism, Robert

quoted by Smout, p. 262.

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dilates on how the house of Knockwinnock has "'been a kind and a gude house to the puir this mony hundred years'" (ill, 305).
'•^he antiquarian interests and controversies of Jonathan Oldbuck and
•^ir Arthur Wardour are a subject for much comedy in the novel, and the viru-lence with which they express their views was characteristic of antiquaries of the period. The " 'learned Pinkerton'" whom Oldbuck cites in support of his view of the Gothic origin of the Pictish language (l, 131) had attacked the Celts in 1789 as "natural savages" who had borrowed from other languages, whereas the Goths were the "conquering people, superior in all things to the Celts," 1 Pinkerton also ridicules the succession of 104 Scottish kings so dear to Sir Arthur (I, 101-2) as a "childish fiction," and his animosity towards the Celts extends to the Highlanders of his own time, whom he calls "stupid, indolent, foolish, fawning, slavish," Andrew Plummer (d. 1799)
an antiquary whose work Scott drew on for his Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border (1802-3 ^ attacks Pinkerton in letters of the 1790 's (to his fellow antiquary -^avid Herd), calling him "the Infallible who can impose upon any other person & was never imposed on himself," and condemning the "illiberal petulance, arrogance, and scurrility, which distinguish the Pinkertonian

5 School." Plummer himself discusses such subjects as Chaucer, Beaumont and

^letcher, the "Mirror of Magistrates" t Jonson, ancient ballads, Scott's ancestor Walter Scott of Harden, the vagaries of Shakespeare editors, his-torical inaccuracies in Shakespeare, the genealogies of the characters in

John Pinkerton, An -inquiry into the History of Scotland Preceding
the iieign of Malcolm III, or the Year 1036 (London : George Nicol; Edinburgh: John Bell, 1789), I, 137-3^
•Enquiry, I, 232
I, 340.
^ 17 December 1792, National Library of Scotland, MS 892, f . I6 r.
5 12 January 1793, Mo 692, f. 26V .

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Macbeth, the origin of the Jacobite vrtiite rose as a political symbol, and. ancient ^oman camps (arguing, against Herd, that "Kame" is a corruption of "camp"), ^cott owned this collection of letters, and one of them is possib-ly the source of the story of "Snuffy ^avie" and Caxton's Game of Chess* Meanwhile one of the champions of Sir ^rthur's side in the dispute over the PJctish language, Joseph Ritson (d. 1803), assails Pinkerton's views, clai-ming that the idea that the Picts spoke Gothic was, "if not a palpable false-hood, asserted without the slightest shadow of authority, and merely for the
p

support of a groundless and self -contradictory system." ^he ^entleman 1 s Magazine - a periodical to which Oldbuck claims to have contributed an ar-ticle (I, 304) - is full of contributions and letters of antiquarian inte-rest in 1794 J descriptions of churches, castles, ancient towers and tombs, mysterious inscriptions which readers are invited to help decipher, and Roman seals, altars and statues, '-^he controversy over the Pictish language is dealt with in the review of the Rev. John Lanne Buchanan's ^ef ence of the Scottish Highlanders > which is a reply to Pinkerton, asserting the purity and originality of the Gaelic language." The reviewer however confesses that he is tired of this argument, and supposes that his readers are too. Yet several readers expend ink attacking or defending other antiquarian works of the period, especially ^ollinson's History and Antiquities of Somersetshire, and the Rev. Richard Polwheie's History of Devonshire. •"•nother correspondent seeks readers' advice ee to what to do about his seven-teen-yec^r-old son and his friend, wh.a have gone antiquities-mad, thinking of

Antiquary, I, 57-59? letter of 71792, MS 892, f. 20.
p
Joseph Ritson, .annals of the Caledonians, Picts, and Scots; and _ Stratholyde, Cumberland, Galloway and Murray (jidi nburgh t rt. and D. Laing; London: Payne and *'oss, 1828), I, 124.
of. Oldbuck's and Dryasdust's six-year correspondence on the inscrip-
tion on a horn in York Monster, during which time they had settled the mea-ning of only one line (ill, 135)«
4 Gentleman's Magazine, 64 (1794), 453-56.
^ Gentleman's Magag ine, 64 (1794), 497-99. 701-3- 1165-67 117O

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nothing else but becoming an F.A.o. "^ometimes I perceive them in deep study over a piece of copper as plain as a common half-penny," he writes, whije his son has "rambled over the whole country in search of old coin
"

and heathen altars, which are erected in every room of my house.
quarianism was clearly open to ridicule in the 1790*3 as well as in 1816, and the reviewer in the Augustan ^eview described the "ridicule of antiquar-

2 ianism" as a "beaten path' 1;
Antiquarians of 1616 do not however appear to have differed much from
those of the generation before. '£he novel refers to the "lords, knights, and squires of our own day" who have imitated Don Quixote in exchanging "fields and farms for folios and quartos of chivalry" (l, 57)» 'x k© change that has occurred in the previous twenty years is that book prices have increased enormously, so that although Oldbuck has paid an inflated price for Johnnie H&wie's land under the illusion that it is the site of ^-gricola's battle against the Caledonians, he has been able to build up his collection of books and pamphlets at no great expense (l, 56-57)• ^ne Gentleman's Magazine for 1816 features many contributions dealing with antiquities, including a review of the Rev. T.D. Fosbrooke's Latent Anti4uities» on the language of the ancient Gauls and Tritons, arguing that the Celts probably used at least one Gothic alphabet, as well as comments on the origins of place-names in London and on the etymology of ll(^ Cambridge! Ritson's Annals » moreover, was not actually published till 1626, twenty-five years after his death, while George Ghalmers (1742-1825), another authority cited by "'ardour on his side of the argument, did not publish his principal contri-

1 Gentleman's Magazine, 64 (1794), 4^-25.
2 'Higustan ^eview, 3 (l6l6), 155-77, at lib.
3 Gentleman's Magazine NS 9 (l8l6), 306-9.
4 Gentleman's Magazine N3 9 (1^16), 394-96, 515-16.

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ribution to the subject till 1807. The reviewers and correspondents of Iol6 are however less aggressive and argumentative than those of 1794* ^cott wtts of course an antiquary himself: throughout the 1790 f s he was collecting the ballads for his Minstrelsy, and in 1796 made excavations on the site of the old Roman fort at Dunnottar. In March 1813 he had to dec-line to join a Northumbrian Society of Antiquaries on the grounds that he was already a member of two similar groups in Scotland, and in 1823 was to be involved in founding the Bannatyne Club in Edinburgh, which aimed to pub-lish source material for Scottish history. He collected books, manuscripts broadsides, old weapons and other relics at Abbotsford, and an 1829 footnote points out that he owns a copy of the seventeenth-century broadside which Oldbuck shows to Lovel (Dryburgh edn, p. 25).
Antiquarianism is not the only theme of the novel where we find that
little change had occurred between 1794 and- 1816. M'lntyre challenges Lovel to a duel on the grounds that he will not prove his identify, and in 1&15 a correspondent in the Gentleman's Magazine quotes approvingly a contemporary attack on duelling:

Now a man kills his companion for treading on his toe - his
friend, for contradicting him - and his brother, for having a
better dog '

'^he "rage for funeral ceremonial" which is shown in the Mucklebackits* expenses at Steenie's burial is said to infect the Scottish peasantry still in 1816, and the narrator claims to have known

1 Caledonia, 3 vols (1807, 1810, 1824).
2 "Letter to Rev. Dr Walker," 6 May 1794, in ^cott Letters, I, 48-50/
^ "Letter to John Bell Jr," 25 March Ifcl3, in ->cott Letters, III, 243.
^ "Letter from John P.M. Dovaston," Gentleman's Magazine, N3 8 (1615),
312.

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many in the lowest stations, who have denied themselves not
merely the comforts, but almost the necessaries of life, in
order to save such a sum of money as might enable their sur-
viving friends to bury them like Christians - as they termed it
(III, 46)

while their executors could not be persuaded to use this money to maintain the living- instead, ^imilarly the system of gynocracy operating among the fishing community, as expounded by Maggie Mucklebackit (II, 279-81)/is des-cribed in a note as still current (-^ryburgh edn pp. 417-18). And as far as a higher rank of life is concerned, Sir Arthur is said to live

like most country gentlemen in Scotland - hunted and fished -
gave and received dinners - attended races and county meetings -
was a deputy-lieutenant and trustee upon turnpike acts (I, 100-1)

preoccupations which had not changed much by 1816. -^t the very end of the novel in fact the distinction between past and present is strangely blurred: the narrator shifts into the present tense, and explains how Mrs Hadoway and the Mucklebackits continue to receive the bounty of Lord and Lady Geraldin (formerly Lovel and Isabella n/ardour) under the supervision of ^die Ochiltree. the "young soldier" Hector is "rising rapidly in the army," while there is "talk of a marriage between Miss M'lntyre and Captain Wardour, but this wants confirmation" (ill, 353-54)• But if about twenty years have passed since the tine of the main action of the novel, iSdie is most likely dead, Hector is scarcely young any more, and Mary M'lntyre and Captain ^ardour are being unusually cautious about embarking upon matrimony. In view of all this it is understandable why the writer in the Monthly Review felt that the novel was not "a delineation of the manners, considered generally, of any one short limited period whatever," albeit the writer in the Augustan Review did des-cribe it as a "glowing resemblance of the manners, customs, and characters,

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which were fast fading away." But the hovel does explore in some detail the issue of how the individual responds to the past.
Edie's revelation about the true nature of the "Kaim of Kinprunes"
early in the novel shows up the deficiencies of Oldbuck's approach to the past: he has been so concerned with speculating over an event in the dis-tant past that he has ignored the life going on around him, and the know-ledge available from iCdie, who is a living repository of tradition. Old-buck's own attitudes are (from the perspective of both 1794 and 1616) a curious mixture of the modern and the old-fashioned. He supports the origi-nal ideology of the French Revolution and the Protestant succession at home, but persists in wearing a wig, a practice which declined over the second half of the eighteenth century, especially after the tax on hair—powder
was introduced in 1795* He rejects the "modern slops of tea and coffee"
in favour of "Mum" described as "a species of fat ale, brewed from wheat and bitter herbs, of which the present generation only know the name by its occurrence in revenue acts of parliament" (l, 231) - although tea—drinking

2 had made rapid progress before 1745> an(* was certainly replacing ale and

whisky by 1800. He also goes in for big meals consisting largely of meat, of the kind that were becoming less common among lairds by the end of the century, offering his guests a dinner "such as suited a professed antiquary, comprehending many savoury specimens of Scottish viands, now disused at the tables of those who pre-^es-s elegance" - solan goose, hotchpotch, fish and sauce, crappit-heads, and chicken pie (l, 121-22). And while he keeps up

1 Monthly Review, 82 (1817), 38-52, at 39; Augustan Review, 3 (1&16), 155-77, at 155-
2
^Gotland and Scotsmen, II, 71-72.
^ Smout, p. 288.
4 ^rnout, pp. 287-88.

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traditional ties with his tenants and despises the people of ^airport for their worship of the Golden Calf (I, 300], he is also niggardly with his own money.

^ir Arthur Ukrdour, who considers himself a Jacobite, shows how by the ITSO's Jacobitism was a "sort of speculative opinion merely - the shadow
of a shade" (l, 123)• Although continuing to pray for the ^tewarts even when the family was extinct, he had "fairly gulped down the oaths of abju-ration and allegiance" in 1770 in order to promote a candidate in a disputed election, and behaves "in all actual service and practical exertion" as "a most Zealous and devoted subject of George III" (I, 100). He does however need to believe in - and to make others believe in - an "heroic past":
when threatened to.th imprisonment for debt he looks back nostalgically to his imprisonment in the Tower during the f 45:

"When I was sent to the Tower with my late father, in the year
1745 9 it wa-s upon a charge becoming our birth - upon an accusa-
tion of high--treason ... we were escorted from Highgate by a
group of life guards, and committed upon a secretary of state's
warrantj and now, here I am, in my old age, dragged from my
household ty a miserable creature like that, (pointing to the
messenger), and for a paltry concern of pounds, shillings, and
pence (ill, 290)

But this is really a distortion of the past: Sir %ithony "'ardour had served the Prince's cause in 1745 with v.ords only, and, like most Lowland Jacobites, had sought excuses for not joining the rebel army. He and his son had actually been released very promptly, as they had not committed any overt act of treason. For Oldbuck and "'ardour the remote past offers subjects for acrimonious controversy based on political prejudices which would otherwise have no outlet.

The last in the direct line from James II, Charles brother'Henry, Cardinal York, actually did not die till 1807.

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If ^ir Arthur embodies Scottish Lowland Jacobitism in its final throes, Oldbuck's nephew Hector M'lntyre shows readers of ^averley what can become of Fergus Mac-Ivor's kind of Highland martial spirit in a society where fight i fig» except against external enemies, is seldom called for. He chal-lenges Lovel to a duel on a trivial pretext, so that he is himself wounded and forces his opponent into hiding; he enters into a ludicrous combat with a seal in which he is worsted (ill, 27-29), and has to be prevented by his uncle from assaulting the legal officer who has come to supervise the sei-zure of Sir Arthur's property, totally ignorant of legal terminology, he does not understand the officer's claim that he has been "deforced" ("for-cibly interrupted in the discharge of his duty"), being himself "better ac-customed to the artillery of the field than to that of the law," and Old-buck has to explain that he is risking a severe penalty (ill, 275-76). ^oon after Hector has to be restrained again from attacking the bailiff and those under him, not believing that they really comprise an "officer" and a "party" (ill, 285-86). Hector is only able to £jct effectively when a real war is in question: he can speak of the actions in which he has been involved with modesty, spirit, and zeal (ill,124), and when a French invasion seems immi-nent, remains calm amid the general hysteria of the Oldbuck household (ill, 335), displaying "presence of mind, and knowledge of his profession" as he directs the precautionary meusureb to be taken with a "calm and steady manner" (ill, 338). After the '45 the Government channelled the military spirit of the Highlanders into its own service by establishing Highland regiments in the army, and from 1793 the Highlanders had responded enthusiastically to the demand for soldiers to fight the French.

Mathieson, p. 118.

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obvious ineffectiveness of M'lntyre's violent expedients in sol-
ving ^ir ^rthur's debt problem highlights again how legal measures had re-placed military action as a means of resolving disputes over property in the second half of the eighteenth century. Near the beginning of The ^nticiuary the innkeeper Hackitchinson tells Oldbuck proudly about his long i\.
lawsuit against Hutchinson about his backyard, - cause which has been before the Fifteen four times, perplexing them continually. Since it began in the time of Mackitchinson's grandfather, it has come to resemble an hereditary feud (I, 23-24). "hen Sir Arthur has been relieved of his financial *orries he accedes to his daughter's request that ale and beef should be distribu-ted to the servants and people assembled round the castle, on the grounds that this had always been done by the family "'when a siege had been raised1 Oldbuck points out that this "siege" had been "'laid by Saunders Sweepclean the bailiff, and raised by ^die Ochiltree the gaberlutyzie 1 " but goes on to say that "'these are such sieges and such reliefs as our time of day admits of ''(III, 307).
B'ut for all his military fervour, the portrayal of Hector M'lntyre
in the novel, as ^avid Brown has pointed out, shows how by the 1790's the Highlanders were losing some of their traditional characteristics. Hector tries to dismiss Biie's claim on him as a former soldier in his father's regiment by offering him money, and evades attending the funeral of -^teenie Mucklebackit, a tenant of his family, firstly pleading the lack of a mour-ning suit (III, 11?), and then using his fall during the combat with the seal as a pretext for returning to Monkbarns (ill, 129-30). He eagerly takes up the ^arl of Glenallan's offer of the use of his horses, resenting his uncle's interference when the latter points out that .Highlanders do not

1 -,. falter -^cott and the Historical Imagination, p. 61.

mount on horseback (III, 153f)» His enthusiastic championing of the authen-ticity of Macpherson's "Ossian" poems (ill, 20f) also suggests that he is out of touch with genuine Gaelic culture. MJ< acceptance of the forgeries is typical anough - he claims to h^ve heard the songs sung from infancy,
and "like many a sturdy Celt, he imagined the honour of his country and native language connected with the authenticity of these popular poems,
and would have fought knee-deep, or forfeited life and land, rather than have given, up a line of them" (ill, 20-21). -^ut it is also rather ironic, since the actual M'lntyre family were the hereditary bards of the Mackintosh* clan from the fifteenth century onwards and hence composed genuine Gaelic poetry. i hey included the prominent eighteenth-century writer of Jacobite, martial, satiric, descriptive and amatory poetry, Aincan Ban Macintyre. Hector's evasion of his obligations towards the Mucklebackits, tenants
of his mother's family, involves a rejection of traditional ties between landlord and tenant. *Hit the consequences of too close an adherence to traditional loyalties, and of keeping up habits and prejudices of 1he past, are demonstrated in the stories of the Glenallan family and of ^Ispeth MucklebacldLt. '^he ^lenallan family apartments are furnished "in the taste of a former and distant period" (II, 31?), while the ^arl himself has al-lowed his grief and remorse over whc-/t he thinks was his incestuous marriage with feline Neville to dominate his life for more than twenty years. 'He has lived a hermit-like existence and does not even know the extent of his own estate (ill, 316-19) or whether his carriage-horses were bred on it (ill, 153). He keeps alive on the c atholic side the religious bigotry of the past, having his mother buried at night although bhere is no longer any need to conceal a Catholic funeral-service: Luckie Mucklebackit cannot

Charles *'raser-Mackintosh, ^n Account of the Confederation of ^
Chattan (Glasgow: John Mackay, 1898), pp. 136-38; ^aiches, Paradox, p. 96.

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understand why the burial has been carried out so secretly (II, 283-84). His generosity in distributing alms is also regulated according to the reli-gion professed by the recipient, with the Catholics served first by an ecclesiastic with a triple ration, the Episcopalians next by a porter with a double portion, and the Presbyterians given their single portion last of all by an old servant (II, 308f). $s a Catholic the ^arl would have had genuine grievances against the political status quo, since until 1793 he would have been debarred from holding civil and military offices and from voting in elections (see II, 305), and could not have stood for election even in 1816, so that his isolation is not entirely self-imposed. In Febru-ary 1?79> too, Lord George Gordon (instigator of the "Gordon Riots" in London in 1780) had incited disturbances in Edinburgh against a proposal rescinding the laws providing for the imprisonment of Jesuits and other Catholics in-volved in education, and debarring Catholics from inheriting or purchasing land - riots which resulted in the proposal's being discarded. Moreover not all the traditions of the Glenallan family are presented as obsolete or harmful in the 1790*s - the iSarl had been brought up to consider that "the trade of arms was the first duly of man, and believed that to employ them against the French was a sort of holy warfare" (ill, 124), and this attitude later leads him to bring out his tenants in defence of the country when a French invasion seems likely, such that "the ancient military spirit of his house seemed to animate and invigorate" his decayed frame (ill, 340)•
Old £lspeth has come to see her lifelong trouble and poverty, the deaths
of th,ree of her four sons and of her grandson ^teenie, as a punishment for the deception of the &arl and ^Veline Neville which had driven the latter to

Mathieson, pp. 77-80. The proposal had also been opposed by the Pro-testant churches, a-nd petitioned against by them as veil as by parishes, towns, incorporated trades and friendly societies.

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suicide (ill, 64, 89), but she tries to justify her behaviour by appealing to the centuries-long devotion of her family to the Glenallans. ^he had obeyed the Countess because her ancestors had always carried the shield
of the ^arls of Glenallan into battle, and her father Reginald Cheyne had died to save the Countess's father at Sheriffmuir (ill, 71). In the old days, she says, "*[n]ae man parted frae his chief for love of gold or of gain, or of right or of wrang"1 (ill, 77~7&), so she hated what her mistress hated, and swoi?e on the Gospels that the Earl's marriage was incestuous, since she would not have spared her body or soul to serve the house of Glenallan (ill, 82). ^-Ithough in her interview with the Earl she acknow-ledges that her behaviour is a matter between God and her conscience (ill, 82), when Oldbuck, Edie and Hector visit her, she screams, " 'none shall
say thi^t I betrayed my mistress, though it were to save my soul! 1 " (ill, 230), and dies calling, 111 Teresa,. - Teresa - my Lady calls us ... rte are coming, my Uidyi*" (ill, 235)« Her grotesque sense of feudal loyalty to the Glenallan family which has overcome all moral and religious considera-tions and continues to do so even as she confronts death, clearly shows the ugly side of adherence to hereditary loyalties. If, as she says, "'the times are changed,"1 so that men will part from their chiefs "'for love of go id or of gain, or of right or of wrqng 1 " this is not really a change en-tirely for the worse. Similarly her personal motive for hating Eveline Neville, the English girl's scorn for her "'northern speech and habit 1 " (ill, 73) shoxtfs the unattractiva side of that exaggerated Scottish nationa-lism which has been displayed from its more comic angle in Sir Arthur's be-lief in the 104 Scottish kings, and Oldbuck's eagerness for Lovel to write a poem in which the Scots defeat ^gricola in spite of history.
In The "-ntiguary, then, Scott plays down the impact of major political
and military events of the 1790's on the lives of the characters, partly

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by jpediating them through the detached perspective of Jonathan Oldbuck,
the same time he highlights for the readers of 1&16 the value of retaining traditional ties of mutual loyalty and duty between people of different ranks, as a means of avoiding disaffection. On the other hand he shows too the dangers of both the pedantic attitude to the past common among antiquar-ies, and an unthinking and unyielding adherence to past values and prejudices,

SCOTT - 4« HKDGAUMlfcP

Redgauntlet (1824) is subtitled £ Tale of the Eighteenth Century, and, as in GUy Mamiering, it is difficult to determine from the early chapters the exact period in which it is set. '•'•'he device of beginning with a series of letters between two of the main characters looks back to the eighteenth-century practice of Richardson, Smollett, and Fanny Burney, but it also means that there can be no explicit reference within the text to the differ-ences between past and present.
'^he fact that the novel is set in the past first emerges from -^arsie's account of his and Alan's exploits as schoolboys at the "Kittle Nine oteps"
- the narrator explains in a footnote that the gateway they would have used is "now demolished'!.' ^lightly later, ^arsie's reference to the "ingenious traders" on the outside of the Hall of the Parliament House in Edinburgh and the "long-robed fraternity within" (I, 8-9n) is explained in another note: by the time the novel was written, the stalls of stationers and toymen had been removed from the outer part. .4 little further on, the narrator glosses -^arsie's reference to the "cramp-speech" Alan will have to make before being admitted to the Bar, explaining that the Latin address made in set terms to the court, faculty, £nd audience by aspiring advocates has been dispensed with "of late years". The dating can be established more specifically when ^-lan tells how his father moved from his "old and beloved quarters, adjacent to the very Heart of Mid-lot hi an" into "one of those new tenements, [entire within themselvesj , which modern tatite has so lately introduced" (l, 29). As another note points out, these residences were built in 1763-64, and although Brown's Squ^ru seems at the time of writing

^edgauntlet; a Tale of the Eighteenth ^entury, by the Author of
. ri averl ey (Edinburgh t Archibald Constable and Co., 1824') j I, ?• Subsequent citations will be from this edition.

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diminutive and obscure," it was "hailed about the time of its erection as an extremely elegant improvement upon the style of designing and erecting Edinburgh residences." By 1824 the New Town had been built and had become the fashionable area for the upper and middle classes to live, quite over-shadowing Brown 1 s Square. Meanwhile the fact that Alan and Darsie have attended the "formal balls and concerts" in -^dinurgh presided over by "the far-famed Miss Nickie Murray" (I, 271) also suggests a mid-eighteenth cen-tury setting. Miss Murray, sister of Lord Mansfield, "exercised undisputed sway" over the balls held in the West Bow, Assembly Close (and, after 1756, in Bell's *'ynd), determined when couples could dance, and when the procee-dings had to end. However by the time the assemblies shifted to George St. in the New Town in 1777» Miss Murray's reign had ended. Hence Alan's later reference to plans to build new assembly rooms, in his conversation with Maxwell and Provost Crosbie (II, 237X means that the novel is set before 1777-

1J-'he dating of the events in the novel can be worked out more accurately
in the second half, since Crosbie, ^edgauntlet and Lilias all mention poli-tical events which point to the mid-1760's. On Alan's visit to Crosbie, the latter "debated with great earnestness upon the stamp act, which was then impending over the American colonies'.1 (II, 259). This controversy,
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which involved the direct taxation through stamp duties of Britain s colo-nies in America, was going on during 1765-66, and was one factor which eventually led the King (George III) to send for the elder Pitt to form an administration in July 1766, making him £arl of Chatham. Lilias tells

1 It should be noted that in the first edn. of 1624, the comments on the "Kittle Nine Steps" and the layout of Parliament House occur as footnotes, but that the notes on the cramp-speech and Br0wn's oquare were added only in the 1832 edn.
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Henry Grey Graham, ^he Social Life of Scotland in the Eighteenth
G entury, I, 98-101.
J. Steven "atson, The rteign £f George III, 1760-1815 (1939)» rev. C.
H. Stuart, Vol. *•!! of the Oxford History of England (Oxford; Oxford Univer-sity Press- I960), nn 106 "lief

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of the circumstances which encourage their uncle's hopes of a Jacobite revolt:

The general dissatisfaction with the peace - the unpopularity
of the minister, which has extended itself even to the person
of his master - the various uproars which have disturbed the
peace of the metropolis, and a general state of disgust and
disaffection which seems to affect the body of the nation
(III, H9)
ttedgauntlet himself of course presents a view of the state of the country which makes his own cause seem even more hopeful: under Chatham, -Britain has acquired Canada only by plunging deep into debt, the peace has been hasty and disgraceful, "'the rich are alarmed - the nobles are disgusted - the populace are inflamed 1 " (ill, 174). '^'he peace here is the Peace of Paris of 1763» which brought an end to the Seven Years' War. The conflict had been very costly, and the government found it impossible to get back quickly to a peacetime financial footing. ^ome felt too that it was a bad bargain to accept Canada under the treaty and to return Guadeloupe to ^rance, since the ^est Indies were more profitable than Canada, both as a supplier of goods and as a mrket for -British products - hence there was an

2 outcry that the peace was not glorious or grasping enough. The fact that

^edgauntlet styles Pitt "Chatham" implies that he is speaking after July 1766, and we know from -^arsie's journal that the month is August (II, 54). Pitt's acceptance of the peerage had actually been one cause of the unpopu-larity to which Lilias alludes, as he had a reputation for being incorrup-tible. The view that the novel cannot be set any earlier than 1766 is con-firmed by the fact that the Jacobite conspirators treat u harles ^dward as

flatson, pp. 72, 90f.
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»<atson, pp. 85-8^.
^ -^orothy Marshall, Eighteenth Century England (London: Longman, 1962),
pp. 376-77-

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the King: this would not have been possible until 1166, when his father James died (on 1 January). Moreover it emerges from Lilias's account of their family background that -^arsie was less than a year old when their father died at Carlisle (ill, 125), which would have been in October 1746, and since at the time the novel is set he is w:ythin a few months of acqui-ring the "'privilege of acting for himself 1 " (ill, 122), i.e. of turning twenty-one, it must then be the Augast of 1766.
The rest of the novel is not however entirely consistent with this
precise dating. For example i)arsie has already referred to the date on which he first writes to Alan as "this my twenty-first birthday" (l, 5), which contradicts his later statement to Lilias. furthermore, when con-trasting ^eddes 1 garden with the ideal which Alan has derived from his rea-ding, -tfarsie mentions "Horace Walpole's late Essay on Gardening" (I, 153) which was not published till 1770* In a*iy case the Stamp Act had actually been repealed before Pitt came to power - in April 1766 - and was no longer "impending over the American colonies." In fact the vagueness of the dating in the first half of the novel, and the inconsistencies which emerge when it seems to be becoming more specific, suggest ths.t Scott is much less con-cerned in Redgauntlet than in '"'averley or even The Antiquary with establish-ing a specific historical setting.
The aspect of ^edgauntlet which most connects it to Waverley and to
the realm of public history is of course its treatment of Jacobitism. '^he novel shows how the Jacobite cause, and its ra{son d'etre, ^harles Edward, had declined by the 1760*s: Scott invents a visit to England by the otewart claimant, to demonstrate how after twenty or so years another Jacobite rising had become an impossibility. It is pointed out repeatedly in the novel how unfounded are hopes such as Uedgauntlet's for another rebellion.

*or example ^arsie, in complaining that Alan's father had not let him ac-cept an invitation from the Laird of Glengallacher to go hunting in the Highlands, "in the full ardour of his zeal for King George, the Hanover succession, and the Presbyterian faith," declares that ^aunders 1 ideas are "absolutely chimerical," since

Pretender is no more remembered in the Highlands, than if the
poor gentleman were gathered to his hundred and eight fathers,
whose portraits adorn the ancient walls of Holyrood; the broad-
swords have passed into other hands; the targets are used to cover
the butter-churns; and the race has sunk, or is fast sinking,
from ruffling bullies into tame cheaters (l, 42-43)

The degradation of the Highlanders in the 1760*5 is brought out too in •^lan's psussing references to the "Highland chairman" (l, 19) whom he dele-gates to take his horse to the stable, and to the "able-bodied Celt" who has to remove the drunken beggar Peter Peebles from the Fairford house (l, 318). Later ^arsie writes in his journal that, apart from Redgauntlet, the Jacobites he has met have been "£o]ld ladies of family" who remembered having led down a dance with the Chevalier, and "grey-haired lairds, recalling their feats at Preston, Clifton and Falkirk (II, 163). He re-cognises too that, even if he does present himself as head of his family and as a Jacobite leader to his family's erstwhile followers, the Act of 1748 abolishing vassalage and hereditary jurisdictions has meant that they will no longer follow him (ill, 151)• Nanty Ewart's view is, predictably, more misogynistic and cynical. -Declaring; that "fyjou 1!! as soon raise the dead as raise the Highlands - you1 11 as soon get a grunt from a dead sow as any comfort from dales or Cheshire, 1 " he points out that those who claim to support Redgauntlet do so out of ambition, or discontent, or fear of being considered turncoats (III, 23-25). Lilias later describes to Darsie how desperately Redgauntlet has tried to cajole old aristocrats "'with

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principles as antiquated as their dwellings and their manners'" and '"out-lawed smugglers, or Highland banditti 1 " into supporting another rebellion (ill, 146). Lledgauntlet himself has to recognise " f the degeneracy of the times, the decay of activity r.mone the aged, and the want of zeal in the rising generation 1 " (ill, 149) > and when he argues to Poxley that it is unlikely that M| at the distance of so many years, the Secretary of State should trouble himself about the unfortunate relics of a ruined cause! 1 " (II, 150), he is acknowledging implicitly that Jacobitism is at this time considered harmless by the authorities. The events at Crackenthorp's inn make it clear that no rising is to be expected, even if Charles Edward were to discard his mistress, since the few conspirators who do assemble are very lukewarm about staging another rebellion. In any case, although one of them regrets that they may all disperse "'without the flash of a sword among them 1 " (ill, 258) the representative of government authority, Golin Campbell, will not meet them on their own, military, terms, and; by not con-sidering them even dangerous enough to fight or arrest, the government makes Redgauntlet realise that "'the cause is lost for ever! '"(ill, 316). Scott's treatment of the Jacobitism of the 1760' s in Redgauntlet is
borne out by both contemporary and modern accounts. As we have seen in dealing with 'Javerley, the Highlands changed rapidly within a few years, while the disarming of the clans made the area an unpromising one for sow-ing the seeds of rebellion. According to Ramsay of Ochtertyre, hopes of a Jacobite revolt were at an end by the end of George II 's rsign (1760) and party rancour was abating as early as 1?54» % tne beginning of George Ill's reign, party spirit seemed extinguished, and a "golden age of peace

Scotland and Scotsmen, I, 153, 331.

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and harmony fondly expected," most Jacobites having decided to abandon the Stewarts. £ven those who retained their loyalties did not oppose their
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children's transferring their allegiance to the Hanoverians, - a develop-ment reflected in the novel by Crosbie's complaint that the sons of power-ful Jacobite lairds are taking the oqths to government which will allow them to practise at the Bar (II, 224). ^ir ^harles Petrie describes the Jacobites of the period after the ! 45 as "a dwindling band of men and women who lived in the past," and desperadoes of all classes with nothing to lose with the overthrow of the established order. George III could command allegiance among many because, unlike his two predecessors, he had been born and bred an Englishman, while Gharles SdwarcL had spent most of his life abroad and was also alienating his followers because of his jea-lousy, suspicions, and habitual drinking.
On the other hand, insofar as there was any Jacobite activity during
the 1760*3, it was encouraged by the weakness of the successive administra-tions after the Seven Years' «Var, and several Jacobite clubs were founded

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in the provinces. As we have noted, objections were m^«de to the terms of the peace, and Pitt was unpopular for accepting his peerage. There were still moreover some loyal Jacobites, notably the non-juring bishops Forbes and Gordon, and the family of Laurence Oliphant of Gask. The latter, fath-er of the poet Lady Nairne, is mentioned by Scott in his 1&32 Introduction to Redgauntlet as retaining his loyalty to the ^tewarts to such an extent as to win the respect of George III. In Deptember 1766 Bishop Gordon re-

Scotland and Scotsmen, I, 154» 334
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Scotland and Scotsmen, II,
Jacobite Moveraerit; The Last Phase 1746-1807, p. 140. Petrie, pp. 141-42.
5 Petrie, pp. 168-69.

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ported the Laird of Cask as claiming thut "some great and principal per-sons were beginning to turn their views" to Charles ^dward as 'Ihe only one to extricate them out of their difficulties, and set to rights their dis-jointed affairs," while Gask himself repeated this view in a letter of 9
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July, 1767. Nothing came of this, but there were enough rumours of visits to Britain by the Chevalier in the 1750's and 1760's, even apart from those mentioned by ^>cott, for the visit invented in Redgauhtlet to be within the realms of possibility. -^avid Hume even mentions a second-hand report thctt Charles had been present at George Ill's coronation, and speculates as
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to what would have happened if he had taken up the Champion's gauntlet. Scott's picture of the decline of Charles ^dward since 1745 also tal-
lies with contemporary accounts. He is described in the novel as "a man of middle life, about forty, or upwards; but either care, or fatigue, or indulgence, had brought on the appearance of premature old age, and given to his fine features a cas-t of seriousness or even sadness," such that he stoops and needs a cane to walk (ill, 63). The contrast between his youth and middle age is made clearest when Redgauntlet has to support him on his way to the boat at the end, "for the ground was rough, and he no longer possessed the elasticity of limb and of spirit which had, twenty years before, carried him over many a Highland hill, as light as one of their native deer" (ill, 319). On the other hand, he retains a "noble counter nance" as well as a "lofty forehead ... full and well-opened eye, and ... well-formed nose" (ill, 63). u harles would have been forty-five in 1766,

1 Rev. Robert ^'orbes, The Lyon in Mourning, ed. Henry Pat on (Edinburgh! ^dinbur^h University Press, 1695-96), HI, 216.
2 The Lyon in Mourning, III, 219.
Jee the Ic3^ Introduction to the novel, and note, in Dryburgh edn
(London: Adam and Charles Black, 1694), pp. xii-xiii, 444-45«
4 Petrie, I6uff.
^ John Heneage Jesse, Memoir^ of the Pret^nd_e_rs_ and Their Adherents (London: Richard Bentley, 1845), II, 1-3.

.but his drinking habits had been mentioned in a contemporary letter as early as 1747- ^uring the 1750 »s his drunkenness and public quaruels with his mistress Clementina tfalkinshaw had become "the common gossip of

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Europe," and in the late 1760's he was described as stooped, bleated, and red in the face, with a melancholy and mortified demeanour. Yet he still had a noble person and graceful manner, and seems to have been able to con-trol his drinking temporarily. The presence of Charles's mistress in the novel is however an anachronism, since Clementina Walkinshaw left him per-j-
manently in 1760.
If Jacobitism was almost a dead cause by the 1760 f s, and certainly
one by 1624, when the book was published, why does Scott devote so much of the novel to it? The reason is I think that he is not so much interested in Jacobitism per se as in the issue of how the individual comes to terms with the past - one of the prominent themes of The ^ntiquaryj as we have seen. This probably accounts in part for his lack of care in establishing a specific date for the events of the novel, ^ithin the novel most of the characters of the older generation have participated in some way in the Jacobite rebellion of 1745~46: ^aunders Fairford was involved in the ret-reats from Edinburgh and the flight from Falkirk as the rebel forces ad-vanced (l, 42), while Provost Crosbie claims to have fought for the Govern-ment (II, 223). On the other side, as well as Hugh Redgauntlet himself, whose life has been totally dominated by his commitment to Jacobitism,
there was Maxwell or "Pate-inr-Peril , who by his daring escape after Cul-loden narrowly avoided sharing the fate of his comrade oir Harry Redgauntlet,

Jesee, II, 131.
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Petrie, p. 165; "illiam Holden Hutton, ^urford Papers (London:
- •rchibald Constable & Co., 1905) » PP« 116-19.
Jesse, II > 1?>2; David Daiches, Charles iildward Stuart (London: Thames & Hudson, 1973), pp. 301-2.
4 Petrie, pp. 165-66.

executed at Carlisle. For ^aunders the Jacobite past of a large part of Scotland must be distanced, put to one side: hence he will not permit ^arsie to visit the Highlands, and later writes to warn him against associ-ating with Papists and Jacobites (I, 190f). "hen he himself has to deal with Jacobites such as Herries in business, his main concern is to avoid offence and controversy (I, 100, II, 6). Provost Crosbie, in a position of public responsibility hut married to a woman from a Jacobite family, temporises, trying to evade simultaneously his wife's anger and any suspi-cion of his loyalty to the Hanoverian succession, The result is that he gains support from all sides, and has been made Provost three times, because no-one really knows whether he is Whig or Tory (II, 277)• :^o Maxwell, his Jacobite past, and especially his escape, seem largely to be subjects for dinner-time reminiscence for the entertainment of the company and for his own gratification, and he admits that at the time he had no very clear idea of what the cause involved:

"'•'•'here was a set of rampauging chields in the country then that
tjtiey called rebels - I never could find out what for ... I dinna
mind very weel what I was doing, swaggering about the country
with dirk and pistol at my belt, for five or six months. °r
thereaway; but I had a weary waking out of a wild dream1 (II, 247).

Because of Alan's presence, he may be claiming to luwe been more naive than he was, but even when he joins in ftedgauntlet's conspiracy at the end, he claims that M| if Pate were not a fool, he would be Pate-in-^afety 1 " (ill, 247).
•^'or Hugh J^edgauntlet however, the past means not just the Jacobite
revolt of 1745-46 but a whole family history goin^ back to the days of iSdward Baliol, in which the ^-edgauntlets have fought for Scottish pride and independence, but, like ths Bertrams, have consistently been on the

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losing side in all the country's civil broils (II, 177)• ^ ne name Redgaunt-let itself derives from the ruthlessness with which an ancestor of Baliol's day pursued the %glish in battle, and refused them quarter (II, 170)• •^arsie, as the last of the family, has to discover this violent family past, of trnioh the iC edgaunt lets' support of the Jacobite cause has been merely the most recent manifestation.
in

he salient feature about Darsie at the beginning of the novel is that
he feels himself to be cut off from any connection with anyone apart from the ^'airfords. "In a country where all the world have a circle of consan-guinity, extending to sixth cousins at least," he writes in his first letter to Alan, "I am a solitary individual, having only one kind heart to throb in unison with my own (l, ll). He is like "a stranger in the crowded cof-fee-house, where he enters, calls for what refreshments he wan.fS, pays his bill, and is forgotten so soon as the waiter's mouth*has pronounced his 'Thank ye, sir'" (l, 12). Recording to Alan, he hopes that the cloud over his birth "will clear up into something inexpressibly and inconceivably brilliant, and this without any effort or exertion of [hisj own, but purely by the goodwill of ^'ortune" (l, 32).
However implausible it may seenrthe mystery of Darsie's birth is
cleared up without his having to exert himself. The first account he hears about his own family is in "Wandering ^illie's 'i'ale" although he does not realise at this stage that he himself is a Redgauntlet. For the reader too the tale is the first occasion when any clue is given to the meaning of the title, as no character (or place) called Redgauntlet has been mentioned hitherto, '^he two Redgauntlets of the tale are unappealing figures: ^ir Robert is cruel and violent, hated and feared by everyone except his own tenants (1, 225-26), and of course, damned with the other pitiless persecu-tors of the Covenanters, while his son ^ir John is both sanctimonious and grasping, lacking his father's affection for those on the estate, ^arsie's

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(and the reader's) sympathy is all with ^teenie Steenson, braving hell to claim his ain." Later -^arsie, seeing the family horse-shoe mark on Herries 1 forehead, and on his own as it is reflected in a mirror, senses his kinship with Herries (II, 146), although he cannot work out the connec-tion with the ftedgauntlets until Herries outlines the family history soon afterwards, and Lilias elaborates on this account. However the reader may well have guessed that ^arsie is to have something to do with the family which gives the novel its title, since ^cott had already used the theme of the "lost heir" in ^uy Mannering and The ^ntiguary.
In his taste for the oldTffashioned, rather artificial form of land-
scape gardening, -^arsie shows an interesx in the past, while his predilec-tion for "the blawing, bleezing stories" which the Highland gentlemen tell of the '45 (l> 191) suggests that this interest extends to Jacobitism.
His concern for the genealogy of his own family is also shared with the Jacobites in the novel. However after -^arsie has discovered the truth about his family background, he never considers adopting the Jacobite cause, and even puts the ties of friendship above those of blood: when he believes that his uncle has harmed ^lan, he exclaims, "'not even our relationship shall protect you"1 (ill, 241). Throughout the conspiracy he hopes that
the plot will break up of its own accord, so that he will neither have to commit himself to it nor incur his uncle's terrible wrath by refusing to participate. His hopes are realised, and almost the last thing we hear of him is that he was presented to George III at the dravang-room by Lieutenant-General ^ampbell. The ending of the novel is rather truncated - it is han-ded over to Oldbuck's pedantic antiquarian correspondent % ^ryasdust -
but it does not appear, from what we learn, that ^arsie was deeply affected

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by his experience of his uncle's fanaticism: his trusting in circumstances while the plotting is afoot is after all merely a continuation of his cha-racteristic attitude to events throughout the novel. However he does feel the sheer physical power of Redgauntlet's presence and manner from his first encounter with him on the Solway Firth, and, on sensing from the horse-shoe mark on his forehead that he may be related to him, has "a wild and mysterious feeling of wonder, almost amounting to pleasure'1 (ll, 166). Darsie's rejection of his family's traditional violent adherence to lost causes, through his support for the winning side, is in one sense a break with the past, but in another sense a continuation of it - after all, the cause of the hereditary Redgauntlet horse-shoe mark is a son who fought
on the opposite side from his father in the conflict between fidward Baliol and the Scottish chiefs, while in "Wandering Willie's Tale" uir John Red-gauntlet is on bad terms v/ith his father because he supports the Union of Scotland and ^ngland of 1707 - the winning side, as it were.
Alan ^airford's attitude to the past, especially the past as represen-
ted: by family history, is rather different from Parsie's. He is very attached to his father, and recognises the law as his family's hereditary vocation, but is concerned to go further in his profession than his for-bears had, rather than merely to follow the family tradition. He is proud that Saunders "'has raised his family from a low and obscure situation'"
to become a ^riter to the &ignetj and is anxious to advance one step fur-ther by becoming a successful advocate through his-own talent and efforts (I, 30-31, III, 67). He resents the condescending attitude of Herries to his father, because he thinks Herries' "'patrician birth and aristocratic fortunes'" do not give him any right to "'censure those v;ho dispose of the fruits of their own industry according to their own pleasure'" (l, 102).

When confronted with -Uarsie's ridicule of his father's past, his retreats before the rebel force in 1745-46, ^lan responds by claiming that Saunders has "civil courage" - "courage enough to do what is right, and to spurn what is wrong - courage enough to defend a righteous caurse with hand and purse, and to take the part of the poor man against his oppressor, without fear of the consequences to himself" (I, 69). As for "military courage,"
it is scarcely important to "most men in this day and country" whether they possess it or not. In his attitude to Peter Peebles' lawsuit he is (with great justification) similarly dismissive of the past - his speech in court removes from the case "those complicated formalities with which it had
been loaded, ... the cumbrous and complicated technicalities of litigation," the'Veil of obscurity and unintelligibility" which had darkened it for
many years (II, 23, 48).
However, although he never considers adopting Jacobite beliefs, and
has nothing to learn about his family background, Alan does have to confront the past in the shape of "Father Buonaventura" or Charles JSdward. Like rt-edgauntlet, the Chevalier has a powerful, commanding presence and Alan feels intimidated by him even when he does not know who he is, forbearing to snatch Maxivell's letter from him because of his "air of such fearlessness and calm authority" (ill, 74)• His earlier experiences with Crosbie and Maxwell have moreover revealed that there are still people in Scotland who, on account of their Jacobite sympathies, have no great respect for the legal knowledge by which Alan sets such great store.
^edgauntlet himself, like Fergus Mac-Ivor, exemplifies an older way
of life which puts military valo\ir above the letter of the law (cf. his burning of Foxley's warrant for his arrest), and involves great loyalty to an ideal. He has devoted his whole life to promoting a cause which is doomed to failure, and, ultimately, is not given the chance to die heroic-

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ally (as ^ergus had twenty years before), but can only retire from the world. Towards the end the novel focusses on Redgauntlet, ^harles Edward, and the Jacobites, rather than on the younger generation, so that we are I think left with the overriding sense of the pathos of this lost cause, em-bodied in the flawed but dignified Chevalier, the fanatical but courageous and self-sacrificing Redgauntlet, and a handful of other loyal adherents. In his treatment of Red<}auntlet S C ott creates the sympathy for the virtues of the Scots of the past which he was to claim as one of his literary aims in the General Preface of 1829.

- Both the story of Ai^erick Redgauntlet and his son, and "Wandering Millie's Tale," are of course legends rather than historical events, but in presenting Hugh Redgauntlet several times as "Herries of Birrenswork",
and introducing a relation of his called Maxwell, Scott is drawing on the history of actual Jacobite families of the eighteenth century. In fact the original title of the novel was Herries, and Scott was only persuaded to change it by Constable and Balle-ntyne when a substantial part of it

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was already through the presses. 'f'he records of the Herries family go back to 1296, when a ^illiam de Heriz swore fealty to -^dward I, but they had apparently changed sides by 1323 (cf. Sir Alberick and his son) for then we find that Robert the Bruce gave a charter to Richard de Herir. of land in Haddingtonshire, while a Robert de Herries is referred to as "-Dominus de Nithsdale" that is, ruler of the area around Dumfries, which
is where much of the action of Redgauntlet takes place. In 1490 Herbert Herries was created 1st Lord Herries of Terregles (also an area just out-side Dumfries) and his two successors in the early sixteenth century

A title derived partly from his mother, and partly his own - II, 21&.
2 John Uibson Lockhart, Memoirs of the Life of Sir Walter Scott , Bart. (Edinburgh: Robert Cadell; London: John Murray and w'hittaker & Co., 1637-38), V, 315-
P.H. M'Kerlie, History of the Land- and !i'heir Owners in Galloway, V (Edinburgh: William Paterson, iSf?), p. 144' -

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acquired yet more land. Meanwhile the 4th Lord Herries left only daugh-ters, and in 1547 the eldest of these, ^gnes, married ^obert, Lord Maxwell, who then became Lord Herries of 1'erregles as well. Like the ^edgauntlets, 2
he devoted himself to a losing caur.e, that of Mary 4ueen of Scots. °ince the brothers of the 4th Lord Herries had had male descendants, the surname Herries did however remain in the family.
"f'he early history of the Herries/Maxwell family would have been famil-
iar to readers of ocott's Minstrelsy, since he had outlined it in the intro-duction to his friend O.K. Sharpe's ballad "Lord Herries His Complaint". Moreover the legend with which the ballad itself deals may have suggested the two incidents in the novel where iledgauntlet carries Darsie across the Solway. '^'he square tower of "Repentance" near the family*1 3 former seat
at Hoddara Castle is said to have been built by a Lord Herries to expiate the crime he had committed while crossing the Solway with some %iglish prisoners: when the boat became caught in a, storm, he had cut their throats and thrown them overboard to lighten the load. Hugh Redgauntlet/ although anachronistic in his proclivity for rash and desperate action, is not nearly as cruel and violent as his ancestors.
ril he next stage of interest in the history of the Herries/Maxwell
family is actually mentioned in the novel by ^aunders Fairford, who ex-plains to Alan that Herries of Birrenswork belongs to " f a brancli of that great and once powerful family of Herries, the elder branch whereof merged in the house of Nithesdale at the death of Lord ^obin the Philoso-pher, Anno pomini sixteen hundred and sixty-seven 1 " (I, 9&). On the

1 M'Kerlie, V, 147.
P
1>he foots Peerage, ed. Sir James Balfour Paul (Edinburgh:
^avid Douglas 7 1907), IV, 411 $ '^he Book of Car lave rock (Edinburgh: "illiam Lord Herries, Ib73), I, 497-570.
3 The Poetical ^'orks of ^ir Walter Scott, Bart. (Edinburgh: Adam and Charles Black, 1880), IV, 307^177"

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death of Robert, llth Lord Maxwell and 2nd Earl of Nithsdale, who was popu-larly called "the Philosopher" because of his addiction to astrology, the Earldom of Nithsdale passed to his cousin John Maxwell, 7th Lord Herries
of Terregles. ^oth the 2nd Earl Robert and his successor John had fought for the losing side in the English Civil .^ar. Later Robert, 4th Earl of Nithsdale (and 8th Lord Herries) was involved in the persecution of the Covenanters in the late 1670' s, and was present at Bothwell Brigg, but was not apparently nearly as bloodthirsty as Sir Robert Redgauntlet in the no-vel, for Claverhouse wrote to him in 167& complaining that a minister he had

2 captured and imprisoned was still holding conventicles in prison.

The reason that the Herries/Maxwell family were no longer pov/erful at
the time the novel is set, is that they had been involved in the Jacobite rising of 1715- I have not found any evidence of a Herbert Herries, who, as launders ^airford says, forfeited his property by following his kinsman the Earl of -l^erwent water to Preston in 1715) but Herbert was a common Herries Christian name, and one of the leading figures in the *15 was William, 5"th Earl of Nithsdale and 9±h Lord Herries. He forfeited his titles because of his involvement in the rebellion, and was sentenced, with Derwent water and a few others, to execution. However on the night before it was due to take place, he escaped from prison by a ruse of his wife's, disguised as one of her friends, a Mrs Hills. ^his escape became famous, and it is possible that in having i>arsie disguised as a woman during the Jacobite conspiracy,

1 The Scots Peerage, IV, 416-175 V~I» 4^7 •
2 . •"-

" tie -^ook of -3-ar lave rock, I, 39&ff • ^ir ^obert Redgauntlet is based
on a more active persecutor of the Covenanters, ^>ir Robert Grierson
Lag, as ^cott was to point out in rJote III to the Ib32 edn. -"-'he Qriersons were distant Relatives and friends of the Maxwells, and oir Robert Grierson held the stewartry of Kircudbright for the ^th Earl of Nithsdale during the latter's minority (Book ojf ^arlaverock, I, 414; ^urke's Peerage and Baronetage, (.London, 1970J > PP» 1161-62). A later holder of_the title, also ^ir "obert ^rierson, who died in 1639 a~t "the age of 102, was a friend of ocott. 's and a possible model for Redgauntlet, as he was pronrj to fits of temper which revealed a horse-shoo m..rk on his forehead (VI. 5. Crockett, . Qriginal_Bj (London and ^dinbur;;h: T.N. Poi/lis, 1912.1, p. 355)•

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£>cott is recalling this event, as well as the even more celebrated disguise of Charles ^dward as Flora Iviac-Oonald 1 s maid "Betty Burke" during his time as a fugitive after uulloden. If so, it is rather a case of history being repeated as farce.
The subsequent history of the Merries/Maxwell family tallies less with
the events mentioned in the novel, Tne 5th ^arl escaped to the c hevalier*s court in Europe, and died abroad in 1744, while his son ^illiam (6th ^
and 10th Lord Herries but for the attainder), although presented to
Edward in Edinburgh in 1745 > was apparently too conscious of the fate which his father had so narrowly avoided to lend any military support to the rebels. His wife (and cousin) Katharine was a more ardent Jacobite, but her brother Charles, ^arl of Traquair, was one who pledged himself
to corae out, but did not, as "Pate-in-Peril" observes (II, 247). There were however other members of the Maxwell family involved in the '45> no-tably James Maxwell of Kirkconnell, who served in Charles Mward's Life
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Guards up to Culloden, escaped abroad, but returned to Scotland in 1750 • The escape of Maxwell of Summertrees is actually based on the experience of one Mac-fiwen or MacMillan, as Scott explains in a note to the 1&32 edition. The Maxwell family retained their Jacobite sympathies into the next generation, for in 17&9 Burns wrote to the "6th -£arl"'s daughter and heir, Lady ^inifred ^onstable-Maxwell (d. iSOl) seeking an introduction to her
on the grounds of their shared support far Jacobitism. Scott was to acquire this letter in 1628. He met Lady Winifred himself, whom he described as
"a singular old curmudgeon" and "one of the most extravagant figures" he

°ee also Henrietta "^ayler, Lady Nithsdale and Her family (London:
Lindsay Drummond Ltd, 1939), PP- 63, 253ff.
* List of Persons Concerned iji the Rebellion of 1743-6 [l74o] , ed.
"alter i-lacleod, Vol. VIII of the Publications of the °cottish History °ociety (Edinburgh: iiidinbur^h University Press, 1^90), pp. 144-455

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ever saw. '^he main branch of the Herries/Maxwell family was still in existence in 1824, and although I have not found any reference to the Herries of Heathgill or ^uchintullocii mentioned by Crosbie (II, 218),
There were still Herries of Barnbarroch till 1&22, when the property was

2 sold, and there are still Herries of Spottes. «''hether S cott realised it

or not, there was even a Herries of £irrenswa,rk in 1624, for, after Redgaunt-let had appeared, Maria ^dgeworth reported to the autnor that it had caused a great accession of visitors to a Kiss Herries of Birrenswark living at Cheltenham - "everybody looks as keenly as civility will allow no doubt for the horseshoe in her forehead." '^here was also a hill in Dumfriesshire called -^urrenswark with a Roman fort on it, the site of the incident which gave Scott the idea for Oldbuck's confrontation with ^die over the "Kaim
of Kinprunes" (see Note C to the Ib29 and later editions of The -^ntiquary). Scott also draws on the history of a real family in the account of
Joshua Geddes 1 forbears. Geddes explains that his ancestors of the sixteenth century were

renowned among the ravenous and bloodthirsty men who then
dwelt in this vexed country; and so much were they famed for
successful freebooting, robbery, and bloodshed, that they are
said to have been called Ceddes, as likening them to the fish
called a Jack, Pike, or Luce, and in our country tongue, a £ed"

The ^eddes were a leading Peeblesshire family, who held lands in Kirkurd and ^achan for hundreds of years, ^'heir name did derive from the plural of "ged", a pike, and their arras were three pike-heads. Paring the sixteenth

See '^he -Book of Carlaverock, I, 490-91, and Scott's letter of 4
ust 182& to Lockhart, in tfcott Letters, X, 482.
2 M'Kerlie, III, 349-50.
3 17 November 1824, in Scott betters, VIII, 49?n.

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century they were continually feuding with the Tweedies of Drumelzier, and one of them was murdered by the Tweedies, in December 1592. In 161? the minister of Glenholm was to complain of the disruptive behaviour of Charles Geddes of ttachan, which had caused the dissolution of a Kirk Session, but the culprit paid little heed to warnings and admonitions, and even when threatened with excommunication did not promise to mend his ways till a year later. The conversion of Joshua's grandfather Philip to Quakerism, and the commercial success of his father which is the basis of Joshua's own prosperity (I, 141-45) seem however to be Scott's own invention, for by 1749 the Geddes family was deeply in debt and their land had all been sold off by 1752. For some of Scott's readers of 1624, the presence in the no-vel of characters with the names Herries, Maxwell and Geddes possibly called actual Scottish families and their traditions, and added to their sense of the book's historical authenticity.
vie have noted in connection with the dating of the novel how Scott
creates some sense of a mid-eighteenth-century setting by mentioning features of Edinburgh life pf the past - schoolboy games, the division of the law courts. Brown's Square, Miss Nickie Murray's formal dancing assemblies.
These and other references to bygone practices create, from the point of view of 1624 and after, an ironic perspective on the period in which the novel is set, in that what seems new-fangled and innovatory to the characters may be old-fashioned to the readers, ^or example Crosbie ridicules the Edinburgh habit of dining at 3.00 instead of 2.00, but by 1624 it was 5»00

2 or even 6.00 (II, 235-36). °hanges of fashion are continual, novelty only

relative. On the other hand the novel also draws attention to features of

A History of Peeblesshire, ed. James Walter %chan and Rev. Henry
Paton, Vol. Ill (Glasgow: Jackson, Wylie <i Co., 1927), PP- 168-97, 261-66. °ockburn, Memorials, p. 30.

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life in the 1760 f s which were still present in the l&20's. An obvious example is the prevalence of smuggling on the ^orders: when Alan has to visit the hidden passages where the hypocritical Trumbull keeps his smuggled goods and smuggling apparatus, the narrator points out that the contraband trade between England and Scotland still exists and "will con-tinue to exist, until the u<tter abolition of the wretched system which es-tablishes an inequality of duties betwixt the different parts of the same kingdom" (II, 304), while a note to the 1832 edition expands on this theme. Hence Scott undermines any complacent assumption on the reader's part that unscrupulous hypocrites like Trumbull could not still exist in their own time,
arsie's description of the Geddes 1 garden also points to the fashions
in landscaping which were to prevail from the raid^eighteenth century on-wards. He defends Geddes 1 formal, old-fashioned style of landscaping, with its fountain, artificial waterfall, "cabinet of verdure", and terrace, against Alan's more modern views, based on Horace ^alpole's -^ssay on Gar-dening, and on ^odsley's descriptions of the Leasowes and of "-^rown's imitations of nature" (l, 153-54)• '^alpole had criticised the prevailing features of the gardens of the late seventeenth and early eighteenth cen-turies, such as straight walks, symmetry, fountains, water-works, terraces,

2 statues, balustrades, parterres, grottoes, arbours, and summer-houses,

and the stricture on "walking up and downstairs in the open air" which
ie attributes to Alan is almost a direct quotation from »Jalpole. Mean-while ^obert ^odsley had ridiculed "the regular deformity/Of plans by line and compass" in his Public Virtue (1753). Both had praised the new style

The duties were not equalised till 1&55 •
"On Modern Gardening," in his -^necdotes of Painting in England; .Jjth
oome ^ccount of the Principal Artists, rev., with additional notes, by Ralph N. kj ornum, ("London: Swan Sonnenschein; Lowrey & Co., 1888), III, 63-93-

cf . "going up and down stairs in the open air" ("On Modern Gardening"
77)

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of garden developed by William Kent (d. 1748) and Lancelot "Capability" Brown (1715-83) who escWed formality and artificiality to exploit the natural features of the landscape, ^alpole commends Kent for seeing "that all nature was a garden," while -^odsley, writing of the Leasowes, the gardens designed and owned by the poet William Shenstone, praises his efforts to landscape the hills and dales into "nature f s finest form/Vague, undetermin'd, infinite," the "lucid rills," the "solemn grove," the "un-equal lawns, /In beauteous wildness, yon fair-spreading trees ;/And mingling woods and waters, hills and dales," the "bursting torrent" which "tumbles
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down the steep/In foaming fury; fierce, irregular, /^ild, interrupted."
This concern for the natural in landscape-gardening continued throughout the century 'and beyond under the aegis of Humphry Repton (l752-l8l8). i he period after the Napoleonic "Wars was to see a growing interest in flowers,
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which had formed little part of Repton s scheme of things - they were collec-ted from all over the world, and. greenhouses came to be considered a neces-sity. However old-fashioned he is in his other gardening techniques, Geddes, with his taste for flowers and extensive greenhouse "filled with the choicest plants" could be seen from. the perspective of 1824 as quite ad-vanced in his ideas, similarly, the fact that he breaks with the custom of his ancestors to cultivate his fields in "'the newest and best fashion 1 "
(I, 161), enclosing his land with hedges and keeping a mixture of arable and pasture (l, 161) also makes him a pioneer of the agricultural improve-ments which were to become more common in the late eighteenth and early
4 nineteenth centuries.

"On Modern Gardening," p. 61.
2 "Verses on the Author's first arrival at the Leasowes, 1734, ""in The Poetical "orks of Robert Dodsley (London: C. Cooke, 1797)» PP- 76-77* ^ee also his Account of the Leasowes (1764)* ^-u1-1 t
G.A. Jellicoe, Studies in Landscape Design, I (London: Oxford Univer-
sity Press, I960), pp. 19-20.
In Gait's Annals of the Pariah, the first agricultural improvements

begin gut •"alirui.il.ing in 1765, with tret-.-planting and hedging of the field (p. 34).

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The dispute between ^edgauntlet and Geddes over the legality of stake-
net fishing for salmon is not explicitly related to contemporary life in the novel, but; as Graham McMaster has shown; the subject was still a live issue in Ifc24. IJ-'he legal position at the time the novel is set is in doubt, as Alan tells Darsie (l, 185) and Crosbie later reminds Alan (II, 216), and in 1&24 the first Blue Book on salmon-fishing was to appear. The arguments dealt with in the Blue Books appear in the novel, notably the idea of the injustice to the "upper heritors" like Redgauntlet. By 1824 stake-net fishing had been practised in the Solway Firth for at least half a century, but spear-fishing was also still used. The Parliamentary report did not in fact dome down on one side or the other.
More important perhaps than the focus on the continuity from the 1760*s
to the l&20»s in such things as landscape gardening, smuggling, and disputes over fishing rights, is the suggestion at some points in the novel that hereditary characteristics cannot be completely suppressed by environmental influences or the force of will. In "Wandering Millie 1 s Tale11 ^ir John ^edgauntlet seems very different from his father - fair-spoken, religious, and non-violent - but when ^teenie °teenson declares to him that he believes the rent-money is in hell with ^ir John's father, then "he heard the Laird swearing blood and wounds behind him, as fast as ever did Sir ^obert" (l, 243)» And although Saunders Fairford can show no military courage during the M5> his launching of his son on a career as an advocate via the Peebles vs. Plainstanes case is viewed in terms of military exploits and values: "like a brave officer sencung forth his son to battle, [he] rather chose
he should die upon the breach, than desert the conflict with dishonour" (II,
2. But the main illustration of this idea is Joshua Geddes. He tries to

t and °Qcic-;.y, pp. 40-41

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put behind him his family background of violence, robbery, and bloodshed, even passionate feeling itself, defacing -the family's armorial scutcheon, creating a quiet, peaceful retreat where life moves on slowly (like the verj riyer within his domain), and rejecting most involvement in the outside world, even that entailed in the acceptance of a secular judicial system. 3ut his temper is actually quite easily-roused: when he sees Benjie riding quickly by on his horse ^olomon, he exclaims, "[tjhe mischievous bastard! ... the doomed gallows-bird 1 " (l, 133). A little later, after Rachel has explained how her brother, although eschewing the use of force, will not submit to ^edgauntlet's threats over the salmon issue, -^arsie concludes that "the spirit of the old sharers of the spoil was not utterly departed even from the bosom of the peaceful Quaker" (I, 160), and when Geddes goes off to confront ^edgauntlet's men at the fishing-station, -^arsie decides that his more habitual absence of enthusiasm "rather belonged to the sect than to his own personal character" (II, 63). On l)arsie's abduction, he does resolve to have recourse to "'the magistrates of the Gentiles'" after all (IIf 231), and turns up at Crackenthorp's inn near the end, still in quest of him. Rachel had said that " ' feJven in the best-trained temper there may. remain some leaven of the old -Adam'" (l, 159)» a*id this observa-tion not only exemplifies her own habitually-religious outlook on life, but also suggests that everyone may be in the same position as Joshua, unable to escape from the influence of tendencies which are both hereditary and shared by all tr.eir fellows. Hence, despite the sense of the inevitability of change which is created by its picture of the decay of Jacobiti^m, the novel also shows - better than does ^ayerloy - the "passions common to men in all stages of society."

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SCOTT - CONCLUSIONS

he novels of Scott with which v-e have dealt are concerned largely to pre-sent a sympathetic view of the manners and people of the ^cottish recent past within (or just beyond) the memories of their first readers, before these customs and character-types vanish completely through being assimila-ted? into the more polished and civilized culture of the early nineteenth century from the increasing contact between Scotland and England. '£he period is part of that which Leslie Stephen was to call

the twilight of history; that period ... from which the broad
glare of the present has departed and which we can yet dimly
observe without making use of the dark-lantern of ancient his-
tornians.

and the characters to be observed in it, Highlanders •'•'ergus and Flora Mac-Ivor and ^an ^hu Maccombich, Lowland Jacopiires the Baron of Bradwardine and Hugh ^edgauntlet, the store-farmer ^andie Dinmont, the gypsy-queen Meg Merrilies, the old-fashioned convivial Scots Lawyer Paulus Pleydell, and the King's Bedesman ^die Ochiltree. The gradual disappearance of such people and the qualities they embody is treated as a subject for regret, and the fates of Fergus Mac-Ivor and Hugh ^edgauntlet are seen as tragic. Tne ac-count of Fergus's condemnation and execution highlights the power of clan loyalty and the Highlanders' great courage, while the final failure of Red-gauntlet's cause spells the end of a long tradition of military heroism in-spired by a sense of Scottish nationalism. Sometimes too the novels' port-rayal of past values and practices points up an implicit lesson for Scott's contemporaries: Oldbuck's paternalistic attitude to his tenants, the valu-able social role played by ^die Gchiltree, and the breakdown of social ties

"^ome tvords About Sir Walter Scott," Cornhill Magazine, 24 (1871)
2?6-93; rpt. Scott;.The °ritical Heritage, pp. 439-58, at pp. 455-56.

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and the gypsies 1 misery brought on by Godfrey Bertram's hi;:;h-handed mea-sures as a J.P., suggest the worth of retaining social relationships based on mutual help and tolerance between different ranks rather than on exchange of money. But °cott would not have wished for the success of the Jacobite rebellion, nor wished undone the cultural, economic and agricultural im-provements which had occurred since 1746, accelerated by the defeat of the rebellion. Moreover the story of ^Ispeth Mucklebackit and the Glenallans shov.'s the horrific consequences of an unquestioning and amoral adherence
to traditional loyalties. AS -^avid Daiches has observed, Scott's

greatest novels are the reoord of that ambiguity of feeling
which combined passionate love of everything that stood for
Scotland's heroic past and reluctant recognition that the
"crowded hour of glorious life", the age of warriors and
emba-ttled fighters for principle, had to give way ±o an age
of merchants and lawyers and respectable citizens.

•^Ithough ^cott's novels of the recent past all refer to events of poli-tical or military history, and occasionally mention (or introduce) real historical figures, the impact of the major national events and of important individuals on the lives of the characters and the progress of the story
is relatively unimportant, aiaverley would appear to be the exception here, but the emphasis here is on the social and economic factors inherent to the Jacobite cause which made its failure inevitable, rather than on the pro-gress of the rising and the battles fought, what ocott calls the "province of history," and Charles ^award's emotional impact on Waverley is only temporary, soon modified by that of the fictional Colonel Talbot . 1J-'he exchange of mutual protection between ^averley and '^'albot shows how indi-vidual efforts towards pe,.ce and concili.a.i^ii can mitigate to some extent the bloody consequences of civil war. In il edg aunt let , ocott draws on the

Address to the Annual Dinner of the Edinburgh Sir «';. Iter ocott Club,
1965, in u ir '"alter °cott 1771-1&32: An ^d in burgh Keepsake (•Edinburgh.; Edinburgh University Presb, 19?U pp. 137-51* ^t p. 140.

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names and traditions of well-known Scottish families, the Maxwells, Herries and Geddes, in order to give a sense of historical authenticity to a novel which reaches its climax in a purely imaginr>.ry event, but much-of the novel focusses not on the events of Scottish history per se, but on how individu-als have come to terms with the past. In Guy Mannering the Colonel's grief over his duel with Brown and his wife's death causes him to attach no value to his great military exploits in India, while the important figures of the Scottish -Enlightenment whom he is said to visit play no part in the plot. In '^'he ^ntiquary the French ^evolutionary k -ars have little effect on the lives of the characters and are distanced from the reader too by the de-tached and ironic perspective of Jonathan Oldbuck.
- Respite Ocott's claim that his concern in rtaverley is to concentrate
on 'those passions common to men in all stages of society," the impression left by this novel is of the way the circumstances peculiar to a particular time in history strongly affect the characters 1 conduct. Oimilarly in -^ed— gauntlet the changed conditions of Scotland of twenty years later have
meant that the hot-headed idealism of his Jacobite forbears have become in
)j>
•^arsie Latimer merely a habit of aimless romanticing". In Guy Mannering
- Dandie Dinmont's ignorance and Paulus Pleydell's conviviality are seen as characteristic respectively of the store-farmers and of the old-fashioned Edinburgh lawyers of the early 1780's, while Hector K'lntyre in '^he Antiquary, although possessing the martial spirit of his Highland ancestors, shows how Highlanders' behaviour has been affected by the failure of the '45 and the breakdown of clan society. However, as occasional outbursts on the part of '-Quaker Joshua Qeddes in ^edgauntlot suggest, the passions which characterised people in less civilised periods of history do not simply disappear with the advent of social change. rtather, they are channelled into such outlets as

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"the time affords, and Scott shows hovv it is law which comes to provide •such outlets during the second half of the eighteenth century, such as the legal machinations which diminish the Bertram estate after the '45, •Dinmont's and Mackitihinson's lawsuits, the creation of fictitious votes to win elections, '•'•hat this change is not necessarily for the "better is sug-gested by Glossln's legal chicanery and the Peebles vs. Plainstanes case. Hugh Redgauntlet, for all the violence and civil disorder which would result if all his dearest hopes came to pass, is at least unselfish and idealistic, whereas Peebles' legal "cause" is motivated by madness, greed, and his enjoyment of being the centre of attention, launders J'airf ord's welcoming of such a cause as an opportunity to advance his son's career throws doubt too on the nature of the "civil courage" which Alan attributes to him and lauds at the expense of the Jacobites' "military courage", Tne suit has obviously been exploited by advocates in the pursuit of personal advancement rather than of justice.
Despite the fact that it is possible to derive from Scott's novels a specific viewpoint on various aspects of the Scottish recent past, these views are seldom spelt out by the narrators _ rather, they emerge from des-cription and dramatisation. The poverty of Lowland rural life in 1745 is brought out in the description of Tully-Veolan, and the strength and value of clan loyalties by -"^an Dhu's conduct at Fergus's trial; in fiedgauntlet the pathos of the decline of Jacobitism emerges from the account of the middle-aged Prince's halting walk to the shore and the Jacobites' final farewells; in The ^ntiquary? the value to the community of the old-fashioned kind of ^cottish mendicant is illustrated by "-'die Ocliiltree's crucial inter-ventions at crises in the lives of the other characters. And altiuu-jh the narrator in Guy Mamie ring does point out explicitly the conssequences of Godfrey Bertram's removal of the local paupers into institutions, his cruelty in dispossessing the gypsies of -^erncleugh. is brought out most

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forcibly in Meg s celebrated speech at the end of Chapter 8 (" lRide your ways ... ride your ways, Laird of El lango wan. .."')• ^e will find that Thackeray and George filiot convey their attitudes to the recent past much more through explicit interventions by their narrators.
The popularity of Scott's novels led to a great upsurge in the writing
of historical fiction, in a vogue which continued till the end of the 1640*3, and produced such works as rt. Harrison Ainsworth's Rookwood (1834), The Tower o£ London (1&40), Old £t. Paul ' s (1841) and rt indsor c astle (1843), JSmrna Robinson's ^hitefriars (1844), ^ulwer Lyttori's -^evereux (1829), Tne Last ^ays o£ Pompeii (1834), ^ienzi (1835), The Last of the Barons (1843), and Harold (1848), not to mention the fifty-sevten historical romances written by ti.P.R. James between 1829 and 1859* ^ulwer's novels were at least extensively researched and aimed at historical accuracy, and were actually received as history rather than as fiction, but most other histo-rical fiction of the period offered a dreamy romanticised view of the past,

2 with characters little different from middle-class Victorians. Interest was centred on complex plots full of missing heirs, disguises, incredible escapes, coincidences, mistaken identities, and missing letters, and the effort made to recreate a particular period was either minimal, or expressed in large slabs of undigested historical information inserted into the text.3 Real historical figures also tended to play an implausibly large part in

James C. Simmons, ^he Novelist as Historian; Essays on the Victorian Historical Novel (The Hague and Paris: Mouton, 1973),
p Nicholas Ranee, The Historical Novel and Popular Politics in Nine-teenth-century England (London: Vision Press, 1975)> PP» 38-39»
°immons, pp. 19> 14 •

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the proceedings: Deyereux includes Pope, Gray, ^wift, Bolingbroke, Louis XIV and Peter the Great, while dhitefriars introduces ^harles II, Nell Gwynne, the puke of Monmouth, Titus Gates, and Aumerle. Moreover Scott's imitators generally chose to emulate, not his novels of the recent past, but the fic-tion concerned with ^gland and Europe in the Middle ^-ges and Renaissance In novels like Ivanhoe (1819), The Monastery (1820) and The Talisman (1825) ^cott devoted much attention to the externals of the past, the scenery, costumes and architecture, and this feature, combined with the kind of wildlj inaccurate treatment of real events found in Kenilworth (l82l) gave his less talented imitators scope to carry such faults to greater excesses. The twenty or so years after Scott's death in 1832 did produce some first-rate novels eet in the recent past, notably Dickens 1 Barnaby ^udge (1841), -which treated the period of the ^ordon Riots of 1780, and G harlotte Bronte's Shirley (1849), dealing with the industrial unrest of 1811-12. But by 1847 Thackeray, like ^cott in 1805, felt the need to distance himself from the kind of fiction being written in his day, including the historical fiction, and to make his own attempt to recreate the recent past .- in Vanity Fair.

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G H A P T E R 3

THACKERAY - 1. VANITY FAIR

Before Vanity Fair (1847-48), Thackeray wrote several satirical attacks directed at the contemporary novelists who were exploiting the vogue for historical fiction initiated by Scott. His early novel Catherine (1839-40) set in the early eighteenth century, is largely a parody of the "Newgate" fiction of the l830's, the romanticisation of criminals in such novels as Sulwer' s Paul Clifford (1830) and jjugene Aram (1832) and Ainsworth's Jack Sheppard (1838), but it also satirises the habit of bringing fictional heroes into contact with a plethora of the leading historical figures of their time, as Bulwer had done in -^evereux;

we had a great mind to make Hayes philosophizing wi-J;h Boling-
broke, like a certain ^evereux; and Mrs Catherine jjiaitresse en
titre to Mr. Alexander Pope, Doctor Sacheverel, Sir John Reade
the oculist, -^ean Swift, or Marshall Tallard; as the very com-
monest romancer would under such circumstances.

Later in the story Thackeray writes a brief pastiche of Ainsworth, involving a quarrel between two ladies by the Thames at midnight:

They turn out to be ^tella and Vanessa, who have followed thither; who is in the act of reading Gulliver's Travels to Gay,
Arbuthnot, Bolingbroke, and Pope. Two fellows are sitting, shud-
dering, under a doorway; to one of them Tom filings flung a
sixpence. He little knew that the names of these two young men
were - Samuel Johnson and Richard Savage .

He also ridicules the "great and learned display" of knowledge of the cos-tumes of the period, to which historical novelists could devote "at least half a dozen pages of fine writing," and the "pretty antiquarian figments" about the songs and music performed <*f ihe concerts of the time, got up from

The Oxford Thackeray, III, 1-18?, at 76-79.
2 '^he Oxford Thackeray, III, 170-71; emphasis Thackeray's.

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such sources as the fcurney collection of music at the British Museum and the memoirs of Colley Gibber and his daughter. 1
A few years later Barry Lyndon (1844) offers a cynical view of warfare itself and a sceptical one of novelists who have their fictional heroes encounter famous army commanders at crucial stages of a battle, '^he epony-mous hero tells how at Minden during the Seven Years' War he bayonetted a Colonel and clubbed down a feeble ensign, and how he and other soldiers stripped and robbed the dead, even those of their own side - "'^hat a number of items of human crime, misery, slavery, to form that sum-total of glory!" p attributed to the "Great Frederick." Moreover, he did not meet any of the "great characters of this remarkable time," unlike the heroes of novels, who would all be brought into contact with "the greatest lords and most no-torious personages of the empire."
More directly relevant to Vanity Fair are Thackeray's views of the fic-tion of Charles Lever. Lever's Charles O'Malley The Irish Dragoon (1841) had dealt"with the Peninsula cam^paign and the battle of Waterloo, and in the war scenes, although acknowledging that battles did involve much blood-shed and suffering, Lever concentrated on the "glorious reality of war," the "spirit and adventure of a soldier's life," the "overwhelming excitement" of charging into the melee. Moreover the hero is continually in contact with the Duke of Wellington, and is sent with dispatches from Spain to the Duke of York, becoming a social lion at Carlton House and -meeting the ^egent, ffox •^urke, and Sheridan. At the -Duchess of Richmond's ball on the eve of Quatre

1 The Oxford Thackeray, III, 138.
2 T>.e Oxford Thackeray, VI, 1-311, at 70-71-
3 The Oxford Thackeray, VI, 69-70.
4 I.Charles Lever 1, ^harles O'Malley the Irish Dragoon, ed. Harry
Lorrequer (Dublin: William Curry Jun & Co.j London: W S. Orr & C0., 184!) I, 229, 235, 246.
^ Charles 0 Galley, II, 208-13.

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•Bras, he sees Lord Uxbridge, Captain Vandeleur, Ponsonby, the Prince of Orange, and again, Wellington. ^'aken prisoner at Ciuatre ^ras, he is brouglr to Napoleon, and later at Waterloo sees Wellington^ Napoleon, Uxbridge and u eneral Graham, being the one to deliver to Uxbridge the Duke's order to charge into the French centre. '^hackeray's pastiche of Lever in his Novels ££ ^minent Hands, "Phil Pogartyj A Tale of the Fighting Onetey-Oneth, By Harry Kollicher," concentrates into a few pages what Thackeray clearly saw as the more ludicrous side of Lever's fiction:

''Hal there goes poor Jack ^elamere's head offl ^he ball chose
a soft one, anyhow. Come here, Tim, till I mend your leg. Your
wife has need only .knit half as many stockings next year,
my boy 1
I and Prince Talleyrand danced a double hornpipe with Pauline
Bonaparte and Madame de Stael; Marshal Soult went down a couple
of sets with Madame Recamier; and Robespierre 1 s v/idow ... stood
up with the Austrian ambassador. Besides, the famous^ artists
Baron Gros, ^avid and Nicholas Poussin, and Canova...

^eedless to say, our hero is also acquainted with Napoleon, Murat, Ney, and Prince Eugene. Also of interest in this context is G.P.R. James's My Aunt Pontypool (l835)> °ne of this autnor's infrequent forays into the recent past, which deals with the battle of Waterloo and the period immediately preceding it: although more sparing than Lever in his battle descriptions, James has his heroine (who has been abducted by agents of the villain wan-ting to force her into marriage with his son) come across Ney in a house near Waterloo, while another character encounters Wellington.

1 G harles O'Malley, II, 288-90.
2 Charles O'Malley, II, 310ff.
"* Punch, 7-21 ^ugust 1847 j rpt. The Oxford Thackeray, VlII, 138-53.
4 tt he Oxford Thackeray, VIII, 141.
^ The Oxford Thackeray, ^III, 146.
My Aunt Pontypool-i A Novel (1835; rpt. London: '^homas Hodgson, n.d.), pp. 209, 219-20.

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Two years after Vanity Fair, Thackeray was to satirise in his continu-ation of I van ho e, Rebecca and ftowenas jji Romance Upon Romance the same ten-dencies in Scott's medieval novels. In the Crusaders' battles in which Ivanhoe becomes caught up,

everything passes off agreeably} the people are slainj but without
any unpleasant sensation to the readerj nay, some of the most
savage anci bloodstained characters of history ... become amiable,
jovial companions for whom one has a hearty sympathy.

He is speaking particularly of King Richard the Lionheart, who in his "fiendish appetite for blood" has just butchered some children with an axe. Ivanhoe, meanwhile, was only prevented from saving Prince Arthur from King John's "horrid designs" by a six-year spell of fever and delirium:

for Ivanhoe was, we need scarcely say, a hero of romance 5 and it
is the custom and duty of all gentlemen of that profession to be
present on all occasions of historic interest, to be engaged
all conspiracies, royal interviews, and remarkable occurrences.

In creating in Vanity Fair "A Novel ^ithout a Hero", and One in which
the character closest to being a military hero, George Osborne, is deeply flawed in other ways, Thackeray is then reacting against the conventions of Scott's later novels and their imitators. Likewise his sparing use of encounters between fictional and real historical characters. In the latter case however Thackeray could well be emulating Scott's practice in his novels of the recent past but his comments on Richard the Lionheart s&dd on Frederick the Great show that he is much more critical than Scott of so-called great men. Moreover, speculating about Napoleon, who greatly in-fluences the lives of the characters in Vanity Fair, Thackeray had argued

1 The Oxford Thackeray, *, 461-572, at 531
2 The Oxford Thackeray, X, 544-45 •

that if we cou}d actually see the famous people of history in their private lives, stripped naked as it were, as well as in their public roles, they would seem far different - reputed warriors would be seen to be cowards, the virtuous to be vicious, and sages, fools.
The action of Vanity Fair begins in June, 1813, when Becky and Amelia leave Miss Pinker-ton's, and extends up to the time of writing, when Amelia and -^obbin are married with a daughter, and Becky is living at £ath and Cheltenham practising good works on the proceeds of her murder of Jos *>edley - albeit the period after Amelia f s second marriage in about 1831

*

is covered very briefly. There are also retrospectives of the main charac-ters 1 schooldays in the early years of the century, ^hile writing the novel '^hackeray was 36-37? hence the period he is dealing with is more or less his own lifetime, and could have been reconstructed at least partly from memory, and from what he had heard from his mother, stepfather and others of their generation, ^imilarly the period would have been recalled by the readers of the same age or older. However the central event of pub-lic history on which he is drawing - the battle of ^aterloo - occurred early in this time-span, when he himself was not quite four (i.e. 18 June 1815), so that it was rather something that he and those of a similar age would have heard about rather than remembered personally. Before the des-cription of the actual battle in the novel, the narrator claims that

you and I, who were children when the great battle was won and lost,
are never tired of hearing and recounting the history of that
£ famous action.

1 "The ^econd *uneral of Napoleon,"(1840), in Tne Oxford ^haokeray,
III, 395-449, at 398-99-
Va*iity Fair; ± Novel without A Hero, originally p^bMhed in 20
parts, January 1847 - July 1648, and in book form in 1848. vol. XI of '^he Oxford ^hackeray, ed. and intro. by George Saintsbury (London: Oxford Uni-versity Press, 1908), p. 405. All subsequent citations will be based on this edition, which notes significant variants from the first edition.

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The victory was in fact still celebrated every year on Wellington's birth-day, ffirt in his treatment of the battle, its background, and its after-effects, '^haokeray offers an approach different from that of Lever and his ilk, and also from that which would have been familiar to readers of his own age from the accounts of their elders and of historians. Instead of devoting much space to descriptions of battles and encomiums on British military glory, he aims to demonstrate the effect the war had on people living at the time, on those who were not particularly interested in it as well as on those who were directly involved - "Lw]e do not claim to rank among the military novelists. Our place is with the non-combatants" (p. 361).
fls she leaves Miss Pinkerton's, Becky, in order to revenge herself on
the sisters, exploits the hatred and fear of Napoleon felt by most people in Britain at the time, by shouting, " * £vl ive la ^rancel Vjve I'Stnpereurl ^ive Bonaparte!*" (p. 14)• A few chapters later the main characters discuss "war and glory, and BOney and Lord Wellington," over dinner at Sedleys*, and, the period being "those famous days" when "every gazette had a victory in it," George and ^obbin long "to see their own names in the glorious list" and to have "the chances of honour" (p. 59)• However the visit to Vauxhall immediately afterwards shows how such victories could also be trivialised or forgotten in preoccupation with more personal concerns: the Russians 1 burning of Moscow (in the face of the French invasion of 1812) is presented as a "panorama.," th» viewing of which gives Becky a chance to fall into Jos's arms when another spectator steps on her toe, while the cantata the "Battle of Borodino" ("a savage Cantata against the Corsican upstart," con-cerning the struggle between the French and &ussian armies on 7 September 1812) is only one attraction amongst the thousands of lamps, the "comic and sentimental ballads," the tightrope walking of Mme Saqui, the eating

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and drinking, and the dark walks thronged with courting couples. Moreover when -Dobbin tries to hum it, he is so preoccupied with his new love for fl-melia that he finds himself humming instead the song he had heard her sing before dinner (pp. 62-64).
After this the war is not raentinned for several chapters and when the subject is reintroduced Thackeray points out that, although there may have been great public interest in the battles being fought, some people could feel sheltered from their effects and indifferent to their outcome: despite the fact that "war was raging all over ^urope, and empires were being staked that it was a period

when the Courier newspaper had tens of thousands of subscribers ;
when one day brought you a battle of Vittoria, another a burning
of Moscow, or a newsman1 s horn blowing down Russell Square about dinner-time, announced such a fact as - "Battle of Leipsic - six
hundred thousand men engaged - total defeat of the French - two
hundred thousand killed (p. 137)
the routine at the ^edleys 1 house goes on uninterrupted, and Amelia cares nothing about ^rienne and Montmirail (two battles won by Napoleon against the Allies in *'rance during January and February, 1014). w hen Napoleon ab-dicates and peace is announced, she is overjoyed, but only because she thinks that George's regiment will not be ordered on service:

The fate of Europe was Lieutenant George Osborne to her. His
dangers being over, she sang Te -^euro. He was her Europe; her
emperior; her allied monarchs and august prince regent. He was
her sun and moon; and I believe she thought the grand illunjina-
tion and ball at the Mansion House, given to the sovereigns,
were especially in honour of George Osborne (p. 137)

AS the AHies prepared to invade France after the battle of Vittoria in October 1813, the Courier had demanded of t-ts "tens of thousands of sub-

., » scribers:

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Is there a heart in the British ^ropire that does not swell with
pride in the contemplation of the glories of our arms? Is there
a nerve that does not quiver in beholding this success of freedom
and free men over tyranny and its engines, this victory of jus-
tice over injustice, this ample harvest of imperishable honour
and renown?

*haokeray is obviously suggesting that some people living at the time were proof against this excitement and patriotic fervour; as Carola Oman has pointed out, there would have been by 1811 many girls of marriageable age who could not recall a time when Britain had not been at war with France,

2 since the struggle had been going on since 1793. gven among those in the

novel who are more stirred by the events of the war than Amelia, Thackeray focusses not on the participants but on people in London responding to news-paper reports, including inaccura^o ones: at Leipsic (16-19 October 1813) there were actually about 510,000 engaged and 115,000 killed.
AS readers of 1847 would have been aware, contemporary confidence in
the peace of 1814 was ill-founded, and the beginning of c hapter 18 reveals that it was Napoleon's sudden landing in prance which was the ultimate cause of the ruin of John ^edley, described in the preceding chapter. The passage draws attention to the way in which "famous events and personages" can affect the lives even of those who are least interested in them:

Pieu, I say, is it not hard that the fateful rush of the
great Imperial struggle can't take place without affecting a
poor little harmless girl of eighteen, who is occupied in
billing and cooing, or working muslin collars in Hussell
Square? ... Yesj Napoleon is flinging his last stake, and
poor little Emmy Sedley's happiness forms, somehow, part
of it (pp. 211-12)

1 Courier and Evening uazette, 19 October 1813, p»1- It was out of publication by 1847 •
2 Britain Against Napoleon (London: Faber & Faber, 1943), pp. 297-98

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In his rage and bitterness Eramy's father even imagines that Napoleon*>s escape was planned by M| half the powers of Europe 1 " simply to "'bring the funds down 1 " (p. 242). In fact Napoleon's escape brings oa Amelia's mar-riage, since George is shamed into proposing to her when her father insists she send back George's letters and gifts, and is confirmed in his resolve j?y his disgust at his own father's slanders of her.
*n or the part of the novel set in Belgium Thackeray follows closely
the account of G.H. Gleig, whose Story of the flattie of Waterloo was pub-lished in 184? > but omits most of the parts dealing with the actual battles to concentrate firstly on the hedonistic, frenetic social life of Brussels before Quatre Bras, culminating in the ^uchess of Richmond's ball, and then on the feelings and responses of the non-combatants left in the city to await the outcome of the war; he is concerned not with the events of
•^ras and "'aterloo as such, familiar as they already were to his readers, but with the way half —knowledge and inaccurate rumours about the battles created terror and panic among the people in Brussels, ^his recalls Scott's treatment of the war in The An-fcjquary. The novel draws attention as well to the sufferings of the wounded at ^uatre Bras, and the pathos of the situation is brought out by the description of the young £nsign ^bubble, who had initially been so naively enthusiastic about going to war (pp. 288- 91, 397-98). Kathleen and Geoffrey 1'illotson have shown how ^hackeray dramatises Gleig's account, embodying typical behaviour in his descriptions of the responses of individual characters. But his account is less sonibre than (Sleig's: he recreates the "heart-rending" partings between husbands and wives on the morning of 16 June, the "wild tokens" of the women's

their Introduction to the 1^63 Methuen edition, pp. xxix-xxxii

alarm, which were "piteous to see and agonizing to listen to," in the reac-tions of ^melia, but varies the picture with his portrayal of Mrs O'Dowd's level-headed good sense and -Becky's self-confident equanimity. He also exploits the comic possibilities of the situation in his account of Becky's revenge on Lady Bareacres, and in his description of Jos's panic and eventual flight.
As I have suggested above,Thackeray*s sparing use of battle descrip-tions in his novel is partly a reaction against their prevalence in the work of other novelists. He also disliked " [t] he idea of j sedentary, paci-fic readers getting titillation from fictional bloodbaths," as John Carey

2 has pointed out, and felt in any case that Waterloo was just one in a long

line of battles between England and ^rance, each leaving "its cursed legacy of hatred and rage" and following "the Devil's code of honour" (p. 4^5) • But the avoidance of such description does mean that the news of George Osborne's death, coming as it does in a subordinate clause at the end of a chapter, after pages of rumour-mongering, comedy, and pathos, hits the rea-der with all the more force, and enables him to feel perhaps some faint echo of the shock undergone by ^melia and the Osbornes.
Directly after this Thackeray takes us back to ^ingland and deals with
the rather mild effect on Miss Grawley of the news of Waterloo, which for her merely "rendered the v»ewspapers rather interesting" while her knowledge of iiawdon's gallantry and promotion does not palliate her rage against him for marrying Becky or cause her to alter her will in his favour. Nor does Waterloo greatly affect the lives of Becky and Rawdon except insofar as the social life at Brussels and later at Paris enables Becky to gain a

Rev. G.R. Gleig, ^'he Story of the %ttle of ^aterloo, From Authentic Sources *2 (1847; rpt. London: John Murray, 1907), ?• 83•
Thackeray; Prodigal Genius, p. 1^0.
In the original part-publication it also came right at the end of
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foothold in the upper-class society into which she is eventually accepted in London. Both during and after the war she demonstrates her ability
to control and manipulate circumstances. Amelia is of course more deeply-affected: she is numbed by grief for George, and his death also serves to fix in her mind an idealised image of him which his behaviour in life must needs have tarnished had he survived. The grief of the rest of the Osborne family is also intense, and in dealing with it the narrator urges the rea-der to imagine what it felt like in Britain to read the dreadful casualty lists of Quatre Bras and Waterloo;

Fancy, at every village and homestead almost through the three
kingdoms, the great news coming of the battles of Flanders, and
the feelings of exultation and gratitude, bereavement and sickening dismay, when the lists of the regimental losses were gone through,
and it became known whether the dear friend and relative had escaped or had fallen, ^-nybody who will take the trouble of looking back to a file of the newspapers of the time, must,
even now, feel at second-hand this breathless pause of expecta-
tion. ^he lists of casualties are carried on from day to day:
you stop in the midst as in a story which is to be continued
in our next. Think what the feelings must have been as those
papers followed each other fresh from the press... (p. 438)

this is merely the final stage of twenty years of war which had been fought by millions and had bereaved millions more.
In the latter half of the novel the Napoleonic Wars actually become history. A few years afterwards Georgy, in the Park with his grandfather ^edley and a Corporal Clink, seizes hold of the latter* s Waterloo Medal, and when the group meets Rawdon and his son, Sedley explains proudly that Georgy 1 s father had also been a "Waterloo man" (p. 481). ^nd just as the Misses Osborne had played the piano sonata "The -Battle of Prague" in 1815 as a pre-dinner diversion, Amelia in placid Pumpernickel in about 1630 her.,ny Beethoven's "-^ie ^chlacht bei Vittoria" (1813), which had been based partly on the earlier piece (p. 794)• Meanwhile Napoleon, object of love

^y *rantisek Koczwara, c. 1?88.

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and hatred, devotion and terror throughout ^nirope for nearly twenty years, had died at St. Helena in 1620, and by 1827 is the subject of Georgy's pom-pous schoolboy essay "On Selfishness". Becky exaggerates her husband's achievements at Vvfeterloo by sending Miss C rawley relics from the battle - actually bought from a pedlar (pp. 408-9) - and the character who ends up with the greatest reputation for military heroism is the cowardly Jos, who becomes known as "Waterloo Sedley" because he displays such detailed know-ledge of what Wellington felt, said and did all through the battle, that everyone he meets in India believes that he had been at the Duke's side the whole time, like the hero of a typical historical novel (pp. 482-83). The events of the Napoleonic wars have a greater impact on the cha-racters of Vanity Fair than on those of The ftntiquary - possibly ^cott, writing so soon after the end of the wars, did not want to revive their horrors. Thackeray is also more cynical, presenting their outcome as the result of chance rather than of superior valour or virtue on the part of the Allies, ^he latter were not on a war-footing in 1815 "providentially/1 as the "historians on our side" would have it, but in order to enforce their claims for control of different parts of Europe against each other. Napoleon was just unlucky not to have waited till they were too busy figh-ting each other to be able to oppose him (pp. 339-40)- c erbainly the Con-gress of Vienna in 1814 had almost broken up under threat of war several times over ^ussia's claim on Poland and Prussia* s demands for control of Saxony. Hence Napoleon's return and its consequences were really just as arbitrary and almost as important to the characters' lives as Jos's drin_ king of the famous ty>wl of rack punch at Vauxhall: 'ft] hat bowl of rack punch was the cause of all this history. And why not a bowl of rack punch

1 i>he Cambridge History of British Foreign Policy i
and G.p. Gooch, Vol. I, 1783-1815 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1922), pp. 467-68, 474, 479-80t Harold Nicolson, The Congress of Vienna (London: Constable & Co., 1946), pp. 177-78. In 1844 Thackeray had re-searched the life of Talleyrand for a biography he never wrote-

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as well as any other cause?" (p. 66). Jos f s drunken behaviour and his later embarrassment about it spell the end of Becky's plans to catch him as a hus-band, and force her to try her luck elsewhere. Such mundane causes have after all had great consequences in history -

»*as not a bowl of prussic acid the cause of fair Rosamond's
retiring from the world? Was not a bowl of wine the cause of
the demise of Alexander the Great? (p. 66)

technique of raising apparently trivial incidents to the level of momentous events, and of drawing analogies between fictional characters and well-known historic figures, is paralleled elsewhere in the novel. The fight between Cuff and ^obbin at Dr. Swisht ail's is compared to the battle of Waterloo, (although, as the narrator acknowledges, the latter had not yet taken place):

It was the last charge of the Guard -...-it was Ney's column
breasting the hill of La Hay Sainte, bristling with ten thousand
bayonets, and crowned with twenty eagles - it was the shout of
the beef-eating British, as leaping down the hill they rushed
to hug the enemy in the savage arras of battle (p. 54)

In fact the spectators' attitude - supporting throughout the side which looks most likely to win,- forshadows the behaviour of the Belgians in Brus-sels, who prepare to Welcome Napoleon when they believe he will prove the victor (pp. 399-4^0). Moreover chapter headings characterise Becky's and Amelia's matrimonial ambitions in military terms - "In rthi'ch Miss Sharp and Miss Sedley Prepare to Open the Campaign" (Chapter 2), "Rebecca is in Presence of the JEnemy" (Chapter 3), as if to suggest that husband-hunting is the female equivalent of warfare. Later the focus on the female perspective on the real war is brought out in the titles of Chapters 2? and 2b - "In
rt hich Amelia Joins Her Regiment" and "In Miich Amelia Invades the Low Coun-tries", And Becky, an upstart like Napoleon (with whom she has allied her-

self in her outburst to the Misses Pinkerton), manages to return from exile at the end, and is more successful than the French iSmperor in achie-ving her designs.
AS we would expect from his satirical attacks on other novelists, Thackeray Brakes sparing use of encounters between his characters and cele-brated historical figures, and records no dialogue between real and fictio-nal people. Becky is seen reding among- "some of the very greatest persons in Brussels" by Jos, Amelia, George, ^obbin, and Mrs O'Dowd, and the latter points out two of them as '"the juke himself 1 " and Lord Uxbridge (p. 347) but the ssene is developed no further. Later Becky is presented to George IV (598ff), but the narrator claims sarcastically that his pen is too "feeble and inexperienced" to describe such a magnificent and dazzling oc-casion s.s her interview with her sovereign, ^awdon Crawley may patronise Wattier's (p. 128), but Thackeray does not have him meet Byron, as does the
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hero of Mrs Gore's Cecil (1841). The impact which the unseen Napoleon has on the characters* lives is both more complex and more plausible than would have been dramatic encounters with him. However the novel as a whole is studded with allusions to well-known figures from the period in which it is set, and since it is also full of passing references to minor characters who never appear, the fictional and historical seem to coalesce, the allu-sions to historical figures adding to the reader's belief in the reality of the fictional ones. *'or example while Becky is at keen's Crawley during Miss ^rawley's visit, the narrator recalls that at this time (1814), as some old readers may recollect, the genteel world was thrown into a consi-

1 The illustration to the opening of Chapter 64 shows Becky as Napole-
on looking out over the Channel - a satirical reference to B.R. Haydon's many paintings of "Napoleon Musing at St. Helena" - see Joan Stevens, "Thackeray's Pictorial Capitals," in Costerus, NS 2 (1974), 113-40, at 126-
26. f\
~ e6il» or, The Adventures of a Coxcomb (London: Richard Bentley,
1641), II, 135-36.Cecil later spends much time with %ron in Geneva and Venice, meeting Shelley,and Mme de ^tael as W3ll (ill,

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derable state of excitement" by the elopements of ^sign Shafton with Lady Barbara Fitzurze, daughter and heiress of the Earl of Bruin, and of Vere Vane with the sexagenarian actress Mrs ftougemont (p. 128), and while the names show that these people are fictitious, they take on credibility from Miss ^rawley's encomium immediately afterwards on Lord Nelson, who 'went to the deuce for a woman/1 " sarlier, the younger Pit* Crawley's friendships with Wilberforce and the Rev, ^ilas Hornblower have been mentioned in the same sentence, while his grandfather Lord Binkie had been a cousin of Henry ^undas, Lord Melville (pp. 77, 100). George Osborne goes to see Edmund Kean play ^hylock (p. 316) before embarking for the Continent, while his ^eneral writes to the fictional Mile Amenaide of His Majesty's '-Theatre
(p. 287). James C rawley raves drunkenly to his aunt about "the different pugilistic qualities of Molyneux and Dutch ^am" (both boxers of 'the period) and at the same time offers Lady Jane odds on the (fictional) 0?utbury Pet and Rottingdean ^'ibber (p. 430).
In a slightly different category are the fictional characters based on well-known figures of the society of the time: Lord ^teyne, modelled on the 3rd Marquess of Hertford, his toady Wenhara suggested by the journalist and politician John Wilson Croker, and Mr ^agg, based on the novelist and society wit ^'heodore Hook-»: A similar trio- Lord Monmouth, Mr ^igby, and Lucian Gay - had figured in Disraeli's ^oningsby (1844), and Thackeray had identified Monmouth as Hertford in his review of the novel for the Morning Chronicle-, Although the Tiliotsons point out that in Steyne Thackeray has suppressed the more creditable aspects of Hertford's career, charles

Kathleen and Geoffrey ^i Hot son's introduction to the 1963
Methuen edn of the novel, pp. xxxii-xxxiii; '^'hackeray puts his death back to 1830, from 1842, and ages him correspondingly, ^teyne, a grandfather, is described and pictured as old, while Lord Hertford (b. 1777) would have been only in his late forties and early fifties during the period in which he appears in the novel.
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Morning Chronicle, 13 May 1L44 J rpt. William Makepeace Thackeray; Contributions to the Morning Chronicle, ed. Gordon N. Ray (Urbana: Univer-sity of Illinois Press, 1955), p. 43.

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Greville, writing just after the latter 1 s death, said that his later life at least was "undisguised debauchery", that he never had a "serious thought', ov* kindly feeling" or did "a generous or charitable action," wasting or degrading his talents.
^hackeray also shows how people of no particular distinction try to
enhance their own prestige by boasting of their connections with the great. The reputation of Miss Pinkerton's academy is due to a visit once paid to it by Dr Johnson? Jos ^edley in India speaks of his lonely life in ^egency London as if "he and Brummell were the leading bucks of the day" (p. 27), and, as we have seen, claims acquaintance with Wellington; his ruined father tries to delude himself and others into believing he has a future in the world of high finance by talking of the doings of the Rothschilds and Baring Brothers (p. 464); Mrs O'Bowd points out the resemblance between Lord Ux-bridge and her brother Molloy J^oloney (p. 347); Becky continually talks of her meeting with George IV (p. 604)1 old Osborne adopte the arras of the Duke of Leeds, '^'he Grawleys of course make a practice of advertising their allegiance to whomever is in the political ascendant in the names they give to their sons.
AS well as being a comment on how a war of the past was really experi-enced, and on the most likely kind and degree of relationship between or-dinary people of the past and famous historical figures, Vanity ffair is also of course an attempt to recreate the life and manners of the tirae.
The picture is extremely varied and detailed, too f although; unlike Scott, Thackeray does not venture down the social scale fceyond those who can make some claim to gentility or who have some prospect of making one (like Briggs 1 dissenting shoemaker brother who wants to send his son to college)

Memoirs (1885) for 19 March, 1&42; rpt. The Complete 'Peerage
by "G.E.C.", Vol. Vl, ed. H.A. Doubleday and Lord Howard de walden, '(London: St. Catherine Press, 1926), p. 513n.

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except for the haggles family and assorted servants, who are seen mainly in relation to their masters. There is the genteel girls 1 school where trivial accomplishments like dancing, embroidery and deportment come before "•prin-ciples of religion and morality 1 " (p. 5), and where the students defer to wealth and noble birth (p. 19)} the boys' school where fagging and bullying are rife. Old oir pitt crawley holds a pocket borough which returns two members and £l,500 a year with five voters (a position not unknown before the 1^32 Heforra Bill), and increases his revenue by means typical of his period - taking out canal shares, horsing coaches, and undertaking mining ventures on the estate. In presenting his appalling boorishness, liberti-nism, and meanness, Thackeray is not suggesting that he is a typical baro-net of his period so much as indicating the extent to which birth and land-ownership carried political power and social deference. But he does resemfele in many ways the peer Lord Deerhurst of Harriette ^ilson's Memoirs (1825), who seduces her thirteen-year old sister, peerhurst is dirty, uses tallow candles and broken candlesticks, takes the girls to a common village pot-house to dine off fried eggs and bacon, and, after failing to gallop through a turnpike in an effort to avoid a 2d toll, beats up the tollkeeper

2 with the boxing skills he.has learnt from cribb and Jackson. °ir Pitt's brother the rtev. Aite ^ rawley is characteristic of the "fox-hunting parsons" of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, interested little if at all in religion and preoccupied with boxing, racing, hunting and social conviviality (pp. 113-14). Meanwhile the younger generation of bucks like rtawdon ^ rawley and Lord Soutiidown, and would-be bucks like George Osborne and James Crawley, indulge in such popular Regency pastimes as heavy drin-x he great age of aanal-building was 1760-1825, before railways. *'or horsing coaches, see JS.W. Bovill, English Country Life 1780-1630 (London: Oxford University Press, 1962), pp. 145-46; for the popularity of mining among landowners, see G.EJ. Mingay, JJJnglish Landed society in the Eighteenth 0 entury (London: ^outledge & Kegan Paul; /oronto: University of Toronto Press, 1963), p. 191.
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Harriette djlson's Memoirs of Herself and Others (1825; rpt. London:
Peter ^avies, 1929), pp. 140-42, 175-

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j smoking, betting, boxing, driving-four-in-hand, womanising, and
culelling.
^eacting against Bute's approach to religion and 3ir Pitt's and Rawdon 1 habits, are the younger Pitt, together with his wife's mother and sister, Lady Southdown and Lady Emily Sheepshanks, with their Nonconformist alle-giances and their interest in overseas missionary work, negro emancipation, and the distribution of tracts, ^'he tracts are distributed along class lines too, with the stronger ones going to the servants, the milder ones to Miss Briggs, and, initially at least, none at all to Miss Crawley herself, in case she is frightened to death before altering her will in Pitt's favour (pp. 416-17). '^he doyenne of tract-writers, Hannah More, although hardly as self-interested as the Sheepshanks family, would also deliberately vary her style according to the social standing of the recipient. Although the co-existence during the Regency of an hedonistic and irreligious element centred on the Court and a growing number of austere and religious people among the same social class had caused Miss More to claim in 1816 that "the
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wicked seem more wicked, and the good, bettei) 1 ^'haokeray sees little real difference between the two: all of Miss Crawley*s relatives devote their efforts to securing her favour so as to inherit her money. Moreover, on succeeding to the baronetcy Pitt abapndons his Dissenting views to become an orthodox Anglican (p. 5^9)> a common phenomenon at this time and after— 3

wards, as it was socially advantageous to do so.
The novel also deals extensively with life in fashionable society,
with the continual efforts of those on the oubkirts to get into it, and the

1 Elisabeth Jay, The Religion of the Heart, pp. 151-52.
^ric Trudgill, Madonnas and Magdalens (London: Heinemann, 1976),
p. 171-
3 Jay, pp. 24-25.

deference to rank and wealth which governs them all. Marriage is generally undertaken to acquire rank or money: the ironmonger's daughter Rose Dawson marries the vulgar old rf ir Pitt Cpawley because he is a baronet, while the wealthy Miss Swartz espouses the Hon. James McMull. In fact a "host of fashionables" marry into Lombard St. and "ennoble cornhill" (p. 537). And those who cannot marry directly into the aristocracy, like Maria Osborne, exploit to the hilt such prospects for mixing with the fashionable world as their marriages provide. Her brother George is bought a commission in the army, where he mixes with (and is exploited by) the sons of peers and baronets, coming to despise the "bankers and city big-wigs" with whom his father associates (p. 246). His son Georgy is earmarked for a college edu-cation and eventual baronetcy. Meanwhile the society of a man of the rank and connections of Lord Steyne is pursued by everyone who has any chance of meeting him, despite his notorious vices (p. 597)•
Thackeray uses Becky's rise to the apex of fashionable society to sug-gest that this world of worshippers of money and rank is not proof agciinst the ambitions of an adventuress who begins with neither, and lacks even a mother to find her a husband. Her rise is facilitated by the fact that the summit of the social world, the province of Lady Slowbore, Lady Grizzel Macbeth, and Lady ^itz-Willis, does not actually comprise the richest or the best-born, but simply those generally agreed to be "the best "(p. 636). This was the group of "exclusives" of the l&20's, and their citadel was Almack's (of which Lady ^itz-Vvlllis is said to be the "Patron Saint"), venue of the weekly balls which could be attended only by those who had been sold a ticket by one of the half-dozen patronesses. As Puckler-Muskau wrote, the exclusives were J.la peculiar caste" which exercised "a still more despo-tical power in society"than the nobility as such, and which was "not influ-enced by rank, still less by riches," such that "those who have never been

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seen at Almack's are regarded as utterly unfashionable - I might almost say disreputable." Eventually however Becky finds that meeting the same people night after night and hearing them make dreary conversation about "each other's housesi and characters, and families; just as the Joneses do about the Smiths" (p. 63?) is very boring, and when during her subsequent exile she is living in a Parisian boarding-house, she finds the "shabby dandies and fly-blown beauties who frequented her landlady's salons , " the ^egency f 2.
debris of which Paris became full after Waterloo, just as amusing as (and less vulgar than) the leaders of London fashionable society (pp. 819-20). Her "yawning in spirit" was shared by Puckler-Muskau, who, wearied with seeing the same faces and hearing the same talk, could even describe a fete, put on by Lord Hertford himself in his magnificent apartments, and complete with a ball, concert and play, as "magnifiquement ennuyeux." Thackeray's picture of fashionable society and the aspirants to it is very similar to that of Bvlwer, who in his non-fictional analysis England and the English (1833) dealt at length with obsequiousness towards the aristocracy and the latter' s habitual frivolity, extravagance and debauchery, social climbing via marriage and education, deference to wealth, and insipid fashionable
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conversation.

£ut although he is concerned to recreate the life of the period from about 1&13 to about 1830, Thackeray is also at pains to point out that society had not really changed in essentials by 1848. This view is of course implicit in the title, for in his allegory Bunyan explains that Vanity-Fair "is no new erected business, but a thing of ^ncient standing"

1 Letters of 19 October 1826 and 10 February 1827, in A Regency
Visitor, trans Sarah Austin, ed. E.H. ^utler (London: Collins, 1957)» PP«
60, 162-63.

2 Roger Boutet de Monvel, Lea Anglais a Paris, 1800-1830 (Paris:
1-ibrairie Plon, 1911).
* Letter of 7 April 1827, in ± ^egenoy v isitor, p.
^ England and the idnglish, ed. and intro. Standish Meacham (Chicago
and London: University of °hicago Press, 197^)j see esp. Rooks I-III.

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set up by the fallen angels, which must be traversed by all those who seek the "Celestial City." During his account of ^ecky's social triumphs, the

narrator avers -

At the time whereof we are writing, though the Great George was
on the throne and ladies wore £igots and large combs like tortoise-
shell shovels in their hair, instead of the simple sleeves and
lovely wreaths which are actually in fashion, the manners of the
very polite world were not, I take it, essentially different
from those of the present day: and their amusements pretty
similar (p. 643)

and the novel is full of generalisations about human motives and conduct which make it clear that Thackeray believes that the people of his own
day are just as immoral and self-seeking as those of twenty-five or thirty-five years before. *'or example the account of the great respect Miss
Crawl ey commands from her relations because of her wealth is succeeded by a long passage detailing the narrator's (and reader's) similar response to wealthy old relatives (pp. 103-4); Maria Osborne would marry old Bullock for his money were he not already married, 4,nd

other day I saw Miss Trotter (that was), . .. trip into the
travelling carriage at St. George's Hanover Square, and Lord
Methuselah hobbled in after (p. 138)\eL

- Everyone who can waits on Lord Steyne "as you the reader (do not say nay) or I .the writer hereof would go if we had an invitation" (p. 597) • Becky believes she would be a good woman if she had five thousand a year, and the narrator speculates about his own period:

* '^ ne Pilgrim's Progress from this World to That which is to Come
D-679]; ed. James Blantori dharey, rev. by £oger Sharrock (Oxford: Clarendon Press, I960), pp. 88-89.
2 The -Duke of Leeds in 1847-48 (s. 1838, d. 1859) married the daughter
of a Baltimore merchant (Complete Peerage, VII [1929], p.

An alderman coming from a turtle feast will not step out of his carriage to steal a leg of mutton? but put him to starve, and see if he will not purloin a loaf (p. 533)

*s late as 1?58 the Darlington Telegraph could observe that
we all of us feel as if we belonged to some rank or caste, out
of which we are all struggling to rise into some other above
it ... while everyone has his or her own exclusive circle,
which all of supposed inferior rank are prevented from enter-
ing, they are at the same time struggling to pass over the
line of social udemarcation drawn by those above them

lagging and petty tyranny were still part of boys* public-school education; girls 1 schooling still encouraged them to plume themselves on tawdry,
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superficial accomplishments and on beauty, dress, rank and wealth. The novel also conveys the impression that some things never change, by showing us the Osbornes patronising and promoting the Todd family just as they had once been patronised and promoted by the ^edleys - to the extent that Mrs Todd sees her daughter Rosa Jemima as a possible future bride for Georgy (p. 720). Tne beginning of Chapter 56 ("Georgy is Made a Gentleman") in early editions shows Georgy in the robes and crown of the Regent, (consi-dered in his day the "*'irst Gentleman of Europe"), suggesting both that the Osbornes defer to him as much as if he were the Regent, and that the Re-gent's frivolity -and extravagance were in danger of being imitated by those two generations younger. ueorgy also exemplifies the very selfishness which he berates in the dead Napoleon. Moreover, despite his occasional references to the costume of the period in which the novel is set^ Thacke-ray's illustrations in general show the characters in the dress of the 1840 thus stressing continually the story's relevance to his own time. Contem-

1 18 Pecember 1656, quoted in W.L. Burn, The Age of Equipoise (London: Unwin University -Books, 1964)» P» 265*
2 See for example "An Inquiry into the State of Girls 1 Fashionable ^chools," Fraser's, 31 (l645)» 703-12.
^ Noted by Robert A. Co lby, Thackeray's Canvass of Humanity (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 19797* ~P« 235-

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porary critics too, even though many thought the novel adopted too pessi-mistic and misogynistic an attitude to human motive and conduct, responded to it as a comment on their own time. Elizabeth ^igby called it "pre-eminently a novel of the day ... a literal photograph of the manners and habits of the nineteenth century," while for '^heodore Martin it aimed to "probe the principles upon which the framework of society in the nineteenth

p century is based."
is is not to say that nothing important had changed by 1847-46.
George IV was long dead, and Victoria 1 s court, which set an example of happy and respectable family life to the rest of the nation, did not receive fast-living men and women. '^'he popularity of such pastimes as heavy drinking, boxing, four-in-hand driving, gambling and duelling was in dec-line, as '^hackeray was to observe himself a few years later. In the first edition he felt it necessary to refer the reader to "Byron's Memoirs" to prove that ^awdon's hunting, gambling, duelling and womanising were really characteristic of the period. AS well as the influence of the Court, the spreading through secular society of the Evangelical notions of respectabi-lity involving sobriety, thrift, respect for law, and chastity, as well as Evangelical opposition to jockeys, bruisers, living on nothing a year, and the valuing of ton at the expense of moral tone, helped to bring

1 "Vanity Fair - and Jane fjfcre," Quarterly Review, 84 (1648), 153-855
rpt. in '^hackeray; 'Jhe Critical Heritage, ed. Geoffrey '^illotson and Donald Hawes (London: ^outledge & Kegan Paul; New York: Jarnes & Noble, 1968), pp. 77-86, at p. 86.
2 "Thackeray's rt orks," Vv/estminster Review NS 3 (1853), 363-88; rpt. Thackeray: The Critical Heritage, pp. 169-88, at p. 180.
A3a -Briggs, The flge of Improvement , 1783-1867 (London; Longmans,
Green & Co., 1959), pp. 459-60; Hichard ^Itick, v ictorian People and Ideas (London! J.M. Pent & ^>ons, 1973), P- 183.
4 In ''George the fourth," in the Oxford Thackeray, XIII, m- ««, «*
^ pp. 884-65 (note to p. 128). He is referring to Thomas Moore's Letters and. Journals of Lord %ron (1629-33), which, he says, embody "the morals of Hichelieu and the elegance of -^utch Sam."

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about these changes. In the novel this increase in piety of an Evangelical colouring (or at least in concern for an appearance of piety) is registered in Becky's eventual triumph as a devout subscriber to charity-lists and stall-holder at fancy-fairs among the ^angelical coteries of Bath and Cheltenham, '^-he actual fancy-fairs which had become ever more popular
from the 1820 's onward among women as a means of raising money for charity (as well as an opportunity to show off sewing and selling talents, and to
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meet marriageable men) come to embody '^'hackeray ' s metaphorical ^anity *'air. Becky's success is I think meant to suggest not so much that res-pectable religious circles were full of murderesses, as that, so long as one was wealthy, society was not concerned to enquire into the sources of one's money, especially as "the moral world, ... has, perhaps, no particular objection to vice, but an insuperable repugnance to having vice called by its proper name" (p. 812). The intolerance which could accompany an in-crease in religiosity is brought out too in the conversation of Amelia's genteel circle in the Anglo-Indian district of London in the late 1820' s - they talk of "'Mr. Peel's late extraordinary tergiversation in the fatal Catholic belief Bill'" (i.e. Peel's decision in 1829 to support the removal of civil disabilities against Catholics; the bill was passed in that year), and predict the fall of the Pope (p. 595)- The rise of the Tract ari an movement in the l830's was to make Evangelicals of this and subsequent decades even more preoccupied with opposing what they saw as "Popish" ideas and practices.

, 174ff$ R.J. White, j^ife in Regency ffn^land (New York: G.P.
Putnam's Sons; London: B.T. Batsford Ltd, 1963), p. 139«
2 i«'.K. Prochaska, "Charity ^azaars in Nineteenth-Century England,"
Journal of British Studies, 16 (197?)> 62-84.
* See Elisabeth Jay's introductory essay to The Evangelical and Oxford Movements (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 19&3), pp. 13-14*

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Another important change, mentioned in the novel, was the passing of
the Reform Bill of 1832: it causes the second SIT Pitt (a Tory) to prophesy "the speedy ruin of the Empire" (p. 872) because his rotten borough has lost both its seats (as did fifty-six English boroughs, forty-one of them in the agricultural south), and his reaction is similar to those of Ralph Sneyd, a Tory landowner in Staffordshire, who planned to go abroad if the Bill was passed in order to protect his person and property, and of the second ^arl of Malmesbury, who compared it to the *'rench Revolution. John Wilson Croker wrote to Scott that it would mean the end of the monarchy, House of
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Lords, and inequalities in the social system. The Aill had extended the franchise to take in more middle-class voters, and had taken steps towards equalising the electorates, abolishing or reducing the representation of small boroughs, and enfranchising large manufacturing towns in the midlands and north. Meanwhile the Corn Laws, a subject of interest to the second Sir Pitt, and a bastion of the landowning agricultural interest, since they kept up grain prices by restricting the importation of foreign corn, had finally been abolished in 1846, after a long a bitter struggle during which the aristocracy had been criticised more sharply than ever before on econo-mic, social, political and moral grounds. In Past and Present (1843) Carlyle had berated their frivolity and dilettantism, and the lack of socia responsibility they showed in return for the power and privileges they en-joyed. Disraeli's Young England Movement arose partly in response to this sort of attack: in his novel Coningsby Lord Monmouth, a borough-monger as

, The ftffe of Improvement, p. 261.
2 Pamela Horn, The Rural florid 1780-1830 (London: Hutchinson, 1980)
p. 196.
•Briggs, P« 242.
4 Briggs, p. 323.

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well as a cynical libertine, is meant to embody the old corrupt order, and, unlike Lord ^teyne, survives until 1842 as Hertford had. But for Thackeray the change was more apparent than real: during the Corn Law controversy in 1&45 he had called Britain a "lickspittle of a country" for allowing the aristocrats Lord John &ussell and Vi3count Morpeth, who had held aloof from the debate, to come in at the end on the side of repeal and "head the party and take all the prize-money." In any case the landed families continued to be a substantial majority of the House of Commons till after the ^ Reform Bill of 1867 • ^o tt eorge Henry Lewes, one of the many critics who protested that the world was not really as bad as the novel made out, Ihackeray wrote, "God forbid that the world should be like it altogether;
2 though I fear it is more like it than we like to own."
But a less cynical kind of pessimism, more elegiac in tone, also emer-
ges from the novel. In his references to music, singers and dancers of the recent past, and in his descriptions of the vanished glories of Vauxhall and of coaching life, Thackeray is drawing on his own and his readers' me-mories to create a nostalgic awareness of the transience of human successes 3 pleasures and pastimes. Early in the novel he recalls the nautical ballads of forty years ago, which

contain numberless good-natured, simple appeals to the affections,
which people understood better than the milk-and-water lagrime,
sospiri, and felicita of the eternal Donizettian music with
which we are favoured now-a-days. (pp. 41-42)

Moreover the singer Elizabeth Billington and the dancers Hillisberg and Parisot, to all of whom Amelia is compared (p. 6) were all prominent in

1 "'Letter to Mrs Carmichael-Smyth" (his mother), 26 .November
in ji^e. Letters and Private Papers of ^illiam Mg.kepe.ace Thackeray, 4 vols (London: Oxford University Press, 1945-46;, II, 216. Cited henceforth as '^hackeray Letters.
2

6 March 1648, in Thackeray Letters, II, 354.

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tho early years of the nineteenth century but dead by 1848. ^he great actor

John Philip Kerable (seen by Cuff - p. 49) had retired in 1817 and died in

1823, while iSdmund Kean, who had made his London debut in 1814, had been

failing visibly for several years due to alcoholism before he died in 1833-

^fter the charades at Levant House the audience likens Becky to Catherine

Stephens, Maria Caradori and ^onzi de Begnis, and as all had retired by

1848, the allusions to them hint at the ephemeral nature of ^ecky's "culmi-

nation" (p. 652).

In recreating Vauxhall, with its

hundred thousand extra lamps, which were always lighted$ the
fiddlers, in cocked-hats, who played ravishing melodies under
the gilded cockle-shell in the midst of the Gardens; the singers,
both of comic and sentimental ballads, who charmed the ears there; the country dances, formed by bouncing cockneys and cockneyesses, and executed amidst jumping, thumping, and laughter; the signal which announced that Uadame £aqui was about to mount skyward on a slack-rope ascending to the stars; the hermit that always sat
in the illuminated hermitage; the dark walks, so favourable to
the interviews of young lovers; the pots of stout handed about
by the people in the shabby old liveries; and the twinkli .g
boxes, in which the happy feasters made believe to eat slices
of almost invisible ham (p. 63)

Thackeray celebrates a fashionable pleasure-garden (patronised by the Regenl
2

himself) which had had its day by the time he was writing. By the l830 l s

it was catering for a more middle-class clientele, with the introduction of

juggling, conjuring, acrobatics and balloon ascents, but it was doing

badly by 1&37, was auctioned in 1840, and by the 1850*3 had become "a raf-

fish caricature of its eighteenth-century self," its rowdy masked balls

frequented by the disreputable. Soon after the Vauxhall episode, as

1 It is hence unlikely that Cuff would have seen him during the period
of Bobbin's and George's childhood - see J.I.Hi ^tewart's note to the Pen-guin edn, of the novel (Harmondsworth, 1968), pp. 800-1.
2 See the '^illotsons 1 Introduction to the Methuen edn, pp. xxxiv-vi.

3 Francis Sheppard, London 1808-70: The Infernal "'en (London: °ecker
& warburg, 1971), P« 357-
4 L.C.B. ^eaman, Life in Victorian, London (London: B.T. Batsford,
1973), p. 176.

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j
ecky and ^ir Pitt leave for Queen's Crawley on the London-Southampton ooaoh, Thackeray evokes the old days of coaching, recalling "with a sweet and tender regret" his own experiences on the journey through a landscape which has itself altered ("jingling rapidly by the strangers 1 entry of Fleet-Market , which, with Exeter 'Change, has now departed to the world of shadows"), lamenting the now-vanished coachmen, passengers, Korses and inns (pp. 86-87). The coaching trade had been killed off by the early 1840* s because of the competition from railways; the London-Southampton railway was opened in 1840 and that to Brighton (see p. 266), in 1841. '^he retros-pective on coaching at this stage in the novel gives to Becky's situation a temporary pathos, in that it suggests how her future- what will happen at the end of her coach journey - is now over, is part of the past, ^he ac-count of George's journey to his wedding on the road down Piccadilly - through a part of London which had changed much by 1847 (p. 262) - has a

2 similar effect. 'i'he transitoriness even of Lord Steyne's prosperity and

pleasures is brought out by the description of Gaunt House as it is in 1847-48, deserted and desolate in a dreary area which has been taken over by doctors and businessmen (p. 588).
The treatment of the manners, values, customs and pleasure of the re-
cent past in Vanity Fair serves then to point up the persistence of human vice and folly, and the ephemeral nature of human success and pleasure.
In Pilgrim's Progress Bunyan stresses the false values and immoral behaviou: prevalent in Vanity-Pair, but the principal ^iblical text on vanity, the Book of Scclesiastes, concentrates more on the sheer transitoriness of the things of this world, ^t the end the preacher urges us to "Feare God, and

For an extensive treatment of the coaching trade and its decline,
see £.W. ^ovill, English Country Life 17fcO-l83Qt HOff.
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Joan Stevens, "Vanity Fair and the London ^yiine," G Os terus, N3 2
(1974), 13-41, at 38-39-

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keepe his commandements, for this is the whole duetie of man" (Eool. 12: 13) Thackeray's message would seem to be that we should "learn to love and pray," as tiie narrator says after describing the pain and fear of the "worldly, selfish, graceless, thankless, religionless11 Miss Cr<iwley as she confronts death (p. 164). Ait in the novel love is after all usually misdirected and transient, while prayers (like Amelia's for George in battle) are not al-ways answered. JiJarlier in -^cclesiastes the preacher "commended mirth, be-cause a man hath no better thing under the Sunne, then to eate and to drinlce and to be merrie" (fjool. 9* 15)» said, before describing Becky's short-lived triumph at the Levant House charades, the narrator points out that, although Belgravia and Hyde Park gardens will pass away in their turn, just as the great names of eighteenth-century politics and society have deserted Baker Street, although "it is all vanity to be sure,"

what well-constituted mind, merely because it is transitory,
dislikes roast-beef? That is a vanity, but may every man who
reads this, have a wholesome portion of it through life (p. 634)•

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THACKERAY - 2. PflNDENNIS

Pendennis was 'Thackeray's next work of fiction after Vanity Fair, being published in twenty-four monthly parts between November 1&48 and December 1850, when the completed novel was then published in book form. In January 1854, the economist Nassau Senior was to commend the "solid foundation"
of historical fact which supported Vanity Fair, but observed that Pendennis lacked this "grand historical background." In fact

*s far as can be inferred from any historical allusions, it
might have been written at any time during the present, or
indeed during the last century. The old, the young, the Loridon-
ners and the provincials, all act and talk as if the fortunes
of the country had no connexion with theirs, ^ven the profes-
sional jfriters deal with politics with the impartiality of indif-
f erence^

The setting of Pendennis is not as vague as Senior claims, but the charac-ters do not participate in any major historical events. Moreover the sense of the past is created mainly by a reminiscent tone on the part of the narrator, who often portrays himself as a middle-aged man recalling the vanished days of youth; Pendennis 's career has similarities with that of Thackeray himself, notably the Oxbridge episode and his life as a journalist in London. In October 1&4& he told Mrs Brookfield that he thought he re-sembled Pendennis.^
opening chapter of the novel, which introduces Major Pendennis and
his fashionable London social life, suggests a period of about twenty
years in the past, since the Major is invited to dine with Lord ^teyne,
who was said in Vanity Fair to have died in 1&30. The mail-coaches

1 "Thackeray's ^orks," Minburgh Review, 44 (l$54)» 196-243; rpt. Thackeray: The Critical Heritage, pp. 1&9-202, at p. 192.
2 "Thackeray's Works," p. 193.
7-9 October 1648, in '^hackeray Letters, II, 437 •
^ Later in the novel it is however clear that ^'hackeray ha,, extended •^teyne's life well into the 1830's.

of the kind in which the Major travels to ^airoaks were in decline by the late 1830*3 because of the competition of railways, and by the time the novel was written belonged to memory alone - as the narrator points out
at the beginning of Chapter ?• ^he retrospective account of Arthur Penden-nis's life after he leaves school at sixteen mentions that he used to read to his mother The Christian Year (by John Keble) which is described as "a book which appeared about that time" (p. 31), thus suggesting a date of about 1&27. His love for %ron's poetry also fits in with .the late 1820 f s, as do his verses in the County Chronicle warning "the people of -^igland to rally against emancipating the Roman Catholics" (p. 3l)f since the catholic Mancipation bill was finally passed in 1&29. But the time-gap is also that between youth and middle (or even old?) age, for the narrator inter-rupts his description of young Arthur s reading to defend his account against possible charges of insipidity:

Look back, good friend, at your own youth, and ask how was that?/--/
^hat bright colours [the world] wore then, and how you enjoyed it!
A man has not many years of such time. He does not know them
whilst they are with him. It is only when they are passed long
away that he remembers how dear and happy they were (p. 29)

Pendennis's courtship of ^mily Costigan takes place during his eigh-teenth year (p. 4), that is, in about 1830, and the chapters dealing with it contain references to plays which were written or being performed around that time: ^ouglas Jerrold's nautical melodrama Black iCy'd Susan (pp. 75- 77), first performed in 1829, James Kenney's alia Rosenberg (p. 106), a melodrama first staged in 1807, and two ^nglish adaptations of plays by the German dramatist Kotzebue, '?he Stranger (44ff), adapted by Benjamin Thompson in 1798 from his friensohenhass und Reue, and Pizarro, adapted by

X j^he History of Pendennis [1848-50] , V0 1. XII of The Oxford Thac-
keray; ed. George Saihtsbury (London: Oxford University Press, 1908), p. 83. All subsequent citations will be from this edition, which notes significant variants from that of Ib50.

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in 1799 from his Die °panier in Peru (l52ff). In general however
the readers of 1848-50 would not I think have found, that the theatrical life portrayed in Pendennis was much different from that of their own day.
Both The Stranger (with which Thackeray assumes at least some of his readers to be familiar) and Pizarro continued to be performed into the mid-nineteent 2 century, as was Black %*d Susan for even longer, while Kenney continued writing into the 1840*3. The financial problems experienced by the theatre impresario Dolphin were very common in the ^ondon theatre world of the first three decades of the century, and the situation had not really

4 improved by 1850. -^dmund Yates, who came from an acting family, believed that Dolphin was based on ^Ifred Bunn, whose long career in managing the major London theatres of Govent Garden and Drury Lane at various times between 1833 and 1848 had been fraught with difficulties.
'^he ignorance and stupidity of i^mily ^ostigan herself, extreme as they are, seem to have been shared to some extent by actors of the time in which the early part of the novel is set, and also by those of the period in
i

which it was written. Macready, the leading actor between Kean s death in 1833 and his retirement in 1851, and a man of education and intelligence, lamented in his diary in 1836 "'the blunders, the ignorance, and wanton buffoonery, which ... degrades the poor art I am labouring in"1 while in his review of the novel in 1850 Lewes, who had had plays performed, claimed:

For London performances of Pizarro and The Stranger up to the end of
the 1820's, see ^ev. John ^enest, Some ^ccount of the English Stage From the xi estoration in 1660 to 1830 (Bath: H.JS. Carrington, 1832), Vol. IX. •^lla ^osenberg seems to have dropped out of the repertoire after 1821.
2
L.P. Thompson, Kotzebue; A_ Survey of his Progress in France, and
England. (Paris: Honore ^hampion, 1928), pp. 63-66.
His last play was produced in 1846.
4
Joseph Donohue, Theatre in the Age of Kean (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, $975)» P« 176 and passim; Michael Booth, Prefaces to ^glish "ineteenth-V entury Theatre (Manchester: luancnester University Press, n.d.), p. 6e •^dmund Yates; His Recollections j*nd Kxperiences (London: ^ichard
ey and Son, 1864), I, 24-25.
Quoted in Michael leaker, r he ^ise of the Victorian ^-ctor (London:
^room Helm, 1978), p. 39-

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speaking generally, actors are certainly below par rather than
above it in intellect ... If any one doubts this, let him listen
to a greenroom conversation for half an hour!

On the other hand the fictional actors likely to be most familiar to Thacke-ray's readers, the Crummies company in M»oholas Njckleby (1838-39), are not for all their professional rivalry and hamming, presented as stupid, vulgar
2

or mercenary in the way Emily is.
Similarly the low social status of the theatrical profession in gene-
ral, and the assumption that actresses in particular were sexually loose - the factors behind the almost universal horror expressed in Clavering at the idea of Arthur's marrying 4nily - had not changed between 1830 and 1850. Geraldine Jewsbury's novel of 1846, 'A he Half-Sisters, covering the career of a dedicated actress from about 1830 to the time of writing, shows up and criticises the comnion belief that actresses are little better than prosti-tutes, advocating a more elevated view of the profession on the part of both practitioners and public. By stressing -^mily's virtue, Thaciceray is no doubt mocking his readers' preconceptions.
- Such sense of the past as is conveyed by the chapters dealing with Pendennis's courtship of %iily emerges rather from the perspective of a mature narrator looking at the follies and illusions of an immature young man undergoing his first feelings of romantic love, since the narrator shows both Pendennis's rapturous feelings about J^rnily, and what she is really like. In the proposal scene for example, Emily asks if his mother

knows of his love:

He seized her hand madly and kissed it a thousand times, ^he
did not withdraw it. "^oes the old lady know it?" Miss costigan

1 Leader, 21 December 1850, rpt. in Thackeray; The Critical Heritage^
. 105-10, at p. 110. k ee also his novel Ranthorpa (lb47), pp. 147-48. Nicholas Mjckleby, Chapters 22-25, 29-30, 48.

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3 Baker, pp. 18, 27, 48, 81,

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thought to herself? "^ell, perhaps she may," and then she remem-
bered what a handsome diamond cross Mrs. Pendennis had on the
night of the play, and thought, "^ure 'twill go in the family.'Vf *

In the account of Pendennis f s career at Oxbridge (Thackeray's own coi

nage) the novelist is concerned to evoke the "bright colours" of the "dear

and happy" years of youth, and after the comedy of the Fotheringay episode

the tone becomes more sentimental:

man, however brief or inglorious may have been his acade-
mical career, must remember with kindness and tenderness the old University comrades and days. The young sari's life is just
beginning: the boy's leading-strings are cut, and he has all
the novel delights and dignities of freedom. He has no idea
of cares yet, or of bad health, or of roguery, or poverty, or to-morrow's disappointment. ¥he play has not been acted so
often as to make him tired... (p. 200)

Later the narrator looks at a collection of old Oxbridge prize-poems,

tracts, declamations and debat ing-speeches of Pendennis and his contempo

raries (of whom he is one), and laments the changes wrought by time on

their generation, ^ate, he says, "has removed some, estranged others,

dealt awfully with all." Some have died, others become more staid and

conservative:

Here is Jack moaning with despair and Bjronic misanthropy,
whose career at the university was one of unraixed milk-
punch. Here is '^om's daring iissay in defence of suicide
and of republicanism in general, .. .Tom 1 s, who wears the star-
chiest tie in all the diocese, and would go to Smithfield
rather than eat a beefsteak on a Friday in Lent. Here is Bob
of the —— Circuit, who has made a fortune in ^ailroad Com-
mittees - bellowing out with ^ancred and Godfrey, "On to the
breach, ye soldiers of the cross... (pp. 220-21)

'^he narrator's comment that this book of memorabilia is "scarce fifteen

years old" suggests the early 1630' s, as does the "^ronic misanthropy"

attributed to Jack, while both the profits to be made from Hailroad

ommittees and the emergence of High Church clergy who refused to eat meat on Fridays in Lent were developments which had occurred since the early 1830*3. Similarly contemporary readers would have been aware that Penden-nis's flamboyant clothes, his "gorgeous velvet waistcoats, with richly embroidered cravats," pink hunting gear, and jewellery (pp. 213, 216-1?), the attire of the post-Brummell dandies of the 1830's like Count D'Orsay and the young -^Israeli, were a thin# of the past. However the main contrast being made is again between the fervent but often foolish idealism of youth and the placidity and self-interest of middle age. In March 1849 llhackeray had revisited his old university, Cambridge, but found it in great measure bitterly melancholious" , so that his disappointment with contemporary Cambridge was probably one reason why he sentimentalised his own youth in the novel. Pendennis is held up for the- reader's indulgence for his "frank, brave" manner which "becomes a high-spirited youth" (p. 216), his generosity, his lack of rancour over "the roguery of the University tradesmen" or the moneylender who charged lOCtyt interest (p. 234) > and the variety of his "liberal tastes and amusements" which accounts for the large total of his

debt s •

^ut Thackeray is also contributing here to a contemporary debate.
Heavy debts were still common among students in the late l&40 f s, and there was a long correspondence and series of leaders in the Times about them in January 1648 and again in ^ugust and October 1849. "liters variously attributed the problem to the students 1 extravagance, the attempt on the part of those of poorer and more humble backgrounds to keep up with the

Robin Gilmour, £he Idea of the Gentleman, in the Victorian Novel
(London: ^eorge Mien & Unwin, 198l) , p. 71.
2 "Letter to Mrs Brookfield," 12-13 March 1&49, in '^hackeray Letters
II, 510.

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noble and wealthy, the traditional tone of university life, the rascality of tradesmen and their credit system, and lack of proper vigilance by fathers and/or c ollege authorities. The subject had initially come before the public eye in two cases in which former Oxford students had been sent to the Insolvents 1 court because of debts to tradesmen which they had left outstanding on going down, ^he first of these, ^dward Napleton Jennings, had a wide variety of tastes (like Pendennis), since he owed £50 for wine, *-33 for saddlery, £46 for confectionery, about £130 fo£ clothes, travelling apparatus and archery goods, and £195 for books, stationery, perfumery,
p upholstery, groceries, drugs, guns, tobacco, and boats, ^n this context '^hackeray seems to be urging an indulgent attitude to university students who run up large debts, and provides his hero with a convenient loan from Laura so that there is no suggestion that any Oxbridge equivalent of Vanity ffajr*s Haggles family will be thrown on the streets.
•^he narrator's tendency for nostalgic reminiscence persists to some
extent in the descriptions of Pendennis f s life in London. It is implicit perhaps in the reporter Doolan's talk about "all the leading men of letters of his day, '^'om ^arapbell, and Tom Hood, and ^ydney Smith" (p. 35°), since all had died in recent years, and very clear in the following:

It was a jovial time, th^t of four-and-twenty, when every muscle
of mind and body was in healthy action, when the world was new
as yet, and one moved over it spurred onwards by good spirits
and the delightful capability to enjoy ... Sometimes, perhaps,
the festivity of that period revives in our memory; but how
dingy the pleasure-garden has grown, how tattered the garlands
look, how scant and old the company, and what a number of the
lights have gone out since that dayi (p. 37?)

Times, 1846* 3 Jan., p. 4> 5 Jan., p. 7, 6 Jan., p* 3j 7 Jan,, p. 5;
8 Jan., p. 3; 10 Jan., p. 3; 11 Jan., p. 85 12 Jan., p. 4; 13 Jan., p. 5; 1&49* 6 Aug., p. 85 7 Aug., p. 65 13 Aug., p. 5; 16 Oct., p. 4; 20 Oct., p. p. 7.
2
Times, 1 Jan., p. 35 6 Jan., p. 3.
Campbell in 1844, Hood and Smith in 1845•

From the account of Pendeanis's literary career it is difficult to work out the extent to which Thackeray is concerned to evoke a particular period:
as Pendsnnis is twenty-four, it should be the mid-1830's. *or example the novel recalls the landlord of the Fielding's Head, whose "jolly appearance and fine voice may be remembered" by some male readers (p. 378), and who in the narrator's youth used to sing ballads celebrating "good liquor and the social affections ... The charms of our women, the heroic deeds of our mili-tary and naval commanders" (p. 38l). But ^dmund Yates recognised in the description of Hodgen and his song "The Body Snatcher" a resemblance to the singer Ross and his "Sam Hall," a popular favourite at the Cyder Cellars at the time the novel appeared ; Thackeray himself mentioned hearing the per-

2 formance in October 1848. Song-and-supper rooms of the Back Kitchen type

were still popular mid-century, the best-fcnown being the Coal Hole, £vans's Supper Rooms at ^ovent ^arden, and the Cyder Cellars, which is probably also the prototype of the Cave of Harmony in The Newcomes.
Some of the characters in the novel were recognised at the time it
appeared as being based on well-known people in the London literary and maga ziue world, notably Bacon and Bungay (Richard -^entley and Henry Colburn, rival publishers of Bent ley's Miscellany and the New Monthly Magazine res-pectively), rtenham and ^agg (as in Vanity Fair, Croker and Hook), and Cap-tain °handon (William Maginn, editor of Eraser's, 1630-36 and friend and colleague of Thackeray's youth). By 1849 Hook and Maginn were both dead, the latter having died an alcoholic in the Fleet in 1842, while colburn
no longer owned the New Monthly* ^handon's prospectus for the Pall Mall ga-zette (pp. 407-10), a cynical attempt in high-flown language to appeal to Recollections and Experiences, I, 166-68.
2 "Letter to the Rev. "illiam Brookfield," in Thackeray Letters. JT
442.

•* See Gordon N. Ray, Thackeray; The Uses of Adversity (1611-184&)
(London: Oxford University Press, 1955J> ?• 155; Henry Vizetelly, ^lances ^aok Through Seventy Years (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co,; 1^93) I, 170-T1-, %ker, p. 72.
^ Ka-rr T backeraV. The Ag-e of Wisdom (l£47-l£63) (London: Oxford Uni-

152.

the many who would consider themselves the "gentlemen of ^gland" is in a style similar to that of Maginn's brilliant "Tobias Gorresondence, M pub-lished in Blaokwood's in 1640, and consisting of advice from one journalist to .another about what jargon should be used to write on either side of a given political question, Maginn himself once wrote a leader for the

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Standard one evening, and answered it the next day in the True Sun. On the other hand ^hackera.y does not, as Senior points out, show his journalists dealing with specific religious, political or social issues of their day, The popularity of annuals of the Spring -^-nnual type was also at its height during the Io30*s, although some, including the Keepsake (see p. 282] survived into the early 1850*3: ornately bound, they consisted generally of badly-drawn steel-engraved plates of languishing beauties and scenes from Byron, accompanying verses by people of noble birth or the inferior work of reputable poets j sixty-three were published in 1832 alone.
Mr Bludyer, the hard-hitting, hard-drinking literary critic, is des-cribed as belonging to a "race which^ ... is quite extinct in the press of our time" (p. 449), and indeed by the late l&40's the spirit of the times was too earnest to tolerate the scurrilous satire*, attacks on personalities and witty invective which had characterised much of the writing in
in the l830's. Moreover journalism as a profession had become more res-pectable: from 1847 onwards the Morning Chronicle employed on its staff

s, 48 U&40), 52-63, 205-14.

f. David Roberts, "More Early ^ictorian Newspaper ^ditors," Victoriai Periodicals Newsletter, no. 16 (June 1972), 15-28, at 21.
See J.I.M. Stewart's note to the Penguin edition (Harmonds worth,
1972), p. 7985 Henry Vizetelly, Glances Back? I, 143-44; and 'Thackeray's attack on the Annuals in a series of articles written 1637-39? in The Oxford Thackeray, II, 337-378. From 1849 to 1&54 he contributed to the
Keepsake.

See "'alter Houghton's Introduction to the section on ^raser's in
'•'•'he Hellesley Index to V i ct o r i an P e r i o di cal s 1824-1900, II (Toronto and Buffalo: University of Toronto Press; London: Rout ledge />; Kegan Paul, 1972)
pp. 309-10.

a ^C, a professor, an archdeacon, and even a peer, and editors like John Delane (of ghe Tjmes) t Algernon ^orthwick (the Morning Post) and George Biber (Hook's successor on the John -^ull) were welcomed by polite society.
in

hackeray was to draw attention to this latter development in '-^he Newoomes, contrasting the journalist "good old $om Sarjent" of the time of Olive's youth, who spends his evenings tippling and singing at a tavern, with his successor of the early l&50's, who "goes to Parliament in his brougham, and

2 dines with the ministers of the crown" On the other hand Thackeray evident

ly saw similarities between the literary world of the mid-1830's and that of the time of writing, for after their dinner at Bungay's with the publi-sher's leading authors, Pendennis and Warrington agree that their talk had not been literary, intellectual or memorable, and the narrator goes on to assert that "there are no race of people who talk about books, or, perhaps, who read books, so little as literary men" (p. 44o)»
AS the novel goes on, however, it becomes increasingly concerned with
the changes which have occurred between the heyday of Major Pendennis and the time in which the novel is set, rather than with the vanished pleasures of Pendennis'a youth. The Major laments that the former Lord Castlewood who came in state to London with four post-chaises and sixteen horses, and caroused with crowds of company at Castlewood during autumn, has been suc-ceeded by one who travels by rail and brougham, and spends his autumn shoo-ting in Scotland and dining at Paris cafe^s. furthermore the gorgeous and witty Lady Lorraine of his day has been followed by a woman who "talks astronomy, and labouring classes, and emigration ... and lurks to church at eight o' clock in the morning" while at Abbots-Lorraine they "'don't drink Roberts, "More Early ^ictorian Newspaper Editors," 24-26,
2 ffl16- Newoomes: Memoirs of & Most Respectable Family Llfc5i-55j» ^ol -
^•IV of '^he Oxford hackeray, ed. George ^aintsbury (London: Oxford Univer-sity Press, 1908), p. l\l. All subsequent citations will be from this edi-tion, which notes significant variants from that of 1855.
*'or the controversy this comment aroused at the time, see Gordon N,
Ray, Thackeray» The Age of djadorn (1847-1.663), pp. 114-15, 136ff; Thackeray Letters, II, 629-37-

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two glasses of wine after dinner, and every other man at table is a country curate with a white neckcloth whose talk is about Polly Higson's progress at school, or tfidow ^atkins 1 lumbago,1 " The "gentlemen" of his time have been replaced by a "'parcel of damned cotton-spinners and utilitarians, 1 " and "'sprigs of parsons with their hair combed down their backs'" (p. 872). This passage glances at several changes in English upper-class society which had occurred since the Regency: the development of railways, the gro-wing habit of the aristocracy and gentry of travelling abroad and to Scot-land, the increasing interest on the part of upper-class women in education^ the v.f elfare of the working classes, and emigration, and the influence of the -Evangelical and Oxford movements (both of which encouraged early-morning services); the increasing prominence of nouveaus riches industrialistsv Meanwhile Pendennis reflects rather more sympathetically on the life of a "woman of the world," who, as well as having an active social romid to go through in London, "'sits upon Charity Committees, or Ball Committees, or
- immigration Committees, or Queen's College Committees," and "'very likely keeps a poor-visiting list; has conversations with the clergyman about soup or flannel, or proper religious teaching for the parish; and (if she lives in certain districts) probably attends early church" (p. 57°)• The curate Smirke, born into the Clapham ^ect, adopts High Church beliefs and practices, letting his hair grow long, going without dinner on ^ridays, putting candlesticks on his chapel table (which he calls an altar), and dating his letters by Saints' Feasts and ^igils, while his church is

a little Anglo-Norman bijou, built the day before yesterday,
and decorated with all sorts of painted windows, carved saints'
heads, gilt Scripture texts, and open pews (pp. 618-19)

rhe results of all these developments in iiaglish life were still in evi-dence in the late 1640's -probably more so, since emigration was a more

pressing need in the light of the Irish potato famine, and issues of ritual ceremonial, and ecclesiastical architecture loomed larger as the High church movement continued into the 1640's. 1 In his influential book frhe Progress of the Nation (1651) G.R. Porter was to draw attention to the growing interest shown during the previous ten years in the moral condition of society, and to the efforts made for the bettering of the physical con-
o

dition of the labouring classes, while the report on the census on reli-gious belief and attendance at worship in the same year was to note that among the upper classes "the subject of religion has obtained of late a marked degree of notice, a regular church-attendance is now ranked among the recognized proprieties of life."
On a more personal level, the Major's simple and overt worldliness, hi lack of insight into "moral questions" (p. 873) is set against his nephew's more complex perceptions: even when he is willing both to run for Parlia-ment and to make a loveless match for motives of personal aggrandisement, Pendennis is uneasy enough about it to rationalise his decision in a long speech to rfarrington (Chapter 61), ?.nd when he finds that his seat and Blanche's fortune are only available to him because the Major ha.s done a deal with Clavering, he refuses to stand, or to take Blanche with any more than her original fortune. As the illustration which appeared on the cover of each number (and, slightly varied, on the cover of the complete novel) shows, he is meant to be seen as torn between {;he claims of carnal pleasure and evil, and those of domesticity and religion.

Horton pavies, Worship and Theology in -^ngland; From ^a,tts and fl
to Maurice, 1690-1830 (Prinoeton: Princeton University Press; London: Cbcford University Press, 1961), 271ff.
2 2nd Edition, (London: John Murray, 1851), p. xxi.
^ quoted in W.L. Burn, Tne /fee O f Equipoise, p. 271.

the time we reach Pendennis's speech on "The **ay of the ^orld,"
the novel is just as concerned with contemporary society as with recreating the world of Thackeray's youth: Pendennis's and -w'arrington's argument about whether it is justifiable merely to accept the status quo for the sake of getting on in the world, is treated as an issue .which must also confront Thackeray's reader* (pp. 800-1). And whereas in ^anity Fair
1 hackeray related the world of 1613-30 to his own time while remaining very accurate in his allusions to specific people and events, Pendenrtis contains several anachronisms. For example when Blanche Amory comes to Clavering as a young woman just after Pendennis's failure at Oxbridge, when it must be about 1633> she is said to have "been in love with Prince Hoclolph and Prince Djalma while she was yet at school" (p. 284), but the books in which these characters appear, ^nigene Sue's Les Mysteres de Paris and Le Juif eryant f were not published till 1842-43 and 1844-45 respectively, -^nd her mother's ignorance of Tennyson, mentioned by Pendennis in ^hapter 61 as one result of her lack of education (p. 794) would not have been unusual in
the late l830's, as the two volumes he had published by then had been little noticed, while Queen's College, supposedly of interest to upper-class wo-men of the time, was not actually founded till 1848. It is however in Pendennis's discussions of religion and politics towards the end of the novel that concern with contemporary issues is most clear.
In 1849-50 there was still great interest in the "Sanitary and Coloni-sation questions" which Pendennis gets up from -Blue Books (p. 897) - the former had been brought to public attention again by the cholera outbreaks of summer, 1&49, in which 6,500 Londoners had died in September alone, and the latter by the publication of Samuel Sidney's Australian Hand-Book in 1848 and Edward gibbon Wakefield's ^rt_ ojf Colonisation the following year.

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Pendennis's comment that the Liberal Conservatives "have done for the nation wh<fct the Whigs could never have done without them""(p» 696) would only have made sense after Ifc41» when-this party (under Peel) first came to power. -t*u.t the most obvious anachronism occurs when he comes to explain how difficult it is to decide on which side religious truth lies:

I see [the truthj ... in that man, who, driven fatally by the
remorseless logic of his creed, gives up every thing,friends,
fame, dearest ties, closest vanities, the respect of an army
of Churchmen, the recognized position of a leader, and passes
over, truth-impelled, to the enemy, in whose ranks he is ready
to eerve henceforth as a nameless private soldier: - I see the truth in that man, as I do in his brother, whose logic drives
him to quite a different conclusion, and who, after having
passed a life in vain endeavour to reconcile an irreconcileable
book, flings it at last down in despair, and declares, with
tearful eyes, and hands up to heaven, his revolt and recantarr
tion (pp. 801-2)

This is clearly a reference to John Henry Newman and his brother Francis, but the former was not received into the Roman Catholic Chvmoh till 1645> while the latter's account of the changes in his religious belief which led to his rejection of historical Christianity, Phases of Pa'ith, was not published till 1650. It is therefore hardly surprising that a writer in the rt eekly Chronicle, which was reviewing the novel as it came out in parts, should remark at the end that he had come to see it as "a series of papers of which every nev; section reproduces or suggests some substantial feature of the social philosophy of our age." A writer in the Prospective ^eview, moreover, saw Pendennis as representative of a specifically modern sensi-bility: the self-consciousness of many characters in modern fiction mirrors

1 Quoted by ^ebecca Rodolff, "The Weekly Chronicle 1 s Month-by-Month Reception of Pendennis and David ^Ojpj^rj^^dj' Victorian Periodicals ^eview, 14 (19&1), 101-111, at 108.

"one phase of our own daily life," in thnt they are continually "striving, not to act out their inmost selves, but to determine, throughout the detail of action, what their inmost selves would really be about." Scott's novel are however quite different, in that they could even encourage their rea-ders to "look on the fortunes and retributions of life, as a more simple-straight forward and visible conflict between the powers of light and dark-ness than they really are."

i<* Copperfield, and Pendennis," Prospective Review, 7 (1851),
157-91, at 176-77.

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THACKERAY - .3. THE NEIVCQMES

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—fig. Newooines. which was published in twenty-four numbers from October 1853 to August 1855, and in book form in the latter year, deals with the period from the late eighteenth century till the early 1840*s, and shares with Pendennis both an intermittently nostalgic tone and a concern with the so-ciety of the time in which it was written. However the opening, which re-counts several well-known fables, reminds us that there is "nothing new under and including the sun" (p» 5)> a point that is made several times later in the novel. The illustration on the cover of each part -'also showed eight scenes from the fables in Chapter 1.
The story is narrated by Pendennis, who is also a character in it, and this raises, the question of the narrator's role as historian — how he ac-~ quired his information about events and conversations at which he was not present. At the beginning of Chapter 24, for example, he points out that the narrative

is written maturely and e-t ease, long after the voyage is over,
whereof it recounts the adventures and perils; the winds adverse
and favourable; the storms, shoals, shipwrecks, islands, and so
forth, which c live Newcome met in his early journey in life.

He then goes on to stress the random and arbitrary nature of the development in such a story:

In such a history events follow each other without necessarily
having a connexion with one another. One ship crosses another
ship, and after a visit from one captain to his comrade, they
sail away each on his course, ljL'he ^liye Newcome meets a vessel
which makes signals that she is short of bread and water: and
after supplying her, our captain leaves her to see her no more.

furthermore he candidly admits th£/t, as the writer in possession of Olive's j he "dresses up the narrative in his own way: utters his own remarks

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in place of Newcome's, makes fanciful descriptions of individuals and inci-dents with which he never could have been personally acquainted." He records dialogues he never could have witnessed and supplies motives which were never confided to him, forming his narrative as best he can "out of stray papers, conversations reported to him, and his knowledge, right or wrong,
of the characters of the persons engaged" #ut this is no more that what pro-fessional historians do - many of the descriptions in "Cook's Voyages" are known to have been invented by ^r. Hawkesworth; Sallust and Livy write ora-tions no more authentic than the speeches, he attributes to Clive and the Co-

1 lonel, and historians like Mr James, Professor Alison,- and Robinson Cj»USoe • all deal much in guesses and conjectures, the outcome of which is "printed in exactly the same type as the most ascertained patent facts" (pp. 296-97)• furthermore, the story of one man's personal life is just as important as the material with which historians generally deal: earlier, in describing Clive f s childhood, Pendennis has also pointed out that there is another side to the history of the British in India apart from that "official history which fills Gazettes and embroiders banners with names of victory - there

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rents in India forced to send their children back there so that they may have some chance of surviving (p. 66). ^his is of course what had happened to Thackeray as a child. In Guy Mannering ^cott had also shown the private history behind the public history of bannering's military exploits, but his story was hardly as typical as Clive's.
'i'he opening of The Newcomes, from the scene at the Cave of Harmony soor after the Colonel's return from India, turough a retrospective of the Newcor family history, is notoriously complicated, moving as it doe^; from the firsl

"Mr James was actually the historical novelist G.P.R. James, who
had been appointed official historiographer to the 4ueen - an indication of the lack of demarcation between history and fiction in this period.

the grief of the women left behind in ^ngland, and the sorrow of the pa-

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'^homas Newcome's arrival in London during the ^merican rt ar of Independence, back to speculations about his birth, on to his marriage to Sophia Hobson, back to his first marriage to Susan and the birth of the future Colonel, on to an account of the Newcornes' life at ^lapham and the boy's troubled child-hood and love affair, and ending with a series of letters received by the ^olonel in India, concerning Mme de florae's married life, Honeyinan's early career, ^live's childhood, and ^ophia Newcome's death, '•'•'homas Newcome's mar-riage to Sophia Hobson takes place presumably some time in the 179^'s, siftce the ^lapham ^ect was established after John Venn became rector there in 1792* and he dies in 1612 ("^bout the time the ^'rench -^peror was meeting with his Russian reverses," p. 21) several years after his eldest son has gone to India. Further difficulties arise however in the main part of the story. The time of the Lionel's return from India is "not twenty years since" (p. 56) - 1833, to be precise, since his mufti-coat, bought in 1821, is twelve years old. (p. 96). It is therefore disconcerting to read a few chapters later that "[w]e are writing of ^eorge the fourth's reign' (p. 182), since that king had died in 1630. Not long after his father's return Olive goes to Paris and writes to Pendennis in praise of Carlyle's description of the mob's pursuit of Louis XVI during the French ^evolution - a reference to his History of the French ^evolution, published in l837» In response i'en-dennis sends him Fred -^yham's reviews of the itoyal Academy exhibition, in which the critic asks, "'^wjliy-have we no picture of the sovereign and her august consort from Smee's brush?"1 (p. ^78), a question which would have been meaningless before Queen Victoria's marriage in 1640. Olive's later visit to the Haunt in O^apter 26 is said to take place more than three years after his father's arrival from India (p. 319)» which suggests a date of about 1637. Soon after this Clive meets the ^icomte de Florae at £aden,

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who says he married Miss Higg during the July ^evolution fifteen years be-

fore. AS the ^evolution occurred in 1630, it is puzzling that it should now

be 1845, unless we are to assume that the Vi conrte only feels as if he has

been married that long. Pendennis *s and Laura's visit to Newcome, during

which Lady ^lara elopes with Lord Highgate, must occur some time during the

I840 f s (see p. 748). Clearly several years pass after this, but it is diffi

cult to locate the specific period. Thackeray's own notes list the following

chronology, locating man.y of the main events in the early 1840* s;

:i'he Colonel goes away august 41 •

goes to <Baden> October 41 •
returns to -England June 42.
Lord Highgate & Lord -^orking die ___ 42.
tClive] meets -^thel in Paris May 43.
^ir -^rian dies June _
Pendennis marries ^eptember 43 «^
[jSliveJ meets the company May 44*

The subtitle of the novel is Memoirs of a. Most Respectable Family, and

in anatomising the "respectability" to which many members and connections of

the ilewcome family lay claim, Thackeray tnrough Pendennis is clearly attack-

ing values which he saw as persisting at the time of writing --for example,

in the strictures on "-^ritish virtue" in Chapter 26:

Gnats are shut out of its ports, or not admitted without scrutiny
and repugnance, whilst herds of camels are let in ... Virtue is
very often shameful according to the English social constitution,
and shame honourable. Truth, if yours happens to differ from your neighbour's, provokes your friend's coldness, your mother's tears, the world's persecution. Love is not to be dealt in, save under restrictions which kill its sweet healthy free commerce. -S±n in
man is so light, that scarce the fine of a penny is imposed:
while for woman it is so heavy, that no repentance can wash it out.
zth yes! all stories are old. You proud matrons in your May Fair
markets, h-ve you never seen a virgin sold, or sold one? Have you

•*• viuoted in Edgar F. Harden, The Emergence of 'i'hackeray * s ^erial Fjctior (Athens, &a.: University of Georgia Press, 197977 P« 345* Note that Penden-his's marriage is fixed at a later date tdian seemed likely at thB end of Pendennis.

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never heard of a poor wayfarer fallen among robbers, and not a
Pharisee to help him? of a poor woman fallen more sadly yet,
abject in repentance and tears, and a crowd to stone her? (p» 360)

A he 0iblical references suggest too that, as in Vanity *'air, '^hackeray is &lso concerned with the recurrent failings of human nature. In >J he Newcomes intolerance and lack of charity to sinners is embodied in Mrs Hobson Newcome, who sees every misfortune of others as a reason to congratulate herself on her own virtue, while -^arnes profits from the light penalty imposed on male sexual licence, and Lady ^lara suffers most from the sexual double standard. '£he selling of May Fair virgins is of course a central theme of the novel, leading to the disastrous marriage between Barnes and Lady ^lara, and almost to a loveless match between ^hel and the corrupt and stupid Marquis of *'arintosh.

'•t'he concern fcur respectability and the hypocrisy it encourages is more pervasive in the period covered by The Newcomes than it had been in the time in which Vanity ^air is set, when vice was more open. But already in 1&33 Bulwer had observed the great importance attached to respectability, "which may certainly exclude virtue, but never a decent sufficiency of wealth!' His "most respectable man" Mr ^arm has affinities with 6arnes:
he forswore his best friend who was imprisoned for failing in trade, seduced a woman and left her penniless when he married, but pays his bills regularly, subscribes to six public charities, and goes to Church with all his family on Sundays. Mrs Hobson Newcome 1 s expressions of contempt for the fashionabl< society she is secretly longing to enter is also an example of what Bulwer had called "social fagging," where "the fag loathed his master, but not the system by which one day he himself might be permitted to fag." Her preten-

%igland and the ^glish, pp. 34> 76, 164, 268.

"tious parties, designed to show off her political, scientific and artistic

lions (Chapter 8) recall Harriet Murtineau's article of 1837, "Literary

Lionism," describing the ambitions of hostesses to display their eminent

acquaintance and to use them to attract other guests. But '•'•'hackeray's social

criticism was equally relevant to the early l850»s. In 1651 G.R. Porter observed that

w ith the self-denying doctrines of ^hristianity on our lips, we
present a practical denial of them in our lives, which are given
up in a greater degree than ever to self-aggrandisement.

while Clough's mid-century poem "The Latest Decalogue-" attributed to his own

time commandments like "Cnjo graven images may be/Worshipped, except the

currency: 11, "Lajt church on Sunday to attend/ w ill serve to keep the world

thy friend:", "^tj.hou shalt not steal; an empty feat,/When it's so lucrative

to cheat: , and "[tj hou shalt not covetj but tradition/Approves all forms

of competition." And with reference to sexual morality, John S. Smith

queried whether any real progress had been made since the eighteenth century:

it is one thing to have hooted immorality into concealment, and
another to have actually lessened the sum of immorality ... have
we so driven immorality in, to fester even more foully in its
hidden channels, or are we more moral in our lives, thoughts,
and conversations, individually and nationally, than we were in
those days of blatant prodigality?

And '^hackeray himself satirised the social hostesses of the 1850's and their
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pursuit of distinguished guests in "The Lion-Huntress of ^elgravia."

Harriet Martineau's Autobiography, 1, (l&55> rpt. London: Smith,
^Ider, ft Co., 1877), PP- 271-97-
The Progress of the Nation, p. 68l.
Quoted in Altick, ^ictorian People and Ideas, pp. 176-77»
^ocia-l ^opics (1850), pp. 63-64, quoted in Tpudgill, Madonnas and Magdalens, p. 130.
* Punch, 24 and 31 ^ugust, and 21 September, 1850; rpt. The Oxford '^hackeray, V III, 507-22.

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In 1851 D.M. Moir had even published a series of lectures in which, like ^arnes, he discussed the work of Mrs Hemans and L.E.L., and enthused over the former much as we can imagine Barnes having done:

her forte lay in depicting; whatever tends to beautify and embellish
domestic life, by purifying the passions and by sanctifying the
affections ••• - the gentle sufferings of love and friendship -
"home-bred delights and heartfelt happiness 1 ' - the glowing associ-
ations of local attachment - and the influence of religious fee-
lings over the soul.

Coventry Patmore's best-selling poem of 1854-56, '-I'he Angel in the House, also dealt with the sanctity of the domestic affections.
Two other subjects of the novel with resonances for the l&50 f s are the Newcome divorce case and the life of gentleman pensioners at Greyfriars.

^ The latter h^s already been discussed by Gordon N. tfay and John ^arey,

who explain how the Colonel's description of his life at Greyfriars, with 11 'good quarters, good food, good light and fire, and good friends'" (p. 955) obviously contradicts the 1852 Household ^ords account of the conditions in which gentlemen—pensioners lived at Charterhouse, the model for Gpeyfriars. •Before writing about the Newcome divorce case, '-^hackeray looked up the case of Norton vs. Melbourne, in which G e orge Norton had accused the then Prime
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Minister, Lord Melbourne, of adultery with his wife Caroline, oince Mrs Norton and Melbourne were innocent and he was acquitted, the case did not really have much in common with Newcome vs. Higiigate, except in that the prosecution in both cases presented the husbands as deeply betrayed and in-jured. However public wrangling betv/een the Nortons continued for years, and Mrs Norton was in the public eye in 1^54-55 --ith the publication of her

aketches of the Poetical Literature of the Past Half-century (Edin-
burgh and London: rt illiam Blackwood and iSons, 1851), p. 260.
2 Ray, Thackeray; The a.ge of iVisdom (1847-1863), pp. ^72-73, 475n.9j
Carey, Thackeray: Prodigal Genius, pp. 164-05.
"Letter to Mrs Cannichael-^myth," 6~7 March Ib55, in Thackeray Letter,
III, 428.
23 June Ifc36, p:>. 2-5.

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two pamphlets •English Laws for ^ngliah Women in the Nineteenth Century (1854) and ;A Letter to the ^ueen on Lord Chancellor Granworth's Marriage and -^ivorce BJH (1655;. Mrs Norton pointed out that under the current and the proposed legislation, women could sue for separation only on the grounds of "cruelty that endangers life anS limb," and not at all if she once condoned such cruelty, nor could she defend herself in court if sued for divorce on the grounds of adultery, or even leave her husband, -^ickens 1 Hard Times, appearing concurrently with 'I1 he Newcomes in 1854 and set in con-temporary %gland, deals with the vulnerability to sexual temptation of a woman trapped in a loveless mercenary marriage, and also with the impossibi-lity of divorce for those not wealthy enough to afford a private Bill.
•^s in Pendennis references to changes which have occurred between the
time in which the novel is set and some earlier period reinforce our sense of Thackeray's preoccupation with contemporary society. For example the Lionel's literary preferences are contrasted with those of Ciive and his friends. He admires Johnson, ^ddison, %ron and Scott, but they declare that Johnson "talked admirably, but did not write -^glish," Addison was only an elegant essayist, and shallow trifler, -^yron "no great poet, though a very clever man," and dcott a "poet of the second order,'' and they set up ^ords-worth, Keats and Tennyson as the great poets of their time (pp. 260-61).
This conversation is supposed to take place in about 1834» and although'the critical reputations of Byron and ;3cott as poets was in decline by the early iy
1830*3, Keats was read by few people except other poets till the late l840'sj while Tennyson's real popularity came with The Princess in 1&47•

A Letter to the J^ueen... (London: Longman, -Brown, Green and Longmans,
1855), PP- 9-11.
In 1633 H.3.0. Peabody noted the conventional view that ocott's poetry
"is not destined to be read hereafter - see Hayden, ooott; The Critical Heritage, pp. 336-39 j for ^Vron, see ^ron; ^he ^ritical Heritage, ed. Andrew Rutherford (London: ^outledge & Ke^an Paul5 New York: ^Barnes & Noble, 1970)> pp. 13-16, comments by Henry lj-'aylor, pp. 325-^9> and ^ arlyle, 2bbff.
3 See Keats: The ^ritical Heritage, ed. G.^. Matthews (London: ^outledge
ex Kegan Paul, 197lTT~PP. 27-32.

But if Thackeray is interested in showing what the society of his time
is like, he is also concerned with how it got that way. Thomas Newcorae mar-ries into the Clapham ^ect, the Anglican ^angelical group established in Clapharo parish in the 1790»s under the aegis of the &ev. JQhn v enn. ^he leading figure was of couroe Wilberforcej others included the Thorntons, a wealthy banking family, Pitt's brother-in-law ^dward ^liot, East India ^ompany pirector James (7rant, former Governor-General of India Lord Teign-mouth, barrister James Stephen, and ^achary Hacaulay (father of the histo-rian), '^hey concerned themselves with spreading the Gospel at home and ab-road, agitating for the abolition of the slave trade, and expending la,rge sums to better the condition of the poor. In the novel, however, although Sophia Newcome's piety and charitableness are presented as genuine enough, Thackeray mocks the sect's preoccupation with converting "Jews, Turks, Infi-dels, and Papists," points up what he sees as their fundamental worldliriess, and draws attention to the way in which narrow standards of morality can encourage both intolerance and hypocrisy. There were, it is said, "not more savoury fleshpots than at Clapham," and "no finer grapes, peaches, or pine-apples, in all England" (pp. lb-19). Moreover because of her wealth the "clerical gentlemen" pray for Mrs ^ewcome "before they thought of asking any favour for iier husband" (p. 21). ^'hen very young the future Colonel is warned of the punishment meted out to wicked little children, and ordered to be whipped for upsetting- his little brothers in a go-cart, although his step-mother feels "unaffected pity" for the lashing of negro slaves (p. 27). Having found him coming back drunk from j^psom races, Mrs Wewcome decides that such a "castaway" can no longer be brought up with the "two little cherubs" her sons, and when he falls in love with the "Papist" Le'onore de Florae, he is packed quickly off to India (pp. 3^-34)• In Pendennis

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had registered the widening impact of the Evangelical movement over
the first half of the century in his account of the influence of Mr ^imcoe and his Chapel of Ease on ^lavering (pp. 170-71); later when an inaccurate version of Pendennis's liaison with Fanny #olton reaches the "happy village" °imcoe, "rather pleased than otherwise" to have his prejudices ccgainst Pendennis reinforced, preaches a sermon against "the dangers of London, and the crime of reading or writing novels" to a large congregation of "admirable moralists" who take his wickedness for granted (p. 639). In •'-'he Newcomes he suggests that the repression of natural feeling demanded loj ^lapham's "seri-ous paradise" enables Sophia's sons and grandson to sow their wild oats while retaining a calm and pious exterior: Brian and Hobson go to the play and Opera, but at home are " f as mum as Quakers at a meeting 1 " (p. 60), while
- ^arnes hopes to "take his pleasure decorously, and sow his wild oats ... not broadcast after the fashion of careless scatter-brained youth, but trimly and neatly, where the crop can come up unobserved, and be 1aken in without bustle or scandal" (p. 103), but never misses church or shows the effects of a hangover, 'i'he evident respect for wealth shown in the novel at ^lapham, wnich iu real life Sir James jsStepen acknowledged as a source of ^ilberforce's influence, also continues into the next generation,,while the habit of household prayers, a Clapham L3ect innovation, has in Sir Brian's family be-come an empty ritual which has no ramifications for anyone's behaviour during the rest of the day (pp. 1^5-67), while ^ophia Newcome's self-righteous in-tolerance is manifested in a stronger and more smug fashion in her daughter-in—law Mrs Hobson Newcorae.

lan -^ra-dley, '^'he Gal]. ton Seriousness: The Evangelical Impact on
the Victorians (London: Jonathan Cape, 1976), pp. 13-14, 57ff» 94fi'»
2 R.I. and o. tfilberforce, Life of djlliam dilberforoe, III, 390-91,
quoted in Elisabeth Jay, The ^eligion of the Heart, p.

Thackeray's unsympathetic treatment of the ^lapham ^ect is in some ways unfair, and he is probably transposing into the past the more rigid and in-tolerant Evangelical attitudes of his own time which were fostered by the narrow and puritanical "Recordite" sect which emerged in the late l&20 f s, and by the alarm at the supposedly "Popish" practices and doctrines of the 1 ractarians. His views were also no doubt influenced by the JSvangelicalism of his mother, which she tried to impose on him and later on his daughters: writing to Anne in 1852 he had recalled that at her age (fifteen - i.e. in about 1&26) he "was accustomed to hear and read a great deal of the ^ange-lical (so called) doctrine and got an extreme distate for that sort of composition." He goes on to attack dogmatism of all kinds, as leading in-

2 evitably to the persecution of unbelievers. In Marianne Thornton, a biog-
raphy of one of the ^lapham Thorntons and his own great-aunt, E.M. ^orster claims that '^hackeray fails to get to the "depths" of the Clapham ^ect. *'or all their "earnestness and pious phraseology" and their concern for " fp.] ray-ers before plenty, ^ut plenty! 0, life at the 'I'horntons 1 house was not narrow and stuffy: the adults did not deny amusement to children and were disin-clined to inflict pain on others - the atmosphere was rather one of "affec-tions, comfort, piety, integrity, intelligence, public activity, private

benevolence."

fact that by the time the main part of the story begins ths New-
comes' religious observance has become a cloak for vice, or else a social convention by which they can reinforce their "repeatability" means that there is i.mple scope for a charlatan like Charles Honeyman to take advantage

Bradl-ey calls it "grossly exaggerated", p. 2J .
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93-95- "Letter to ^nne Lhackeray," October U-52, in Thackeray Letters, III, ————— j^arianne Tho rnt on . 1 797-1 6fc 7 ; A domestic -^iography (London: C-dward
Arnold, 1956), pp. 59, 29-

1/0

of passing trends. Histrionic preaching which aimed at "starring" the prea-cher and making his fortune seems to have been a problem at least since the first decade of the century. Robert ^outhey, writing in 1&07, had criticised preachers whose sermons were like theatrical performances, and contained nothing but "a little smooth morality ... sparkling with metaphors and simi-les"; their main aim was to become wealthy Ma marriage. ^lisabeth Jay has pointed out that Honeyman's career has similarities with that of ^dward Irving, whose emotional preaching had great impact during the late 1620's and early 1830's; in his case power without responsibility had led to the dilution of his doctrine and to the growth of the cult of the individual mi-

2 nister. And in the year Thackeray began The Newcomes, the ^ev. W.J. Conybeare had attacked Recordite preauhers who aimed to avoid the responsibi-lities of pastoral care by setting up chapels in large towns in which to preach to big crowds of wealthy and educated disciples. «%ile the Colonel is still in India iioneyman borrows money from him to buy Lady "hittlssea's chapel in May -Fair, and by the time of his return, has become a very success-ful preacher, especially among wealthy women (pp. 146-49)* ^ut Honeyman's career is also related specifically to the Oxford Movement. In order to restore his waning popularity, ^herrick the Jewish wine-merchant, who will undertake anything likely to be profitable, sets him up with the parapher-nalia of the High Church - narrow scarf, ephod cut close 3,nd short, sleeves of the surplice trimmed with lace, long curling hair, professional singers, flowers, Gothic lettering on the organ-loft and galleries to give the place

Letters from England, ed. and intro. Jack Summons (London: The
Cresset Press, 195 1)? PP» 106-7.
The Religion of the Heart, pp. 60, 123.
•* "Church Parties," Edinburgh Review, 96 (1853), 273-342, at 293-96.

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a medieval look. Meanwhile *red Bayham has engineered a public controversy

over Honeyman's allegedly "Popish practices" to further enhance his fame

and popularity (580ff).

Set against the hypocrisy and worldly ambitions of most of the rest of

the family is the Bohemian life of Glive and his friends. Thackeray himself

had tried unsuccessfully to become a painter in Paris and London over 1833-

35? and Gandish's studio is based on Henry Sass's art school in ^loornsbury

at which he had studied in 1833-34* Hov;ever as in Pendennis there is much

nostalgic reminiscence about, the time of youth as such, which is not tied

to ;nny specific period. This starts in the very opening scene at the ^ave

of Harmony:

There was once a time when the sun used to shine brighter than it
appears to do in this latter half of the nineteenth eentury; when
the aest of life was certainly keener; when tavern wines seemed
to be delicious, and tavern dinners the perfection of cookery;
when the. perusal of novels was productive of immense delight,
and the monthly advent of magazine-day was hailed as an exciting
holiday .... when it seemed necessary to purchase a grand silver dressing-case, so as to be ready for the beard that was not yet
born...

There are several other rather sentimental comments on the joys of youth -

for example:

Mr. Clive Newcome, who has long since shaved his beard, who has
become a family man, and has seen the world in a thousand dif-
ferent phases, avers th<-t his life as an art-student at home and
abroad was the pleasantest part of his whole existence (p.

«-h! pleasant days, happy old dingy chambers illuminated by youth-ful sunshine! merry songs and kind faces - it is pleasant to re-call you! ^ome of those bright eyes shine no more; some of those ami ling lips do not speak. Some are not less kind, but sadder than in those days: of which the memories revisit us for a moment and sink back into the grey past (p. 288)

Hay, Thackeray; The Uses of Adversity (1811-1847), pp. 168-69

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"The description of artistic life does not in itself evoke the past, and the equivocal social status of art which is the cause of Ethel's rejection of ^live and of the rest of the family's contempt for him is seen as persisting at the time of writing - the "social station" of the "Muse of Painting" is "not altogether recognized with us as yet" (p. 339). Historical painting, the genre officially encouraged "by the Royal Academy as "high art," and including subjects taken from legend, the ^ible, Shakespeare and -^cott, still offered a target for satire: ^ilkie Collins 1 novel Hide and Seek (lL54)> with a contemporary setting, features a middle-aged artist whose "^olumbus in sight of the New ^orld" is an incongruous mixture of crude allegory and pedantic detailism, and, like ^andish, he is unsuccessful. In any case the ^oyal -^caderay in 1&54 actually assumed that Smee was based on one of them and retaliated by not inviting the author to their annual banquet .
Insofar as the life of the young artists in the novel can be compared with ^hackeray's youthful experiences, the fictional version is a romanti-cised one. In October 1633 he had written to his mother from Paris:

artists with their wild ways £ their poverty are the happiest
fellows in the world ... - Yesterday we had a breakfast for five consisting of 5 sausages 3 loaves & a bottle of wine for 15 sous;
there were no plates or knives accordingly the meat was carved
by the fingers - afterwards pipes succeeded & the songs imita- -,
tions of all the singers in Paris they are admirable musicians.

In the novel, the tone is more sentimental, and the description less speci fic. ''^ick Tinto" the archetypal -British artist, is a "kind chirping

1 I'c6l edn (London: Chatto & Hindus), 192ff .
^ oeo ^hackeray's letters to percival -Leigh, 12 April 185~4, and to hi mother, 11 May 1854, in '-I'hackeray Letters, III, 362-63, 365.
22-30 October 1&33, in Thackeray Letters, I, 26?.
originally a bad artist treated comically in the Introduction to
. Scott's -Bride of Lammermoor (1619).

ill

soul" and a "gentle creature," and as for his friends:

tit

he kindest folks alive I have found among those scowling whis-keraddes. They open oysters with their yataghans, toast muffins on their rapiers, and fill their Venice glasses with half-and-
half. If they have money in their lean purses, be sure they
have a friend to share it. ^hat innocent gaiety, what jovial
suppers on threadbare cloths, and wonderful songs after5 what
pathos, merriment, humour does not a man enjoy who frequents
their company (p. 215)

Moreover, whereas Thackeray himself had found it difficult to make progress

with his painting, writing to his mother in July 1&35 that he was "as tho-

roughly disheartened as a man could be" since he can "do nothing" although

he thinks he has "got the stuff to make as good a painter as the very best

of them," in the novel it is said of art students:

'i'heir work is for the most part delightfully easy. It does not
exercise the brain too much, but gently occupies it, and with a
subject most agreeable to the scholar ... If you pass his door
you will very probably hear him singing at his easel (pp. 507-8)

A couple of passages do however draw attention more specifically to

changes wnich occurred between about It 30 and 1&53-55* One compares the

wild youth of Lord Kew with the manners of the present. -Because the "spirit

of the age" appears "to equalize all ranks' and make people "more peaceable

and polished]' young aristocrats of the lf-50's can no longer amuse themselve:

by driving mail-coaches or by boxing and watching boxing-matches:

Young gentlemen went eagerly to Moulsey to see the Slasher punch
the Pet's head, or the Negro beat the Jew's nose to a jelly....
To travel in coaches, to drive coaches, to know coachmen and
guards, to laugh with the jolly hostess in the bar, to chuck
the pretty chambermaid under the chin, were the delight of men
who were young not very long ago (p. 137)

1 1^-23 July, in Thackeray ^etters, I, 291.

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Lord Kew had "kept race-horses, patronized boxers, fought a duel, thrashed

a Life ^uardsman, gambled furiously at Crockford's," (p. 138), and, as we

learn later, had affairs with a large number of women. On the other hand,

the faults of the Marquis of *'arintosh are attributed to the fact that

people have deferred to him all his life, and this servility towards the

"Princekins of private life" is clearly seen as persisting in the l650 f s

(pp. 69&-700).

•^nother passage describes ^live f s and Pendennis's visit to a tavern

called the Haunt (in about 1836), and is for the most part both maudlin and

flaccidly written. 'I1 he old journalist ^'om °arjen.t is described as "one of
ii

the old boys; <a good old scholar with a good old library of books who will

"never troll a chorus more." At this tavern "painters, sculptors, men of

letters, actors used to congregate, passing pleasant hours in rough, kindly

communion" (p. 316), singing "brave old songs ... kindly ballads in praise
ii

of love and wine; famous maritime ditties in honour of old ^gland (p. 31?

In fact, " Lt] he time is not very long since, though to-day is so changed."

More specifically:

In the days when the Haunt was a haunt, stage coaches were not
yet quite over. Casinos were not invented: clubs were rather
rare luxuries: there were sanded floors, triangular sawdust-
boxes, pipes, and tavern parlours. Young v ^mith and -^rown, from the '-^emple, did not go from chambers to dine at the Poly-anthus, or the Megatherium, off potage a la -^isque, turbot au gratin, cotelettes a la wha/t-d'you-call-'em, and a pint of St. i&nilion: but ordered their beefsteak and pint of port from the "plump head waiter at the Cock": did not disdain the pit of the theatre: and for s supper a homely refection at the tavern. How delightful are the suppers in ^hapies Lamb to read of even now!
- the cards - the punch - the candles to be snuffed - the social oysters - the modest cheer! ^hoever snuffs a candle now?- ' J h^t man has a domestic supper whose dinner-hour is eight o 1 clock'l '•••'hose little meetings, in the memory of many of us yet, are gone quite away into the past, ^'ive-and-twenty years a^;o is a hundred years off - so much has our social life changed in those five lustres (pp. 316-17).

s letters and di^ry of the early 1630's are full of references to tavern-dining, but in his youth the suppers of Charles Lamb were already
a thing of the past. Lamb himself, having had to move in middle age to En-field, wrote in 1622, "I .jiave lived to a time of life to have outlived
the good hours, the nine-o'-clock suppers ... Now you cannot get tea before

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that hour." ^hackeray looks back on the social life of the recent past, as does Scott in Guy Mannering, but unlike Scott, who recalls the great names of the Scottish flight enment as well as the drinking habits of the ly&O's, •'•hackeray is interested in the old social customs but not in the people who actually attended Lamb's suppers - men such as Charles Kemble, Hazlitt,

2 ^ordsworth and Coleridge.

Clive's and Kew's youthful pleasures are obviously meant to contrast
with the lives led by Barnes, ^ir ^rian, Mrs Hobson Newcome, Lady Kew et al. but since most of the events in the novel are not fixed in any particular period of the recent past, whereas Clive's and Kew's youth is generally described in a sentimentally nostalgic tone, it is as if the novel is being written about two different periods. Thackeray wants both to castigate the society of his time and indulge in reminiscences of his youth. In one of his •rtouiftiabout Papers he was later to declare:

•"• man can be alive in i860 and 1830 at the same time, donft you
see? Boaily, I may be in i860, inert, silent, torpid^ but in the
spirit I am xvallcing about in Ib2&, let us say5 - in a blue dress
coat and brass buttons, a sweet figured .silk waistcoat (which I
button round a slim waist with perfect ease), looking at beautiful
beings with gig°t sleeves and tea-tray hats under the golden chest-
nuts of the ^uileries, or around the Place Vendome, where the
drapeau blanc is floating from the statueless columm

"Letter to Bernard Barton," 23 December Ic22, in The Letters of
Charles Larnb djth £ Sketch of his Life, by Thomas Noon '£alf ourd, bound with ljl'he rt orks of Charles Lamb (London: ^dward Moxon, 1841), Pt.rt II, p. 24.
2 1'homas Noon ^'alfourd, -final Memorials of ^harles Lamb (London:
^dward Moxon, 1848), II, Huff
" A Koundaboivo Journey: Notes of a deck's Holiday, 11 Cornhill Magazine
2 (I860), 623-40; rpt."The' Oxford •J'hackoray, .^11, 436-59, at '440.

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Occasionally however the treatment of the past is more complex. At the beginning of Chapter 47 of The Newcomes Pendennis again declares that his narrative is as authentic as other histories, and compares himself to scientists like Professors Owen and ^-gassiz who build an "enormous forgotten monster" of thousands of years ago out of "a fragment of bone." £ ir ^ichard Owen, an authority on fossil mammals, was also the first to show that ancient monsters were structurally differsnt from modern lizards, while
the paleontologist Louis Agassiz was the first to advance the idea that the earth had been subjected to a long reign of snow and ice. Pendennis as novelist/historian believes his conjectures about the mental and emotional life of people living in the recent past are as reliable as Owen's and Agassiz's conjectures about the physical appearance of creatures who lived in the remote past, '^'he reconstruction of prehistoric mammals was topical in l854~~5<j since -^enjamin ^aterhouse Hawkins had built replicas of the mon-sters in the grounds of the Crystal Palace at 5'ydenham, and 40,000 specta-tors had seen (qiueen Victoria and Prince Albert open the new dinosaur park in June 1854. '-"-he novelist/historian 1 s task is also compared to that of th physiologist, who depicts the size, habits, appearance and structure of various animals. Pendennis then goes on to describe the old garden of the

A

Hotel de -

Suppose then, in the quaint old garden of the Hotel de Florae,
two young people are walking up and down in an avenue of lime-
trees, which are still permitted to grow in that ancient place.
In the centre of that iwenue is a fountain, surmounted by a Tri-ton so grey and moss-eaten, that though he holds his conch to his swelling lips, curling his tail in the arid basin, his instrument has had a sinecure for at least fifty years, and did not think
fit even to play when the Bourbons, in whose time he was erected,

Prickett, ^ictorian ^''antasy (Hassocks: Harvester Press, 1979)

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came back from their exile. At the end of the lime-tree avenue is a broken-nosed damp Faun with a marble panpipe who pipes to the ppirit ditties which I believe never had any tune. The perron of tne hStel is at the other end of the avenue; a couple of Caesars on either side of the door-window, from which the inhabitants of the hotel issue into the garden- Caracalla frow-ning over his mouldy shoulder at Nerva, on to whose clipped hair the roofs of the grey chateau have been dribbling for ever so many long years. There are more statues gracing this noble
place. There is Cupid, who has been at the point of kissing
Psyche this half-century at least, though the delicious event
has never come off, through all those blazing summers and
dreary winters; there is Venus and her Boy under the damp little
dome of a cracked old Temple (pp. 616-17)

Present in the garden are three generations - the old M. de Florae in his chair, his melancholy wife, their son the abbe, their grandchildren, and Olive and ifithel. Meanwhile the hotel next door, with a "new Chapel rising over the trees," had passed through the hands of a member of the Directory
- so that Ml no doubt in the groves of its garden, Madame Tallien, and Ma-dame Recamier, and Madame Beauharnais have danced under the lamps'" - a Marshal of the Empire, and eventually its legitimate owner, who sold it to the Convent, '^he dry fountain with its "grey and moss-eaten" Triton, the "broken-nosed damp -^'aunj1 the equally damp Nerva and mouldy Caracalla, the "cracked old Temple," all evoke an atmosphere of decay, imaged in human terms in the decrepit M. de Florae. The allusion to the Cupid who has not kissed Psyche over fifty years recalls the emotional and sexual frustration of Mine de Florae and Colonel Newcome, the latter of whom, ironically, would not, as we know, have picked up the reference to Keats f s "Ode on a Grecian Urn." Clive and ^thel are, like the lime-trees, "still permitted to grow in that ancient place," but the presence of the old -Florae couple is a re-minder of the outcome of a loveless marriage such as Ethel seems about to enter into with Farintosh. '^he history of the neighbouring hotel also high-lights the transience of human power, pleasure and of life itself. Madame Beauharnais of the Directory period was to become the Empress Josephine,

under the -^mpire, but was divorced by Napoleon and died in 1814. r he Bourbons had indeed come back from exile in 1&15, but ivere deposed again in I83u by Louis-Philippe, whose court w^s "in its splendour" at t>he period in which this part of the novel is set (p. 610), but by the time Thackeray wrote this, France was ruled by Louis-Napoleon - both grandson and nephew-by—marriage of hme Beauharnais. Nevertheless the new chapel perhaps indi-cates that piety such as that exemplified by Mme de Florae has undergone a revival.

I am indebted to the fine and sensitive analysis of this passage by
Jean oudrann in her '"-L'he Philosopher's Property: '^hackeray and the Use of ," 360-63*

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THACKERAY - CONCLUSION

In their first major novels dealing with the recent past both Scott and Thackeray focus on an important conflict, but in neither ^ayerley nor Vanity Fair does the novelist follow the obvious course of describing important battles in detail: Scott eschews "the province of history" and Thackeray refuses to "rank among the military novelists." Soott contrasts opposing cultures, and shows why the Highlanders were doomed to fail and what was lost when they did; Thackeray looky at the different ways in which Waterloo and the events preceding it affected people living at the time. Both pay little attention to real historical figures, but do draw on the careers of real people in creating 'a few of their fictional characters, and this heigh-tens the sense of historical authenticity about the characters while free/'.ng the novelist from the demands of strict biographical accuracy. Thackeray also shows how people enhance their own prestige by drawing attention to their own connections with the famous. Similarly, political issues and events as such play little role in the work of either novelist, but both show an awareness of how political views and ambitions are affected by per-sonal feelings and motives. In Thackeray this is evident from the way Penden-*- nis defends the status quo because he has been offered a seat, ^ir Brian Newcome grumbles about "(jtjhe spirit of Radicalism abroad in this coiintry" when the Newcome Independent attacks him (p. 19^)> and the Colonel stands against Barnes with no coherent political programme, merely a desire to be revenged on his nephew for personal slights.
As Scott and Thackeray move closer to their own time, the settings of their novels are less precisely located in the past, but both are also con-cerned to show how events "become history, ocott demonstrates how in the years after the '45 JacobitiBm itself gradually decayed but how men defined

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their pa-st in terms of their allegiance at that time, while Thackeray traces the way in which Napoleon and Waterloo became part of the past and were trividlised - Napoleon as a subject of a trite school essay, Waterloo as a rhetorical device in journalism (in Pendennis) or an entertainment at ^stley (in The Newcomes). -Sometimes too the past is distorted, as when Mannering is remembered as a mysterious old astrologer, and Jos ^edley gains a reputa-tion as a Waterloo hero.
In Scott's novels character is seen to be shaped partly by historical conditions. In Thackeray f s, it is true that Mrs Hobson Newcome, ^ir Barnes, and Honeyman would have been different if they had lived at a time offering less scope for smug self-righteousness, hypocrisy, or concern for an appear-ance of piety, and that Lord ^teyne would not have flourished under Victoria as he had under George IV. However Thackeray is more concerned than Scott with universal human virtues and failings, and highlights this theme through the feature of his novels in which they most clearly differ from ocott's - the narratorial commentary. In Vanity Fair this continually draws attention to the similarities between human conduct of past and present wiiich transceni superficial changes in manners, while in the later novels, where the sense of the past is less strong, the tendency to generalise actually serves to weaken it. In the later novels too, in keeping with their less cynical tone, the commentary is sometimes used to arouse sympathy for the more atbra< tive characters by making their experience seem typical, as for example in this passage from P_endennis:

I suppose there is scarcely any man who reads this or another
novel but has been balked in love some time or the other, by
fate and circumstance, by falsehood of women, or his own fault.
Let th.H.t worthy friend recall his own sensations under the cir-cumstances, and apply them j.s illustrative of Mr. Pen's anguish... (p. 165)

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°n the other hand, when Thackeray does draw attention to differences between recent past and present, the important role of the narrative voice in his work means that he tends to be more emphatic about them than Scott. In 1&56 Bernard Cracroft observed that "Thackeray seems to cling to his moral reflec-tions as tenaciously as ^alter Scott did to his descriptions." After Thackeray»s death ^alter Bagehot commented that Scott "throws himself far away into fictitious worlds, and soars there without effort, without pain, and with increasing enjoyment," and although this underestimates I think the extent to which a sense of the contrasts between recent past and present is implicit in Scott's writing, it is true, as Bagehot goes on to say, that Thackeray's "thoughts were never long away from the close proximate scene," that he could not forget "the ever-attending, the ever-painful sense of himself." 2

"Thackeray and Currer Bell, Oxford and Cambridge Magaz ine for 1636,
pp. 3^3-35»' a"t p» 335«
^ "Sterne and Thackeray," National ^evie-.-j, 18 (1864), 523-53; rpt. Thackeray; The Critical Heritage, pp. 350~5T> at pp. 351-52.

CHAPTER ••- 4.

GEORGE ELIOT - I. SCENES OF CLERICAL LIFE

As the title suggests, Scenes of Clerical Life_, serialised in Blackwood 1 s
in 1857 and published in book form in 1658, is concerned particularly with the religious movements and beliefs of the recent past. But in introducing the series to John Blackwood, Lewes was careful to point out that the stories would
consist of tales and sketches illustrative of the actual life of
our country clergy about a quarter of a century ago; but solely
in its human and not at all in its theological aspect; ... we
have had abundant religious stories polemical and doctrinal,
but since the "Vicar" and Miss Austen, no stories representing
the clergy like any other class with the humours, sorrows, and
troubles of other men.

Lewes is referring to the plethora of novels which had appeared by the

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1&50 1 s, taking sides in the religious controversies of the day. ^illiam Gresley (1801-76) and ^lizabeth Sewell (1815-1906) put forward the High ^hurch viewpoint, while 'fcharlotte Elizabeth" (Mrs Tonna, 1790-1846) used her novels to promote Evangelicalism, &ingsley's fllton Locke, Tom Thurnall (in Two Years Ago, 1857) and Lancelot ^mith (in Yeast, 1851) all resolve their doubts by adopting a Broad Church Anglicanism, while J.H. Newman charts his conversion to Catholicism in Loss and Gain (1848). At least one novel of this kind, Froude's *Phe Nemesis of Faith (1849), with its record of the author's doubt and anguish, affected George Eliot deeply, for she described its impact on her by quoting the sestet of Keats 's "On First Looking Into Chapman's Homer.'
of Clerical Life can however be seen as a reaction not only
against this kind of roman a. these, but also against its sub-literary variant,

6 November 1856, in Eliot Letters, II, 26$. Emphasis Lewes'.
2
For a detailed treatment of religious novels of the period, see Robert
Lee Wolff , Gains and Losses: Novels of Faith and -^oubt in Victorian England (London: John Murray, 1977).
"Letter to Sara Sophia Hennell," 16 April 1849, in Eliot Letters, I,
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a kind of pastiche^ combining characteristics of the "silver-fork" novels of fashionable life with those of novels of faith and doubt. George Eliot at-tacks these novels in he;r essay "^illy Novels by Lady Novelists." '^heir heroines move in a world of balls, parties, improbable melodrama and eligible offers, but are made to mouth the authoresses 1 religious views in long, high-flown speeches, •'•hese novels, according to George Eliot, show no real know-ledge of any class of society, and in fact the less the writer knows of real life, the more confidently she expresses her religious opinions about it: "the means by which she usually chooses to conduct you to true ideas of the

2 invisible is a totally false picture of the visible. 11

More directly relevant to Scenes of Clerical Life are her comments on
the Evangelical version of this type of novel, what she called "white neck-cloth novels" - a "genteel tract -on a large scale, intended as a sort of medicinal sweetmeat for Low Church young ladies," where "the vicissitudes of the tender passion are sanctified lay saving views of Regeneration and the atonement." '^'he hero is usually a young curate,

frowned upon, perhaps, by worldly mammas, but carrying captive
the hearts of their daughters, who can 'never forget that sermon; 1
tender glances are seized from the pulpit stairs instead of the
opera-box; t£te ji tetes are seasoned with quotations from Scrip-
ture, instead of quotations from the poets; and questions as to
the state of the heroine's affections are mingled with anxieties
as to the state of her soul.

AS this passage suggests, such novels show an awkward grafting of religious issues onto a conventional, sentimental love-intrigue, set in 1he fashionable and aristocratic world, ^'or example, in one of the novels George Eliot dis-

"estminster rieview, 66 (1856), 442-61; in ^ssays, pp. 301-24. •^ssaysj p. 311*
Essays, p. 317.
^ssays, p. 316.

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cusses, '^he Old Grey Church (by Lady Caroline Wcy Scott), the hero, iJJvange-lical curate -^stace Grey, combines piety with natural "refinement of taste and fueling"-(I, 4) and a "naturally superior understanding," and because "there was so great a charm in his intelligent countenance, and simple open manners," he would not have been "deplace" in any society (l, 125). '-^he story deals mainly with his love for his cousin Lucy, who is given to the enjoyments of the fashionable world, but contains occasional outbursts of religions sentiment on the part of the hero or the narrator: when ^ustace breaks off his clandestine engagement to Lucy, resolving to reveal all to her father, he exclaims (in the Coliseum!), "'I leave all in the hands of our Heavenly *ather. If He sees fit, He can bring even my heart's wild desires to pass; if not - 1 " (I, 1^4)• Crying for God's help, he suddenly hears the Waning Hymn, the sound of which thrills to his "inmost soul" (I, 195)• Later: on Lucy's receiving another proposal from Sustace, the narrator urges, "fripply to HIM, Lucy, and He will guide you aright" (II, 1?3), explaining that for Lucy, iiJustace is the "one thing needful" (II, 235)• Not surprisingly, in
one of Eustace's last sermons, the preacher has a "look of almost divine inspiration ... in his eyes" and a "brilliant flush on his before-pallid face" reminiscent of "the description in Holy tfrit of the martyr Stephen when ... 'they looking on him saw his face as it had been the face of an angel...'" (ill, 294)» According to George I£Liot, a novelist should deal with the ' real drama of Evangelicalism," which "lies among the middle and

p lower classes," rather than indulge in this excessive idealisation of the hero and efforts to give a routine love-story a pseudo-religious significance

3 vols (London: ^ichard Bentley, 1856). 2
•^ssays, p.

Of the three stories in Scenes of Clerical Life, two, "'•'•'he Sad fortunes
of the Rev. Amos Barton", and "Janet's Repentance", are set in the 1830's, the period of ^eorge ^liot's youth, and can hence be considered together. '^he events of "Janet's Repentance" take place "[rajore than a quarter of a "1

century ago, while " 4imos Barton" opens with a description of Shepperton

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Church "five-and-twenty years ago" (I, 3), with the main part of the story taking place at the time when "the immense sale of the 'Pickwick Papers 1 ' had been "recently completed" (I, 105) - that is, in 1837. George ^liot creates a sense of the past, and of the reader's distance from that past, partly through reference to particular historical events and developments.
" Amos Barton" begins with allusions to the Tithe Commutation Act (1836),
the New Police (1839) and the penny-post (1840) as examples of changes in the past twenty-five years (I, 4). rhe description of Milby in "Janet's Repentance" mentions that there is now a railway station (thus registering

P the most significant change of the past quarter-century), and gas-lighting,

while the change from Kr Crewe's "arduous inacqfuaintance with Latin" con-veyed to "three pupils in the upper grammar-school^" to the crowded new school "conducted on reformed principles" (II, 59-60), is part of the wide-spread increase in literacy, expansion of school funding, and development of teacher-training which all occurred between the late 1630*s and the early 1&50's. Meanwhile the decline in the drunkenness prevalent at Milby ref-lects the effects of the temperance movement which came to the fore during the 1&40's, and echoes the comment of a Blackwood's contributor of 1656

Scenes of Clerical Life, 2 vols (Edinburgh and London: rt illiam
^lackwood and Sons, 1858), n, 59. flu subsequent citations will be from this edition.
2
Introduced in Nuneaton, on which Milby was based, in February 1837 -
see the anonymous diary of Nuneaton events from 1610 to 1845, "Memorandum Book of Occurrences at Nuneaton," (Nuneaton Public Library), p. 118.
J.F.C. Harrison, '^he Early Victorians 1&32-31 (London: <J eidenfeld and Nicolson, 1971) 9 p. 136.
R.K. rtebb, Modern England: From the 16th Century to the Present
(19695 rpt. London: G orge Alien & Unwin, 1975), p. 260.

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(J.H. %rton) that drinking had declined in the middle and lower classes. AS far as religious history is concerned, the changes evoked in the beginning of "Amos -Barton" - the replacement of large pews restricted to particular families by benches open to all, the use of organs rather than the rustic bands of bassoon and key-bugles, and the substitution of hymns for the Old and New Versions - were all characteristic of the period bet-ween the late 1830*8 and l860/~ Charlotte Yonge's Chantry House (1886, set in 1827 and the years following), provides a similar if less sympathetic picture of a church service of the same period, in a church with stained walls, bricked-up windows, and singing gallery, and conducted by a top-
•y

booted parson with his orchestra of bassoon, clarionet, and fiddle.
George #liot draws attention also to the fact that -^arton's poverty results from the abuse of plurality, where one clergyman could hold several livings and delegate all but one to curates, taking part of the proceeds from each. The pluralities act of 1838 was to limit such benefices to two per person, with a joint value of £1,000 only, and George -^liot registers this fact in "Janet's Repentance" when she mentions that Milby now has a resident rector instead of a curate (II, 59)» I*1 llumos Barton" she lays particular emphasis on the change by assuming initially that the reader may be ignorant of it
(l, 9-10), and later has Carpe remove Barton from his curacy so that his own brother-in-law may take it up (l, 144-45)* Tne reference to Barton's emula-tion of Simeon, Thomas ^oott and John Newton establishes his roots in the Evangelical tradition, but when he, like they, combines strong Calvinist beliefs with a fervent support of "ecclesiastical powers and functions," it is

1 The ^arly Victorians, pp. 136, 171-72? "Drinking and SraoKing,"
Blackwood's, 79 (1856), |oi-m> at 109.
Owen Chadwick, The Victorian Church, I (London: Adam & Charles Black,
1966), pp. 51c-22.
3 3rd edn (London: Macmillan and Co., 1889), pp. 77~?8.

less from conviction than from a muddle-headed desire to bewilder the Dissen-ting opposition with his "wisdom of the serpent" (I, 26-27). His insensi-tive and tactless warnings to Mrs Brick and Master Fodge of the tortures of hell (I, 48-51) are a kind of reduotio ad absurdum of the Evangelical pre-occupation with the necessity for salvation.
On a more positive note, ^arton's and Tryan's establishment of lending libraries in Shepperton and Milby, Tryan's attempt to start weekly lectures and his ministry to the poor, and ^arton's Tract Society, are all measures typical of Evangelicals of the early part of the century. In his 1853 article "Church Parties" which George Eliot mentioned at the time -as being very much talked of, ^.J. COnybeare had praised the efforts of the early Evangelicals to lighten the "profound darkness" of the English peasantry by their teaching and example-

They were the establishers of Sunday Schools, of Infant Schools,
and lending libraries. By weekly lectures in the sequestered
hamlets of their parishes, they brought the teaching of the
Church to the door of the most distant cottage

•Derapster's hostility to Tryan's efforts, and the language in which it
is expressed in his talk and his mock playbill, reflect popular opposition to the Evangelical movement of the period. Just as Dempster calls his entertainment "The Wolf in Sheep's Clothing, or The Methodist in a Mask," a very popular tract circulated in the first thirty years of the century by the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge attacks the Evangelicals for being disguised -^issenters, while Gladstone recalls that tracts of the

He cannot, like Simeon, accommodate his ideas to ordinary minds,
and he ignores his mentor's advice not to preach extempore until practised and competent enough to do so. See ^.W. Brown, Recollections of the Con-versation Parties of the flev. Charles SjLrne ori> M, ,••>.» (London: Hamilton,
& Co., 1863), esp. pp. 6, 51, 178.
r\

See her letter to Charles Bray, 29 October 1853, in Eliot Letters,
II, 121.
3 Edinburgh Review 98 (1653), 280.

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period directed against I2vangelicals used language "which was not only insolent, but almost libellous."
Given the views set out in her essay on Riehl, it is clear that George •kliot would hope that the detail and comprehensiveness of her portrayal of the society of the period would serve to arouse the readers' sympathies for the people of the recent past. Contemporary reviewers invariably sing-led out for praise the stories 1 social realism, commenting on their "candid and inclusive appreciation of life and character/ the "freshness, vivacity, and sweetness" of the "descriptions of simple life in a country village" such that the "greater part of each story reads like a reminiscence of real 2 life." The stories were said to show "a sobriety ... compatible with strength" and "a combination of humour and pathos in depicting ordinary situations." ^ut in this context the tone of the narratorial commentary towards the people, practices and institutions of the recent past is all-important, particularly since the gap between George idiot's characters on the one hand and many of her readers on the other would have been not only historical but also social and cultural. This tone varies, however, between "Amos -^arton" and "Janet's Repentance" aid within each story.
'•^he contrast is perhaps best demonstrated by comparing the respective opening chapters. "Amos -Barton" begins with the recollection of Shepperton Church as it was twenty-five years before, and the narrator admits to

painuea, new— varnisnea emuxeriuy , wiixuii WJ..LJ. yield endless
diagrams, plans, elevations, and sections, but alast

Thomas A» Noble, George flliot ' s Scenes of Clerical Life (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 196$), pp. 173-74; see also Valentine Cunningham, Everywhere Spoken Against, pp. 17-1&*
2 ^tlantic Monthly, I (1656), 890-9^5 rpt. George allot: The Critical Heritage, ed. David R. Garroll (London: Rout ledge & Kegan Paul, 1971), p. 66. £irnes, 2 January 1656, p. 9«

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and feels "an occasional tenderness f6r old abuses" (I, 5). This doing a H l(
little Toryism by the sly recalls, albeit in a more sentimental vein, Scott's attitude towards Godfrey ^ertram's treatment of the paupers and gypsies on his estate. Although subsequent references to "dear old quaint-nesses" (I, 5) and to "the bucolic mind" (I, 7), and the comic treatment of the incompetence of the choir and orchestra (I, 6-?), convey a tone of arc ness and even condescension towards the practices of the past, the use of personal reminiscence and overtly-expressed nostalgia invites the reader of the period,to revel in his own memories of the churches and services of twenty-five years before. On the other hand, the scene at the Hed Lion which opens "Janet's Repentance" begins with a violent exclamation from Dempster, and goes on to reveal the citizens 1 ignorance and prejudice. The reader is expected to be aware that Presbyterianism did not derive from a John Presbyter, that Tryan's doctrine cannot be at once "methodistical" (II, 47) and "sectarian, antinomian, anabaptist" (II, 55) a&cL the man him-self a "domineering ambitious Jesuit" (II, 55) > n°r Luke Byles both an "insolvent atheist" and a "deistical prater" (II, 5l)» He is hence induced to feel superior to - and contemptuous of - the characters.
After the recollections of onepperton Church, the narrator of "Amos •Barton" drops the tone of personal reminiscence and moves on to a series of scenes characterised by comedy and a tone of amused tolerance - scenes such as that at the Gross iH'arm:

Mrs Hackit declines cream; she has so long abstained from it
with an eye to the weekly butter-money, that abstinence, wedded
to habit, has begotten aversion, one is a thin woman with a chronic liver-ouraplaint, which would have secured her Mr Pilgrim's
entire regard and unreserved good word, even if he had not been in awe of her tongue, which was as sharp as his own lancet. She has brought her knitting - no frivolous fancy knitting, but a substantial woollen stocking; the click-click of her knitting-

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needles is the running accompaniment to all her conversation,
and in her utmost enjoyment of spoiling a friend's self-satis-
faction, she was never known to spoil a stocking (I, 13)

The tone in which Amos Barton himself is treated is more patronising. Ex-plaining Milly's love for him, the narrator claims

I have all my life had a sympathy for mongrel ungainly dogs,
who are nobody's pets; and I would rather surprise one of them
by a pat and a pleasant morsel, than meet the condescending
advances of the loveliest Skye-terrier... (I, 30)

The picture of Milby life in "Janet's Repentance is however presented
much more scerbically: apart from the drunken, wife-beating lawyer Dempster, there are the tight-fisted curate Mr Crewe, Drs Pilgrim and Pratt, ready to unite to drive out all medical newcomers, Church tradesmen who attend Dis-senting chapels to encourage Dissenting customers, and another lawyer, Pittraann, who like Dempster is tolerated although known to be unscrupulous* John Blackwood complained about the early chapters of the story that "the colours are rather harsh for a sketch of English County Town Life only 25 years ag°t" »*he was writing, he thought,'"in the harsher Thackerayan view of human nature." In reply, she explained that the "real town"(Nuneaton) was "more vicious" than Milby, the real Dempster (James Williams Aichanan, 1792—1646) "more disgusting" than hers, and the real Janet far more unfor-tunate in her fate. £>he thinks that she may have some resemblance to Thackeray in that she refuses to exclude "disagreeable truths" from her fiction, and considers him "on the whole the moat powerful of living nove-
o

lists." ^he diary of occurrences at Nuneaton notes the "disgracefully conspicuous" intoxication at the Nuneaton assembly in January 1827, the

1 8 June 1&57, in Eliot Letters, II, 344-
2 11 June 1857, in fliot Letters, II, 347-49 + n.2.

death of a man in a brawl at a beer-house in October 1&30, public oppositior to Catholic Emancipation in February 1829, continual litigation among the inhabitants over property, and even "|>J whoman exhibited in a Halter in the Market for sale" in November 1833. 1 George ^liot did in fact delete from her manuscript several passages relating to drunkenness among women (ff. 11-12), the Milby girls 1 bad ^rench (f. 14), and the inhabitants' lack

2 of generosity and their tolerance of -Dempster's vices (ff. 22-23).

narrator's tone in presenting the social worlds of ^hepperton and
Milby can, then, create a distance between the readers and characters, and thus militate against the extension of their sympathies. This is less of
a problem in Scott's and Thackeray's novels since Scott is generally not self-conscious enough a writer for his narrative to have a patronising tone, while Thackeray continually points out that his readers share his characters vices. George -^liot overcomes this distancing effect partly by the tone of personal reminiscence at the beginning of "Amos -^arton" and also by the comedy of scenes like that at the Cross Farm. In "Janet's Repentance" she partly undermines the mixture of condescension and repugnance in the reader attitude to Milby by the use of sarcasm at the expense of modern advances: excessive drunkenness has declined, but there is now at dinner-parties a "perfectly well-bred and virtuous excess of stupidity," while the young ladies are educated "so far as to have forgotten a little German" (II, 60). Later nostalgia is even brought into play in the description of Mr Jerome's garden, "one of those old-fashioned paradises which hardly exist any longer except as memories of our childhood" (II, 159)» Unfortunately however George i£Liot tends to idealise her ^vangelicaL clergyman Tryan. If we are

"Occurrences at Nuneaton," pp. 23, 34-35, 44, 79 •
2 Noted in the Penguin edition, ed. David Lodge (Harmonds worth, 1973;,
pp. H22-24-

encouraged to sympathise with him in advance on account of the persecution he suffers, the passage in which he is actually introduced recalls the "Orlando^s of Evangelical literature like Eustace Grey: "Mr Tryan has en-tered the room; and the strange light from the golden sky falling on his light brown hair*, which is brushed high up round his head, makes it look

almost like an auredle' (II, 105).
In order to overcome the distance between reader and characters, George •^liot sometimes relies on direct appeals to the reader's sympathy, '^iie most overt example of this occurs in "Amos -^arton", where Barton's ordinariness is insisted on at length, and he is contrasted favourably, with the "ideal" heroes of fiction, '^hen the narrator points out that "so very large a majority" of the reader's compatriots are "of this insignificant stamp" (I, 81-82) - thus presenting ^arton as typical of the present as well as of the recent past - and goes on to declare:

Depend upon it.f you would gain unspeakably if you would learn
with me to see some of the poetry and the pathos, the tragedy
and the comedy, lying in the experience of a human soul that
looks out through dull grey eyes, and that speaks in a voice
of quite ordinary tones (l, 82-83)

^he attitude of moral superiority shown elsewhere towards the characters is here transferred to the readers. George filiot is I think more successful in extending the reader's sympathies when a character's suffering is rea-lised dramatically, as in the description of Janet's feelings when Dempster shuts her out at night, and of her disenchantment in the morning:

'i'he daylight changes the aspect of misery to us, as of everything
else. In the night it presses on our imagination - the forms it
takes are false, fitful^ exaggerated; in broad day it sickens our
sense with the dreary persistence of definite measurable reality*
•••..That moment of iritensest depression was come to Janet, when

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the daylight which showed her the walls, and chairs, and tables, and all the commonplace reality that surrounded her, seemed to
lay bare the future too, and bring out into oppressive distinct-
ness all the details of a weary life to be lived from day to day,
with no hope to strengthen her against that evil habit, which
she loathed in retrospect and yet was powerless to resist
(II, 254-55)

Here Janet's experience is also generalised, presented as something which the reader has shared, rather than as an incident related to one particular time and place.

Most illuminating perhaps in the context of George Eliot's treatment of the recent past is her defence of Tryan and the account of the influence of ••Vangelicalism on Milby. The passage begins by acknowledging the possible detrimental effects: the way some of the inhabitants may have gained a "religious vocabulary rather than religious experience," becoming "sancti-monious" without their conduct being changed for the better. But this hap-pens "in all other times and places where the mental atmosphere is changing, and men are inhaling the stimulus of new ideas," and the suggestion is I think that the people of 1657 may also live at a time when "folly ... mis-took itself for wisdom, ignorance gave itself airs of knowledge, and sel-fishness, turning its eyes upward, called itself religion" (II, 193-94)- •^'urther on, when speaking of ^ryan, the narrator admits that

any one looking at him with the bird's-eye glance of a critic
might perhaps say that he made the mistake of identifying Chris-
tianity with a too narrow doctrinal system; that he saw God's
work too exclusively in antagonism to the world, the flesh, and
the devil; that his intellectual culture was too limited - and
so on; making Mr Tryan the text for a wise discourse on the characteristics of the Evangelical school in his day (II, 197-98)

Many Evangelicals of the period were liable to such criticism, because of the rather uncritical contempt -for the things of the secular world which

1 Barbara Hardy notes that the image of the "disenchanted daylit room"
is a recurrent motif in George ^liot's fiction - see her The Novels of George Eliot; A Study in *'orm (London: A-fchlone Press, 1959), 190ff.

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increased in the late l820 l s and early 1830's with the emergence of the conservative "Recordite" group, their concentration on the -%ble sometimes to the exclusion of all other books, their suspicion of the dangerous ef-fects of the arts, and the limiting of their preaching to the subject of "Jesus Christ and Him crucified." ^hese limitations would have been thrown into relief for George ^liot's contemporaries by the Tractarian move-ment of the 1830*3 and 1840*s, with its emphasis on ritual, liturgical re-newal, the authority of the Church, and the study of the Church Fathers, and by the -t^van&elicalism of the 1850*3, which, as we have seen, became more narrow and intolerant in response to the allegedly "Popish" practices of the Tractarians, hence causing many cultivated Victorians to consider them to be hostile to intellectual enquiry. Discussing the Evangelicalism of 1853, Conybeare draws attention to its "narrowness and rigidity in teaching, neglect of learning, lack of critical study of Scripture." However the

5< i * Mrd's-eye" critic fails to respnd to 1 ryan as a fellow human-being, merely

classifying him as "'Cojne of the Evangelical clergy, a disciple of Venn 1 ' treating him as would a student of "natural history" in the most limited-sense of the term: Mt tn3ot a remarkable specimen; the anatomy and habits of his species have been determined long ago'" (II, 198). Later the narrator stresses the need to move beyond details of history and circumstance to an awareness of the common humanity we share with others:

surely, surely the only true knowledge of aur fellow-man is that
Which enables us to feel with him - which gives us a fine ear for
the heart-pulses that are beating under the mere clothes of

1 Jay, The fleligion of the Heart, pp. 123, I80ff.
p
Jay, 'i'he Evangelical and Oxford Movements, pp. 13-14•
3 "Church Parties," 283-64.
^ Probably ^onry Venn (1725-97), father of the founder of the Clapham sect*

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circumstance and opinion. Our subtlest analysis of schools and
sects must miss the essential truth, unless it be lit up by the
love that sees in all forms of human thought and work, the life
and death struggles of separate human beings (II, 198-99)

In other words, the reader, like the historian, must perceive "identity of

nature under variety of manifestation - a perception which resembles an

expansion of one's own being - a pre-existence in the past/"

But such a man as Tryan is also one of the "real heroes" of the modern

world. By contrast with the ideal hero currently in demand, these men

have their natural heritage of love and consience which they
drew in with their mother's milk; they know one or two of those
deep spiritual truths which are only to be won.by long wrestling
with their own sins and their own sorrows; they have earned
faith and strength so far as they have done genuine work: but
the rest is dry bar ren\ theory, blank prejudice, vague hearsay. Their insight is blended witn mere opinion: their sympathy is perhaps confined in narrow conduits of doctrine, instead of flowing forth with the freedom of a stream that blesses every
weed in its course; obstinacy or self-assertion will often interfuse itself with their grandest impulses; and their very
deeds of self-sacrifice are sometimes only the rebound of a
passionate egoism (II, 197)

George .Eliot is of course reacting against the idealised heroes of fiction,

but is also I think trying to redefine the heroic, ^'hackeiray, who deliber-

ately wrote a "novel without a hero" believed that the virtues and achieve-

ments of the so-called great men of history would not bear close examina-

tion, while on the other hand Carlyle asserted their superiority to the

normal run of men, and attributed to their efforts and inspiration all

that man had accomplished in the world. The treatment of Tryan suggests

however that for George JJJliot the great man was flawed like other men, and

could attract their sympathy and understanding partly because of these

flaws, the sense they can feel that they are like him. After all even

Essays, p. 29.

and Luther (one of Carlyle's heroes) could not satisfy the modern
demand for an ideal novel hero "who believes nothing but what is true, feels nothing but what is exalted, and does nothing but what is graceful" (II, 197)- Vat a hero is not necessarily a well-known, influential figure like Bunyan and Luther^ but can operate for a short period and on a local scale - Tpyan has no "memorial" of his work outside Milby.
George ^liot's treatment of the country clergy from the human rather
than the theological aspect and her eschewing of the "polemical and doct-rinal" also reflect her personal view that it is after all the human aspect which is the more important. °he told Blackwood that in "Janet's Repentance4 the "collision .«. is nob at all between 'bigotted churchmanship' and evan-glicalisra, but between irffeligion and religion," and went on to equate '\irreligion and religion" with "immorality and morality." As is well-known, her own rejection of Evangelicalism was largely due to her reading of Hennell, Stnauss an£ tfeuerbach, but she attributed the initial unsettlement of her orthodox views to Scott's influence. fc ^he does not elaborate, but presumably she was referring to ^cott's concern for the human and moral rather than for the theological implications of religious beliefs. W e have seen how in Guy Mannering Pleydell praises J^rskine for making his views of ^cripture the basis of a "sound system of practical morals" and for being free of the "souring or Pharisaical pride" of the early Scottish Calvinist leaders, while in The Antiquary the Glenallans* bigotted Catholicism unnec-essarily perpetuates religious divisions. His next novel Old Mortality (1617), which dealt with the Scottish civil war of the 1670's between religious sects, highlighted the intolerance, violence and fanaticism to which rigidly-held theological convictions could give rise.

1 11 June 1857, in Eliot Letters, II, 347 • George ^liot's emphasis.
2
Gross, new edn, I, 48; quoted by Haight in tiliot Letters, I, 21 n.8.

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George Eliot's beliefs of the l850's evidently colour her view of
the religious life of the l830's as presented in Scenes of Clerical Life. This comes out in details of plot and character: Barton's troubles arouse the "better sympathies" of his parishioners where his sermons had failed, and as a result there is a "real bond between him and his flock" (I, 146). Mr Jerome initially becomes a ^issenter because where he lived as a boy Dissent "seemed to have the balance of piety, purity, and good works on its side," but later transfers from oalem Chapel to hear Tryan, since the latter is a "good man and a powerful preacher (II, 163-64). '^he ^ev. Martin Cleves in "^mos Barton" is called the "true parish priest" although he is the "least clerical-looking of the party" at the Clerical dinner, and he is distinguished for the purely human aspect of his relationship with his parishioners - the comprehensibility (rather than the content) of his sermons, his "humour and feeling," and his addresses to workers on "useful practical matters" (I, 106-7). Similarly the beneficial effect of Evangelicalism on Milby is seen as moral rather than as specifically re-ligious: the "recognition of something to be lived for beyond the mere satisfaction of self," the "principle ... of self-mastery," and the aware-ness of a "rule of goodness higher than the opinion of their neighbours (II, 194-95).
The influence of George -^liot's beliefs of the 1850*3 is evident too
in her treatment of Janet's conversion, the "real drama of ^angelicalism/1 although offering a deeper psychological explanation of Janet's experience than Scott - or indeed Thackeray - would have done, she emphasises the "Lbjlessed influence of one true loving human soul on another!" (II, 2&4)t Janet's conversion is effected more by Tryan than by Christ. In the moment

According to lan -^radley, Jerome's attitude was quite common - see
The Call to Seriousness, pp. 66-69.

of her greatest despair, Janet tries to "throw herself with the more des-perate clinging energy at the foot of the cross, where the Divine Sufferer would impart divine strength," but she finally decides that she must seek ™ryan s help, since she has "no confidence that the aid she sought would be given" (II, 346-47). But then her confiding in "human sympathy" says the narrator, "prepared her soul for that stronger leap by which faith grasps the idea of the divine sympathy" (II, 349). Yet Janet is never actually shown appropriating the merits and realising the all-suffic fency of Christ, the process involved in full conversion. Although secularist views of religion like George Eliot's had a growing' appeal in the mid-Victorian

2 period, she is I think too conscious of the respectable family readership

Blackwood s to say anything explicitly. anti-Christian, and the early reviewers did not question the Christian content of the story.

The first chapter of "Mr Gilfil's Love-Story" is set "thirty years ago" (i.e. about 1827), and continues the social comedy of the early part of "Amos Barton", albeit the occasion for the comedy is Gilfil's death. The stress is on the conservatism of the Shepperton and Knebley parishioners, the way in which the Church and Giifii himself are an accepted, unquestioned part of life, "like markets and toll-gates and dirty bank-notes" (I, 131). These analogies help to establish the period, since although by the middle of the century Parliament had adopted a policy of discontinuing turnpike roads and the toll-gates connected with them, in the early nineteenth cen-tury there had been in England 7»800 toll-gates controlling 23,000 miles
of roads, -^ank— notes meanwhile had been issued in profusion during the

jyks Religion of the Heart , p. 62.

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See A.O.J. Cockshut, Anglican /Htitudes; A_ study o£ Victorian
Religious Controversies (London: Collins, 1959)> P- 27 .

1620's by some eight hundred provincial banks, but after many failures over 1825-26 notes under £5 value were forbidden and replaced by the gold sover-eign. Gilfil f s acceptance by his parishioners is due to his human rather than to his clerical qualities, and his behaviour contrasts favourably with Barton s: uilfil gains popularity by quarrelling with the bad landlord Mr Oldinport, while Barton is sycophantic towards the unscrupulous Countess; ^ilfil gives sugar-plums to Tommy Bond while Barton preaches hell-fire to Master Fodge; Gilfil gains respect by showing knowledge of farming, while Barton alienates parishioners like Mrs Patten by hectoring them about their sins; ^ilfil claims no money from his parishioners, but Barton annoys them with requests for funds to rebuild the church; Gilfil's sermons are short and simple, Barton's pseudo-erudite. On the other hand the parishioners are more critical of Barton than of Gilfil partly because "thcit dangerous fruit of the tree of knowledge - innovation" (I, 170) had intervened bet-ween 1&27 and 1837, " an interval in which -Evangelicalism and the Catholic Question had begun to agitate the rustic mind with controversial debates" (I, 6).
•^he main contrast established in this story is however that between the recent past (1827) and the more remote past (1788-91) - between the period of Gilfil's early life, when his wife's death could tragically stunt his growth, and the period forty years later, when his own death could be an occasion for gossip about the social respectability of mourning clothes.
u eorge Jfiliot hopes to arouse the reader's sympathies by comparing his ro-mantic past with his prosaic present, so that the "poetry and the pathos" lie not in the events of ordinary life, but in the very contrast between

, Modern England: iJ'rom the 18th Century to the Present, pp.
171-73.

U.-C. Knoepflmacher, "^eorge Eliot's Anti-Homantic Romance: 'Mr.
Gilfil's Love-otory,J " Victorian Newsletter, no. 31 (°prin^ 1967), 11-15,
at 11.

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tha hopes of the past and his present circumstances, •'•'he following passage makes this clear, as well as exemplifying again the narrator's attitude of moral superiority to the readers:

But in the first place, dear ladies, allow me to plead that gin-
and-water, like obesity, or baldness, or the gout, does not ex-
clude a vast amount of antecedent romance, any more than the neatly-executed ''fronts" which you may some day wear, will ex-
clude your present possession of less expensive braids. AlasJ
alasS we poor mortals are often little better than wood-ashes
- there is small sign of the sap, and the leafy freshness, and
the bursting buds that were once there... (l, 173)

By contrast, Thackeray generally assumes that his readers are middle-aged 01 old, and share the narrators' regrets over the evanescence of youth.
The flashback to Giifii'g youth - complicated by a further flashback
to Caterina's childhood - takes us from a middle-class to an aristocratic setting. The neo-^othic Gheverel Manor (a reminiscence of Arbury Hall where George Eliot's father had been estate manager) is described in con-fused and rather laborious detail, and the life of the Cheverels and Asshers is presented as a leisured round of music, embroidery, and talk about servants. Here the lack of emphasis on Gilfil's specifically cleri-cal role reflects the state of the Church in the late eighteenth century, especially before the ^rench ^evolution, although not necessarily as world ly as Aite Cpawley, the clergy in general were complacent, fearful of en-thusiasm, and chary of dealing with doctrine, and many shared Mary Craw-ford's view that the Cnurch was merely a convenient career for younger
f-)
sons. Sir ^hristopher Cheverel sees (Jilfil as a "domestic appendage"

Parties," 274.
Jane Austen, Mansfield Park (1815), ed. R.W. Chapman (Oxford:
Oxford University Press, 1934)> P«

who takes life easily, "keeping his hunter, and observing a mild regimen of clerical duty" till the Cumbermoor living falls vacant (I, 242).
•The events of the story are concurrent with those of the French ^evolu-tion - Sir ^hristopher reads of "the last portentous proceedings of the French parliaments" (l, 186-87) - but the life of ^heverel Manor is isolated from the currents of great historical movements and events, ^hen ^eorge •^liot does make a direct comparison between the "conflicting thoughts and passions" agitating Prance in the summer of 1788, and the "terrible struggles" which C aterina endures at the same time (l, 211), the effect is merely bathetic, as the oassions of C a-fcerina and those of the ^evolution are too different both in scale and kind, '^he comparison of the Manor to a scene from '"'atteau, and of Lady Cheverel to "one of ^ir Joshua Heynolds's stately ladies" (I, 184) establish not so much the period as the aristocra-tic opulence and idyllic nature of the opening scene on the lawn.
'•^he identification by Warwickshire people of the figures from George •^liot's youth on whom some of the characters were based forced her to re-t

fine her view of the writer s treatment of the recent past. She claimed to 2
vary the stories and characters considerably from the originals, and said that the ^cenes represented "widely sundered portions of experience" and a "combination of subtle shadowy suggestions with certain actual objects and events." '^he stories are spun out of the subtlest web of minute observatio: and inward experience," from her "first childish recollections up to recent years"; in fact - " [i] "t would be a very difficult thing for me to furnish a key to them myself."

from the identification of Barton with Gwythe^r, '1'iyan was iden-
tified with the Rev. John ffdmund Jones of Wuneaton, ^ir Christopher Chevere with Sir ^qger Newdigate of ^rbury Hall, the -^empsters with James Williams ^uchanan and his wife Nancy.
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See her letters to Gwyther, 15 June 1659 (^liot Letters, III, 85-86.
and to John ^lackwood, 11 June It57 (II, 347) and 28 Way 1858 (ll, 459-60), "Letter to John ^lackvjood," 28 May 1858, in jjliot Letters, II, 459-
60.

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GEORGE ELIOT - £. ADAM BKDE

Contemporary reviewers of Adam Bede welcomed enthusiastically what they saw as its social realism. The writer in Blackwood's claims that George Eliot unlike most other novelists, shows true knowledge of the lower classes, por-trays the "genuine article," while Geraldine Jewsbury in the Athenaeum goes so far as to declare that "the story is not a story, but a true ac-
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count of a place and people who have really lived." Meanwhile the belief that the novel is true to history, is expressed by the Westminster &eview;

His work reads like an authentic history: the actors impress us
as real men and women, who, being what they were, could not have
spoken or acted other than they did ... the function of the author
being' that of a faithful and wise historian, who records simply
what he had seen or learnt

George Sliot even had to deny the claim of a Charles Holte Bracebridge that she had copied Dinah Morris's sermon from the journals and sermon notes of her Methodist aunt Mrs Samuel Evans, whose conversion of a girl imprisoned for child-murder provided the germ of the story. "Truth in art is so start-ling," she complained to Blackwood, "that no one can believe in it as art."^" opening sentence of the novel itself declares the narrator's
intention of imitating the Egyptian sorcerer's power to "reveal to any chance-comer far-reaching visions of the past." Since the book is set almost sixty years before the time of writing, only a small proportion of George Eliot's readers would have any direct recollection of the period it deals with, and throughout the narrator shows a strong sense of the distance,

1 IX Lucas CollinsJ, "Adam Bede," Blackwood* s, 85 (1659), 490-504,
at 490-91, 503.
2 26 February 1859; rpt. George Eliot and her Readers ; A. ^electioq of Contemporary Reviewg, ed. John Holmstrom and Laurence Lerner (London: Bodley Head, 1966), p. 21.
3 [John Chapman], "Adam BedeJ' Westminster ^eview^ NS 15 (l&59), 486-512,
at 487.

16 October 1&59> in Eliot Letters, III, 1655 emphasis George Eliot's,

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both social and historical, between the farmers and rural craftsmen of 1799

- 1807 and the middle and upper-class reading public of 1&59. As in Scenes

of^ Clerical Lif e_j George ^liot sometimes urges the readers directly to sym-

pathise with the unidealised kind of character she is describing - notably in Chapter 17:

I have had quite enthusiastic movements of admiration towards old
gentlemen who spoke the worst English, who were occasionally fret-
ful in their temper, and who nad never moved in a higher sphere of influence than that of parish overseer; and ... the way in which
I have come to the conclusion that human nature is lovable — the
way I have learnt something of its deep pathos, its sublime mys-
teries - has been by living a great deal among people more or less commonplace and vulgar

Meanwhile, the later defence of the old labourer Kester Bale points out the

debt that the people of the present owe to those of the recent past:

I am not ashamed of commemorating old Kester; you and I are in-
debted to the hard hands of such men - hands that have long ago
mingled with the soil they tilled so faithfully, thriftily making
the best they could of the earth's fruits, and receiving the
smallest share as their own wages (p.

The tone of both these passages suggests that George Eliot feels she is stil

combatting in her readers a preference for stories of ideal characters set

in the fashionable world, an attitude of repugnance and condescension to-

wards the farmers and labourers of sixty years before - this despite Scott's

sympathetic treatment of characters like Dandie ^inmont, the Mucklebackits,

and Edie Ochiltree, and Thackeray's exposure of the selfish and mercenary attitudes prevalent in fashionable life.

Another straightforward technique of overcoming the reader's (supposed)

feeling of condescension towards the recent past is the comparison of past

George Eliot, Adam Bede (1839), ed. and intro. Stephen Gill (Harmonds-worth: Penguin, 19^0), p. 229* AH subsequent citations will be from this edition, which is based on the first.

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and present practice at the expense of the latter, such as the lament for the passing of dances like the one at Arthur's birthday feast:

That merry stamping, that gracious nodding of the head, that
waving bestowal of the hand - where can we see them now? ...
instead of low dresses and large skirts, and scanning glances
exploring costumes, and languid men in lackered boots smiling
with double meaning (p. 329)

This recalls of course Thackeray's nostalgic passages about vanished plea-sures like coach-travel and innocent conviviality in taverns. Similarly in Chapter 3, modern Methodism is compared unfavourably with that embodied in ^inah and Seth. Their naive and "old-fashioned" belief in "present miracles, in instantaneous conversions, in revelations "by dreams and visions ... lots, and ... Pivine guidance by opening the Bible at hazard" (p. 82) does not prevent "sublime feelings" or "faith, hope, and charity", and so is prefer-able to the attitude of Methodists "of that modern type which reads quarterly reviews and attends in chapels with pillared porticoes" (p. 82). By the 1850's the Connexion had become more middle—class, and Philip Gosse lamented the "large fine Wesleyan chapels of Liverpool, the fashionable attire of
the audiences, and the studied refinement of the discourses." The railways had in any case made itinerant preaching like ^inah's less romantic, the age of the great inspirational preachers was over, and membership was declining,

2 partly through the secession of breakaway groups. In fact it was the years

of the Napoleonic Wars which had seen the greatest expansion of the Con- > nexion.
The many generalisations drawn from the characters 1 experience serve to

Edmund Gosse, Life of Philip Henry Gosse, p. 153, quoted in Cunningham •^verywhere Spoken Against, p. 33.
2 Owen Chadwicfr The Viotorian Church, I, 3?2, 383-84.
3 E.P. Thompson, The Making of the English Working Class , rev. edn. (Harmondsworth: Pelican, 1968), p. 419*

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relate the recent past to the present, by suggesting that the same feelings and laws govern human behaviour in both periods. Of ^darn's reaction to his father's drowning, the narrator comments that when we encounter death, "it is never our tenderness that we repent of, but our severity" (p. 97)• Hetty's style of beauty is described as if it still exists to "turn the heads" of men, women, and "all intelligent mammals," and the narrator even says that it is useless to describe it to people who have not experienced 11 (pp. 12-7-28). Of the change in Arthur's character after his seduction of Hetty, the narrator claims that

Our deeds determine us, as much as we determine our deeds ...
There is a terrible coercion in our deeds which may first turn
the honest man into a deceiver, and then reconcile him to the
change; for this reason - that the second wrong presents itself
to him in the guise of the only practicable right (p. 359)

^ome of the passages generalising from a character's feelings are quite ex-tensive, such as that relating Adam's reaction to sorrow to the common humai experience of it - the change in character involved in the "transformation of pain into sympathy" such that we gain a "sense of our lives having vi-sible and invisible relations beyond any of which either pur present or prospective self is the centre" (pp. 531-32). Overall, they convey the ide; that human nature and human experience change little throughout history. This is of course the tenor of many of the narratorial comments in Thacke—c ray's novels, but the latter tend to point up the unattractive qualities which readers share with people of the recent past, while George Sliot's stress is on common feelings and psychological processes.
Sometimes however these generalisations simultaneously relate the rece; past to the present, while demonstrating in the language used the different between the narrator's range of experience and expression, and that of the

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characters. Of Seth's love for Dinah, the nareator declares that "(ijove of this sort is hardly distinguishable from religious feeling," and that

Our caresses, our tender words, our still rapture under the
influence of autumn sunsets, or pillared vistas, or calm majestic
statues, or Beethoven symphonies, all bring with them the con-
sciousness that they are mere waves and ripples in an unfathom-
able ocean of love and beauty (p. 61)

George Eliot's language moves far beyond the range of Seth's power of ex-pression, and indeed, of his experience: he is unlikely to have encountered "pillared vistasy or . calm majestic statues," while none of Beethoven's symphonies had been written by 1799 a^d Seth would not have been able to hear them in Hayslope if they had been. George Eliot translates ^eth's experience into the terms of her readers' consciousness to make it more com-prehensible to them, but in so doing is obliged to expose the gap between his awareness and theirs.
Yet it is not only the relatively inarticulate lower-class characters
whose means of expression is shown to differ from that of the narrator and reader, tfhen citing Mr Irwine's religious views - how he sees "certain dim but strong emotions, suffusing themselves as a hallowing influence over the family affections and neighbourly duties" as the "only healthy form" religio: could take for his parishioners (p. 112), the narrator says that Irwine would "perhaps" have expressed himself in this way, " [i] f he had been in the habit of speaking theoretically." The point is that he is a practical man, a clergyman like many who were criticised in parliamentary reports of the time, who were not much interested in doctrine or in abstract speculation.

Which George Eliot had herself read in the Gentleman's Magazine; see
Joseph tfiesenfarth, "G e0 rge Eliot's notes for Adam Bede," Nineteenth-Century Fiction, 32 (1977), 127-65, a* U2-44-

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But in order to make this kind of outlook accessible to the readers of 1859 G eorge Eliot has to present his views in a theoretical way. On the other hand, many of the comments on characters in Adam Bede which could have been expressed by the narrator are put into the mouth of Mrs Poyser - for example the strictures on Dinah's self-sacrificing asceticism (I21ff, 5l8ff) and on Hetty's hardness (p. 384), and the attack on 3artle Massey and Mr Craig (568f), so that the patronising tone which can sometimes result from the social, historical and intellectual gap between narrator (and reader) and characters is avoided. Unfortunately this is not the case with the defence of Irwine by Adam in Chapter 17, as he is too obviously paraphrasing the comments already made by the narrator botja in this chapter and in Chapter 5» George Eliot's main way of bringing the recent past to life is the de»
tail of her descriptions of Hayslope life, particularly at the beginning of the novel, 'i'he narrative moves slowly through the different centres of Hay-slope life, to introduce the main characters and to show their typical ac-tivities - in Jchathan -Surge's workshop (Chapter l), the Bede home (Chapter 4), the Irwine's residence (Chapter 5)> the Hall ^'arra (Chapter 6) anrf. its dairy (Chapter 7)» The reader is treated as if he is actually visiting each of these places, being guided by the narrator, while the use of the historic present is clearly intended to create a sense of immediacy, to make the past present:

Put your face to one of the glass panes in the right-hand window:
[of the Hall ^arm3 what do you see? A large open fireplace, with
rusty dogs in it, and a bare-boarded floor; at the far end
fleeces of wool stacked up; in the middle of the floor some
empty corn-bags (p. 116)

far as the characters are concerned, Geojpge Sliot makes it clear that they are not to be judged according to stereotyped views about the people of the recent past, ^inah as a Methodist is unlike both the kinds the

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stranger has encountered, "the ecstatic and the bilious" (p. 66).-or the "ordinary type of the Ranter" (p. 12). And the presentation in Chapter 5 of Irwine 1 s home life, his devotion to his mother and sisters, is explicitly intended to prevent the readers 1 judging him according to conventional views of late eighteenth-century clergy, ^he reader is urged to see Irwine, not from a "lofty historical level1 ' (p. 112), condemning him for lacking the "enthusiasm", earnestness, interest in spiritual life, or "self-scour-ging sense of duty" valued by people of the 1850*s, but from the point of view of people who know him personally, who can "walk by his side in fami-liar talk, or look at him in his home" (p. 111). It is interesting here that whereas in "Janet's Repentance" George -Eliot had felt it necessary to defend Tryan against anti-Evangelical prejudices, here she assumes that her readers will criticise Irwine as a clergyman according to criteria actually established by the impact of Evangelicalism. There is also a dis-tinction being made, n.ot only between past facts and present prejudices, but between the differing impressions a man may make on his contemporaries in his public and in his private life: Mr Irwine, an unabashed pluralist, but "tender to other men's failings, and unwilling to impute evil," is "one of those men ••. of whom we can know the best only by following them away from the market place, the platform, and the pulpit, entering with them into their own homes" (p. 113), while the private lives of some "great reformers of abuses" do not bear enquiring into. This stress on private as distinct from public life will emerge again in the novel's treatment of Adam Bede and Arthur Donnithorne.
In many ways howeyer both characters and their way of life in Hayslope
are broadly characteristic of rural life of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. The Poysers have been tenant-farmers for some gene-rations, as were many farmers of the period: Batchelor, in his General View of the Agriculture of Bedfordshire (1808), notes that the large farmers

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are "secure in their possessions/' so that the farms "generally descend from father to son through a long series of years; and perhaps as frequently change their owners as their occupiers." Although most tenants were te-nant s-at-will, they were seldom evicted except in cases of serious misbe-

2 haviour - and we find in Adam Bede that the old Squire's veiled threats

to turn out the Poysers are never put into practice. The interest of both Mr and Mrs Poyser in the practical details of farming are also characteris-tic of prosperous farmers and their wives of the period. This concern is shown in their conversation in Chapter 18 (234ff)» in Martin Poyser1 s strictures on the bad husbandry of Luke Britten, in Mrs Poyser's interest in butter and cheese making, and the household's brewing and spinning of their own linen. Writing in 1808, Charles Vancouver saw the farmer's wife's contribution as the real foundation of farmhouse life because of the .j.
money earnt from her butter, cheese, and eggs, and this view is echoed in the novel's comment that "Lti he woman who manages a dairy has a large share in making the rent" (p. 234). Shops were only starting to be set up in villages towards the end of the eighteenth century' (of* Mrs Poyser's con-tempt for "shop-rag" linen, p. 270), while the bad state of most roads meant that villages tended to be self-sufficient in food, drink and cloth. By 1859 however new habits had emerged among the more prosperous class of farmer, and were described by George Sliot in her more theoretical discus-sion of the peasantry in "The Natural History of German Life": they no longer do farm-work themselves, eat in the company of their servants, or

Quoted in G.E. Mingay, English Landed Society in the Eighteenth
Century (London; Routledge & Kegan Paul; Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1963), p. 1?1-
2
Mingay, p. 45.
^ Pamela Horn, The ^ural h'orld, 1780-1830; Social Change in the Englis! Countryside (London: Hutchinson, 1980), p. 30.
Quoted in fC.W. Martin, The Secret People: ^ngli^h Village Life after
O (London: Phoenix House, 1954)» ?• 242.
5 iS.W. Bovill, English Country Life, 1780-lt3Q, p. 58.
6 Bovill. p- 55.

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spin their own table-linen, but imitate the middle classes, having drawing-rooms filled with pianos and old annuals, and driving vehicles with springs. ^actly when this development occurred is difficult to determine, since a "Country Farmer" writing in 1786 criticises farmers' elegant entertainments, delicate food, and expensive wine, and their daughters 1 opulent dress, while only a few years later Arthur Young attacks wealthy farmers who try to ape the aristocracy by investing in post-chaises, pianos, liveried servants, expensive boarding-school for their darters and University for their sons. On the other hand, "George Bourne1 ' 'in his history of a t>urrey parish, dates the decline of the yeomen who were on^, easy terms with their labourers (like Martin Poyser) and shared their traditions, mainly from the enclosure of the parish, which occurred in 1861. In any case, to the readers of 1859» the Poysers, who assume "no rigid demarcation of rank between the farmer and -the respectable artisan" (p. 142) would probably have seemed old-fashioned. Similarly Lisbeth Bede's horror of the '"workhus"1 and her an-xiety that Thias get a decent burial was typical of peas'aritry of the periojd being noted by Southey in 1807, but by 1830 Miss Mitford was to observe that this pride was becoming rarer.
throughout the novel, a contrast is made between the rich agricultural county of Loamshire where Hayslope is situated, and the bleak, bare, impo-verished and industrialised county of Stonyshire adjacent to it, where •^inah Morris works in a cotton-mill. Except for Adam's quest for Hetty and his later visit to Dinah, the novel is not set in Stonyshire, but the

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Remarks on Inclosures, quoted in Martin, p. 128.
Heport on Agri culture (1795) > quoted by John Addy, The Agrarian devolution (London; Longman, 1972), pp. 83-64.
LGeorge SturtJ, ^hange in the Village (London: -^ickworth & Co., 191 PP. 152-53.

5 Letters from England, p. 145*
Mary ttussell Mitford, Our Village: sketches of ^ural Character and °cenery > IV (London: George B. '/hittaker, 1830), p. 105.

harshness and poverty of life there are brought out in -Dinah 1 s disputes with Mrs Poyser (Chapters 6 and 49), and her conversations with S eth (Chap-ter 3) and Mr Irwine (Chapter 8). The references to the cotton mill and th people who work there reflect the growth of factory production in the late eighteenth century, particularly in the cotton industry, brought about by such inventions as Hichard ^rkwright's water-frame (used in his mill at Cromford, mentioned by Adam in Chapter l), and CrOmpton's mule, which pro-duced a stronger and finer thread than was possible on a spinning-wheel.
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fry 1790 there were 150 factories in England driven by water-power, '^he invention of the steam engine by Boulton and Watt meant that textile fac-tories no longer had to be built near sources of running water, however. This new development led to the concentration of the textile and other in-dustries into towns, and the growth of these towns as people from the sur-rounding areas settled there to work, '^he terrible living conditions in the industrial slums and the long hours and unhealthy conditions of the textile factories are well-known, and were so by the mid -nineteenth century, from parliamentary reports, Blue Books such as those Pendennis reads, and accounts such as j.p. Kay 1 s The Moral and Physical Condition of the Working Classes (1832), Peter Gaskell's The Manufacturing Population of -E
its Moral, Social and Physical Conditions (1833) and '^. Cooke Taylor s Notes of the Manufacturing -Districts of Lancashire (1842) as well as from the "condition of England" novels such as Pisraeli's Sybil (1845), -Dickens 1 Hard <J? imes (1854) and Mrs Gaskell's Marff Barton (1848) and North and South

Paul Mantoux, The Industrial Revolution in the Eighteenth Century (London: Jonathan Cape, 1961)> P» 235»
2 T.o. Ashton, An Economic History -of gngland; the 18th Century
(London: Methuen, 1955)> P»
Mantoux, p. 431*

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(!855). At the period in which Mam Bede is set, the use of the steam engine was not general or extensive, and the population was still nearly two-thirds rural. By 1841 sixty percent of the population lived in conur-bations of 5,000 or more, and this number grew by 1.8 million in the next ten years. However Dinah's description of Leeds, where there were twenty steam ei^ines operating by 1800, as "high-walled streets, where you seemed to walk as in a prison-fyard, and the ear is deafened with the sounds of worldly toil" (p. 13?) recalls flikin's account of the working class areas of Manchester before 1800, with its "dismal narrow streets and tumbledown houses," affected by damp, and cellars without light or air. If Adam Bede, fooussing on an agricultural area but with an adjacent industrial area which occasionally emerges in description or characters 1 comments, shows the rela-tive importance of the two main contrasting landscapes and ways of life in the 1799-1807 period, North and South, concentrating on the industrial town of Milton-Northern with some reference to and description of southern agri-cultural areas, demonstrates the change in the balance of population and economic activity which occurred during the next fifty years.
In making Loamshire a "north midland county" however (p. 337)» George
Eliot is using geographical and historical conditions to highlight the con-trast between the county's fertility and prosperity, and the bareness and poverty of Stonyshire. The midlands contained the most fertile and prospe-rous counties, while the workers in the northern agricultural areas tended to command higher wages than those in the south because the farmers had to

$ compete with mill-owners for employees, and fuel was cheap because of the

W.G. Hoskins, The Making of the English Landscape (l°/55> rp'fc. London:
Book ^lub Associates, 19^l)> P» 224.

2 R. Lawton, "Rural Depopulation in Nineteenth Century England," in
English Rural Gommunitj.es; The Impact of a. Specialised Economy, ed. Dennis 1%. Mills (Londonrand fl'asingstoke: Macmillan Press, 1973), pp. 195-219, at p. 195-
Mantoux, p. 335*
4
Quoted in Mantoux, pp. 430-31.

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proximity of the industrial areas. In view of the conditions prevailing
in the agricultural areas during the Napoleonic Wars, too, Loamshire is rather privileged. Because of a series of bad harvests during the late 1790*8) and reductions in imports due to the war, the prices of agricultural products rose dramatically, and George Eliot noted from the Gentleman's Magazine that the cost of a quartern loaf increased froqi 8d in 1798 to 13d in 1799» Increase in the prices of grain and meat continued into 1800,

2 till in March 1801 famine seemed imminent. High prices benefitted farmers,

but they made life more difficult for the farm-labourers who did not produce their own food. In the part of his diary covering this period, the Rev. Woodforde refers several times to the complaints of the poor about the price of bread, and Also to their risings in protest. Curing the Napoleonic Wars rural wages went up seventy-five percent, but prices more than doubled^, and F.M.L. Thompson has argued that the general economic trend of the period involved a transfer of income from the labouring and consuming sections of the population to the landowners and farmers. In the novel the rise in bread prices is seen explicitly from the point of view of the farmers, who were not "such exceptional farmers as to love the general good better than their own ... they were not in very low spirits about 1he rapid rise in the price of bread (p. 337)• ^ut even the farm-rtworkers, insofar as they come into the story at all, are not shown to be suffering any privations, and there is no evidence in Hayslope of the poverty described by Southey:

Joseph Wiesenfarth, "George ^liot's Notes for Adam Bede," p. 144.
2 Addy, pp. 36-38.
The friary of a Sountry Parson, ed. John Beresford, Vol. V (1797-1802) (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1931), PP- 241, 250, 279, 2QO, 295, 297, 305. Woodforde, -^iary, p. 308.

5 Horn, p. 46.
•UJnglish Landed Society in the Nineteenth ^entury (London: Rout ledge & Kegan Paul5 Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1963), p. 215.

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The numbers who perish from diseases produced by exposure to
cold and rain, by unwholesome food, and by the want of enough
even of that, would startle as well as shock you. Of the chil-
dren of the poor, hardly one third are reared

poverty as exists is located in Stonyshire. In ?he Antiquary Scott, although dealing with the part of the war slightly before economic condition worsened, does pay more attention to poverty in his treatment of the Muckle— backits and Edie Ochiltree, while Mrs Gaskell's Sylvia's Lovers (1863) was to draw attention to the hardships arising from the famine of 1799-1800 (Chapter 44)• It is possible that readers who generalised from Hayslope about rural life of sixty years b,efore would have idealised the ptfst. AS it is, the very real evils dealt with in the novel arise less from social conditions than from errors in the conduct of individuals.
Hayslope is also very little influenced by the war itself. Local
events and people are as important as - or more important than - events of national significance. The "news from Egypt" (of Nelson's victory over the *'rench at the Battle of the Nile in August 1798) and "the King's health" (the beginnings of George Ill's attacks of insanity) are of the same conver-sational interest as Mrs Irwine, "the sweet new patterns in cotton dresses" and "Lord Dacey's law-suit, which was fretting poor Lady Dacey to death"
(p. 110). Later Mrs Poyser's verbal assault on the Squire makes the news of Bonaparte's return from Egypt "comparatively insipid" while to the Hayslope mind "the repulse of the French in Italy was nothing to Mrs Poyser's re-pulse of the old Squire" (p. 396). ^hen Arthur hears of the planned mar-riage between Adam and Hetty, he "greeted every one who spoke to him with an eager gaiety, as if there had been news of a fresh Nelson victory" (p. 485). The most extended comments on political and military events are in the conversation at the harvest supoer, after the crises in the characters' Letters from England, pp. 145-46.

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lives have been resolved - there is talk of Pitt's resignation and of the war, but the emphasis even here is not on the facts, but on the characters 1 prejudice (notably Craig's criticism of the Cabinet, and his smug assertion of the superiority of the English over the French, pp. 565-67). Arthur's captaincy in the local militia has more status in local eyes than a cap-taincy in the "regulars" (p. 105) - but it means that he will not have to fight outside Britain, tfhen he does finally join the regular army, it is only because he wants to spare Adam and the Poysers his continued presence at Hayslope and to discourage them from leaving. Furthermore, although the stranger in Chapter 2 thinks Adam the kind of man needed '"to lick'the French1 " (p. 6l), the latter never becomes a soldier, and uses his savings to pay for a substitute for a eth when his brother is called up (p. 89). '^his was a common practice at the period, and volunteers were hard to raise, even for county regiments, and even when invasion was feared in 179&: ballots were sometimes destroyed, or substitutes found in other counties. Yet George -Eliot is possibly underestimating the actual impact of the war on rural areas, as ^oodforde's diary for the period contains frequent refe-rences to its progress, as well as to fears of an invasion at a time just

2 before Hayslope's harvest supper in 1801. In Adam Bede the war is more

peripheral to the characters' concerns than in The fl-ntiquary, and the poli-tical disaffection of the period is not even mentioned.
George Eliot's notes for the novel show that she read up the Gentleman* Magazine of 1799 for details of the Duke of Jutland's majority, as back-ground for Arthur's coming-of-age party, and checked the fashions of the

1 Horn, 6lff.
2 See the entry for 6 *ugust 1801, in -^iar.y, V, 329.

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period, the seasons, as well as major events and historical figures, ^he bulk of the notes however concern religious history, specifically the par-liamentary reports, letters and book reviews in the Gentleman's Magazine of 1801-2 about the problems of the non-residence of the clergy, o"d Mz encouragement this gave to the growth of Methodism, and extracts from Southey's Life of Lesley. Polemic against Methodists such as the following

a set of self-constituted, itinerant, uneducated apostles, who
arrogate to themselves the character of the apostolic founders,
the first preachers of Gospel truths, without the smallest
pretension or qualification

is echoed in Joshua Harm's complaints to Irwine about Will Maskery in Chap-ter 5> but George $liot is also using her knowledge of anti-Methodist pre-judice to highlight Irwine*s good-natured tolerance. As far as the treat-ment of Dinah is concerned, Kathleen Watson has shown that her diction is typical of Methodists of the period, including that of the woman on whom sh€ <)
was based, George ^liot's aunt Mrs Samuel &vans, while ^alentine Cunning-ham has pointed out how many features of late eighteenth-century Methodism as discussed in Southey's Life of ^esley are brought into the novel: her use of the game text in her sermon as w esley used in his first open-air meeting, her technique of seeming to address a particular individual in her sermon, as '"'esley did, her trust in random opening of the Bible for guidance, the practice of prison-visiting, the physical convulsions in-volved in conversion, the short-lived nature of many conversions (such as ^ranage'sj, the difficulty of converting.the farmers and the greater

1 Gentleman's Magazine, 73 (1802), 608.
2 "'i'he Use of Religious Diction in the
Special Reference to George iCliot," (Oxford MS D.Phil., 19?0), 147ff.

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'" Nineteenth Century Novel, with

receptivity of townspeople towards the Methodist message, the Quaker-like dress and asceticism of the Methodists. H0 wever despite this historical authenticity, George ^liot's own beliefs colour her presentation here as they did in Scenes of Clerical Life; in quoting hymns she omits stanzas so as to exclude specifically Christian terminology (as in Seth's hymn,
P« 437), or to alter the theme of the hymn to fit the situation in the no-vel (as in Dinah's hymn, p. 535). And when Hetty is actually converted, she expresses no sense of joy or repose in God's pardon, and, like Janet in relation to Tryan, leans more on Dinah as a fellow human-being than as a source of divine comfort.
'•'•'he deference towards Arthur Donnithorne as the ^quire's heir in Hay-slope is sometimes mentioned as peculiar to the past, and is explained to the reader of 1859 as a cause for behaviour not otherwise explicable. Mrs Poyser curtseys to Arthur and Irwine, since "in those days the keenest bu-colic minds felt a whispering awe at the sight of the gentry - such as of old men felt when they stood on tip-toe to watch the gods passing by in tall human shape" (p. 124). Adam has an "instinctive reverence" for Arthur and his grandfather, and even if criticising estate management to the Squire, would have felt a strong "impulse to a respectful demeanour towards a 'gentleman.'" The narrator explains this attitude by pointing out that since Adam "was in his prime half a century ago, you must expect some of his characteristics to be obsolete." (p. 209). The opening of Mrs Gaskell's M ivea and -^aughters, set in about 1620, observes that Lord and Lady Cumnor "expected to be submitted to, and obeyed," and in the country near their

Everywhere Spoken Against, 14$ff•
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•Everywhere Spoken -^-gainst, pp. 165-66. •Everywhere Spoken Against, pp. 168-69.

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seat "a very pretty amount of feudal feeling still lingered." -^ven the liberal-talking inhabitants vote for their Cumnor landowner, and this is described as "no unusual instance of the influence of the great landowners over humbler neighbours in those days before railways." In the same year as ^dam Bede was published John Stuart Mill observed that, on account of changes in education, increased mobility (due largely to the development of railways), the diffusion of the advantages of easy circumstances and the growing scope for the ambitious to rise provided by the expansion of com-merce and manufactures, the extension of the franchise, and the increasing power of public opinion, the gap between the ranks was narrowing, such that

2 they lived in much the same world. Yet in A dam -^ede it is implied that in

> people still defer to men like Arthur because of their status as "gentlemen" - a view with which Thackeray would have agreed:

we don't inquire too closely into character in the case of a
handsome generous young fellow, who will have property enough
to support numerous peccadilloes ... "^e use round, general,
gentlemanly epithets about a young man of birth and fortune (p. 170)

F.M.L. Thompson argues that respect for landowners was not much affected by the industrial revolution before about i860. '-^he change that had occurred between 1799 and 1859 wa-s perhaps not so much a diminution of the deference shown to squires and landowners in rural society, but the burgeoning of urban-based industrial society to embrace a larger proportion of the popula-tion, where the relationship between social classes might be purely economic

Elizabeth ^askell, *Hves and Daughters (1864-66), ed Frank Glover
Smith, intro. Laurence Lerner (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1969)) PP» 36-37-
o

On Liberty (1859), in Utilitarianism, Liberty, Representative Govern-

ment , intro. A.D. Lindsay (New York and London: Everyman, 1910)* pp. 130-31 ' •)
English Landed Society _in the Nineteenth Century, p. 290.

Arthur's attitude to agriculture locates him as a progressive thinker
in his historical context. In Chapter 16 he explains to Irwine that when he comes into the estate, he would like to carry out Arthur Young's ideas, "putting the farmers on a better management of their land; and, as he says, making what was a wild country, all of the same dark hue, bright and varie-gated with corn and cattle 1 " (p. 215). This last comment is a reference to Young's 1770 account of the improvements made by ^homas £lliot of ^reming-ton, who enclosed some uncultivated land and ran twenty' horses, forty cows, and 1,200 sheep on it: "[a] noble parcel of cattle to be kept upon a wild spot, which once maintained scarce anything; and was not distinguished from the unvarying dark hue of the whole country" Young was the best-known ad-vocate during the last third of the eighteenth century of the enclosure of wild, uncultive/ted land, and also of the common land which was attached to each parishj and used lay the villagers for feeding their animals and as a source of firing. ^closure was particularly rapid during the Napoleonic

2 rt ars, in order to make more land productive, hence mitigating the food

shortage while allowing advantage to be taken of both the high returns
on agricultural products and the high rents which resulted from them. Arthur also plans to show a "wonderful knowledge of agriculture" as "the patron of new ploughs and drills" and to undertake drainage (p, 4^3)• *^he late eighteenth century saw many efforts towards agricultural improvement under the aegis of Young and the Board of Agriculture, including crop rota-tion, experiments with drainage, treatment of the soil with marl, chalk

Arthur Young, A 5jx Months' Tour Through the North of -^ngland ,
(Edinburgh and London: Strahan, Nicoll, Collins & ^alfour, 1770), jj QJ^ . See also ^iesenfarth, "George Eliot's Notes for Adam Bede," 131.
2
Acts permitting the enclosure of two thousand parishes were passed between 1793 and 1815 - see Addy, The Agrarian Revolution, p. 26.

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and bones, improvements in stock-breeding, the development of more efficient ploughs, and the invention of the seed-drill (first used in 1730, but slow to take on).~
Enclosure of the commons had its disadvantages as well as its benefits, especially for the poor, as Young himself had realised Ijy 1801. Since en-closed common land was distributed according to the amount a villager al-ready owned, those with little or no land would acquire little or none of the common land, and hence would not have room to graze their cows, as well 2
as losing the access to the furze or timber on the common for firing. Irwine warns Arthur that his friend Gawaine has attracted the "curses of the whole neighbourhood" because of his enclosure activities (p. 215), and the reader of 1&59 might, with hindsight, also feel that Arthur is too sanguine about his plans. Yet because of his seduction of Hetty ^rthur cannot per-sonally effect the progressive changes he has planned, or move in the public sphere as a speaker at election dinners and a "severe upbraider of negligent landowners" (p. 483). In fact his ambitions are treated ironically through-out the story: when in the dairy waiting for a chance of private conversatior. with Hetty, he has to improvise opinions for Mrs Poyser on ^wede turnips and short-horns (p. 129), while in the discussion of his enclosure plans with Irwine he is really trying to avoid confessing his more worrying and urgent preoccupation with Hetty. Most heavily ironic is the flashback to Arthur f s thoughts as he rides to Hayslope after his grandfather *s death: he is full of ambitions for his future as a landowner, but the reader already knows that Hetty is to be condemned to death for the murder of their child and that the Poysers will consider leaving Hayslope.

Annals of Agrj ouiture, 38 (l80l), p. 214, quoted by Horn, p. 51-

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*n or the damaging effects of enclosure on individual parishes, see
"Ueorge Bourne", Change in the Village, 127ff , Maude i'1. Davies, Life in an English Village (London: T. Wisher Unwin, 1909)> 41ff$ M.K. AshbyT^he ^hanging Jfriglish Village (Kineton: The &oundwood Press, 1974), 228ff, and W.G. Hoskins, The Midland Peasant (London: Macmillan, 1957), 247ff.

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On the other hand, although he has to overcome his tendency to be hard
and unsympathetic towards others when they have offended him - exemplified in his attitude to his father and later to Arthur - Adam does nothing in his personal relations with others which nullifies his ambitions. Like Arthur's schemes of agricultural improvement, Adam's interest in technolo-gical developments -

plans for seasoning timber at a trifling expense, calculations
as to the cheapening of bricks per thousand by water-carriage,
and a favourite scheme for the strengthening of roofs and walls
with a peculiar form of iron girder (p. 401)
defines him as progressive for his time. The late eighteenth century had seen a spectacular increase in estate profits from timber, while the great growth in canal transport from the 1760's onward drastically reduced the cost of transporting heavy materials, and led to an eighty-percent increase

2 in the output of bricks in the twenty years after 17&9. Cork's puddling

process, developed in 1763-84, had enabled the production of cheap, mal-leable iron, and the metal began to replace copper and brass in engine parts, stone or brick in bridges, and timber in beams and pillars in facto-ries. f^he period was a productive one for new inventions in general,
s

with 655 patents granted between 1791 and 1800, ninety-six in 1600 alone.' In his reference to "'coal-pit engines'" (p. 53) as one of the worthwhile advances of modern technology, Adam shows his awareness of what was to be the most revolutionary of these patented inventions, the steam-engine, which, as well as being used in cotton mills, facilitated coal mining from deeper seams.

Mingay, English Landed Society in the Eighteenth Century, pp. 57, 90 Phyllis Dea»e > The ^'irst Industrial ^evolution (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 19657T~P« 122 »
3 -Deane, p. 130.
•"•shtori, An a'oonomic History of -^glandt the 16th Century, p. 110.
•* *shton, pp. 107-8.

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Moreover, although Adam is concerned with possible future technologi-
cal developments, he remains mentally attached to the past. This is evi-dent in his response to his father's funeral, where he reacts not just to the "bare object" of the service but to its "subtle relations" to his entire past" (p. 245). -^y contrast, ^rthun if ails to respect the past in that he contravenes traditional social and moral laws, even at a time when his coming-of—age party is embodying and reaffirming the social hierarchy and continuity of Hayslope life. ^imilarly Hetty feels no attachment to her past life, as she looks forward to marriage with Arthur, and part of her suffering during her journey derives from a belated awareness of the comfort and security which her past life offered (pp. 417 > 424-25)• In view of these characters' experiences, it is clear that Mam's attachment to the past is meant to be valued.
furthermore, despite the fact that Adam likes to live in a northern
hilly county so as to see a lot, and "'feel the world's a big place, and there's other men working in it with their heads and hands'" (p. 165), ne has no ambitions to make an impact on the world outside Hayslope* Neither a genius nor merely an average man, he has his counterparts in each genera-tion of peasant artisans:

with an inheritance of affections nurtured by a simple family
life of common need and common industry, and an inheritance of
faculties trained in skilful courageous labour ... Their lives
have no discernible echo beyond the neighbourhood where they
dwelt, but you are almost sure to find there some good piece of road, some building, some application of mineral produce, some improvement in farming practice, some reform of parish abuses, with which their names are associated one or two generations after them ... (pp. 258-59)

the"discussion of this section by Stephen Gill in his Introduc-tion to the Penguin edn, pp. 26-30.

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This recalls her earlier definition of the "real heroes" of the modern world to include '^'ryan, a flawed man who also has a temporary influence over a small area. George Eliot derived some elements of Adam's personality from Samuel Smiles' Life of George Stephenson; "both can lift sixty stones 1 weight, both are good at figures, both are frugal and use their savings to pay for military substitutes (in ^darn's case, for Seth rather than himself), both are practical, hard-working and sober. The implication is that there have been throughout history many men with the same qualities as Stephenson who have not become famous but whose work has been nonetheless valuable. £ven someone like Dinah, who tries unsuccessfully to have an impact on large numbers with her preaching and later has to give it up because of the 1603 Methodist Conference ^an on women preachers, can succeed on the perso-nal level with Hetty, as well as eventually becoming a good wife and mother. Meanwhile the contrast between Adam's achievement and Arthur's failure is
I think meant to show how misconduct in private life can spell the end of ambitious plans for change. At the time George Eliot wrote Adam Be.de. t the view that moral reform of the individual had to be effected before more wide-ranging social change was possible, was becoming increasingly prevalent Perhaps the most famous evocation of the recent past in the novel is
the passage at the end of Chapter 52, lamenting the passing of "Old Leisure" and contrasting contemporary life with that of sixty years previously (pp. 557-58). "Old Leisure" is characterised by complacency, serenity, an indifference to metaphysical issues, and a view of religion as social con-vention rather than spiritual experience, and his era by canals, "spinning

JJavid Moldstaol, " George ^liot's Adam Bede and Smiles' Life of George Stephenson," ^glish Language Notes, 14 (1977),' 169-92.
o

Patrick Brant linger, The °pirit of ^eform, pp. 1-2 and passim.

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wheels ••• pack-horses • .. slow waggons, and the pedlars who brought bar-gains to the door on sunny afternoons." On the other hand, people of mo-dern times are interested in newspapers, "art-museums, periodical litera-ture, and exciting novels," in the "causes of things" and "scientific the-orising," and live in an age of railways. The references to Exeter Hall and Tracts for the ^imes evoke the religious controversies of the period between 1801 and 1859, while the allusion to carlyle*s influential Sartor fiesartus (1633-34) brings to mind the self-analysis, soul-searching and religious doubt expressed in this work. Sylvia's Lovers was to make a si-milar kind of contrast between the people of the 1790 r s and those of the second half of the nineteenth century: in those days people "felt, they understood, without going through reasoning or analytic processes" and
few knew what manner of men they were, compared to the numbers
who are now fully conscious of their virtues, qualities, failings,
and weaknesses, and who go about comparing others with themselves-
... with a vivid self-consciousness

The "Old Leisure" passage certainly pinpoints some of the most important changes which had occurred between 1801 and 1859• Most significant of these was, as we have seen, the growth of the railways after 1830. Several impor-tant periodicals had also been founded between 1801 and 1&59» notably the Edinburgh *Wiew (1802), the Quarterly fteview (1809), Blackwood's fldinburgh Magazine (1812), the Westminster Heview (l&24), Eraser's (1830) and the North British Review (1844), and Pendennis of course bears witness to the flourishing of journalism in the l&30 f s and after. £y the 1640»s too novels had replaced poetry as the dominant literary form. Moreover, some features of the period of "Old Leisure" were disappearing: spinning >/heels had even-

^lizabeth Gtaskell, *->yIvia's Lovers (1863), ed. and intro. Andrew
Sanders (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1982), pp. 318, 74.

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tually been ousted by the development of machine-spinning centred in fac-tories, and by the wide availability of cheap factory-produced clothes; in the areas penetrated by railways the latter replaced the "slow waggons" and pack-horsesj pedlars became less common with the spread of shops.
Sven the canals, which ^dam recognises as a sign of progress in 1799> were often superseded by the faster railways.
At the end of the chapter the narrator urges the reader with mock seriousness not to be severe on Old Leisure, "and judge him by our modern standard - but the tone of the preceding passage is nostalgic, celebrating Old Leisure at the expense of this "modern standard" George Sliot actually told Blackwood that she hoped Carlyle would read the novel "because the PT.e- philosophic period - the childhood and poetry of his life - lay among the furrowed fields and pious peasantry." 2 But if Hayslope is fertile and prosperous, and the characters relatively free of "doubts and qualms" and of interest in "the causes of things," the "Old Leisure" passage is hardly a complete embodiment of the recent past as it is presented in the novel. Hayslope is disrupted from within by the consequences of Arthur's and Hetty's affair, and the potential for suffering in an apparently idyllic world is suggested before the actual tragedy by the image of the Cross suddenly encountered by the roadside in a foreign country (pp. 409-10)-
In any case, it is not a life of leisure which is being celebrated so much as the dedication to hard work and the useful, practical wisdom of Adam and Mrs Poyser.

This decline is lamented by W.B. Donne in his Old Roads and Mew
Roads (1852), quoted by E.w. Bavill, *qigliah Country Life 1755-1830 t p. 58. 2 i
24 February 1859, in JJliot Letters, III, 23. ^arlyle was born in
1795-

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IJ< he events of the novel tend in fact to question the value of the complacency and serenity of "Old Leisure." ^oth after bias's death and after Hetty's trial, Adam is forced to re-evaluate his own nature and to learn to overcome his hardness and complacent self-righteousness, while it is partly Arthur's lack of rigorous self-analysis which leads to his seduction of Hetty. He habitually sees himself as his neighbours see him, in terms of the social stereotype of the young gentleman, and as the "good fellow" that all hia College friends believe him to be (p. 171). Moreover the interest in the inner life and in psychological analysis, demonstrated in Sartor ^esartus and shared by many novels of the 1840*3 and 1850 «s/
is present in the narrator of Adam Bede. With reference to Arthur, the narrator warns that, "until we know what has been or will be the peculiar combination of outward with inward facts, which constitutes a man's criti-cal actions, it will be better not to think ourselves wise about his cha-racter11 (p. 359), and goes on to trace in detail Arthur's hesitations, rationalisations and excuses before and during the affair with Hetty. Near the end of the book, Mam journeys to ^nowfield to hear Dinah's decision about marriage, and as he goes over the area he passed through on his earlier quest for Hetty, he finds that the landscape "seemed to be telling him afresh the story of that painful past which he knew so well by heart" (p. 573)• "^ut the new thoughts he has gained since the first jour-ney alter the significance of this story of the past. The past does not change, but for Adam the lapse of time has made its story different. He has gained a "fuller life" from his "sad experience" and wider sympathies because of his own suffering and his comprehension of others' suffering, and now feels a new strength in the mutual love between him and -^inah: it turns out to have been the "distant unseen point towards which that hard

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journey from ^nowfield eighteen months ago had been leading him" (pp. 573- 74). In Pendennis '^hackeray also points out the difference between an ex-perience as it is felt at the time and the way it is recalled, but for him the past is all too fleeting, living only in memory, while for George ^liot, as uilfil's story shows, it produces the present. For xldam the effect of the past is ultimately beneficial, but in Arthur's case his early sin blights his whole life, or what we hear of it - his character has been determined by his deeds. Ait the passage about Adam's journey also hints that for the reader as well the passing of time - such as that bet-ween 1799 and 1859 - inevitably changes the perspective on events; "no story is the same after a lapse of time; or rather, we who read it are no longer the same interpreters."

•"tfor interesting discussions of this passage, see Naomi June Diamond, "Vision and the Role of the Past in the Novels of George Eliot," (MS D.Phil. Washington, 1959)> P« 69; c harles Palliser, "Adam Bede and the 'Story of the Past,'" in George Eliot; Centenary Essays and an Unpublished Fragment. ed. Anne Smith (London: Vision Press, 1960), pp. 55-76*, esp. 66ff.

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GEORGE ELIOT - JU THE MILL ON THE FLOSS

Recording to Daniel P. Deneau, the events recounted in The Hill on the Floss take place between February 1629 and September 1839, except of course for the Conclusion. In an early scene of the story, Riley is said to have been an auctioneer and appraiser thirty years ago" (p. 23) - that is, in about 1830, since the novel was published in i860 - while the conversation between Deane and '^ulliver about the Duke of Wellington's "conduct in the Catholic Question" (p. 65) points to 1829. Wellington, the Tory Prime Minister, had initially opposed measures aimed at removing Catholics 1 civil disabilities — allowing them to vote, stand for election, and hold public office - but by the- late 1820*s had come to feel that Catholic Emancipation was advisable if only to avert civil war in Ireland. The bill was finally carried in the
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Lords on 13 April 1829 and signed by the King on the 16th, while Deneaa dates Deane's and '-^ulliver's discussion at some timae between 22 and 25 April (i.e. Easter Week of 1829 - p. 3?)» Meanwhile the later reference to Tuliiver's talks with Stelling on "'Swing 1 and incendiarism" (p. 120) brings to mind the machine-breaking and rick-burning by agricultural labourers which broke out in the second half of 1830: landlords used to receive mys-terious threatening letters signed "Captain Swing" before the riots erupted, while the disturbances themselves, actuated by the bad winter of 1829-30, the subsequent bad harvest, the harsh administration of the Poor Law, could involve attacks on J.P.'s, landlords and parsons. The dating of 1839 for the last two books of the novel is suggested by the fact that Maggie has

Appendix B to George Sliot, The Mill on the Floss t ed. Gordon 3.
Haight (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1980). AH subsequent citations from the text are from this edition, which shows the variants among the nineteenth-century editions.
3ee Owen Chadwick, The Victorian Church, I, 7ff, and Elie HaleVy,
The Liberal Awakening 1813-1830, trans. E.I. Watkin (London: Ernest Benn, 1949), 239ff•
3 See ^.J. Hobsbawm and George itude, Captain owing (London: Readers' Union, 197-0.

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11 'gone nine 1 " at the beginning (p. 12) and is nineteen in Book VI (p. 382). However, since the "Swing" riots did not break out till August 1830, that year may be a more probable starting-point: hence the timing of the talk about the Catholic Question reveals the provincial backwardness of St. Ogg's society. On the other hand, the inconsistency may not be intentional - •Deneau points out several other inconsistencies in the early books concer-. ning the children^ ages'(pp. 468-69).
After these early allusions to well-known historical events, the set-
ting in the 1830*8 is evoked mainly by references to musical and literary works. Stelling is said to read "one of Theodore Hook's novels" (p. 149), Hook (Wagg in Thackeray) having been a very popular novelist of the 1820*s and 1830 1 s as well as a journalist: he died in 1841. In Book ^1 we find references to Southey's Life of Cowper» which was prefixed to his standard edition of the poet's works published over 1833-37» and to "Auckland's Treatise" - William Buckland's Geology and Mineralogy Considered With Refe-rence to Natural Theology, the last of the Bridgewater Treatises, published in 1836 (p. 334)• Three operas referred to in the same section also evoke the period: ^tephen, looking for a pretext for visiting Deanes' when he knows Maggie will be alone, brings over some music for Lucy from M.W. Balfe's Maid of ^rtois, which was first performed in 1836 (p. 356)» A little later Philip and Stephen sing a duet from D.F.E. Auber's Masanxello (or La Muette de Portioi), which was first performed in 1828 and gained a certain notoriety after a performance in Brussels in August 1830, when its portrayal of revolutionary fervour had inspired a riot in which the Dutch conquerors were driven out of the city. Meanwhile La Somnambula, a Bellini opera of 1831 > gives Philip Wakera the opportunity to express his

Grove's Dictionary of Music and Musicians, $th edn, ed. &cic
(London: Macmillan; New York: St. Martin's Press, 1954), I, 253.

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devotion to Maggie by singing the aria "¥\hl perche non posso odiarti" (p. 366). fhe fact that Southey's and Oakland's books, as well as all three operas, were written a few years before they became popular in St. Ogg's, is perhaps meant to suggest how provincial fashions lagged behind those of the capital.
But George filiot does not make use of literary and musical allusions merely to establish the period. Hook's novels were full of homely comedy and farce and also of descriptions of fashionable life which made readers outside high society feel as if they were learning the secrets of those inside; hence ^telling's taste for them underscores both the superficiality of his professed evangelicalism and his anxiety to get ahead in the world. •Auckland's ^ridgewater Treatise, meanwhile, was part of a series aiming to show "the Power, wisdom and Goodness of God, as manifested in the ^reation," and hence provide a reassuring world-view in opposition to that suggested by Charles Lyell's Principles of Geology (1&30-33): Lyell's geological dis-coveries implied a much larger time-span for the earth and the life on it than seemed warranted by Biblical accounts, but Buckland, following in the tradition of eighteenth-century divinity, presented the new, discoveries as
a marvellous new demonstration of the purpose and providence of an almighty Creator. The Mill on the Floss was however published the year after The Origin of ^pecies. which was in part an extension of Lyell's work, so for contemporary readers George Eliot's allusion to -^ckland is an oblique reference to the contemporary controversy over -^arwin, but one which would also have reminded them how the reassurance that Buckland had seemed to offei in l&36 v had since been seriously challenged.

1 lan Jack, English Literature 1615-1&32 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1963]
pp. 250-51.
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For Buckland and Darwin and their impact see Chadwick, The Victorian Church, I, 55bff, II (1970), Iff.

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Philip uses an aria from La Somnambula to convey his devotion to
Maggie, and this is actually a response to the growing attraction towards Stephen which he has recognised in her reaction to the duet from Masaniello:

all her intentions were lost in the vague state of emotion
produced by the inspiring duet - emotion that seemed to make
her at once strong and weak: strong for all enjoyment, weak
for all resistance. H'hen the strain passed into the minor, she half-started from her seat with the sudden thrill of tliat change...
(p. 366)
Masaniello in fact differs from all of ^uber's other operas in its bold effects in instrumentation, original harmonies, and dramatic characterisa-tion. On the other hand Philip's rendition of the Bellini aria suggests to Maggie "distinct memories and thoughts" and "quiet regret," rather than "excitement" (p. 367). It is even possible that Lucy's interest in songs from The Maid of Artois is a comment on her pleasant but rather superficial
'L

character, given that Balfe's main talent was for "facile melody/" Moreover, as ^illiam J. Sullivan has shown, the plots of the three operas can be
3
related to that of the novel. Most interesting is the analogy with La ijomnambala: in the opera the heroine (whose family owns a mill) is suspected of having an affair with a dashing and cosmopolitan stranger, on account
of her habit of sleep-walking. She is however innocent, the misunderstan-ding is cleared up, and she is reunited with her rustic sweetheart in a happy romantic ending. The allusion to the opera in,the novel hence high-lights the difficulty and complexity of Maggie's predicament: she is not entirely innocent in her relation xvith Stephen, the slanders of public opin-ion are not easily refuted and overcome, and the main misunderstanding (with her brother Tom rather than her first suitor Philip) is cleared up only at the cost of their lives.

1 urove's, I, 253.
Grove's, I, 3?1»
"Music and Musical Allusion in i he Kill on the *'loas," Criticism,
16 (1974), 232-46.

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Deane's and Tulliver's talk of the Catholic Question, and the
latter's discussion with -'telling over the "Swing" riots, the events of public history do not have a great impact on St. Ogg's. Moreover Deane's and '^ulliver's opinions are coloured by their degree of personal prosperity. Tulliver's fears of "Papists and Radicals" refiect his distrust of elements within his own environment which his experience and education do not qualify him to understand, notably lawyers and lawsuits, while Deane's "more lively view of the present" is attributable to his being "attached to a firm of which the returns were on the increase" (p. 65)• In any case Tulliver has no first-hand knowledge of the riots, and Hobsbawm and Kude' point out that the "incendiarism" which for Tulliver is the leading feature of the riots, was actually less prevalent than machine-breaking, but was the aspect which the press concentrated on. Although the nearby rural parish of Basset is neglected and impoverished (p. 68), this gives a poor farmer like Moss "the depressed, unexpectant air of a machine-horse" (p. 72) rather than feelings of discontent and rebelliousness. The riots were concentrated in the south of ^gland, whereas the dialect suggests that the novel is set in "arwick-

2 shire, where George Eliot grew up.

The two main passages focussing on the beliefs and traditions of St.
°gg s - the opening of Book I, ^hapter 12, and Book IV, ^liapter 1 - do in fact stress the community's lack of interest in political and religious issues. Attention to business is what is valued, and "men who busied them-selves with political questions were regarded with some suspicion, as dan-gerous characters" (p. 104). Religious belief has ossified into an unques-tioning adherence to tradition, and also involves "many pagan ideas,"

^aptain ^wing, p. 12.
P

See Appendix A. 1J?he physical details of the setting are based on
the Gainsborough area of Lincolnshire.

although the people "believe themselves good church-people" (p. 240) - as is demonstrated by Tulliver's curse on Wakem in the fly-leaf of his 5ible, and the mutton-bone which women keep in their pockets to protect them from cramp (p. 105). Faith.is no longer a force in anyone's life, and the memory of Wesley's preaching has almost faded, ifiven when introduced to a less complacent and worldly form of religion in the Tractarian Dr Kenn, who gives away most of his money, attacks the selfish motives behind the charity bazaar, and tries to encourage a more tolerant and sympathetic attitude towards Maggie, the people of St. Ogg's reassert their intolerant and ego-istic attitudes to thwart his purposes. Dissent, like Churchmanship, is an inherited custom common in trade circles, and is considered by Church people as "a foolish habit that clung greatly to families in the grocery and chandlering lines" (p. 104) - an accurate enough perception of the social make-up of Dissenting groups, but showing no awareness of their actual beliefs.

i he religious beliefs flnd political attitudes of St. Ogg's are not presented as typical of the period, for "the religious and moral ideas of the Dodsons and Tullivers were of too specific a kind to be arrived at deductively, from the statement that they were part of the Protestant population of Great -Britain" (pp. 238-39)» while in the political sphere the citizens of ^t. Ogg's do not participate in the widespread agitation for parliamentary reform of the early 1830's, which George -^liot was later to show ss affecting even a poor and ignorant farmer like Dagley, in Middlemarch. However such religious feeling as exists in St. Ogg's does reflect attitudes prevalent at the period, '•'•he ^glish population, was in

1 Chadwick, The Victorian Church, I, 407-8, 371-72.

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general anti-catholic, especially in rural and remote areas, although the feeling was, like Tulliver's, passive rather than active, and the "monster-meetings" organised by the Ultra-Tory peers to mobilise public opinion were

p only occasionally successful. The ^t. Ogg's conviction that the "Catholics ... would lay hold of government and property, and burn men alive" (p. 104) echoes the message of cartoons and placards used in anti-Catholic agitation, showing Queen Mary burning heretics, the atrocities of Judge Jeffries, and Wellington and Peel carrying rosaries and kissing the Pope's toe - as well as general fear of being ruled by a "Popish" king. '^he contrast between the Dissenting minister's support for Emancipation and his flock's opposi-tion to it is also characteristic of the time: in the view of -^issenters, Catholicism was a "harmful superstition," but the ministers felt they could hardly deny them religious liberty without seeming inconsistent, in view of their campaign against their own disabilities. Mr Spray's "fervent belief in the right of the Catholics to the franchise and his fervent belief in their eternal perdition (p. 104) echoes a comment in the Christian Observer, that to give Catholics civil rights "is not the same thing as to actively support a corrupt Church, denounced by God and proved most bane-full to man."^
The discussion of the "emmet-like ^odsons and I ullivers" (p. 238) pre-supposes on the part of the reader a feeling of dislike, even revulsion, towards them:

It is a sordid life, you say,... irradiated by no sublime
principlesi"no active, self-renouncing faith ... Here, one has

G.I.T. Maohin, The Catholic Question in English Politics 1820-1630 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 19^4)> PP» 55 > 144•
2
Machin, pp. 140-44*
3 Chadwick, I, b.
^ Raymond G. Cowherd, The Politics of English -^issent (London:
Epworth Press, 1959)» PP- 33-34*
® 29 (Ib29), 129, quoted by Cowherd, p. 34-

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conventional worldly notions and habits without instruction
and without polish - surely the most prosaic form of human life
• * *I share with you this sense of oppressive narrowness...

feeling was so strong in some contemporary reviewers' responses, that George Eliot felt obliged to defend her characters. -E.s. Dallas wrote in '•^he '^imes that most of them were "unpleasant companions - prosaic, selfish, nasty ... a world of pride, vain-glory, and hypocrisy, envy, ha±fedcin^ ma-lice, and all uncharitableness," comprising a "degraded species of exis-tence" In response, George ^liot wrote to William Blackwood:

I have certainly fulfilled my intention very badly if I have
made the Dodson honesty appear "mean and uninteresting," or
made the payment of one's debts appear a contemptible virtue
in comparison with any sort of "Bohemian" qualities ... no one
class of persons or form of character-is held up to reprobation
or to exclusive admiration

Within the novel, too, the narrator undermines any tendency in the reader to assume an attitude of condescension towards the characters, or indeed to believe that his own time is an advance on the recent past. ;jpulliver's "narrow notions that one should pay one's debts "may perhaps excite a smile on the faces of many readers in these days of wide commercial views and wide philosophy, according to which everything rights itself without any trouble of ours/1 for the narrator is "telling the history of very simple people, who had never had any illuminating doubts as to personal integrity and honour (p. 244)» Earlier, Tulliver's strong attachment to the mill where he had grown up, his "clinging affection for the old home as part of his life, part of himself" had been contrasted favourably with

1 19 May i860, pp. 10-11; rpt. George ^liot; the Critical Heritage,
PP. 131-37, ** 132, 135-
2 £7 May i860, in flliot Letters, III, 299.

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Our instructed vagrancy, which has hardly time to linger by
the hedgerows, but runs away early to the tropics, and is at
home with palms and banyans - which is nourished on books of
travel, and stretches the theatre of its imagination to the
Zambesi (p. 229)

•l-'hese comments reflect the great increase in travel and emigration from Britain since the 1830*3 - by the early 1850*3 more than a quarter of a million people were leaving the British Isles each year - and probably also the great public interest in David Livingstone f s travels round the Zambesi and its tributaries from 1656 onwards.
After the opening chapter of personal reminiscence, the first allusion which locates the story in the past is to Mrs Tulliver f s "fan-shaped cap" of which the narrator says, "I am afraid to think how long it is since fan-shaped caps were worn - they must be so near corning in again" (p. 9)» "file allusion, trivial as its subject is, suggests that change can be more ap-parent than lasting, ^everal other features o'f St. Ogg's in the l830 f s could well apply to i860 as well. -^-nti-Catholic prejudice had re-emerged more recently in controversy over the allegedly "Popish" practices of '- tarian clergy, such as wearing surplices to conduct services and putting a

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cross ojc candlesticks on the communion table - one of the features of Kenn's services in the novel which "set the Dissenters and the Church people by the ears" (p. 333)» and violent demonstrations ivere still going on in the London parish of St. -George f s-in-t he East in 1859-60. Kenn's criticisms of charity bazaars as "making vanity do the work of charity" are also per-tinent to i860, especially as the practice of holding bazaars to raise money for church projects expanded throughout the century. In his book of advice

1 Briggs, The Age of Improvement 1783-1867 » p. 388.

2 *rv cf . the opposition to Honeyrnan engineered by BayKam in The IJewcomes.
3 Chadwick, I, 495-500.
1?.K. Prochaska, "Cnarity Bazaars in Nineteenth-Century ^ngland,"
pp. 65-66.

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to parish priests, first published in 1856, the iiev. J.J. Blunt urges that the picactice of the parishioners 1 bringing gifts to the altar on °undays and holy-days is much preferable to "a Ladies 1 -^azaar, and the attendance af Mr So-and-So's quadrille band!" Similarly, if Mangelicallsm was the "Helling thing'" in felling's diocese of 1630, the party within the Church most likely to advance his worldly ambitions, this was certainly the case in many dioceses of the late l850 t s, as the Prime Minister Lord Palmer-ston, under the guidance of Lord ^haftesbury, tended to appoint ^angelical bishops.
This technique of making oblique allusions to the present while osten-sibly dealing with the past is most evident in the novel's treatment of Tom's and Maggie's education. The state of both boys' and girls' education in the late l&20's and early l&30's is criticised, and the contemporary situation is - apparently - seen as an improvement. AS Maggie becomes dis-illusioned with the gypsies, the narrator explains that she had only been to .school for a year in St. Ogg's, and that her mind "hence contained the most unexpected ignorance as well as unexpected knowledge" (p. 9^), unlike that of "that well- trained, well-informed young person that a small female of eight or nine necessarily is in these days." Her boarding-school edu-cation is later described as consisting of "shreds and patches of feeble literature and false history - with much futile information about ^axon
and other kings of doubtful example" (p. 252). An enquiry into elementary Schooling in 1833 stressed the lack of facilities and the poor quality of such as did exist, such that two fifths of children attended no school at all, and most of the rest went to dame-schools (often mainly a child-mindin; establishment) or to Sunday schools, which concentrated on religious tea-

The Acquirements and Principal Obligations and fruties of the Parish
Priest (London; John Murray, 1856), pp. 258-60; rioted.by' ^hadwick, ~
174-

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ching, and on reading rather than writing. By i860, government grants for school-building had begun (l&33)» sbhool inspections had been initiated (1839)» and a system of pupil-teacher ships followed by full-time college training introduced (1646). From 1847 schools received funding for books

2 and equipment, and capitation grants were introduced during the 1650*3.

Corn's education in Latin grammar and iiniclidian geometry exemplifies
what was thought at the time to constitute the education of a gentleman, while its focus on rote-learning and on rules and abstractions rather than on concrete objects was mentioned by Spencer in 1854 as a feature of past education which was then in decline. In 1836 ^illiam Hamilton had comp^r lained of the way a predominantly classical education was offered to boys of different aptitudes and temperaments, while '^om's only alternative A to Stelling at the period, is described in the novel without much exaggeration:

a grammar— school as yet unvisited by commissioners, where two
or three boys could have/ all to themselves, the advantages of
a large and lofty building, together with a headmaster, tooth-
less, dim— eyed, and deaf, whose erudite indistinctness and
inattention were engrossed by them at the rate or three hundred
pounds a— head (p. 148)

The "commissioners" would be the Charity Commissioners who inspected grammar-schools from 1619 onwards, but who had not finished their work by 1&32: they found that many were in absolute or comparative decay. The conditions under which they had been founded (often ducing the Renaissance) generally confined their teaching to the classics, while an 1806 judgment

H.C. Barnard, ^ Short History of English Education From 1760 to 1944, (London: University of London Press, 1947)> P» 114-
John Hurt, ICducation in Evolution (London: Rupert Hart— ^avis, 1971),
pp. 69-70; Pamela Horn, The ftural World, 1780-1850, p. 135.
•* "The Art of Education," North British Review, 21 (1854), 137-7!; rpt .
as "Intellectual Education," Chapter 2 of his Education; Intellectual, Moral^ and Physical (London: G. Manwaring-, It-61), 60ff. """'
^ "Pillans on Classical Education," i&inburgh He view, 64 (U,36), 106-
124, at 123.
of. Crewe's school in "Janet's Repentance," °cenea, 11, SV

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by Lord -^Idon meant that the curriculum could not be changed without an Act of Parliament* teaching as a profession lacked social prestige, and hence attracted few men of talent, so that the schools tended to teach even the classical languages badly.2* The situation had improved somewhat by 1860$ there were more private schools offering a broader curriculum than the

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grammar-schools were able to provide, a Normal School of -^esign had been founded in 1837 to offer training in art, design, and industrial techniques for craftsmen, skilled workers and manufacturers - "schools of design!1 are mentioned in the novel as an improvement on the kind of art education Tom gets from Mr Goodrich (p. 147).
Yet George Eliot's treatment of Tom's and Maggie's education also con-tains a more veiled criticism of contemporary practices. This was quickly recognised by the ^lackwood*s reviewer, who in a (predictably) favourable review of the novel singled out the commentary on the methods and content of Tom s education as the few pages that could be skipped, since the sub-ject had been done to death already in the Quarterly, Edinburgh and West-minster. In any case the references in the novel to the "necessarily" well-informed and well-trained "young female of eight or nine" and to contemporary schoolmasters as "invariably men of scrupulous integrity, and the clergy as "all men of enlarged minds and varied culture" (p. 147) a**e clearly aimed at satirising through exaggeration self-confident assumptions that education of i860 is superior to that of the l£30's. Gollins is pre-sumably referring in his review to articles such as G.R. Gleig's "National Education,"• '^illiam ^llis's "Classical Education," and Herbert Spencer's

[Saxe Bannister], "infant and G rammar Schools," Westminster Heview,
17 (1832), 406-413; P.H.J.H. ^osden, How They ^ere Taught (Oxford: Basil tflackwell, 1969), PP- 87-89.

2 Hurt, Education in Evolution, p. 117; ft.M. Ogilvie, Latin and u reek
(London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1964), pp. 97-98.
•* Ogilvie, pp. 97-98.
4 U. Lucas Gollins], "The Mill on the r''i oss," ^lackwood's, 87 (lc60j, 611-23, at 616.

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"What knowledge is of most worth?", ^leig had criticised grammar-schools of his period for remaining under-used despite rapid population growth around them, and for continuing to offer classical education which no longer met the needs of the population. '^he quality of the schoolmasters remained a problem as well: as late as 1850 the Rev. H. Moseley observed that they tended to be men unfitted for better jobs "by reason of some
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feebleness of character, or perhaps of intellect, or some bodily defect." Meanwhile Ellis's article, quoting with approval the views expressed in a pamphlet by "M.S. , argues that a classical education has little practical application to man s present condition - what he needs to know is history, the sciences, and geography, so as to understand the physical circumstances of his surroundings, the causes of his present circumstances, the laws of nature through which he can carry on his work of civilization and progress. Herbert Spencer argues a similar case at greater length, and his comment that classical education is still thought to constitute the "education of a gentleman" calls to mind Philip's defence of ^telling's curriculum to Tom on the grounds that "'fijt's part of the education of a gentleman 1 " (p. 143) •^s far as elementary education and girls 1 secondary education is concerned too, the position in i860 was in many respects similar to that of 1830. In 1861 the Newcastle Commission reported that elementary education for many children was both brief and superficial, while the Schools Inquiry Commis-sion, reporting on girls 1 education in 1868, complained that cheap day schools and boarding schools for daughters of farmers, tradesmen and shop-

1 "National fducation," ^dinburgh Review, 95 (1852), 321-57, at 353.
p
Quoted by Hurt, Education in Evolution, p. 117• cf. Riley's comment
that schoolmasters are "'men who have failed in other trades, most likely 1 " p. 20.
"Classical iixiucation," Westminster Review, 53 (1850), 393-409, at
396-97.

"""hat knowledge is of most worth?" Westminster Review, 12 (1859),
1-41; rpt. as Chapter 1. .of Education, at pp. 2-3.
^ ^arnard, short History, p. 1^7.

keepers still concentrated too much on rote-learning of miscellaneous in-

formation, and that after their schooling the girls forget quickly all they

have learnt, and their lives before marriage, like Maggie's for some time
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after hev. schooling is cut short, are "listless and purposeless.

Spencer also notes that girls are still made to learn "the births, deaths,

P marriages of kings, and other like historic trivialities."

J^or all the aversion that they often felt for the citizens of St. Ogg's

contemporary reviewers of the novel believed that their ilk were still

flourishing in the England of their own time. E.o. Dallas claims that the

book shows "the sort of life which thousands upon thousands of our country-

men lead," while for John Chapman the Dodsons are "a picture in little of

nine-tenths of the world we live in, and ±Knah Mulock averred that "we

feel that we all are haunted by some of the race, could name them among our
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own connections." Maggie's frustration with her constricting environment

was also related to the present. According to the Spectator,

A woman's natural impulses; all the wild fancies and self-
torturing thoughts of a young girl vivid in imagination, bat
not strong in any mental exercise, and obliged to live a life
at first very narrow, and then very mean - are .described
exactly as they might happen, as they do happen, in thousands
of English homes

1'he novel itself attacks the contempt felt by "good society" for "unfashion-

able families" (pp. 254-55) as if Maggie's suffering and need for "emphatic

belief" result fr"om her social position rather than from her historical

Quoted in Gosden, How They ^ere Taught, pp. 155, 158.
2
Education, p. 3.
£imes, 19 May i860, pp. 10-11, rpt. George Eliot t The Critical
Heritage, p. 135*
Westminster Review, 74 (i860), 24-32; rpt. George ^liot; The Critical Heritage, pp. 139-144 , a,t p. 142. Macmillan's Magazine, 3 (l86l), 441-48; rpt. George Eliot; The Critical Heritage . pp. 154-16! , at p. 159. Spectator, 7 >pril i860, pp. 330-331; rpt. George Eliot and her headers, pp. 25-27 , at p. 25.

situation, and assumes a great social gulf between Maggie and the readers* She is part of a

wide and arduous national life condensed in unfragrant deafening factories cramping itself in mines, sweating at furnaces,
grinding, hammering, weaving under more or less oppression of
carbonic acid - or else, spread over sheepwalks and scattered
in lonely houses and huts on the clayey or chalky corn-lands,
where the rainy days look dreary.

'Although, as ^raham Martin has pointed out, Maggie's suffering involves emotional and cultural deprivation rather than the physical hardships of work in factories, mines, or farming, her predicament is presented as characteristic of the present as well as of the recent past. People living in such conditions, the passage goes on, need belief in gin, or in

something that will present motives in an entire absence of
high prices, something that will give patience and feed human
love when the limbs ache with weariness, and human looks are
hard upon us - something, clearly, that lies outside personal
desires, that includes resignation for ourselves and active
love for what is not ourselves.

narrator's later satirical attack on the narrowness and intolerance
of public opinion, as embodied in the attitude of the St. Ogg's women to-wards Maggie after her return to the town, is also relevant to the present* If Maggie had returned as Stephen's wife, she would have been accepted, since "public opinion, which at St. Ogg's, as elsewhere, always knew what to think, would have judged in strict consistency with those results" (p. 431). ^'he narrator then moves into the present tense, observing that
M [p]ublic opinion, in these cases, is always of the feminine gender - not the world, but the world's wife," so that the subsequent passage, which

Mill on the Floss and the Unreliable Narrator," in George ^liot •.
Centenary ^saays and an Unpublished Fragment, pp. 36-54, at p. 51 »

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quotes the women's comments and exposes their petty-mindedness and super-ficial values, can also be seen as a criticism of "Society" of i860. The intolerant attitudes of "public opinion" of his own time towards unconven-tional, uncustomary behaviour of any kind was a major theme of Mill's On Liberty, published in 1859• Society, he argues, imposes its own ideas, rules of conduct and practices on those who dissent from it, preventing the formation of individuality not in harmony with its ways, and compelling all characters to fashion themselves on its own model, so that "the man, and still more the woman, who can be accused either of doing 'what nobody does,1 or of not doing 'what every body does,' is the subject of as much deprecatory remark as if he or she had committed some grave moral"delinquen-

2 cy." Like the |>odsons, most people of 1&59 do what is customary, since

11 LiJ t does not occur to them to have any inclination, except for what is customary" And his argument that people of strong desires and feelings are capable of both more evil and more good than others, that the. strong susceptibilities which make personal impulses vivid and powerful are also the source Of the "most passionate love of virtue" and the "sternest self-controlj1 can be related to Maggie's character, and particularly to her

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criticism of Tom, after he has dicovered her clandestine meetings • rwith Philip -
"sometimes when I have done wrong, it has been because I have
feelings that you would be the better for, if you had them
You have not even a vision of feelings by the side of which
your shining virtues are mere darkness/" (p. 305)

On Liberty, p. 68.
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On Liberty, p. 126.
On Liberty, p. 119-
On Liberty, p. 118.

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^ometimes, as in •"•dam Bede, the use of generalisation to relate the
recent past to the present can be more explicit. For example the narrator draws attention to the difference between Maggie's internal struggles, with the slain shadowy antagonists "for ever rising again," and Tom's "dustier, noisier warfare, grappling with more substantial obstacles, and gaining more definite conquests (p. 271). '^his kind of contrast between the male and female roles is then said to have persisted throughout history:

^o it has been since the days of Hecuba, and of Hector, Tamer
of horses: inside the gates, the women with streaming hair and
uplifted hands offering prayers, watching the world's combat .;
from afar, filling their long, empty days with memories and fears: outside, the men, in fierce struggle with things divine and
human, quenching memory in the stronger light of purpose,
losing the sense of dread and even of wounds in the hurrying
ardour of action
Perhaps then the novel can be seen as an implicit qualification of
the assumptions of contemporary writers like Spencer and Macaulay that the development of society ia always progressive. It recalls in fact Froude's definition of history as

a study.,, not of institutions, not of progress of the species,
not of development of ideas, or other loud sounding nonentities5
but of personal character in conflict with the circumstances of
life, and crushed by them or rising over them triumphant

The novel obviously does deal with ''personal character in conflict with the circumstances of life11 - a theme not only of Maggie's story but also em-bodied in Tuiiiver's struggles against legal complications he cannot under-stand and in Tom's unhappy education and his later efforts to retrieve the family fortunes. Yet at the same time, the novel seems to endorse a pro-gressive view of social development. In the famous first chapter of Book

"History: Its Use and Meaning," infest minster it e view, 62 (1&54), 420-
28, at 422.

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IV the narrator, after comparing the life of the -^odsons and Tullivers with the "narrow, ugly, grovelling existence" once lived on the banks of the *thone, goes on to say that we must feel the "oppressive narrowness" of this kind of life, so as to understand how it acted on Tom and Maggie,

how it has acted on young natures in many generations, that in
the onward tendency of human things have risen above the mental
level of the generation before them, to which they have been ne-vertheless tied by the strongest fibres of their hearts (p. 238)

Tom's and Maggie's predicament is hence both a recurrent problem, and a stage in the gradual progress of society, '^heir suffering is both part of an "historical advance of mankind11 and representative of the suffering
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which occurs "in every town, and by hundreds of obscure hearths." Their

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story is to be taken as representative of the lives of many people of both past and present, for "there is nothing petty to the mind that has a large vision of relations, and to which every single object suggests a vast sum of conditions."

This poses the question of exactly how Tom>'s and Maggie's lives illus-trate an "historical advance of mankind" - more specifically, the particular advance which occurred between about 1629 and i860. The issue is made more complicated not only by the indications that many aspects of society have not changed, but also by the positive value attached to the past per se
by both narrator and characters. The very opening sentence of the novel, lacking a main clause, evokes an almost a-temporal world, so strongly does the past feel present to the narrator: "A wide plain, where the broadening Floss hurries on between its green banks to the sea, and the loving tide, rushing to meet it, checks its passage with an impetuous embrace'."

i^ee Lyane Tidaback Roberts, "Perfect Pyramids: The Mill on the Floss,
T exas Studies in Language and Literature, 13 (1971), 111-24, at 113.

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TWO particularly lyrical passages which convey a strong personal note of nostalgia, celebrate feeling for the past, and the way that the past lives in the present. The thoughts and loves of 'i'ora's and Maggie's first years will always be part of their lives, since
We could never have loved the earth so well if we had had no child-
hood in it, - if it were not the earth where the same flowers
come up- again every spring ,,that we used to gather with our tiny
fingers as we sat lisping to ourselves on the grass ... What
novelty is worth that sweet monotony where everything is known,
and loved because it is known? (p. 36)

•^-he narrator then speaks of walking in the wood "on this mild May day,' and of how "the young yellow-brown foliage of the oaks between me and the blue sky, the white star-flowers and the blue-eyed speedwell and the ground ivy at my feet" touch more "deep and delicate fibres than exotic tropical scenery which evokes no memories.

Our delight in the sunshine on the deep-bladed grass to-day,
might be no more than the faint perception of wearied souls,
if it were not for the sunshine and the grass in the far-off
years which still live in us, and transform our perception
into love

The later passage expresses the same idea, but gives it an ethical as well as an emotional force, pointing out that we prefer humble plants to fine ones, and ugly furniture to fashionable, if they are associated with "early memory": continual "striving after something better and better in our sur-roundings" would be dangerous "if our affections had not a trick of twining round those old inferior things" (p. 133)• w e have already noted Mr 'il ul-liver's strong attachment to the mill where he was born, and other charac-ters also feel such powerful ties: Tom is determined that the mill come back into the family, the flodson sisters adhere closely (albeit unthirking-

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ly) to family traditions, Mrs Tulliver's grief after the family downfall is due to the loss of her linen and china, and of the family furniture, which arg literally her past life, and she spends her days in a "perpetual rumi-nating comparison of the past with the present" (p. 242). *nor Maggie how-ever the past, embodied in her life in St. Ogg's, her love for Tom, and her sense of duty towards Lucy and Philip^ is a moral imperative, expressing what she sees as the best part of her nature, As she tells Stephen just before they part, her feeling for him is in conflict with "'memories, and affections, and longings after perfect goodness, 1 " and "'fijf the past is not to bind us; where can duty lie? We should have no law but the inclination of the moment 1 " (pp. 417-18). In view of the great value Maggie herself sets on the past, and of the social ostracism she incurs when she tries to remain loyal to it, it is difficult to see how her story exemplifies any "historical advance of mankind." I shall return to this subject later. Tom's career after his father's ruin can however be related to various aspects of the economic progress which was occurring around the 1830's, and which is represented in the novel largely by the career and character of Mr ^eane. The lives of Tom's uncles and of his father suggest the different careers open to him in St. Ogg's, and demonstrate as it were dif-ferent stages of economic progress. Uncle Pullet's wealth is in land, and as a gentleman farmer with his own land he is part of the large proportion of English society of the time who depended on agriculture for their live-lihood. However, as we have noted in reference to Adam Bedeythis proportioi declined throughout the century. Pullet's mentality is also old-fashioned: he knows nothing of the clergy, the government, or even a famous figure like the Duke of Wellington, and believes that the only secure form of investment is in land. In the early nineteenth century more than half of

all investment was in land, but by i860 it was a less attractive proposi-tion than before, as the interest on land securities was only 3-J— 4^ percent, as compared with returns on commercial investment of 8-9 percent or higher. Consequently the percentage of total investment which went into industry

2 increased, especially after 18? 0.

The careers of Tom's other two uncles, Glegg and Deane, have been in business. -&s a (retired) wool-stapler, ^legg has depended on the prospe-rity of agriculture.- Having risen slowly in his business (p. 196) he re-tains his early penny-pinching habits in his prosperity (pp. 106-7) • saving as an end in itself "belonged to the industrious men of business of -a for-mer generation" and their race is "nearly lost in these days of rapid money« getting, when lavishness comes close on the back of want" (p. 106). Deane on the other hand has risen rapidly in Guest & Co., a "great mill-owning,

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ship-owning business ... with a banking concern attached" (p. 55) which has $he "largest oil-mill and the most extensive wharf in St. Ogg's." (p. 319)« . Deane himself recounts the changes he has seen in his own lifetime:

"forty years ago ... ^he looms went slowish, and fashions
didn't alter quite so fast ... Everything was on a lower ccale,
sir - in point of expenditure, I mean. It's this steam, you
see, that has made a difference: it drives on every wheel
double pace . *.«it's a fine thing, too, to further the exchange
of commodities, and bring the grains of corn to the mouths that
are hungry" (pp. 347-48)

In the early nineteenth century the increasing population in America and Ireland had led to a rising capacity in these countries to absorb -^ritish manufactures, and to supply raw materials such as cotton, flax, and grain.

Phyllis Deane, "Capital formation in Britain Before the Railway Age, 1
in Capital Formation in the Industrial Revolution, .ed. Francois Crouzet (London: Methuen, 19?27» PP« 94-118 , at p. 101.
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Crou$et, "Capital formation in Great Britain during the Industrial Revolution," in his Capital ^ormation. . . , pp. 162-222 , at p. 219; *'«M.L. Thompson, English Landed ^ociety in the Nineteenth Century, pp. 251-52. ^ichard Tames, Economy and ffociety in Nineteenth-Century Britain
(London: George Alien £ Unwin, 1972), p. 83.

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Exports, mainly of textiles, had increased tenfold from 1800 to 1&10, as compared with the 1780's, and had trebled again by 1815» New markets opened up or expanded in South America in the 1820's and in the East in the 1830'si and trade with southern ^urope, Africa and Central America also increased. '^he 1820's also saw a rise in the rate of capital for-mation which continued into the 1830's f ^team power was applied in tex-tile^'factories, mines, ironworks and railways, and its potential in brewing, flour-mills and paper-mills was clear. In the 1820's too steamships travelled round the British coasts, across the Channel and the Irish Sea, and to Spain; I.K. Brunei's Great ^estern crossed the Atlantic in 1838. '•^ulliver's ruin is partly due to the complicated system of law which had-grown up around the vagaries of water-power in milling, but ^eane proposes to replace the mill's water-power with steam-power (p. 349)• "hen Mrs Tulliver points out to him that the Tulliver family had been carrying on ^orlcote Hill before the oil-mill of Guest & Co., had been thought of, he has to tell her that this is not "precisely the relation between the two mills which would determine their value as investments" (p. 213).
The economic developments outlined by Mr Deane would have been recog-nised by George Eliot's readers as having continued up to their own period: the l84O's and 1850's saw a massive increase in production in manufacturing-industry, and a corresponding rise in exports, which increased by 130 per-

2 Deane, The -^irst Industrial Revolution, p. 89. """ ~~ " "
^.G. Checkland, The ^ise of Industrial Society in ^ngland 1&13-1885, (London* Longmana, Qreen & Co., 1964), P« 110.
J.B. Chambers, The Workshop of the ^orld (London: Oxford University
Press, 1961), p. 99-
Peane, "Capital formation..." p. 112; U heckla2id, p. 11.
Deane, The First Industrial ^evolution, pp. 129, 273.
- »ee ^ichard L. Hills, Power in the Industrial Revolution (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1970)» 103f.

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cent between 1842 and 1857, with new markets opened up in the Middle East, Singapore and Australia. Moreover, as knowledge of the world outside ^ritain expanded, the risks involved in overseas investment could be calcu-lated more accurately, and investors became dissatisfied with the kind of low returns considered good by Mr Glegg, who considers five percent a sound
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profit (p. 187). And, by i860 the railways had of course greatly expanded. The passage we have already noted referring to people in factories,
mines and iron-works' shows that George Eliot was aware of the human sufferin involved in the growth of industrialisation. However by-choosing to emu-late his uncle -^eane rather than his father or any of his other uncles,
Tom adapts himself to changing social and economic conditions. He also adds Dodsonian prudence and restraint to the more daring spirit he emulates in peane and has inherited from his father, saving his earnings carefully, and, unlike his father, making a good profit when he speculates (on Bob Jakin's "Laceham goods"); On the other hand it is doubtful whether out-side his business activities, Tom can be said to represent an advance on the preceding generation: he agrees to write out his father's curse on "'akem in the Bible, and keeps up his father's enmity towards ^akem in his own attitude to Philip. *'or Maggie he is a major embodiment of the "oppres-sive narrowness" of ^t. Ogg's life, rather than a sharer in her struggles
to transcend it.

Maggie is however unable to participate in these economic developments because she is a woman. She has indeed "risen above the mental level of the

Checkland, pp. 27, 37-38* Judith Blow Williams, -British Commercial Policy and Trade Expansion 1750-1850 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972), pp. 44, 84, 114-

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^heckland, pp. 40-41; Chambers, p. 145•
cf. his father's unsuccessful speculation in corn, p. 274.

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generation before" her, in her quick intelligence, her imaginative respon-see to what she reads, and her aspiration towards a more satisfying life than her society can offer her. Philip can satisfy her longing for compan-ionship and talk about literature, but has no sexual attraction for her, while, although marriage to Stephen would connect her with the rising eco-nomic forces of the period, her attraction to him is partly the result of the contrast between her "third-rate schoolroom, with all its jarring sounds and petty round of tasks" and his "world of love and beauty and de-light, made up of vague, mingled images from all the poetry and romance she had ever read, or had ever woven in her dreamy reveries" (p. 336), not to mention her vanity, her "excessive delight in admiration and acknowledged supremacy" (p. 383;• On the other hand, when she rejects Stephen, and res-ponds to the "stronger" feelings of "passion, and affection, and long deep memories of early discipline and effort, of early claims on her love and pity" she is ostracised by much of St. Ogg*s.
In her efforts to come to terms with her trivial and emotionally-
starved life after her father's ruin, Maggie sometimes thinks that she could have been contented with absorbing fancies; if she could have had all Scott's novels and all -^yron s poems! - then, perhaps, she might have found happiness to dull her sensibility to her actual daily life" (p. 25^). Maggie sees Scott here as offering an escape from reality, but she eventu-ally realises that such an escape into a "dream-world" is not enough - she needs "some explanation of this hard, real life", a "key" enabling her to understand and endure "the heavy weight that had fallen on her young hearty the real learning and wisdom of great men, and these she does not find in Scott. George ^liot's own comments on ^cott in "The Natural History of Life" show that she believed that such descriptions as that of

Luckie Mucfclebackit's cottage in Chapter 31 of The Antiquary could serve to extend the reader,1 s sympathies to that which was apart from themselves. That is, Maggie's response to Scott may be inadequate - she is too preoc-cupied with her own suffering to extend her sympathies to that of others. She feels that the "privation of all pleasant things" which had resulted from her family's ruin "had come to her more than to others" (p. 250).
^hen later she talks to Philip about Scott, it is to complain that the dark-haired heroines like Rebecca, *'lora Mac-Ivor and Minna Troil (in The Pirate. as well as Corinne in Mme de ^tael's novel of that name, never find happi-ness, while the blonde-haired ones do (p. 292). In this case Scott is not providing escapism enough, not Allowing the brilliant, impulsive and uncon-ventional heroines with whom Maggie identifies to win out. Philip predicts jocularly that one day she will avenge the dark-haired heroines herself, supplanting her cousin Lucy in her lover's heart, This is of course exact-ly what happens, but winning Stephen's love away from Lucy does not make Maggie happy. If she had read to the end of The Pirate (see p. 269) she would have learnt that Minna, although separated from her lover Cleveland (the pirate) does find some content staying at home and doing her duty-
It is arguably George -t^liot who provides the more escapist ending, in Maggie's reconciliation with Tom in the flood.
Maggie seems to find a solution to her discontent in her reading of
Thomas a Kempis's Imitation of Christ, from which she takes a belief in self-renunciation, in the repression of personal desire, and in concern for the greater sufferings of others. Hence she puts herself in contact with the "active, self-renouncing faith" which St. Ogg's has lost and forgotten

For George Eliot's use of Scott in the novel, see Judith ^ilt,
"Steamboat Surfac ing: Scott and the English Novelists," Nineteenth-Century Fiction, 35 (I98l), 459-86 esp. at 474. =——

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since the time when people gave up their possessions for conscience's sake in the civil wars and "went forth beggared from their native town" (p. 103). he chapter describing Maggie's conversion is actually called "^ Voice From the Past." A Kempis was of course a medieval Catholic rather than a seven-teenth-century Puritan or Loyalist, but, as -Barbara Hardy has pointed out, Maggie adopts his ideas as an ethic rather than as a religious belief, a ^euerbachian creed of duty and selflessness . Although a Kempis *s work
was designed to enkindle a strong personal love for God, Maggie is never

2 shown to feel this, and this slant to her interpretation of the book - un-

like her pride and self -dramatisation in her application of its creed - is never mentioned by the narrator, ^nd the relevance of a Kempis to i860 is suggested by the narrator* s observation that his book "works miracles to this day" because it "was written down by a hand that waited for the heart's prompting," and is a "record of human needs and human consolations (p. 254) Maggie's impulse towards self-renunciation is unconsciously egoistic -
she conspicuously gets her plain-sewing at a linen-shop in ^t. Ogg's, in-stead of "in a more quiet and indirect way" (p. 256). In any case her ^ulliver inheritance means that her efforts fail, and she allows herself secret meetings with Philip in the ^ed Deeps. After this connection has been broken off, she starves her feelings again by teaching in a dreary girls' school, and her elopement with Stephen is a fulfilment of Philip's prediction that when she is thrown into the world "every rational satisfac-tion" of her nature which she denies will "assault" her "like a savage appetite4" (p. 289).

"'i'he Mill on the Floss, " in her ^ritical ^ssays on ueorge ^liot (ed.) (London, Boston and Henley: Rout ledge & Kegan Paul, 197 w» pp, *i-5"8, at p. Kathleen ^atson, "'^'he Use of ^eligious Diction..." p. 166.

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Maggie has renounced Stephen, and is suffering from the vindic-
tiveness of St. Ogg's, -^r Kenn endorses her attachment to her past ties, and sees it as part of an ethic which makes the community "a family knit to-gether by Christian brotherhood under a spiritual father/' He laments the "'want of fellowship and sense of mutual responsibility" among his own flock, and also what he feels is a tendency "towards the relaxation of ties - to-wards the substitution of wayward choice for the adherence to obligation, which has its roots in the past'" (p. 435). ^'or Kenn, as a Tractarian, this ideal would have its model in the early Church of the ^'athers, or of the medieval period in which a Kempis lived, ^he Oxford Movement feared that the secularising tendencies which had emerged from the ^rench ^evolution, the growth of economic individualism and the rise of political liberalism, would lead to "the final destruction of the idea of a corporate society with given, mutual responsibilities, and the arrival of a disordered regime in which the mutual ties and relations of men would disappear in a greedy scramble/"
One solution to Maggie's predicament seems then to be an ethic of self-renunciation which involves a return to an ideal based on a kind of secula-rised medieval Catholicism, a "progress" based on a return to a forgotten past, ^elf-renunciation as an ideal seems to be endorsed too by an earlier passage describing Maggie's state before she reads a Kempis: she is "unhap-pily quite without that knowledge of the irreversible laws within and without her, which, governing the habits, becomes morality, and, developing the feelings of submission and dependence, becomes religion" (p. 252).
•''he idea that both the physical world and human behaviour were governed by

^illiam George Peck, The Social Implications of the Oxford Movement (London: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1933) > p. 53.

irreversible laws was, as we have noted, expressed elsewhere by George
and was common at the time she was writing. Like Arthur -^onnithorne
gie tries to evade the conditions imposed on her by external circumstan-ces and often acts without due regard for the consequences of her behaviour* **ut it is not really clear how an ethic based on "feelings of submission and dependence" and obedience to "irreversible laws" will allow Maggie any scope for activity, ^r Kenn, for all his personal goodwill and social idea-lism, is forced to akk Maggie to leave his household'because of the ill-natured local gossip her presence there has attracted, and in any case his analysis of ot. Ogg's society is not borne out by the way it is presented in the novel. It is not characterised by a tendency to "wayward choice"
at all - it is rather intolerance and narrow materialistic standards which caused the community to neglect the Tullivers after their ruin (p. 2Y^)
and to ostracise Maggie. Given her society's unthinking adherence to what is customary, it is difficult to see what progress, other than economic,
it is likely to make. The -^odsons and Tullivers were "reared in the praise-worthy past of Pitt and high prices" (i.e. during the early years of the Napoleonic Wars), and "there had been no highly modifying .influence to act on them in their mature life" (p. 240). In any case it has been suggested in various ways throughout the novel that there had also been little pro-gress since the 1830*s. Morally, Maggie would seem to be the "fittest" in her society, but she is not, in ^arwinian terms, the most adapted to her environment - rather the reverse.

Margaret Harris, "'in he Narrator of The Mill on the *'loss t " Sydney
Studies in English, 3 (1977-78), 32-46, at "46.

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Just before the end of the novel it appears that self-renunciation, stripped of all egotism, can be beneficial. Maggie confronts "the long penance of life, which was all the possibility she had of lightening the load to some other sufferers, and so changing that passionate error into a new force of unselfish human love" (p. 451), and, after resisting the appeal in Stephen's letter, she prays, "'0 God, if my life is to be long, let me live to bless and comfort r-"1 (p. 453)» It is shown too that her self-renunciation extends Lucy's sympathies, making her aware of what she calls a "'better'" nature than her own (p. 449)i while Philip has found that his love for her has released him from "painful self-consciousness,1" planted the seed of sympathy; of "'that enlarged life which grows and grows by appropriating the life of others1 " (p. 443) • -Bjit the flood still appears a d-eus ex machina, since the only possible future which seems open to Maggie is one of sheer endurance, gradually living down the slanders against her reputation and lightening the load to some other sufferers," and this is both vaguely defined and appallingly dreary. Moreover the ending implies that the only way she can be reconciled with Tom is to make the ultimate self-scicrif ice. In any case, given what we know of Tom, it is improbable that he would at any time have been capable of feeling a "new revelation to his spirit, of the depths in life, that had lain beyond his vision which he fancied so keen and clear" (p. 45&)• It is as if George £»liot, unable to envisage any gradual, progressive social evolution operating in *H. Ogg's to which Maggie could become adapted, has had to revert to a theory of change through sudden catastrophe.

•^ara Putzell, M| An Antagonism of Valid Claims': The dynamics of
The Mill on the Floss," ^tudies in the Novel, 7 (1975), 227-244, at 233.

GEORGE ELIOT - . SILAS MARNER

While writing 31 las Marner in 1861 George Eliot explained to John Blackwaod how the idea for the novel had come to her "quite suddenly, as a sort of legendary tale, suggested by [her3 recollection of having once, in early childhood, seen a linen-weaver with a bag on his back." But as she con-sidered it further, she felt inclined to attempt "a more realistic treat-

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An important element of this "realistic treatment" is the setting of
the novel at a specific period, or rather at three particular points in

2 history. Part 1 focusses on "the early years of this century," but con-

tains cl retrospect to Silas's exile from Lantern Yard about fifteen years earlier - i.e. in the late 1780*3. '^he events of Part II take place six-teen years after those of Part 1 - in 1817 a"t least, since the edition of Mant's Bible which Nancy is reading in Chapter 1? was published in that year. However the opening paragraph of the novel evokes a past which is both more distant and more vaguely defined than these three periods: it is the era "when the spinning-wheels hummed busily in the farmhouses — and even great ladies, clothed1 in silk and thread— lace, had their toy spinning-wheels of polished oak..." (p. 3), and a "far-off time" when "superstition clung easily round every person or thing that was at all unwonted, or even intermittent and occasional merely" (p. 2). The distrust and suspicion with which immigrant country weavers were viewed is said to reflect the outlook of "the peasants of old times" and at this apparently-distant time,

1 24 February 1861, in Eliot Letters, III, 382.
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£ilas Marner: the leaver of ^ayeloa, by George Eliot (Edinburgh and London: William Blackwood ?.xnd Sons, 1861), p. 3. All subsequent citations will be from this edition.
Noted by 4.D. Leavis in her notes to the Penguin edn of the novel (Harmondsworth, 19^7)> P» £64.

the linen-weavers themselves seem to be already obsolescent, appearing like remnants of a disinherited race" (p. 3)» In the next paragraph the setting is made more specific ("the early years of this century"), but the dating is never as precise as in Adam Bede, and the opening paragraph suggests that Raveloe maintains traditions of generations before which were shared by peasant communities in general. Later it is in fact described as "a village where many of the old echoes lingered, undrowned by new voices"
(p. 6).
The most prominent of the "old echoes" in ^aveloe life is the villagers habitual recourse to supernatural explanations for natural phenomena. f^o the boys of Raveloe, oilas's protuberant eyes and "dreadful stare" portend cramp, rickets, or a wry mouth, while their parents believe he can cure rheumatism (pp. 4-5). His actual cure of Sally Dates 1 heart-disease and dropsy through herbal medicine had encouraged them to think he could take over the magical office of the dead Wise Woman of Tarley, who had muttered strange words and tied red thread round children's toes to keep off water in the head, and given prospective mothers little bags to hang around their necks to prevent their having idiot children (pp. 29-31). Although Marner is too honest about his own abilities to exploit this role, his refusal to do so means that they attribute subsequent accidents and attacks to his "ill-will and irritated glances." His fits of catalepsy intensify their fear and their sense that he must be in league with the devil (pp. 8-9). Later, when his money is stolen, some people, notably Mr Macey, assume that the robbery in fact signals the break-up of this intimacy, and hence that it was committed by some "preternatural felon" (p. 111). In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries local wise men and women used incomprehensible formulae like those employed by the ^'ise Woman of Tarley to cure diseases/

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and their obscurity added to their power in the minds of those being trea-ted, Similarly there was a common belief that the devil could enter into semi-feudal contracts with people to ensure their worldly success, and his supposed intervention could be a convenient way of explaining strange di-2 seases, motiveless crimes, or unusual success, The superstitions describee Marner can hence be seen as survivals from an earlier period, but
they continued into George ^liot's day and even beyond, ^outhey attests to their survival into the period in which Part 1 of the novel is set:
"a Cunning— Man, or a Cunning-Woman ••• is to be found near every town, and though the laws are occasionally put in force against them, still it is a gainful trade," while Edward Peacock in 1&56 declared that

Those who are not in daily intercourse with the peasantry can
hardly be made to believe or comprehend the hold that charms,
witchcraft, wiser-men, and other like relics of heathendom have
upon the people.

Recalling a period only a few years before the £ime of writing (lo79)» William Henderson writes of a Kirk elder at Berwick-upon-Tweed who applied to a wise woman in order to retrieve a stolen web of linen, but then did not want to know who the thief was, for fear of being brought into contact

5 with the Devil. He also observes that it is believed throughout the coun-try that baptism benefits a child physically as well as spiritually - an idea which recalls Dolly ^inthrop f s equation of christening and inoculation Hardy's novels too are full of evidence as to the prevalence of superstitior

Keith Thomas, Religion and the Decline of Magic, 179ff .
Thomas, pp. 473-77.
Letters from England, p. 295*
Notes and Queries, 24 May 1856, p. 415*
Notes on the £'0 Ik- lore of the Northern Counties of England and the
Borders (London: ^atchell, Peyton & Co., for the ^oik-lore Society, 1879),
P- 237-
Henderson, p. 15 •

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in rural districts. In fteturn of the Native (1878), set in the 1840's, some of the peasantry think £ustacia Vye a witch, and Susan Nonsuch is convinced that she causes her son's illnesses, while G hribtian Gantle thinks that •^amon Wildeve's dice have the power of charms and spells. In The Mayor of Casterbridge (1886) set at the same period, several farmers consult a "weather-prophet" about the likely outcome of the harvest, and he is also thought to be able to charm away warts and cure the evil (scrofula).
•nd just as ^ilas arouses the superstitious fears of his neighbours because of his isolation from them and his supposed cleverness in possessing a skill (weaving) which they cannot understand, Dr -^'itzpiers in The tf landers (1887), set in the 1850's or possibly later, is rumoured to have sold his soul to the "wicked one" since he lives apart from his neighbours and is a "'strange, deep, perusing gentleman'" (pp« 40, 6l).
Moreover Little Hintock in lj-'he ^oodlanders is like Raveloe in other
ways as well. It is described as

one of those sequestered spots outside the gates of the world
where may usually be found more meditation than action, and
more listlessness than meditation; where reasoning proceeds on
narrow premisses, and results in inferences wildly imaginative"
(pp. 39-40)
Haveloe, with its speculations about Marner continuing unchanged for fifteen years, and its repeated discussions of events such as old Mr Lammeter's marriage and the fate of the would-be gentleman Cliff, shows a predilection for "more meditation than action," while the Casses* idle lives are charac-terised by "more listlessness than meditation." r^heir "sporting, drinking,

#ook III, ^hapters 2 and 7 5 ^ook V, Chapters 2 and 7-
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Chapter 26.
^ee Oavid Lodge's discussion of the dating problems in his Appendix
to the New Wessex ^dition (London: Macrnillan, 1975), pp. 390-92.

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card-playing" ia in fact described as "the half-listless gratification of senses dulled by monotony' (p. 55) • Meanwhile the "narrow premisses" of the villagers' reasoning and the "wildly imaginative" inferences which re-sult from them are highlighted in their reaction to the robbery of Silas s gold: they are unable to conceive that ^unsey could be the culprit because of the "prescriptive respectability of a family with a mural monument and venerable tankards" (p. 149)> and hence infer a "preternatural felon," or a pedlar whom everyone suddenly remembers as having worn large ear—rings when this possibility is suggested to them (I20ff).
The analogies with Hardy's novels suggest then that superstitious
beliefs persisted into George ^liot's own time, and the narrator does in fact declare that "strange lingering echoes of the old demon-worship might perhaps even now be caught by the diligent listener among the grey-haired peasantry" (p. 5)» '^e survival of old-fashioned beliefs in ^aveloe results from its isolation from the influence of new ideas and from the rapid tech-nological changes taking place at the end of the eighteenth and the begin-ning of the nineteenth centuries, ^eing "an hour's journey on horseback from any turnpike" Raveloe "was never reached by the vibrations of the coach-horn, or of public opinion" (p. 6), and hence remained "aloof from the currents of industrial energy and Puritan earnestness (p. 40) • ^-s such it is not intended as representative of rural villages of the early nineteenth century, simply because no village or type of village could be made to embody the rural life of the period:

our old-fashioned country life had many different aspects, as
all life must have when it is spread over & various surface,
and breathed on variously by multitudinous currents, from the
winds of heaven to the thoughts of men, which are for ever moving and crossing each other with incalculable results (p.

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George Eliot is pointing out the variety to be found in early nineteenth-century rural life to those who, like the social theorists criticised in "The Natural History of German Life]' tend to generalise about it. Similarly Cobbett in his Rural Rides » writing of the l&20's, could not generalise about the condition of agricultural labourers, since in some areas they were well-housed, well-fed and able to produce some of their own food, whereas elsewhere they were poor, dirty, starving, unemployed, and living
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in hovels. 1 he reader of 1861 would possibly have compared Raveloe to Hayslope, since Adam Bede is set in the same period as the first part of Silas Marner. Raveloe shares Playslope's material prosperity, and in both cases this prosperity is related to the village s geographical setting: Hayslope is in a "north midland county" while Raveloe, although further south, is situated "in the rich central plain of what we are pleased to call Merry ^gland" (p. 6). ^oth areas are also well-wooded, providing an ave-nue of profit for landlords and a source of firing for the poor: Cobbett often points out that the labouring populations are better off in wooded areas because of this. In both places too the squires command a great
deal of respect because of their social pre-eminence. In Silas Marner, Squire Cass, although not much different in dress or habits from other prosperous farmers, is considered their superior by virtue of having a couple of tenants, and is the only landed parishioner given the title of Squire (pp. 39, 133-34)- Because of his social position Ainsey'is not suspected of robbing Silas, while Silas himself is habitually in awe of the

Cobbett, Rural Rides During the Years 1&21 to 1&32, ed. and
notes by Pitt Cobbett (London: Reeves & Turner, 1&93), I, 34, 5$, 108, 229, £83; II, 123, 250.
2 Rural Rides, I, 18, 21, 126, 321, 3b4, 391; II, 3, 191-
3 *ural Rides, I, 35, 263, 321.

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gentry, whom he considers "tall, powerful, florid men, seen chiefly on horseback" (p. 332). Moreover, although the people of Hayslope are not nearly as superstitious as those of Raveloe, the role of the Church is similar in both parishes. Soth Mr Irwine and Mr G rackenthorp are easygoing, lacking "Puritan earnestness" and interest in doctrine, while Church atten-dance and participation in its customs bear witness to an individual's mem-bership of the community: In Hayslope the church on ^unday afternoon is partly a meeting-place where social contacts are kept up and local gossip exchanged, while in Raveloe an important part of Silas's integration into the community is his christening and attendance at church - the first time he appears in Part II, he is emerging from church with Eppie.
However, Hayslope is in a hilly region, which enables Adam to "'feel
the world's a big place/" while ^aveloe, situated in a "snug well-wooded hollow" (p. 6) seems to Silas to be "hidden even from the heavens by the screening trees and hedgerows" (p. 24). This geographical difference is paralleled by the far more limited awareness which the people of Raveloe have of the world outside. No-one in Raveloe mentions, as Adam does, coal-pit engines or Arkwright's cotton mills at Cromford, and even a well-estate lished machine like Silas's hand-loom arouses a "half-fearful fascination" in the Raveloe boys. Although Mrs Poyser is very critical of Dinah for wanting to stay in an industrial area like Stonyshire, she feels no suspi-cion or fear of the people who live there, but the people of ^aveloe, know-ing nothing of the industrial north where Silas grew up, treat him with awe and distrust for fifteen years. And by contrast with Arthur -^onnithorne,

The power-loom, which was gradually to replace the hand-loom during
the first half of the nineteenth century, had already been invented by Cartwright in

is content to let his tenants "get into arrears, neglect their
fences, reduce their stock, sell their straw, and otherwise go the wrong way" until his rent returns suffer (p. 131). He is in fact a landowner of the type that Young and other advocates of agricultural improvement habitu ally criticised for negligence and old-fashioned habits. As far as reli-gion is concerned too the two villages differ: the Hayslope area does boast a few Methodists, and twenty years after the events of the story Evangelicalism has arrived in the shape of Irwine's successor Hyde t In ^aveloe^ on the other hand, Dissent is so unfamiliar that Dolly tfinthrop, never having heard the word "chapety1 is afraid that it may refer to "some haunt of wickedness" (pp. 165-66), while ^r Crackenthorp,-is apparently stil there to marry Eppie to Aaron at the end.
Nor do the inhabitants of &aveloe ever refer to the events of the Napoleonic Wars or to contemporary politics, ^he war is mentioned only as a factor determining the prosperity of the lazy Raveloe farmers, as "that glorious war-time which was felt to be a peculiar fattour of Providence towards the landed interest" (p. 39). In Adam Bede Mrs Poyser refers to
a Lord -^acey whose eldest son lost thousands of pounds. to the Prince of ^ales, and the extravagance and scandalous private life of the future George IV was a recurrent theme of popular newspapers and cartoons of this

2 period, but the gossip at the Rainbow focusses on purely local concerns
and traditions.

^he transition between the two parts of &ilas Marner involves a gap of sixteen years, so that we might expect some reference to social and histo-rical changes over this period. In Chapter 3 the narrator foreshadows the

Mingay, -^nglish Landed Society in the Eighteenth Century, pp. 165-66
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J. Steven Watson, The "*" rieign of -J1--

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"fall of prices" : which would "come to carry the race of small squires and yeomen down that road to ruin for which extravagant habits and bad husband-ry were plentifully anointing their wheels" (pp. 39-40), and this decline in the prosperity of agricultural areas after the end of the war in 1815 is then registered in Part II by the conversation of Godfrey and the Lamme-ters about the "increasing poor-rate and the ruinous times" when things invariably turn out wrong (p. 30l). ^uring the war both profits and rents increased "by amounts in no way commensurate with any additional efforts, new practices or fresh outlays which were put into farming" but with the renewal of corn imports after the war, prices fell, and many small landow-ners could not repay debts they had incurred from buying land at inflated
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war-time prices. ^or landowners with tenants, low prices affected the rent the latter could pay, and since many farmers could not afford to employ as many labourers as they had beforehand, poor-rates went up us these la-bourers, their numbers swelled by returning soldiers, went on parish relief. Labourers 1 wages often declined, and had to be supplemented by the poor-rates. By the mid l&30's the decline in the number of owner-occupiers among farmers since 1815 was noticeable, as they were forced to sell out
to larger landowners or to would-be landowners among merchants and indust-rialists. Cobbett's ftural Rides are full of comments on the decline of
the yeomanry and smaller gentry. In the novel the narrator points out however that this decline occurred only in ^aveloe "and the parishes that resembled it" (p.

F.M.L. Thompson, -English Landed Society in the Nineteenth Century^
p. 215.
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Mingay, p. 95.
3 Horn, The Rural rtorld 178Q-1&50, Tiff-
4 Horn, p. 73; F.M.L. Thompson, pp. 122, 233-
5 e.g. I, 12, 3&, 45-46, ?fc, 126, 159, 222, 391, 395-975 II, 151, 210-
211. cf. also "Occurrences at Nuneaton," November 1821, p. 48: "very great complaints from the Farmers, several sold up for rent, & c"

Nevertheless, although these economic changes are mentioned, they
are seen mainly from the point of view of the substantial farmers and gen-try like the Lammeters and Casses - the poor-rates are "ruinous" to those who have to pay them rather than those who have to live on them. Nor is there any reference to discontent among the poor of the kind that resulted the East %iglia "Bread or Blood" riots of 1616. Only ^aron ^inthrop's comment that "'there need nobody run short o 1 victuals if the land was made the most on, and there was never a morsel but what could find its way to a mouth 1 " (pp. 277-78) could be taken as a sign of working-class resentment of agricultural practices at this period. Far outstripping the pace of change in rural life is the transformation of urban life over the thirty or so years covered by the story: when Silas visits his former home he finds that the Lantern Yard community has gone, the place had become a "great manufacturing town" with houses close together, noise, movement, bad smells, and a "multitude of strange indifferent faces"; a large factory has replaced the old chapel (pp. 353-37).
In any case the economic changes which occur daring the sixteen years
when fippie grows up are not shown as having a significant influence in them-selves on the yeomen and gentry. Godfrey ^ass's draining of the Stone-Pits reflects a progressive trend of the period,^but its effect is not to lead Godfrey towards future prosperity but to bring back the past he has tried to escape. For the drainage reveals the skeleton of Dunsey and Silas's stolen money, and convinces ^odfrey that he held best tell Nancy the story of his first marriage, as he thinks that too will inevitably be revealed. ' The novel is essentially the story of two private lives, that of Godfrey Cass who abandons his child and lives to regret it, and that of Silas Marner, who through his decision to adopt the child, regains contact with his own past and is integrated into itaveloe life. George Eliot's intention in the

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novel was to set "in a strong light the remedial influences of pure, natural human relations," and both the rather vague dating and the limited impact of historical events and trends on the story ensure that thsse "remedial influences" are not seen as dependent on historical circumstances or as confined to any one period.
However, given that the highlighting of such influences is George
•^liot's aim the period she has chosen does allow for a very strong con-trast between Silas's life in Raveloe during his first fifteen years there and the position he attains in the community in the sixteen years after his adoption of Eppie. By placing Silas in the late eighteenth and early nine-teenth centuries rather than in an earlier period, ^eorge iSliot makes his extreme solitude plausible: if he had lived in the first half of the eigh-teenth century, he would probably have needed an assistant in his work, since before the advent of John Kay's flying-shuttle (invented in 1?33) a weaver could not throw the shuttle across the cloth with one hand and catch

2 it with the other* However a handloom weaver living at a later period

than that dealt with in the novel would probably have lived in or near a large industrial centre, and been employed as an outworker- by the agent
of a large mill rather than by individuals in a country villages the numbers of independent customer-weavers like Marner were declining even in the eigh-teenth century. The historical setting also means that Silas, as a weaver, can be seen as an individual rather than as part of a near-contemporary social problem. Silas lives at a time when handloom weavers could earn

1 "Letter to John Blackwood," 24 February It6l, in Eliot Letters, III,
382.

T.S. Ashton, An Economic History of jSngland: the l8th Century, p. 109,
. P. '-Thompson, '^he Making of the English forking Class, pp. 29&~99«

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high wages, since new technology in weaving had not kept pace with that in spinning, but with the increasing use of the power loom, especially after 1820, their wages declined^ until during the 1830 *s and 1840 *s they came to live in appalling poverty before they almost disappeared in the 1850 *s. The plight of the handloom weavers had been a prominent social issue, such that in ^israeli s 3ybil (1845) "the desperately poor weaver Warner laments his sufferings and points out that he is one of 600,000 enduring the same pri-vations (Chapter 13) • A contemporary review praises ^eorge ^liot for not doing what other novelists do, treating the poor merely as "so many sub-jects for experimenting on, for reclaiming, improving, being anxious about; and relieving," and ignoring them completely if above the reach of "occasio 2 nal destitution."
aspect of the past with which the novel is most concerned is
^ilas's personal past, and his story is an illustration of the importance of integrating an individual's past with his present. It is because Sppie's influence puts him back in touch with aspects of his past life that ^ilas becomes absorbed into ^aveloe life. This has long been recognised by cri-tics, so a brief discussion should suffice here, '"'hen ^ilas first settles in rtaveloe he finds nothing there to remind him of the place he had left,
so thctt the past "becomes dreamy because its symbols have all vanished," while "the present too is dreamy because it is linked with no memories"
(p. 22). "%en he is able to use the herbal medicine he had once practised to relieve his mother's heart disease to cure ^ally Gates, he feels for the first time "a sense of unity between his past and present life, which

This was especially the case between 1780 and 1603, according to -^.
P. Thompson (p. 304).
LJohn Morley?J. Saturday Review, IB April 1861, pp. 369-7°; rpt.
u eorge ^liot ; The Critical Heritage, pp. 170-174 , at p. 171 •

might have been the beginning of his rescue from the insect-like existence into which his nature had shrunk" (p. 29). But because he refuses to pre-tend to be able to charm away illness, he comes to be distrusted by the villagers even more than before, and his alienation is "more complete" (p. 32). His reaction to the breaking of the brown earthenware pot also shov.'s his capacity to become attached to things because of their connection with the past. °ince it has been his companion for twelve years, he cannot bear to part with it even when it is useless for practical purposes, and he sticks it together and leaves it in its old place "for a memorial" (pp. 35~~ 36). The incident shows that his "sap of affection was not all gone" and it begins to flow strongly again with the advent of Eppie, who reminds him of his dead sister and brings back to him a vision of his home and the "streets leading to Lantern Yard":

he had a dreamy feeling that this child was somehow a message
come to him from that far-off life; it stirred fibres that had
never been moved in Raveloe - old quiverings of tenderness —
old impressions of awe at the presentiment of some Power pre-
siding over his life (p. 223)

Later, Eppie's interest in flowers encourages ^ilas to look again for the herbs which had been familiar to him in childhood: remembrances crowd upon him, so that, as she acquires knowledge, "his mind [is] growing into memory and his soul "into full consciousness" (p. 254)• The sensibilities that she awakens in him also cause him to blend his impressions of the religious faith in Raveloe with his old faith, so that he recovers "a consciousness of unity between his past and present, 1 involving a "sense of presiding goodness and ... human trust" (p. 284). because of Eppie, too, ^ilas be-comes an object of interest to the villagers, and calls forth their latent kindness and willingness to help. The superstition and fear which once

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surrounded him are dissipated, to be replaced by "open smiling faces and cheerful questioning" (p. 2.^2-), and all the local mothers offer advice, Dolly "^inthrop giving continual practical assistance, Silas is finally re-garded as "an exceptional person, whose claims on neighbourly help were not to be matched in Raveloe" (p.lsL),
In his anxiety to do the best for Eppie, Silas gradually comes "to appropriate the forms of custom and belief which were the mould of Raveloe life" (p. 283). This involves such things as pipe-smoking, church-going, and christening for both Eppie and himself. It may seem contradictory that Silas both reawakens to his past life and takes on Raveloe customs and be-liefs, given that life in Raveloe is shown to be so different from that in Lantern Yard, but what Silas in fact does is to integrate the best of the past with the best of the present, '^he herb-lore which he regains through his upbringing of %>pie had derived, after all, from his mother, and had been rejected by the Lantern Yard sect (p. 13). Since the herbs are demon-stratively beneficial, %>pie, by renewing Silas's interest in them, is en-abling him to adopt the better of the two contradictory attitudes suggested by his past experience. Similarly, in gaining a renewed religious faith, ^ilas does not resume his Lantern Yard beliefs, but does come to feel again a sense of belonging to a close-Knit community. In any case the religion of Raveloe is preferable to that of Lantern Yard, since it cannot be inter-preted so as to justify the sort of criminal behaviour shown in ^illiam Dane, which could be the result of the doctrine of assurance in which the sect believes: if he is convinced that he will be saved no matter what he does, he could well come to see the morality of his actions as immaterial, contrast, an inarticulate Raveloe villager like Dolly ^inthrop is

humbler and less certain of the intentions of "'Them above 1 " - she decides simply to "'trusten'" (pp. 288-89). This is the attitude ^ilas adopts, and his confidence is justified by the course of events. Moreover the re-ligion of Raveloe is in a sense more sophisticated than that of Lantern Yard. The story of Mr Lamrneter f s marriage to Miss Osgood (told by Macey
at the Rainbow in Chapter 6), in which Mr Grackenthorp 1 s predecessor Mr •Drumlow had mixed up the words of the service, shows that the people of Raveloe can distinguish^between the form and the meaning of the ceremony: they let it go ahead, since everyone knows the true intentions of the parties involved, -^rumlow however goes one further, declaring to Macey that the
" 'regester* 1 ' is the binding force in the marriage (pp. 95-98) - that is, couple f s willingness to become a permanent part of &aveloe tradition and history by signing their names in a permanent record of local events* On the other hand, in their practice of drawing lots, the Lantern Yard commu-nity shows its inability to see a possible difference between the ritual they use to determine guilt and the -^ivine w ill it is supposed to express. Silas accepts their equation of the lot-drawing with the voice of God - only that, knowing he is innocent, he postulates from the result '"a God of lies 11 (p. 21).
Silas is careful however to keep Eppie away from "the lowering influ-
ences of the village talk and habits" (p. 291), an(* n^ s own influence on
the village serves to undermine the worst of its habits and traditions. Because of Eppie the villagers 1 dislike and fear of him is replaced by sym-pathy and interest, and the superstitions which have been shown as endemic to si'nall isolated societies like Raveloe are dissipated. The impact which the villagers and Silas are to have on each other during the sixteen years after the robbery, is foreshadowed by the two scenes in which Silas bursts in on a crowd of ^avelo<i people - firstly, when he announces the robbery to

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the surprised group at the Rainbow (I06ff), and secondly when he interrupts the Casses 1 New Year's ^Ve party, with the news of his discovery of hippie and her mother (228ff). Silas feels the need of the community's aid, and this signals the beginning of his dependence on tfaveloe help and sympathy. •But by coming in on the two groups he is also interrupting social occasions which are in a sense rituals celebrating Raveloe tradition. In the Rainbow Inn the lower orders listen to the story of one of their most respected "betters/1 Mr Lammeter, and hear too in Cliff's oft-repeated history how social climbers never prosper. The scene reaffirms the popular confidence in the Raveloe status quo. At the Casses' New Year's Eve party the dancing of the higher orders, carried on in familar style - the Squire leading off Mrs Crackenthorp, and "joining hands with the Rector and i-i rs Osgood" - seems to be a renewal of the "charter of Raveloe," with its traditional visiting habits, jokes, and compliments (p. 204). ^y interrupting both these scenes Silas presents himself as it were to the two main social groups of Raveloe as the element of which their conventions do not take account, and as a result of his influence, the villagers' idea of social duty comes to embrace a more active and practical kindness and sympathy. And as in the cases of Tryan and Adam, progress on a .^mall scale is effected by a man, flawed in character, who achieves no fame or influence outside his local community, and, unlike The Mill on the ^loss, Silas Marner shows how an individual can effect social change for the better.
Godfrey ^ass however the personal past functions as a Nemesis—
albeit a "very mild" one, as George Eliot put it in a letter to Blackwood.

1 24 February 1661, in Eliot Letters, III, 382

Molly 's timely death makes him believe he can put the past entirely behind him, and he lets Marner bring up his child, salving his conscience by hel-ping the weaver with furniture, n'hen the ghastly discovery of -^unsey's skeleton forces visions of the past back on ^odfrey, he is not able to retrieve what is most valuable in it - Eppie - and has to admit that
11 'there's debts we can't pay like money debts, ty paying extra for the years that have slipped by"1 (p. 34-8).
'^he two main ways in which the narrator of ^ilas Marner relates the recent past to the present are through generalising from the characters' experience to make it relevant to that of the readers - a technique with which we are familiar from the earlier works - and through detailed expla-nations which try to make the beliefs of the uncultured minds of the past comprehensible to the more sophisticated readers of the present. <^hen ^ilas's life has ^reduced itself to the functions of weaving and hoarding," the narrator points out that

'I'he same sort of process has perhaps been undergone by wiser
men, when they have been cut off from faith and love - only,
instead of a loom and a heap of guineas, they have had some
erudite research, some ingenious project, or some well— knit theory (pp. 34-35)

Later Godfrey's worship of dhance is said to be a characteristic which "c£.n hardly be called old-fashioned," since

Favourable Chance, i fancy, is the god of all men who follow
their own devices instead of obeying a law they believe in. Let even a polished man of these days get into a position he
is ashamed to avow, and his mind will be bent on all the pos-
sible issues that may deliver him from the calculable results
of that position (p. 145)

Most interesting perhaps is the brief comment on ^ilf-s's continued attach-

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ment to the hearth where he found Sppie: he refuses to have it replaced
by a grate and oven, and loves it as he had loved his pot. The narrator goes on: "The gods of the hearth exist for us still; and let all new faith be tolerant of that fetiehism, lest it bruise its own roots" (pp. 281- 82). Another aspect of this fetishism was described in the account of ^ila.s's flight from Lantern Yard: his attitude was seen as akin to that
of primitive men who believed that the influence of their native gods could not be felt beyond their own area, since the Power Silas had trusted in Lantern Yard seemed to have no effect of Raveloe life (pp. 25-26). According to the philosophy of Comte, as described and advocated by Lewes four years before Sil&s Marner appeared/ fetishism is the earliest form which religious belief takes:

In the Theological stage, the mind regards all effects as the
productions of supernatural agents ... Nature is animated by
supernatural beings, ^Very unusual phenomenon is a sign of
the pleasure or displeasure of some being adored and propitia-
ted as a God. '^he lowest condition of this stage is that of
the savages, viz. ^etishism.

Marner George ^liot is appealing for tolerance of modern survivals
of fetishism, as it is the source from which more advanced kinds of reli-gious belief have developed, and can be valuable in its own right as an expression of an individual's attachment to his past, ^uskin makes a simi lar point in his Seven Lamps of Architecture; "(ojur God is a household God, as well as a heavenly one; He has an altar in every man s dwelling; let men look to it when they rend it lightly and pour out its ashes."

George Henry Lewes, The Biographical History of Philosophy from its Origin in Greece Down to the Present -^ay (London; John W. Parker & °on, 1857), P. 656,
John P- 150. ^uskin, Q?he Seven Lamps ~ of —————————

Architecture (New York: John Wiley,

It is arguable too that the mental capacities of the tfaveloe villages
of the early nineteenth century are similar to those of the novel's educated readers of 1&61, with only their power and means of expression differing. R.H. Hutton in his review of the novel drew attention to the fact that the talk of the villagers at the Rainbow Inn "has almost always a distinct re-lation to the intellectual forms of the same questions as discussed in mo-dern times by the educated classes." 1 As evidence of this he cites Macey's distinction between "'the 'pinion a man has of himsen, and ... the 'pinion other folks have on him, 1 " in the latter's rebuke of Tookey (p. 9l)» T^e difference he perceives between the subjective and objective point of view shows "a faint shadow of the intellectual 2 phases of 'modern thought"' The error in the vows at the Lammeter-Osgood wedding, meamtfhile, raises "the difficult question as to the relation between 'substance* and 'form.1 "'here such similarities between the mental habits of characters and readers are not evident, however, the characters' beliefs and attitudes have to be explained. It is true for example that ^ilas's appearance would not have been strange to "people of average culture and experience,"
- but for the villagers of Raveloe, "it had mysterious peculiarities which corresponded with the exceptional nature of his occupation, and his advent from an unknown region called 'North'ard'" (p. 7). Later Earner's simple assumption that the result of the lot-drawing expresses the divine nature, which the reader may find hard to believe, is explained with reference to his lack of education, and his inability to think independently, especially

The Economist, 27 April 1861? pp. 455-57? rpt. The Hill on the Floss
and £>ilas Marner; A ^asebook, ed. R.P. Draper (London & Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1977)> PP- 60-63, at p. 60.
2
Hutton, p. 61.
Hutton, p. 61.

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when all his energies were turned into the anguish of disappointed: faith (pp. 21-22). In describing the effect of Raveloe on Marneri the narrator begins by suggesting that his feelings could be shared by people like the reader:

people whose lives have been made various by learning, sometimes find it hard to keep a fast hold on their habitual
views of life, on their faith in the Invisible, nay, on the
sense that their past joys and sorrows are a real experience,
when they are suddenly transported to a new land, where the beings around them know nothing of their history, and share none of their ideas - where their mother earth shows another lap, and human life has other forms than those on which their
souls have been nourished (p. 23)

The effect on Silas of his new environment is even more intense and dislo-cating, however:
But even their experience may hardly enable them thoroughly to
imagine what was the effect on a simple weaver like Silas Marner,
when he left his own country and people and came' to settle in
Raveloe (pp. 23-24)
&nd because of the growth of a more complex sensibility since the time in which the novel is set, it is sometimes necessary to make an effort to under-stand a past state of mind even where a character from a social class simi-lar to that of the reader is concerned. In the account of Godfrey's di-lemma over his first marriage, the narrator compares people of "higher sen-sibility" who have the "higher culture" of the present with the "ruder minds' of "our rural forefathers" such as ^odfrey, and claims that the "subtle and varied pains" attributable to the former are 'perhaps less pitiable than that dreary absence of impersonal enjoyment aid consolation which leaves ruder minds to the perpetual urgent companionship of their own grief.s and discontents" v presumably the obverse dide of "Old Leisure." The squire-archy of the recent past may seem prosaic, but their monotonous, sensual lives were affected, like the reader's, by calamities and by errors which ha-d "hard consequences" (pp. 55~56)» The reader of Silas learner is guided towards a comprehension of the limited mentality of people of the recent past, as well as towards a recognition that he may share ti-.eir feelings.

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GEORGE ELIOT - £. FELIX HOLT, THE RADICAL

ix Holt, the Radical is set in the period from "the 1st of September, in the memorable year 1832," and May 1833, when Felix and ^sther marry (p. 398); that is, from about three months after the passing of the First ^eform -^ill (June 1832) till soon after the first elections under the re-formed constituency (December 1832). ^ince it was written between March 1865 and May 1866, a period when a further extension of the franchise was under discussion in Parliament, the novel can obviously be seen as an ob-lique comment on the politics of the l860 f s, and has generally been treated as such. After reading most of it in manuscript, John Blackwood wrote en-thusiastically - "£h]er politics are excellent and will attract all parties. p
Her sayings would be invaluable in the present debate." ^he "debate" at this time concerned the bill put forward by Gladstone under Russell's go-vernment in March 1866, to extend the franchise in boroughs from £-10 to £7 householders (i.e. to people paying at least £7 per annum rent), and in counties, to tenants paying at least £14 • This measure was defeated three days after the novel was published on 15 June 1866. However in August 1867 the new Conservative government under Lord Derby put through a more wide-ranging measure enfranchising more or less all householders in boroughs
and hence adding large numbers of the working class to the electorate, so
- Blackwood asked George -^liot to write for Blackwood 1 s an article addressed to the working men on their new responsibilities, ^he article she produced, "Address to forking Men, by Felix Holt," makes it clear that Fe iix's

George Eliot, Felix Holt, the Radical, ed. Fred C. Thomson (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1980), p. 13. All subsequent citations are from this edition, which is based on the first.
p
"Letter to Joseph Munt Langford," 26 April 1866, in ^liot Letters,
IV, 247-
3 Blackwood* s, 103 (1868), 1-11; rpt. pp. 412-22 of Thomson's edn.

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speech to the crowd at Tre"by in 1832 had expressed her own views on the implications of an extension of the franchise in the l&60's, since it re-iterates at greater length the arguments that education and individual moral reform, involving the subjection of selfish interests to the common good, are essential before the vote, or any measure it may be used to enact, is of any value. Moreover the similarities between George ^liot's poli-tical thought and the ideas put forward in -^-mold's Culture and diarchy

2 (1869) have often been pointed out. fl'rnold claims that "our besetting

danger" is "faith in machinery," that,is, a blind belief in particular slogans adopted without thought as to wha,t they really mean or what they might lead to in practice - stock notions like "freedom," and "wealth," he says, tend to be seen as ends in themselves. The believer in "culture" should rather try to create a frame of mind from which schemes of really fruitful reform may grow, eschewing involvement in public life and direct political action, to make others scrutinise their usual ideas and habits, and learn to think more clearly. Moreover the working classes, (or "Bopu-lace" as he calls them) are still ignorant and given to violence, passion, envy and the adoration of mere power and success, and so need, not the franchise, but an increased spiritual activity and more extended sympathies. Similarly for il'elix "'schemes about voting, and districts, and annual Parliaments'" are just '"engines'" and whether they do good or bad depends on the "'force that is to work them 1 " which "'must come out of human

Felix's speech is on pp. 24&-51 of "the novel.
2
See for example Michael Wolff, "The Uses of Context: Aspects of the
I660 l s," ^ictorian Studies, 9 (1965), Supplement, pp. 47-63, at 55ff- Peter Coveney's Introduction to the Penguin edn (Harmondsworth, 1972), PP« 11-12; Cunningham, Everywhere Spoken ^gainst , 17&ff .
•* Rpt. Complete Prose "'orks, Vol. V (1965), pp. 65-229, at p. 96.
and ^narchy , pp. 221^ 226.
Culture and ^narchy, pp. 109, 144-45.

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nature - out of men's passions, feelings, desires 1 " (p- 250). Hence if

working men were enfranchised, and most of them spent all their money on

drink or accepted bribes, they would return to Parliament only men given to

"'dirty work*" (pp. 250-51). He himself prefers not to become involved in

politics, but to "!try to make life less bitter for a few within [hisj

reach, 1 " as a "'demagogue of a new sort, ... who will tell the people they

are blind and foolish,'" and oppose their tendency towards social climbing

(pp. 224-25).

'^he question of whether George Eliot is presenting in Felix charac-

teristics and points of view typical of the l860's but anachronistic for

1832 is one to which I shall return later. A passage within the novel

explains the essential difference she sees between the spirit of 1832 and

that of her own time:

At that time, when faith in the efficacy of political change
was at fever-heat in ardent Reformers, many measures which men
are still discussing with little confidence on either side,
were then talked about and disposed of like property in near
reversion. Crying abuses - "bloated paupers," "bloated plura-lists," and other corruptions hindering men from being wise and happy - had to be fought against and slain, ^uch a time is a time of hope. Afterwards, when the corpses of those monsters have been held up to the public wonder and abhorrence, and yet wisdom and happiness do not follow, but rather a.more abundant breeding of the foolish and unhappy, comes a time of doubt and despondency. But in the great Reform-year Hope was mighty: the prospect of Reform had even served the voters instead of
drink; and in one place, at least, there had been a "dry elec-
tion." . . . ^orae dwelt on the abolition of all abuses, and on
millennial blessedness generally; others, whose imaginations
were less suffused with exhalations of the dawn, insisted
chiefly on the ballot-box, (pp. 157-58)

In her research for the novel G eorge Eliot had been amazed at the "strong

language ... used in those days, especially about the Church." It was a

"Letter to John Blackwood, 11 27 Aprii 1866, in jjliot Letters, IV, 248,

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period, recalled J.S. Mill, of "almost unbounded confidence in the efficacy of two things: representative government, and complete freedom of discus-sion," this confidence being created in part by the influence of the Utili-tarian thought of Bentham and James Mill, who believed that extension of the suffrage would create a legislature which "would aim at the general interest, honestly, and with adequate wisdom." In treating the "great tteform-year" in Felix Holt George Eliot aims to show why hopes were disap-pointed, and thus suggest to her contemporaries that any renewal of confi-dence in purely political change roused by the prospect of further exten-sion of the franchise would also be misplaced.
'^he famous Introduction to the novel describes a journey by stage-
coach through the midlands of thirty-five years earlier, ^he evocation of the days of coaching, "the great roadside inns ... still brilliant with well-polished tankards, the smiling glances of pretty barmaids, and the re-partees of jocose ostlers," the'feinviable memories" of the elderly man who can recall "a long journey in mid-spring or autumn on the outside of a stage-coach" (p. 5) can of course be compared to Thackeray's nostalgic reminiscences of the days before railways. But George -Eliot also relates the stage-coach journey to specific social and political conditions. She is dealing with the England of about 1831, that is, unreformed England, where "there were pocket boroughs, a Birmingham unrepresented in Parliament and compelled to make strong representations out of it, unrepealed corn-laws, three-and-sixpenny letters, a brawny and many-breeding pauperism, and other departed evils." The penny-post was introduced in 1&4-0, while the Reform Bill gave two seats to Birmingham and abolished most pocket

Autobiography (1673); rpt. Collected Works, Vol. l (1981), pp. 1^
291, at p. 109.

boroughs (i.e, those with very few or even no electors, controlled by a landed magnate or closed corporation), as well as providing the impetus for further reforms such as the Poor Law of 1834, which forced able-bodied pau-pers into the workhouse rather than letting them receive outdoor relief or work for wages subsidised out of the poor-rates (cf. the shepherd's resent-ment of "pauper labourers" - p. 6). Meanwhile the widened franchise meant that the House of Commons had to become more receptive to middle-class opi-nion, and in 1846 this was one reason for the repeal of the corn-laws (the duties charged on imported corn) which had benefited the landed interest at the expense of the commercial and manufacturing sectors.
But developments since the 1830' s have not been an unmixed blessing;
just as "spick-and-span, new-varnished efficiency11 yields "endless diagrams, planes, elevations, and sections, but alas I no picture," the end of coaching has meant that it is no longer possible to gather through travel "enough stories of English life, enough of -^nglish labours in town and country, enough aspects of earth and sky, to make episodes for a modern Odyssey" (p. 5). In any case the railways which had superseded coaches by the 1840*3 could be destructive - they killed Mr Huskisson (p. 9) who had in fact made one of the earliest efforts to get Birmingham represented in Parliament, proposing in 1828 that it be given the seats freed by the disenf ranchisemenl of the notoriously corrupt borough of #ast Retf ord.
The description of the midlands in 1831 highlights the immense variety
of -^nglish life and the rapid transitions between sharply-contrasted land-scapes and types of people: it is still "spread over a various surface, and breathed on Variously by multitudinous currents." '^hero are prosperous

He was killed by a train at the opening of the Liverpool and Manches-
ter Railway in September 1830.

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farming districts with "golden corn-ricks" and "full-uddered cows," driven by shepherds with no interest in affairs outside the parish - isolated ham-lets of dingy labourers 1 cottages, untouched by -Dissent and "safely in the via media of indifference" (p. 6), the "trim cheerful villages1 full of busy craftsmen and wealthy farmers unaffected by the rick-burning which had swept through many southern counties of -England during 1830-31, a "district of clean little market-towns without manufacturers, of fat livings, an aristocratic clergy, and low poor-rates" (p. !)• Later the coach would pass through villages of miners and handloom weavers, many of them Dissen-ters whose belief in predestination makes their life of dirt and hard work more bearable, '^hen there was the manufacturing town, whose breath "made a cloudy dajr and a red gloom by night on the horizon," also full of ^issen-ters, but in this case of people dissatisfied with the status quo, and wan-ting their rulers to "alter many things which now made the world perhaps more painful than it need be, and certainly more sinful" (p. 8). ^ith these scenes following each other in quick succession,

it was easy for the traveller to conceive that town and country
had no pulse in common, except where the handlo-oms made a far-
reaching straggling fringe about the great centres of manufac-
ture; that till the agitation about the ^atholics in '29, rural
- ^glishmen had hardly known more of Catholics than of the fossil
mammals; and that their notion of ^eform was a confused combina-
tion of rick-*burners, trades-bunions, Nottingham riots, and in
general whatever required the calling-oui- of the yeomanry. It
was still easier to see that, for the most part, they resisted
the rotation of crops and stood by their fallows... (pp. 8-9)

This draws attention to the complexity of pre-Reform society and to the co-existence of widely different types of community, from 1he traditional rural parish almost unaffected either by national events or by the industrial developments of the nineteenth century, overhung by a "low grey sky ... as

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if Time itself were pausing" - just like Raveloe thirty years before, in. fact - through the mining and weaving villages which burgeoned during the first thirty years of the nineteenth century, to the manufacturing towns which achieved their greatest rate of growth in the l820 f s, and were the foci of agitation for Reform and attacks on the religious Establishment. George Eliot is I think also setting up a contrast between the disparateness of this society, showing as it does different stages in the development towards industrialisation and political consciousness, and the simple, arbi-trary plans for change advocated later by both Harold Transome and the Puffield trades-union leader, Moreover, readers of 1866 would have been aware that not all change in the previous thirty-five years had been for the better: although the great upsurge in agricultural improvements from the late 1830*3 onward would have made successful resistance to crop rotation more rare, and a smaller proportion of agricultural labourers' cottages would have been dark and dingy in 1866, a greater percentage of the popula-tion could no longer enjoy the meadows silvered by the morning, or the beautiful hedgerows of the rural landscape, but were crowded into ugly in—

4 sanitary cities. The handloom weavers, as we have seen, had been starved

out by competition from the factory-based power looms, and by 1862 there
<5

were only three thousand left in the cotton trade.
The development of a traditional market-town almost entirely dependent
on agriculture into a community conta-ining a tape-manufactory and surroun-ded by coal-mines and a stone-quarry, is traced at the beginning of Chapter

Weavers were the largest occupational group from 1820 to 1840, apart
from agricultural labourers and domestic servants (E.P. Thompson, The Making of the English Working Class, p. 344)•
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Checkland, The Rise of Industrial Society in -England 1813-1883, p.
238.

See Horn, The Rural dp-rid 1780-1850, pp. 236-40.
In 1831 42-5?" °f "the population was urban, and in 1866, between
54.6^ and 61.&X (the figures for Ifc6l and 1871 respectively) - :;ee R. Lawton "Rural Depopulation in Nineteenth ^entury England," p. 195.
A.j). Gilbert, Religion and Society in Industrial England (London and

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3 in the account of the history of Treby Magna from early in the century till 1832. It resembles the change from the world of "Old Leisure" - prosperous, satisfied with itself, with an accepted social hierarchy headed by the longrestablished Debarry family who "as lords of the manor, naturally came next to Providence" and who always supply a rector who in turn IB ex-pected to associate only with county families (pp. 40-41) - to one whose relationship with the rest of the world was complicated by new conditions which awoke in it "that higher consciousness which is known to bring higher pains" (p. 4l)« A major aspect of this change is the alteration in the kind of Dissenters in Treby, from a small Independent congregation of "quies-cent, well-to-do" people with little interest in doctrine, to crowds of "er.£-er men and women" from the stone-pits, coal-pits and tape-weaving ham-lets, "to whom the exceptional possession of religious truth was the con-dition which reconciled them to a meagre existence," and who attacked the Rector as a "blind leader of the blind" (p. 43). ^he period from the late eighteenth century to the 1830 's had seen a rapid spread of Dissent,
only of the Methodism dealt with in ^dam Bede but also of Congregationalism, especially among artisans, the largest proportion of whom were weavers. Moreover the Catholic Emancipation ^ill of 1829 exacerbated religious ten-sions between Church and pissent, since, as we noted with reference to St. Ogg's, Dissenters often supported Catholic claims for relief, while oppo-nents of ^mancipation feared further attacks on the position of the Church of England and on the government. In Treby, "Mr Tiliot, the Church spirit-merchant, knew now that Mr Nuttwood, the obliging grocer, was one of those ers, Deists, Socinians, Papists, and Radicals, who were in league to

Gilbert, pp. 36-39» 51-68, especially tables on pp. 63, 67.

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destroy the Constitution" (p. 43). The sympathetic presentation of Philip ebarry, who insists to his uncle that Lyon's request for the religious debate be granted, and who is said to have died a convert to Catholicism in Rome about fifteen years after the time in which the novel is set (p. 136), suggests that people of Catholic inclinations could be less bigotted than their opponents. Catholic Emancipation also paved the way for Reform in the sense that it set a precedent for sweeping changes, while Dissenters, like Lyon in the novel, supported Reform in the hope that it would lead to such things as the abolition of their liability to G hurch rates (which had in fact ended in practice by the time the novel was published), the right to hold their own marriage services and bury their own dead in the parish graveyards, and their admission to the universities. The controversy surrounding Catholic Emancipation and the passing of the Reform Bill was also intensified by agricultural depression, which had continued on and off

3 since 1815, and by the accompanying distress in the manufacturing districts^ In Treby it is the discontent which arises because "prices had fallen, poor-rates had risen, rent and tithe were not elastic enough, and the farmer's fat sorrow had become lean" that makes the town ready to "vibrate" when political agitation sweeps the country: before the advent of working-class ^issent and economic distress the town, like Hayslope and Raveloe, had re-mained impervious to the effects of the French Revolution, Paine f s defence of it in his ^ights of Man, the Napoleonic Wars, and ^obbett s Radical attacks on the Church and aristocratic misgovernment in his Political Register (p. 44)•
According to Samuel Warren in 1841, the Reform Bill was widely seen as Philip Debarry was presumably influenced by the Tractarian movement,
which led to several conversions, notably that of J.H. Newman in 1845.
p
See ^aymond G. C owherd, The Politics of English Dissent, pp. 86, 91.
*'elix and Esther have to marry in the parish church in 1633 - the change came in 1836. Cunningham argues that the tone of Lyon's political radical-ism is more characteristic of the period between 1&32 and 1866 than of 1832 itself (Everywhere Spoken Again..t, l&2ff).
Asa Brig/'.s, Tne Age of Impxoy^niiint 1783-1867, p. 245.

the "great bill for giving everybody everything," while Harriet Martineau claimed in 1850 that the hungry and ignorant believed the Bill would feed

2 and clothe them, bring them work and good wages, and remove taxes. According to Proude, "^eform in Parliament was the symbol of a general hope for the introduction of a new and better order of things." ^or all this however the shaky alliance between the middle and working classes which had been largely instrumental in forcing the Reform Bill through Parliament in June 1832 broke down very quickly: by the end of the year the Whig leader Lord Grey was calling Thomas Attwood, leader of the Birmingham Political Union (a major Radical force in agitating for the Bill) "»a cox-comb and a knave, 1 " while Melbourne thought he deserved to be "'torn to pieces.'" "^he %11 had enfranchised mainly middle-class people, but the Radicals had hoped that subsequent measures would extend the franchise fur-ther, and were incensed when Grey made it clear that he considered the Bill a final measure. On 25 October 1832 the Poor Man's ^uardian claimed that the Bin merely aimed at consolidating aristocratic institutions by "'a
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reinf orcement of sub-aristocracy from the middle classes,'" and it is this kind of feeling that George Eliot draws on when she has the ^adical trades-union leader from Duffield argue that

"the ^eform Bill is a trick - it's nothing but swearing-in
special constables to keep the aristocrats safe in their
monopoly; it's bribing some of the people with votes to make
them hold their tongues about giving votes to the rest" (p. 247)

He goes on to declare that what the working class needs is "'universal

Ten. Thousand A Year, quoted by Briggs, The Age o f improvement 1783-
1867, p. 260.
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The History of the ^'hirty Years' Peace 1816-1846, II (London:
Charles Knight, 1850), p. 25.
Garlyle's Life in London (1891), I, 310; quoted by W.L. Burn, The Age of Equipoise, p. 65. Michael Brock, '-Phe Creat Reform ^ct (London: Hutchinson University Libvary, 1973), p. 314-
Briggs, p. 258.

suffrage, and annual Parliaments, and the vote by ballot, and electoral districts'" (p. 248). ^he particular measures supported by the Radical Harold '^'ransome are not outlined in any detail, but as his uncle Littgon put: it, he opposes "'^higgery, with its rights of man stopping short at ten-pounc householders'" (p. 3l), and he supports the ballot, at least as a long-term aim (p. 158)» As readers of 1866 would have been aware, the Radicals had not succeeded in getting any of these measures through Parliament; after the severe ^adical losses of the 1837 election, the working classes had to pin their hopes for change on the agitation of the extra-Parliamentary Chartist movement, but this had in turn failed by l848i»
More importantly, as far as the novel is concerned, the Reform Bill
did not encourage a higher standard of morality among either candidates or voters. Harold Transome for all his Radicalism condones the continuation
ii

of Johnson's "treating of the non-electors and inciting them to violence, and assumes his own tenants will automatically vote for him. At one stage he says to his mother that he wishes she had kept on three more old tenants, for then he would have had '"three more fifty-pound voters'" (p. 95)• This is probably an allusion to the notorious ^handos amendment to the Reform Bill which enfranchised £50 tenants-at-will in counties - that is, tenants who paid £50 or more in rent each year but who had no security of tenure and hence risked eviction if they voted against the candidate supported by their landlord. This clause was deliberately designed to restore some of the illegitimate power of landlords undermined by the Bill's other provision

1 and Harold is aiming to exploit this. Later his tenants are brought'to the

polls to vote for him (p. 258)- a continuation of the family's Tory tradition

Ten-pound householders were the main new category of borough voters enfranchised by the Reform Bill. "Electoral districts" meant constituencies with an equal number of voters; "the ballot" i6 what we would now call secret ballot.
2
See Norman Gash, Politics in the Age of Feel (London, New York,
Toronto; Longmans, Green and GO.> 1953), pp. 9^-93.

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of driving their tenants to the poll " f as if they were sheep 1 " as Felix puts it (p. 63). In any case Reform has not affected Treby conservatism enough to change Mr -^ibbs* or Mr ^ose's views that voting for one's landlord is a natural duty (pp. l8l, 256), or Nolan's opinion that "'the Whigs should always be in opposition, and the Tories on the ministerial side 1 " (p. 182). •Nhe publican Chubb will merely sell his vote to the highest bidder (pp. 112-13).
Furthermore, the religious and party-political polarisations of the
period are seen to create artificial barriers between people and to encourage simplified and distorted views of their characters. One of the attractions for the audience of the planned debate between Lyon and Sherlock is not the likely polemic of the combatants but the chance of seeing old friends from whom they had been sundered by religious differences -

One or two Dissenting ladies were not without emotion at the
thought that, seated on the front benches, they should be brought near to old Church friends, and have a longer greeting
than had taken place since the Catholic Emancipation (p. 203)

Nor do the actual personalities of the inhabitants fit neatly into political stereotypes: Reformers are not all "large-hearted patriots or ardent lovers of justice," and all Tories either "oppressors, disposed to grind down the working classes into serfdom," nor likely regenerators of a society under threat from the "hypocrites, Radicals, Dissenters, and atheism" which they abuse (pp. 44-45)» One reason for Felix's anger against Johnson for his bribery of the Sproxton workers is that Johnson is politically on his own side, so that the intricacies of life 'would certainly be greatly sinlplified if corrupt practices were the invaria-ble mark of wrong opinions" (pp. 128-29) Earlier the narrator has contrasted the complex nature of Harold's Radicali sm

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with the strident cliches used to describe him in the politically partisan Press (pp. 96-98), and when he is reeling with the news that Jermyn is his father, he finds himself supported by Sir Maximus Debarry, hereditary Tory and father of his political opponent (p. 383). Meanwhile Mrs Transome's person is described as "too typical of social distinctions to be passed by with indifference by any one," while her"high-born imperious air ... would have marked her as an object of hatred and reviling by a revolutionary mob," but it is made clear to the reader, if not to anyone in Tpeby, "that she exercises the power she derives from her social class over her tenants not for its own sake, but in order to dull her feelings of discontent and fill the emotional void in her life (pp. 27-29)•
The 1835 Report from the ^eibect Committee on Bribery at -^lections,
which George Eliot read as part of her research for the novel, deals with many forms of intimidation and illegitimate influence operating at election times; direct money bribery of voters, paying the registration fees for them to become freemen (a category of voters in boroughs), payment of their rates, promises of premises, situations, accommodation or land, "treating" them with food and drink at public houses, dealing only with tradesmen and shopkeepers who support one's own party, intimidation by landlords of te-nants and smaller freeholders, intimidation of workers by employers and"
of customers by bankers and solicitors, clergy refusing charity to people of opposing political views, ca-ndidates paying to transport voters to the poll, refusal of non-electors to deal with publicans, tradesmen or shopkee-pers who vote against their favoured candidate, and violence against their customers, violence directed by non-electors against electors at the poll.

•Examples all taken from the witnesses whose evidence George i^liot
noted: Joseph Tarkes (minutes 1593-1&5&, pp. 88-110), James Skerratt (3846- 4011/pp. 221-230), John Gilbert (4101-4291/pp. 241-250); John Scott (6745- 6920/pp. 402-407); John tircom (6921-7l86/pp. 407-417); John James (729- 1060/pp. 45-59). ^ee the relevant sections from her MS Notebook (Tinker Collection, -Beinecke Library, Yale University) rpt. in the Clarendon Edition pp. 400-406. Pa';: e references are to the 1968 Irish University Press edn
of the Report, vol. I.

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This kind of behaviour continued well past 1832, but George Eliot is main-ly concerned with that of the non-electors, •'•his is probably one reason why she deals with a county rather than a borough election - as she noted from Parkes's evidence to the Bribery Committee direct bribery of county 2 n_
voters was impossible because of the size of the constituency. The col-liers, navvies and stone-cutters heed Johnson because he appeals to their self-interest, and believe that "Reform, if it were good for anything, must at last resolve itself into spare money - meaning 'sport 1 and drink, and keeping away from work for several days in the week" (p. 120)j they hustle, pelt, roar and hiss on Transome's behalf at the nomination-day (p. 244) and at the actual election go on the rampage, attacking Spratt the mine-overseer and damaging Tory property. ^here were many riots during the 1832 elections at Bolton, Nuneaton, Walsall, Huddersfield, South Shields, Sheffield, Ken-dall, Wolverhampton, Halesowen, Frome, Norwich, Bury, Stamford, Preston, Carmarthen and ^oventry, and George Eliot transcribed into her notes for the novel the Annual Register account of the Bolton riot. Sne had also

5 witnessed the Nuneaton riot as a girl : according to the Times, the mob beat up Tory voters and stopped them going to the poll,.broke into and smashed the windows of the house of the Tory committee, and pelted the windows of the Town Hall. George Eliot presumably read this account, as among her notes from the Times is "N. Rioters tried at Warwick, April 5" (p. 401)• However the anonymous diarist of "Occurrences at Nuneaton11 puts

1 Gash > Politics in the Age of Peel, 105ff.

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Clarendon Edition, pp. 404-405; Report, 1642-44/p. 93.
Joseph Hamburger, James Mill and the Art of Revolution (New Haven:
Yale University Press, 1963), p. 200n.
4 Annual ^egister, 74 U&32), 304.
5 Cross, Life, I, 22-24. 6 ———
Times, 9 April 1833, p. 3.

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the blame on the lories, who, seeing the tide going against them, suspended the poll and called in a detachment of Scots Greys which proceeded to cut and trample the people down. AS a result the ^ory candidate won, although the spirit of the town was strongly Radical. That is, insofar as George #liot is drawing on her own experiences for Felix Holt, she is stressing the violence of the pro-Radical crowd rather than the '^'ories 1 dishonesty or

2 the brutality of the 'military. Election riots were common long after 1&32
- there was even a notorious disturbance at a Nottingham election in 1865, so that the "Nottingham riots," mentioned in the Introduction as one pheno-menon which rural voters associated with Reform (p. 8), may not simply have recalled the riot which broke out in Nottingham in October 1831 when the Lords threw out an earlier version of the 1832 Reform Bill.
In any case, the novel's focus on the non-electors is probably attri-butable to the fact that in 1865—66 it seemed increasingly likely that many of those who were not enfranchised by the 1832 Bill would soon get the vote, for there was much discussion going on as to whether they were fit for it* On 3 May 1865> Robert Lowe, the M.P. who over the next two years was to become the most virulent opponent of any further electoral re-form, opposed a Borough Franchise Extension Bill partly on the grounds that the working class were given to heavy drinking and wasting money on sensual enjoyment with no thought for the future, and that any power given to them would be a threat to "the institutions and property of this country." In
a later speech, on Gladstone's 1866 Bin, on 13 March of that year, he said

"Occurrences at Nuneaton," 21-24 ^ecember 1&32, pp. 68-70; noted by
Gordon S. Haight in his George flliot; A Biography (Oxford, New York, ^ondon: Oxford University Press, 1968), p. 382.
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Gash, Politics in the Age of Peel, pp. 137-153; rowdyism by organised
mobs of non-electors is a feature of the election episode of The Newcoraes, (Chapter 69), but is treated quite indulgently as it mainly works in the Colonel's favour and against Barnes.
Rt. Hon. Robert Lowe, Speeches and Letters on Reform, 2nd edn
(London: Robert John Bush, 1867), pp. 32-62, at pp. 47-48, 54-55-

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of the poorest of those who were already electors:

I have had opportunities of knowing some of the constituencies
in this country, and I ask, if you want venality, ignorance,
druhkenness, and the means of intimidations if you want impul-
sive, unreflecting violent people, where will you go to look
for them - to the top or to ths bottom?

This was taken as a slur on the working class in general, and actually did

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a lot to arouse popular enthusiasm for Reform. Lowe also feared the powers of trades unions to force their demands on Parliament, as did many orthodox spokesmen, who saw them as tyrannical and seditious organisations, so that the references in the novel to the dread of trades-union power are probably meant to evoke contemporary apprehensions: manufacturing towns are described in the Introduction as the scenes of "riots and trades-union mee-tings (p. 8), and later young Joyce claims that the ^adicals "'want us to be governed by delegates from the trades-unions, who are to dictate to everybody, and make everything square to their mastery 111 " (p. 180).
Lowe's dim view of the working class's capacity to exercise the vote peacefully or honestly called forth a letter of protest from his own con-stituents, who claimed that he had ignored the providence, self-reliance and perseverance of the lower classes, and other writers also sprang to their defence, -^or example F.D. Maurice, in his book The ^orkraan and the franchise, claimed that workers who wanted the vote despised and repudiated mob violence, that the trades-unions served as a preservative against destructive force by making their members feel that they were part of a

Speeches, p. 25«
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Asa Briggs, Victorian People, rev. ed. (Chicago: University of
Chicago Press, 1970), pp. 193, 233.
3 Speeches, pp. 33, 54-55, 14-Off.
Victorian People, p. 169.
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25 March 1666, rpt. Speeches, pp. 21-22.
'•I'he Workman and, the ^ra_nchi.3e_ (London and New York: Alexander •^trahan, ILE6), pT xii.

commonwealth, and that representation of the unmoneyed class was needed to sustain the intelligence, dignity and unity of the country, and to prevent Parliament from reflecting merely the views of the capitalist and landed interests. Contributors to the 1867 ^ssays on Reform argued meanwhile that the working class was less selfish than the other classes, and was prepared to make sacrifices for great ideas - for example they supported the North in the American Civil ^ar despite the cotton famine which had
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caused such hardships to the workers in the Lancashire cotton districts — and that more people now possessed knowledge, self-respect and a capacity for combined action than were allowed to possess the political privileges to which these qualities entitled them. A longer work by the Christian Socialist J.M. Ludlow and the workman Lloyd Jones, Progress of the Working ^lass Ifc32~l867 goes into much detail about the improvements they believe the working class has undergone since the passing of the first Reform Bill^ discussing not only the legislation regulating employment in factories and mines and providing better sanitary conditions and more education facili-ties, but also the workers' own initiatives towards self-improvement, such as Friendly and Benefit ^ocieties, Penny Savings Banks, Building Societies, Ce-operative stores, evening classes, Working Men's Clubs with reading rooms and libraries, and trades-unions. The latter, it is claimed, both support their members when ill, incapacitated or unemployed, and promote forethought, sobriety, and the growth of mutual trust and confidence, as well as discouraging heavy drinking. Writing of colliers in particular they observe that, although still "one of the most ignorant classes of our

The Workman and the Franchise, pp. 22"l-2b. - - •— — -- ~~
rt.H. Hutton, "'J-'he Political Character of the kj orking Class," in £
Plea for Democracy: An edited selection from the Ib67 ^ssays on Reform and Questions for a. Reformed Parliament, ed. -^.L. Gut ts man (London: Mac^ibbon and Kee, 15^7)> PP« 34-44 •
James Bryce, '"-i-'he Historical Aspect of Democracy," in A_ Plea for •Democracy, pp. Io7-80, at p. 177-

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population," they have become more eager for education for their children and less given to violent sport. Finally John Bright, the Kadical M.P. who had been campaigning for electoral reform since the late l650's, asser-ted that the working classes were not "too degraded, too vicious, and too

2 destructive to be entrusted with the elective franchise," and drew atten-

tion to the thrift and industriousness of the people of Yorkshire and Lan-cashire, as demonstrated by their establishment of co-operative societies and their reliance on savings rather than poor-relief during the cotton famine.
Felix Holt does not comment on whether the working classes were more
fit for the franchise in 1866 than they had been in 1832-33, but the
" Address to Working Ken" strongly suggests that George Eliot believed they had improved little, if at all, since Felix begins by asserting that "as a body we are neither very wise nor very virtuous" (p. 412), and goes on to talk of "'a set of Houghs, who have the worst vices of the worst rich — who are gamblers, sots, libertines, knaves, or else mere sensual simpletons"
(p. 4lT). ^he makes more allowance than does Lowe for the social evils

A partly responsible for their condition, but her treatment of the miners

in the novel takey little account of the circumstances of tneir lives which fostered boozing, thriftlessness and ignorance, such as irregular and un-predictable working hours, dangerous work, the habit of paying wages in public houses (and even in the form of drink), and bad housing conditions.

Progress of_ the ^orking c lass 1832-186? . (London: Alexander
•Hrahan/ 186?), pp. 116-118, Il8-119n.
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Speech of 18 January 1865, in his Speeches on Questions of Public
Policy, ed. J.E. Thorold Rogers, 2nd edn (London: Macmillan and Co..,
1869), II, 103-29, at 129.
Speech of 23 flpril 1866, in Speeches, II, 151-84, at 175-77.
cf. Felix's comment on "'a poor voter named Jack 1 " (p. 251), and,
in the "Address," on the evils that can be blamed on past and present rulers (p. 414j-
5 oee The Progress of the forking Glass 1832-1867, 258ff; John Renson, British Coalminers in the Nineteenth Century (Dublin: GUI and Macmillan, IQfiO). 112ff.

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However the important point is I think that the ^eform debate of the mid 1860*s focussed on the issue of whether the working classes were morally fit or sufficiently educated for the vote, and that their worthiness or otherwise tended to be judged according to whether they exemplified the mid-Victorian virtues of self-help and moral improvement through thrift and self-restraint - hende all the discussion of co-operative societies, savings-banks and the beneficial qualities fostered by trades unions.
the 1860's it was widely believed that moral reform was a prerequisite to social reform, that human nature had to be changed before institutions could be altered for the better. "It is of little use to alter the suff-rage unless we alter ourselves," argued ^alter #agehot in the final instal-

2 ment of his English Constitution. Supporters of Reform generally made an

exception for the very lowest and most ignorant classes of society, while one popular argument used in favour of extension of the suffrage was that the vote actually encouraged moral and intellectual improvement, -^or Mill, the opportunity to participate in the constitution had an invigorating effect on the individual - the performance of public duty gave a largeness to his conceptions, and sentiments, since he was called on to weigh inte-rests not his own and to apply principles and maxims based on the common

4 good.- while Maurice argued that if the worker saw the franchise as a trust,

it might itself be "a better discipline, morally and intellectually, for

Brant linger, The Spirit of Reform, pp. 1-9, 13.

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fortnightly Review, 1 January 1867, pp. 78-99? rpt. Collected Works
of' Walter Bagehot, ed. Norman 3t. - Jo-hn-Stevas, Vol. V (London: The econo-mist, 1974), pp. 384-4QJ, at pp. 405-406.
See for example James Bryce, "The Historical Aspect of Democracy,"
p. 178," and John Stuart Mill, Representative Government (l86l), rpt. in Utilitarianism, Liberty, Representative Government, pp. 171-393, at 2&0ff. Representative ^overnment, pp. 216-17, 277-79.

the English citizen than the knowledge, however desirable in itself, which some would demand as the conditxoy. precedent to his acquisition of it." ^elix's preoccupation with individual moral reform is hence very characte-ristic of the l660's, and reflects too the point of view which several former Radicals of the 1830's had come to hold by that decade. For example by 1858 Matthew Davenport Hill, a pro-radical barrister of the 1^30's, saw little hope in appealing to the masses, and favoured granting an extra vote for the attainment of an educational standard, r while the Chartist leader William Lovett lost his faith in political agitation and developed a gro-wing interest in popular education and self-improvement, coming to believe that political and general instruction should be a prerequisite for a share of political power. In fact !,he mid-Victorian apostle of self-help, °amuel Smiles, had himself once been a Radical: in the l840 f s he had advo-cated the extension of the suffrage and the repeal of the corn-laws, but later came to feel the inadequacy of political formulae and collective striving in an atmosphere of ignorance and poverty, and turned to thrift and self—help as the best channels for working-class improvement. His books such as Self-Help (1&59) and Character (1871) argue that social evils are largely the outgrowth of man's perverted life, and that

No laws, however stringent, can make the idle industrious,
the thriftless provident, or the drunken sober. Such reforms
can only be effected by means of individual action, economy,
and self-denial, by better habits rather than by greater rights.

'•Phe ^orkman and the Franchise, p. ix.
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rf.L. ^urn, The Age of Equipoise, p. 75-
Burn, p. 77.
Quoted by Bpiggs, Victorian People, pp. 123-24*

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The parallels between Felix and Smiles and other former Radicals do not necessarily mean that Felix is anachronistic, since Joseph Parkes, a lead-ing figure in the Birmingham Political Union and father of George ^liot's friend Be esie Rayner Parkes, was already by 1839 a^ opponent of Chartism, having come to feel that he had had "'many Radical prejudices, or rather ignorances, removed, 1 " and that "'much liberty, and still more social hap-piness and illumination can be spread by Education than by mere forms of Government'" Similarly oamuel Bamford, whose Passages in the Life of & Radical was also part of George Eliot's research for Felix Holt, had been very involved in Radical agitation in the period after the Napoleonic Wars, but by the time he wrote his memoirs (l839~4°) had become very critical of the violence and dishonesty habitual in elections, and felt the overriding

2 need was for education in the knowledge of right and wrong. He praises

workers who have used their initiative to educate themselves, and his com-ment that this is "radicalism with a vengeance, and aims at the deep root of one of our great social evils" possibly suggested to George Eliot Felix's remark to Lyon that he is a Radical, but one who wants "'to go to some roots a good deal lower down than the franchise 1 " (p. 226).
George Eliot is generally criticised for creating in Felix an idealise character and a spokesman for her own views, both of which he is, but his unsatisfactoriness is not due simply to this, or even to the fact that his outlook is more characteristic of the 1660's than of the 1830's, but rather to the lack of any real sense of the p«.st experience that has led him to

Quoted by Burn, The Age of Equipoise, p. 74* Emphasis Parkes's.
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Passages in the Life of _a Radical (1&40; rpt. London: Si.npkin,
Marshall & Co.; Manchester: Abel rieywood, 1859), pp. 10-12.
Bamford, Passages, pp. 439-44°-

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his opinions. He seems never to have been influenced enough by Radical ideas to have become disillusioned with them - a point made by J.R. Wise in the review in the Westminster; "many a village Hampden" was created in the I830 f s by the starvation, brutality and injustice endured by the poor at the hands of the wealthy and privileged. '-^he problem is exacerbated by the fact that so many of the other major characters - Harold and Mrs Transome, Esther and ftufus Lyon - have to learn from difficult experiences. The novel also reflects the belief common by the l860's, but less so
in the l&30's, that the relationship of past and present was a steady or-ganic growth, that societies evolve gradually and inevitably through a chain of causes and effects in accordance with discoverable natural laws, that society was so complex and interdependent that it was difficult to change one aspect of it without damaging another. That this po.int of view underlies Felix Holt is suggested of course by Felix's attacks on plans for sweeping change, and also by his strictures on the vague Romantic aspi-rations towards the infinite embodied in the eponymous hero of Chateau-briand's Rene (p. 108), Romanticism having been an important impetus behind the hopes of the 1830's and 1840*s for social and political trans-formations through wide-ranging reforms. The point of view implicit in
the novel is made explicit in the "Address". Here society is compared to "the human body, with all its various parts depending on one another, and with a terrible liability to get wrong because of this delicate dependance" (p. 415)> a^d in this body there are

"I'elix Holt - the Radical," Westminster iteview, NS 30 (1866), 200-
207, at 203.
2
Burn, The ^ge of Equipoise, pp. 62-04 .

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old institutions, and among them the various distinctions and inherited advantages of classes, which have shaped them-
selves along with all the wonderful slow-growing system of
things made up of our laws, our commerce, and our stores of
all sorts, whether in material objects, such as buildings and
machinery, or in- .knowledge, such as scientific thought and professional skill (p. 416)

It is a view with which Scott would have agreed, ^adical change by the working classes would be dangerous not only because of their own ignorance, drunkenness and self-interest, but also because " Lt J he nature of things
in this world has been determined for us beforehand" (p. 417)> many of the evils of their condition are not such as they can blame others for (p. 421), and much of what has grown up as part of the aristocracy's way of life is worth preserving - "that treasure of knowledge, science, poetry, refinement of thought; feeling, and manners, great memories, and the interpretation
of great records, which'is carried on from the minds of one generation to the minds of another" (p. 418)•
AS I noted in the Introduction, the belief held by thinkers such as Spencer, Comte and Ruckle that not only the natural world but also histo-rical change was governed by irreversible laws meant that the role attri-buted to the "great man" in history was minimised, ^'or G eorge Eliot in Felix Holt small-fcale change is all that is either possible or indeed desi-rable, and individual initiative is the source of improvement. Since "'great things can't happen,'" ^'elix cares for "'very si.iall things, such as will never be known beyond a few garrets and workshops'" (p. 364). Like Adarn Bede and Silas Marner in the simpler life of the early nineteenth-century village, Felix represents a possible instrument of social progress for the towns of the l&30's and after, Interestingly, in their account of working-class advances since 1832, Jones and I/uAlow point out that these are difficult to determine accurately because of the "unrecorded, the

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unremembered, the undiscoverable" - the short-lived mutual improvement so-

ciety, the healthy influence of one or two men in a shop, the grip of one

thought by one tenacious mind, may have been the germ of some remarkable

organisation now worked by men unaware of its origin. Felix aims " f to do

small work close art . hand, not waiting for speculative chances of heroism,

but preparing for them 1 " (p. 245). That he is potentially heroic in the

conventional sense is suggested when the narrator remarks, as Felix starts

the risky business of leading the riotous mob, "we hardly allow enough in

common life for the results of that enkindled passionate enthusiasm which,
• ||

under other conditions, makes world-famous deeds (p. 269)• AK earlier

passage, relating to Lyon's illusions about the likely effect of his words

on Harold tfhen the latter has come to canvass him, reminds the reader of the

respect due to each man in history who has played a small role in forward-

ing "the onward tendency of human things":

what we call illusions are often, in truth, a wider vision of
past and present realities - a willing movement of a man's soul
with the larger sweep of the world's forces - a movement towards
a more assured end than the chances of a single life, i^e see human heroism broken into units and say, this unit did little - might as well not have been. But in this way we might break up a great army into units; in this way we might break the sunlight into fragments, and think that this and the other might be
cheaply parted with. Let us rather raise a monument to the sol-
diers whose brave hearts only kept the ranks unbroken, and raet
death - a monument to the faithful who were not famous, and who
are precious as the continuity of the sunbeams is precious,
though some of them fall unseen and on barrenness (p. 161)

^eorge Eliot's portrayal of Felix and Lyon reflects in fact a charac-

teristic of contemporary thought to which E.3. Dallas (who reviewed the

novel in the Times of 26 June 1866) drew attention in another work of the

The Progress of the d pricing Glass 1832-1867, p.

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same year. "The private virtues are becoming public," he remarked, while the private life is rising into public importance," such that "we recog-nise the fact that the action of every unit of a nation or a party tells upon the total result of human achievement." Consequently, " (h) orny-hand is now a hero as much as any knight of old that placed his lance in rest for the golden lilies, or for the roses, white and red." Thackeray's novels have, he says, encouraged the trend, bu urging upon us the idea that we are all alike, and thy/t the differences between the extremes of human-kind are very trifling - although in Thackeray's work this tendency often serves to present a pessimistic view of human nature rather than to high-light the heroism inherent in private life. Partly because of female novelists' greater interest in domestic relations, too, their recent lite-rary ascendancy has meant that "the individual as a great public character withers. The individual as a member of society and in all his private re-lations grows in importance."
That slow and steady change is not necessarily progressive is however suggested by the implied contrast between the semi-rural midlands of 1831 and the more urbanised area of 1866, and by the final satirical comments on Tpeby Magna:

it has since prospered as the rest of England has prospered.
Doubtless there is more enlightenment now. ^hether the farmers
are all public-spirited, the shopkeepers nobly independent,
the ^proxton men entirely sober and judicious, the ^issenters

The Gay Science (London: Chapman and Hall, 1866), II, 252.
2 The Ctay Science, II, 274.
3 The Gay Science, II, 272.
4 The Ga-J ^cience, II, 288-92.
5 The Gay Science, II, 299.

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quite without narrowness or asperity in relrgion and politics,
and the publicans all fit, like Gaius, to be the friends of an
apostle - these things I have not heard ... "hether any presump-
tion may be drawn from the fact that North Loamshire does not yet
return a Radical candidate, I leave to the all-wise - I mean the
newspapers (p. 399)

Although no supporter of sweeping political change, George Eliot, as we have seen in The Mill on the Floss, does not endorse mid-Victorian compla-cency about progress. In February 1864 the economist ^onamy Price delivered a paean to the increasing prosperity of the previous thirty years - for
him the period had seen the reduction of the "reforming flood into the steady and calm stream of prosperous progress." All that was necessary
had been done, and most Englishmen had now attained "a broader civilization, a purer and more generous humanity, a more cultivated intelligence, a softei spirit, a richer, more sustained, and more ennobling prosperity." Lowe also believed that since 1832 the House of Commons had "revised every insti-tution of the country" such that "everything that was complained of, every-thing that had grown distasteful, has been touched with success and modera—

2 tion by the amending hand." On the more personal level in the novel,

Esther's education, like that of Mrs Transome about thirty-five years be-fore, fails equally to provide her with any moral principles to guide her life, - she becomes preoccupied with matters of accent, taste, and style, just as Mrs Transome had been eager merely to show off her playing, singing, painting, and daring quotations from "the lighter parts of dangerous French authors," and had adopted "correct" pro-Tory, pro-Church of England opinions

1 "The Political Temper of the Nation," Fraser's, 69 (1864), 135-59,
at 137-
2
Speech of 3 May 1865, in Speeches, pp. 32-62, at p. 51•
cf. Maggie Tulliver's education at a slightly later period.

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without either thinking about them or letting them govern her conduct (pp. 27-29). -"-he two women even read at least one author in common, hateaubriand, Mrs 'J'ransome to talk in company of his eloquence (p. 27), Esther presumably because she is dissatisfied with her life in Treby and, like his hero Hene, is inclined to ask, "'Est-ce ma faute, si je trouve partout les bornes?"1 (p. 108). Meanwhile the change in Jermyn since his youth prompts the narrator to ask rhetorically, as the lawyer prepares to avert ruin by revealing Mrs Transome's secret to their son, "[sjhall we call it degeneration or gradual development - this effect of thirty additional winters on the soft-glancing, versifying young Jermyn?" (p. 38l).
It is a weakness in the novel however that, given the emphasis placed
on the choices faced by both Felix and Esther between a future of progress and one of degeneration, Harold Transome has so little control over his
own fate. George Eliot is obviously -concerned to contrast Harold's politi-cal Radicalism, which seeks widespread change but is contaminated by his class prejudice and condoning of corruption, with the almost apolitical Radicalism of Felix, which works honestly for small ends, and the point is made effectively as far as it goes. Nevertheless the two discoveries that most deeply affect Harold, that Esther has a prior cibaim to the '^ransome estate, and that he is Jermyn 1 s illegitimate son, are circumstances which he can have done nothing to prevent, and seem like rather arbitrary punish-ments for his egoism. Moreover, despite the famous statement that "there is no private life which has not been determined by a wider public life"
- 45)> what happens to Harold is not really determined by social

Relief part of Le Ge'nie du Ghristianisme (1602) was his second suc-
cessful work after Atala (1801). There was a new English translation as late as 1&54» Chateaubriand was apparently a "sublime poseur, a sublime egot^yst, and a sublime day-dreamer, seeing the world in and through him-self,' much as Felix suggests (Oxford Companion to French Literature, comp. and ed. Sir Paul Harvey and J.E. Heseltine, 1959> P» 126).

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conditions or political developments: Esther's claim to the estate and the way it is brought to light are based on a complicated and improbable series of events which have little connection with any "wider public life." And the most powerful part of the novel, the story of Mrs Transome, depends little on any social or political context. Towards the end of the Intro-duction in fact the narrator raoves away from the detailed description of the midlands of 1&31 to a series of generalisations about the many conse-quences of wrong-doing and the pain, hatred, and robberies which remain secret, "breathed into no human ear" (p. ll) - that is, the narrator, obvi-ously foreshadowing the part of the story concerning Mrs T ransome, focusses on a kind of life that is both private (in the most extreme sense of the word), and unrelated to any particular period, '^he final paragraph of the Introduction breaks completely free of any setting in time or place, and in an extended allusion to Virgii s Aeneid and -^ante's Inferno, imbues Mrs Transome f s plight with an a-historical and even religious significance:

The poets have told us of a dolorous enchanted forest in the
under world. The thorn-bushes there, and the thick-barked
stems, have human histories hidden in them; the power of unuttered cries dwells in the passionless-seeming branches,
and the red warm blood is darkly feeding the quivering nerves
of a sleepless memory that watches through all dreams. These things are a parable, (p. 11).

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GEORGE ELIOT - 6. MIDDLEMARCH

Like Felix Holt, Middlemarch (1871-72) deals with the period dominated poli-tically by the issues of Catholic Emancipation and Parliamentary Reform,
but in this case all the events in the novel (apart from the "Finale") take place before the passing of the Reform Bill in the first week of June 1832. The first political reference is in Chapter 1, where provincial families are said to be "still discussing Mr Peel's late conduct on the Catholic Question/1 which suggests a date soon after the passing of Catholic -Mancipation in January 1829, and slightly further on Celia tells Doroth^. that it is the "'last day of September'" (l, 10). Later we learn that Mr Brooks collects 'documents on machine-breaking and rick-burning" (I, 34-35)» and although such expressions of discontent reached their height in the winters of 1830-31 and 1831-32, they'had been going on sporadically since the beginning of

2 the economic depression in 1&15« In 1829 the handloom weavers in several

places, including the silk-weaving centres of Coventry, -^edworth and Nunea-ton, rioted and destroyed the new machinery which they believed to threaten their livelihood. By the time Dorothea is on her honeymoon, and the novel has turned to focus on Lydgate's plans for medical reform, it is said to be "the end of 1829" (II, 264). Later, before reading Fec.therstone f s willy
Mr Standish talks of "the last bulletins concerning the King" (IV, 201), a reference to the long illness of George IV which ended in his death on 26 June 1&30: according to Harriet Martineau the news given to the public on

Middlemarch £ Study of Provincial Life, by George Eliot (8 parts; Edinburgh and London: William Blackwood and Sons, 1871-72), AH subsequent citations will be from this edition, which appeared from December 187! to December 1872.

2 Horn, The Rural World 1780-1850, p. 88; HoV>sbawm and ^ude", Captain
^wing, p. 16.
Halevy, The Liberal Awakening I8l5-l830, p. 290; Harriet Martineau
The History of England during the Thirty Years' Peace, I (London: Charles Knight, 184977 ?• 508.

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the subject over April-June 1830 was misleading, playing down the serious-

ness of the illness. Soon afterwards Mr Vincy cites the ruinous state of

the country as the reason why he cannot give Rosamond a dowry:

"Parliament going to be dissolved, and machine-breaking every-
where and an election coming on ... ^ome say it s the end
of the world, and be hanged if I don't think it looks like it"
(IV, 237-38)

and later the narrator elaborates:

The doubt hinted by Mr Vincy whether it were only the general election or the end of the world that was coming on, now that George the -Fourth was dead, Parliament dissolved, Wellington and Peel generally depreciated and the new King apologetic, was a feeble type of the uncertainties in -provincial opinion
at that time, ^ith the glow-worm lights of country places, how could me*i see which were their own thoughts in the con-fusion of a Tory Ministry passing Liberal measures, of Tory
nobles being anxious to return Liberals rather than friends
of the recreant Ministers....(IV, 244-45)

Parliament had been dissolved on 24 July 1830, and according to W.N. Moles-

2 worth, the political atmosphere was "charged with electricity." Many Tories

were still disaffected with Wellington and Peel for their support of Catholic

Emancipation, while ^incy's apocalyptic visions were later to be shared

even by Dr Arnold., who feared that the Reform agitation and the revolutionary

mood of the period heralded the end of one of the great epochs of the human

race.

In the midst of this political excitement, Mr Hackbutt announces

I myself should, never favour immoderate views - in fact I take
my stand with Huskisson - but I cannot bl:nd myself to the con-
sideration that the non-representation of large towns..." (IV, 24?)

1 History, I, 552.
2
The History of the Reforin Bill of 1832 (London: Chapman and Hall,
1865), p. 77-

•^ee Peter -Allan -^ale, ^he "ictorian Critic and the Idea of History (Cambridge, Mass, and London: Harvard University Press, 1977)> P- 95? Ouncan Forbes, '•'•'he Liberal Anglican Idea of History, pp. 97-9^'••

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He is alluding here to the Bill introduced by Lord John Hussell a few months earlier (23 ^ebruary 1830) providing for the enfranchisement of Leeds, **ir-mingham and Manchester. Huskisson had supported it but did not favour any further extension of the franchise, for fear that democracy would lead even-tually to a military despotism. '•'•he '^ory Hawley declares however that quashing pocket-boroughs and enfranchising " f every mushroom town in the kingdom 1 " would only increase the expenditure of getting into Parliament (IV, 247) - a view which Felix Holt suggests George filiot would endorse. Political issues move to the forefront of the novel in the chapters
dealing with Mr Brooke's candidacy for Middlemarch. When the election of August-September 1830 is imminent the T0 ry Trumpet attacks Brooke's bad management of his own estate, highlighting the contrast between his public statements and his private conduct (IV, 292-93) and recalling George Eliot's treatment of the same kind of theme in Adam Bede and Felix Holt, ^he force of the paper's criticisms is brought home to Brooke himself when he visits the farm of his tenant JJagley, with its ivy-choked chimney, "worm-eaten shutters , "mouldering garden wall," "pauper labourers in ragged breeches," "scanty dairy of cows, spiritless, underfed pigs and ducks (IV, 312). Oagley himself abuses Brooke, and declares that the "'Hinform'" will send Brooke and his ilk "'a-scuttlin'; an 1 wi' pretty strong-smellin 1 things too, 1 " giving voice to the hostility towards the landed interest which pre-vailed at the time of the 1830 election, and the great but misplaced opti-mism of many of the poor about the effects of Heform. Public interest in the issue increased further when an actual Bill was proposed in March 1&31: according to Harriet Martineau even in rural hamlets and scattered farm-

Martineau, History, I, 550-
2 Brock, The G reat Reform Act, 86ff

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steads labourers would club together to buy papers to read - or hear read-the Parliamentary debates, and rural artisans walked miles to towns to read posters or hear what was said in public houses. At the beginning of Chapter 46 we have reached this period: there is "a new political animation in Middlemarch, and a new definition of parties which might show a decided change of balance if a new election came" (V, 55)• '^he Commons rejected
the -Bill in effect by passing a motion against any decrease in the represent-ation of England and Wales, and the King (William IV) dissolved Parliament amid uproar on 22 April. Brooke, who did not after all stand in the 1830 election, decides to do so in that of May 1831, and ^ill has to urge him to support the Bill wholeheartedly instead of adopting his usual attitude of not wanting to go "too far." The country, Ladislaw explains, ' * wants to have a House of Commons which is not weighted with nominees of the landed class, but with representatives of the other interests'" (V, 57)- The 1831 election was fought almost wholly on the issue of the Reform Bin - most people wanted it, and candidates were asked to pledge their support for

2 "the Bill, the whole Biii? and nothing but the Bill." Later Ladislaw fails

to learn of the codicil to Casaubon s will because " [tj he famous *dry elec-tion* was at hand, in which the depths of public feeling might be measured by the low flood-mark of drink," and "more private noises were taken little notice of! (V, 127). ^s in -^'elix Holt however the narrator points out that agitation for Reform was not universal, since Lowick is "not more agitated by Reform than by the solemn tenor of the Sunday sermon" (V, 79), while
in the nearby parish of Frick,

1 History, II, 39.

2 Molesworth, pp. 195-96; Henry Vi^etelly, Glances Back through
Seventy Years ^.T, ~76.

the rumour of Reform had not yet excited any millennial expec-
tations ... there being no definite promise in it, as of gratu-
itous grains to fatten Hiram Ford's pig, or of a publican at
the "^eights and Scales" wno would brew beer for nothing, or of
an offer on the part of the three neighbouring farmers to raise
wages during winter (VI, 230)

Vizetelly recalled that the public preoccupation with Reform at this period was so great that even news of public interest such as Scott's final illness was hardly mentioned in the papers, but on the other hand, in 1836 he met an old shepherd at ^tonehenge, near the notorious rotten borough of Old Sarum, who had never heard of Reform.
Even ifBrooke's candidature had been successful, his election as a representative for Middlemarch would have been a dubious honour. Mrs ^ad-wallader had remarked that the last unsuccessful candidate had failed because he did not bribe enough, and her husband had quoted the opinion that •^ast R-etford, a well-known corrupt borough whose disenfranchisement had been much discussed in Parliament in 1828-30, "'was nothing to Middlemarch"1 (IV, 294). It is clear from Brooke's attempt to canvass the grocer Mawmsey that candidates generally undertake to do business with their political sup-oorters alone; the means of enlisting the ignorance of the Middlemarch voter on the side of the Bill "were remarkably similar to the means of enlisting it on the side against the Bill" (V, 135).
'^he treatment of Brooke's candidacy shows then that, as in Felix Kolt., George ^liot is doubtful about the value of political reform when it is not accompanied by moral reform. Before the elction Lydgate accuses Ladislaw of "'crying up a measure as if it were a universal cure, and crying up men who are part of the very disease that wants curing,'" and although Ladislaw

Glances Back, pp. 77, 133.

argues that "'your cure must begin somewhere, 1 " and that it is no use wai-ting for '"immaculate men to work with 1 " (V, 67-68) in his mind he is uneasy about his relations with Brooke, both because the latter is obviously an incompetent aandidate and because he knows he himself is only using his work on the Pioneer as an excuse to stay near Dorothea, ^incy's and Mawm-sey's attitudes to politics are also obviously governed by self-interest. Moreover political concerns tend to be swept aside by local and personal interests, ^ir James and Mrs ^adwallader cease to be concerned about ^rooke's intention to stand when they learn he has consented to Dorothea's marrying Casaubon; Lydgate and Bulstrode talk about cholera and the chances of the Reform Bill in the Lords after Raffles' death so as to avoid the sub-ject of how he died (VII, 141) and when the scandal finally breaks, "all public conviviality, from the Green Dragon to Dollop's, gathered a zest which could not be won from the question whether the Lords would throw out the Reform Bill" (VII, 155). Later there is a meeting of the Middlemarch Board for the superintentiance of sanitary measures against the cholera, which had appeared in London in February 1832, but the significance of the
. eeting lies in the occasion it provides for publicly exposing and ostraci-sing Bulstrode, and forcing Lydgate to help him, thus confirming the other citizens in their suspicions that Bulstrode has bribed him to cover up the murder of Rafi'les. Towards the end of the novel a public issue is displaced again when Brooke arrives to tell the Ghettams and ^adwalladers that Doro-thea has resolved to marry Ladislaw. The others assume his despondency is due to the fact that the Lords have in fact thrown out the Reform Bill (which happened in May 1832), but Brooke is totally preoccupied with his niece's impending marriage, and the others also soon forget politics in

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their consternation. We hear nothing of the Middlemarch reaction to the rejection of the Reform Bill, although in the country as a whole this, to-gether with Lord Grey's resignation: two days later, aroused much indigna-tion, with large meetings of the Political Unions and many pro-Reform peti-

2 tions. Nor is there any reference in the novel to any Middlemarch response

to the Lords 1 rejection of an earlier version of the Bill on 8 October. 1&31, which had stimulated the formation of Political Unions and led to attacks
on leading anti-Reform peers, disturbances at -^erby and Nottingham, and three days of serious rioting at Bristol. George .Eliot is if anything
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underemphasising the interest in the Reform issue in the early 1830*s»
In Felix Holt, as we have seen, proposals for political reforms were compared unfavourably with the small-scale individual efforts which Felix undertakes. In Middlemarch it is the characters with modest aims who lead the most successful lives, ^ir James Chettam, for example, contents himself with being a generous paternalistic landlord, doing the best for his land and tenants during the agricultural depression of the period (I, 27; IV, 288) ^aleb Garth, who has much in common with Adam Bede, is proud to be part of the "myriad-headed, myriad-handed labour by which the social body is fed, clothed, and housed" (ill, 44)• Garth's daughter and son-in-law Mary and Fred Viricy lead similar lives of limited but worthwhile achievement: Fred becomes 'rather distinguished in his side of the county as a theoretic and practical farmer" and writes a book on the Cultivation of Green G rpp S and the Economy of Gattle-^Feeding, thus playing his part in the drive towards farming improvements which occurred from the late 1630*s onward, while Mary

'•^he displacement of public issues by private concerns in the latter
part of Middlemarch has been well covered by Jerome Beaty in his "History

by Indirection: The -Era of Reform in Middlemarch," Victorian Studies, I (1957), 173-79. —————————————
2 Brock, 294ff.

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becomes a contented wife and mother, as well as the author of a children's book (VIII | 359)» ^he and her brother Jim are also great readers of Scott: she talks playfully of Brenda Troil and Mordaunt Mertoun, Minna Troil and Cleveland (all from The Pirate), and Waverley and Flora Mac-'Ivor, when Fred claims that "'a woman is never in love with anyone she has always known"
(II, 244~45)» an(i it emerges later that Fred has brought her Anne of
stein (1828) to read at Featherstone's (ill, 162-63). In Chapter 57 Jim reads from Ivanhoe, by "that beloved writer who has made a chief part in the happiness of many young lives" (VI, 201). ^his all tends to suggest that Scott's novelr, are valuable largely for the diversion and entertain-ment they provide, a view which was becoming increasingly common by the time Middlemarch was written: in April l6?2 a writer in the London Quarterly ^eview contrasted the "wide intellectuality and profound soul-lore infor-ming "Amos -Barton" with "the simple, healthful interest in lives of adven-ture" which young people find in reading the ^averley Novels, "unencumbered as those books are by any didactic or other purpose ulterior to the original nature of romance';" George Eliot's own epigraph for Chapter 57 hints . however at a deeper connection between Scott and the characters in the novel Scott stirs in children motions like those which "thrill the buds and shape their hidden frame/ -^t penetration of the quickening air" and makes "the little world their childhood knew/Large with a land of mountain, lake, and scaur//-lnd larger yet with wonder, love, belief." And then, when separated from the book, " L"rr]n lines that thwart like portly spiders ran, /They wrote the tale, from Tully Veolan'. " This I think foreshadows Fred's and Mary's future, writing books and passing a productive but uneventful life at ^tone Court, just as '"'averley ends up living peacefully with Rose at Tully~

Veolan.

^uoted in Hayden, Spott : The Critical Heritage, p. 469.

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•••he "Finale" pays tribute to people like Caleb, Fred, Mary, and (eventually) ^orothea -

for the growing good of the world is partly dependent on unhis-
toric acts; and that things are not so ill with you and me as
they might have been, is half owing to the number who lived faithfully a hidden life, and rest in unvisited tombs

George Eliot's letters from the period in which the novel was written also express confidence in the value of individual small-scale effort. In Janu-ary 1870 she wrote to Oscar Browning that "[oDne must care for small imme-diate results as well as for great and distant ones," and to Mrs Mark Patti-son she observed in September, " fijt seems to be more than ever that in our affectionate relations we have some of the moral treasure of the world

2 under our charge." However this belief was partly a refuge in the face of

the horror of the Franco-Prussian War of 1870-71: the preceding sentence of the letter just quoted reads, "the painful, too engrossing thoughts raised in

by the War urge me to counteracting thoughts of all friendly bonds." he next year, writing to Francois d'Albert-^Durade, she speaks of

the myriad sorrows produced by the regression of barbarism from
that historical tomb where we thought it so picturesquely buried
- if indeed we ought not to beg pardon of barbarism, which had no
weapons for making eight wounds at once in our body, and rather
call the present warfare that of the devil and all his legions

Middlemarch itself contains nothing as desponding as this comment, in which George Eliot is forced to have recourse to a supernatural explanation of human evil. However two years earlier, when European war already seemed imminent, she had told d'Albert-JJurade that " [t] he want of public spirit is

1 31 January 1870, in allot Letters, V, 76.
15 September 1870, in Eliot Letters, V, 117. ^ 27 January 1871, in Eliot Letters, V, 135.

one of the crying defects in our countrymen," and in the novel this lack of public spirit is I think treated more critically than in Adam ^ede - we learn that Dorothea's son declines to stand for Middlemarch, "thinking that his opinions had less chance of "being stifled if he remained out of doors" (VIII , 369) - while there is a greater sense of regret over the failure to create improvement by political means than in -Felix Holt. However the main failures dealt with in the novel are of course those of Lydgate, who in his medical and scientific career does not manage "to do good small work for Middlemarch, and great work for the world" (II, 265), and Dorothea, who can-not live an "epic life" in the England of her time. 'J'he prominence of their stories- made many contemporaries feel that the 'novel was very melancholy. According to R.H. Hutton in the Spectator George Eliot "steadily discourages the hope that there is any light for us behind the cloud," while the At hen-amim claimed tha.t the novel Kas "from prologue to epilogue tinged with melan-choly," such that "'all is vanity and vexation of spirit' seems to be for ever ringing in our ears. 1 " In the .Quart erly Robert Laing notes the "profound despondency" of the general tone, and responds with the characte-ristic mid-Victorian assurance in steady progress:

Humanity as such makes progress ... the stream of human life
has adapted itself to general needs, it obeys uniform laws, it
ha.s renounced all fury and eccentricity ... it flows deeply and persistently without storm or spray

But Middlemarch points out how gradual change could also work in the direc-tion of degeneration, that "in the multitude of middle-aged men who go about their vocations in a daily course determined for them much in the same way 1 30 Jcinuary It 68, in Eliot Letters, IV, 419.
2 [it.h. Hutton], "The Melancholy of Middlemarch," Spectator, 1 June 1872
pp. 685-87; rpt. George Eliot, Hiodlemarch; A casebook, ed. Patrick Swinden (London and ^asingstoke: Macmillan, 1972)> PP- 34~39> at p. 35*
3 Mhenaeum, 7 pecember 1872, pp. 725-26, at p. 72 S.
"Middlemarch: A Study of Provincial Life," Quarterly Review, 134
(1873), 336-69, at 365-66.

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as the tie of their cravats, there is always a good number who once meant to shape their own deeds and .Alter the world a little" (ll, 257).
One reason for setting Lydgate's story in the recent past is to show
the beginnings of his "gradual change," and to make the reader aware of the great youthful hopes that may lie buried in the commonplace middle-aged men they see around them (cf. "Mr Gilfil's Love-Story"), and even of the part they may themselves have played in thwarting them through "conforming falsi-ties" and "silly conclusions" And to have left Lydgate even in 1832, without spelling out his subsequent decline into conformity and acquiescence in Rosamond's demands, would not have been satisfactory, since

the fragment of a life, however typical, is not the sample of an
even web; promises may not be kept, and an ardent outset may be
followed by declension; latent powers may find their long-awaited opportunity; a past error may urge a grand retrieval (l/ll),

More specifically, however, by setting the crucial, determining stage of Lydgate's career in 1829-32 George Eliot intensifies the tragedy of his fai-lure, since he is living at the beginning of a period of great medical and scientific reform, so that if he had overcome his early problems, he would have found his ideas and techniques accepted within about a generation.
For example, his diagnosis of Fred's illness as typhoid fever, which
so much arouses the ire and jealousy of ^rench, is based on his reading of P.O. A. Louis' 1829 book on the subject (ll, 293~94)> while the disease was later distinguished from typhus fever in 1837 by William Wood ^erhard of Philadelphia. The work of both had become generally known in England by

^harles Singer and E. -"-shworth Underwood, ^ Short History o_f_ Medicine
2nd edn (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1962), p. 387. See also "Quarry for Midalemarch," ed. and intro. Anna Theresa Kitchel, rpt . Nineteenth-century Fiction, 4 (195°) » supplement, I, 17, where George Eliot gives the date
as Ifc36.

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about 1&50. Meanwhile the dispute over the surgeon's right to prescribe drugs and take fees for attendance alone causes much ill-feeling between Lydgate and the other doctors (see esp. Chapter 45) and has Mawmsey telling Gambit that "Lydgate went about saying physic was of no use" (V, 30). Because of a legal decision in the case of Handey vs. Henson in January 1829 - re-ferred to by Hawley as " f a damned judge's decision"1 (V, 34)» Lydgate was entitled to charge for attendance rather than drugs, and, as he had hoped,

2 the change led to a rise in doctors' social status by mid-century. Lydgate f s

difficulty in getting dead bodies to dissect for research leads him to re-quest the corpse of Mrs Goby, arousing the indignation of Mrs Dollop, who predicts that "there would be no limits to the cutting-up of bodies, as had been well seen in Burke and Hare" (V, 24). She is alluding to a horrific series of crimes in Scotland, revealed in 1828, in which Burke and Hare had murdered at least fifteen people and sold their bodies to a doctor for dis-section: Hare turned King's evidence, and Burke was hanged in January 1829« AS a result of the case, "dreadful stories of murder" were current in every town, and gangs of murderess thought to be at large. However in 1833 an Anatomy Act was passed, legalising the dissection of unclaimed workhouse corpses, and thus protecting doctors from accusations of fostering crime,
as well as raising their status in the public eye.
Also innovatory are Lydgate's use of the stethoscope to examine
Casaubon, and his up-to-date method of treating Haffles* delirium tremens. Using the stethoscope, it is pointed out, "had not become a matter of course

linger and Underwood, pp. 387, 722.
2
Charles Newman, The -^volution of Medical Education in the Nineteenth Century (London: Oxford University Press,1957)> P« 78.
J Martineau, History, I,

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in practice at that time" (ill, 112). Laennec had invented the device in 1&19» and discussed its uses in a book on auscultation in the same year, while its use had been advocated by the leading London doctor John Elliotson in a clinical lecture of 15 October 1829, in which he had discussed hyper-trophy of the heart, that is, the "fatty degeneration" from which Casaubon suffers, and, like Lydgate, recommended low diet, rest, and the avoidance
of all excitement. However the fact that he also prescribes the old-fashionei remedy of bleeding, whereas Lydgate does not, again highlights the modernity of the latter 's methods (ill, 112-13): we have already been told that "the heroic times of copious bleeding and blistering had not yet departed" (ll,

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252) By 1831 the fleeting interest aroused by Laennec 's work of 1819 had in fact largely died out, but the stethoscope was eventually to be adopted
•-I

by Dr Addison at Guy's in 1836 and had become commonplace at King's by 1853. Pevelopments such as the use of the stethoscope and easier access to corpses for morbid anatomy promoted the actual physical examination of the patient (as distinct from the mere investigation of symptoms) — the main medical advance of the nineteenth century - and hence helped to underline the pen—

4 chant for "thorough-going theory of the period in which the novel is set.

It is made cle;>r in the novel that Lydgate' s treatment of delirium
tremems is also advanced for his time. ^hereas the traditional approach involves large doses of opium and alcohol, Lydgate recommends small doses of opium and abstinence from alcohol (VII, 117-18), and Bulstrode causes
* death by allowing Mrs Abel to continue with the traditional mode

1 Lancet (1^29-30), I, 141-44- In "Quarry," I, 2, George Eliot noted
Lancet review of Elliotson 's book on diseases on the heart of 9 October
1830 (1830-31, I, 84-86). This is the same Dr. Elliotson to whom Thackeray was to dedicate Pendennis twenty years later.
Anna 'i'nereaa Kitchel, Introduction to "Quarry for Middlemarch," p. 8, Newman, 88ff .
4 Newmari, pp. 96, 105-107.

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of treatment. In the early l830*s treatment of this illness was very contro-versial: in most cases cited in the Lancet the old approach was used and recommended, but on 16 March 1833 there was a heated argument at a meeting of the Westminster Medical Society about the value of opium and stimulants

p in curing the condition. On 26 October the Lancet reports four cases, in which their use had been successful in only one. Lydgate himself bases his approach on the ^rnerican experience of Dr John Ware, whose Remarks on the History of Treatment of Qelirium Tremens had been published in Boston in 1831. In the novel the uncertainty about the treatment of the disease works against Lydgate, in that it contributes to his own unwillingness to question -Bulstrode about Raffles' death, since he thinks his own prescription may have been wrong (VII, 140-41). And the fact that the medical men, when they learn what Mrs A-bel has really done, cannot according to their own lights fault what they assume to have, been Lydgate f s orders, means that their "vague conviction of indeterminable guilt' ... had for the general
mind all the superior power of mystery over fact," since "conjecture soon became more confident than knowledge, and had a more liberal allowance for the incompatible" (VII, 157)•
Lydgate is also concerned about the state of medical education in his
time. At the top of the hierarchy were the physicians who, in the Middle-march view, "alone could offer any hope when danger was extreme" (II, 253). TO become a Fellow of the Royal College of Piiysicians one had to be a gra-duate of Oxford or Cambridge, but the medical training offered at these

1 *'or example, Lancet (1830-31), II, 257-56, 336, 522-23; (1631-32), II,
392; (1^32-33), II, 539, 719-
2 Lancet (1832-33), II, 819,
3 Lancet (1833-34), I, 172-74-
4 See Vin, 117-18; "^uarry," I, 29-31.

universities was minimal, with an "absence of anatomical and bedside study" (II, 329) t and the College was mainly concerned that its members had the "education of a gentleman" (i.e. a knowledge of Classics and mathematics) rather than medical training. The physician's chief professional asset was an impressive manner, bolstered by experience and guarded by elaborate

2 etiquette. In Middlemarch Drs Minchin and Sprague "enjoyed about equally

the mysterious privilege of medical reputation, and concealed with much etiquette their contempt for each other's skill" (ll, 327-28). At this period the physicians, like Minchin and Sprague, were anxious to maintain their social superiority over surgeons. ^he older Middlemarch surgeons, Toller and ^rench, probably qualified before 1815, and hence would only have had to serve an apprenticeship and attend one course on each of surgery and anatomy, and (after 1813) attend hospital surgical practice. With the passing of the Apothecaries 1 Act of 1815 however it became necessary to hold the licence of the Society of Apothecaries to practise outside London'^ and the training for this required an apprenticeship followed by attendance at lectures in anatomy, physiology, the theory and practice of medicine,
and study at a hospital for six months. By 1834 most of the eight thousand Licentiates of the Royal College of Surgeons were also apothecaries, and, like Lydgate, practised as General Practitioners. Lydgate's education is more advanced than this, however; unlike most G.P.s, he has been to Edin-burgh, long recognised as offering the best medical education available in Britain - according to the Lancet of 8 January 1831, the Edinburgh Medical

Newrnan, pp. 5-6 j W.J. Reader, Professional Men (London: Weidenfeld
and Nicolson, 1966), pp. 17-18.
2
^eader, p. 19•
leader, pp. 39-40.
Newman, pp. 17-18; C.L. Cline, "Qualifications of the Medical Prac-titioners of Middlemarch," p. 278. 5 Cline, p. 275.
°'line, p. ^76.

School was "filled by a greater number of professors of eminence, and atten-ded by more numerous classes of medical pupils, than any one of the British universities." And Paris, where Lydgate also gets part of his medical education, was the undisputed leader in medicine in the first half of the
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century. By the time the novel was written medical education had greatly improved. Medical degree requirements and facilities at Oxford and Camb-ridge became better, and the 1858 Medical Act had broken down vvh&t Lydgate considers an "irrational severance between medical and surgical knowledge, by creating the category of "registered medical practitioner)" who could practise in any branch of the profession provided he had satisfied one of twenty-one licensing bodies, same of which were provincial medical schools of the kind envisaged by Lydgate. Moreover the General Medical Council set up by the Act regulated the quackery of the kind rife in the early 1830's and after, by making it illegal for unqualified practitioners to sign statutory certificates or prescribe dangerous drugs. The school at Edinburgh University was however in decline by 1865 •
An important part of Lydgate f s ambition is his plan to use the cases
he comes upon in his medical practice to further his scientific research - he is "fired with the possibility that he might work out the proof of an anatomical conception and make a link in the chain of discovery." This
is the reason behind his enthusiasm for the fever hospital, and hence the main cause of his involvement with Bulstrode. He hopes to follow up the work of Francois Bichat (1771-1802), who at the beginning of the century

1 Lancet (1830-31), I, 503; "Quarry," I, 6-7.
2

Newman, pp. 47-49•
3 Newraan, pp. 127, 279-60, 264f.
Reader, p. 66. See also George Eliot's notes in her Middlemarch notebook at the Folger library, in George Eliot's Middlemarch Notebooks:
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'^' ran script ion, ed. John °'lark Pratt and Victor A. Neufeldt (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1979), PP« 25-26 (ff. 39-41)
p. 67.

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first carried out the conception that living bodies, fundamen-
tally considered, are not associations of organs which can be
understood by studying them first apart, and then as it were
federally; but must be regarded as consisting of certain pri-
mary webs or tissues, out of which the various organs - brain,
heart, lungs, and so on - are compacted...

and by studying these- tissues in detail showed "new connections and hitherto hidden facts of structure which must be taken into account in considering the symptoms of maladies and the action of medicaments (II, 263-64)- In
a medical lecture of 1833 on "The Classification of diseases" Mr Wardrop paid tribute to the contributions made by Bichat's enlightened views to
the advancement of pathological science, since he had shown how the tissues of the same material have the same functions, regardless of the part of the body in which they are to ibe found, and that the modifications of structure in the different organs are due to the diversity of possible tissue combinations. But the outline of the way in which Lydgate seeks to progress beyond Bichat's work brings out again how the decline of his research after his marriage in 1830 means that he just fails to get on to the right track towards important discoveries. His hypothesis is that the tissues have "some common basis from which they have all started" that is, a "primitive tissue" (II, 264-65)• But he puts the question "not quite in the way required by the waiting answer." The crucial development here was the discovery that organisms were composed of cells. In l£29 Lydgate of ^ fers ^arebrother the botanist Robert Brown's Microscopic Observations on the Pollen of Plants, published the preceding year; however it was not

2 till 1831 that Brown described the nucleus of plant cells, and by this

1 Lancet (1633-34), I, 50-55-
2
^inger and Underwood, p. 321; W.J. Harvey, "The Intellectual Back-ground of the Novel: ^asaubon and Lydgate," p. 36.

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time Lydgate is too enmeshed in marital and financial problems to give
time to research. After pioneering work in cell theory by G.G. Valentin (1836), Friedrich Henle and Johannes Purkinge (both 1837), Matthias ^chleiden s Beitrage ^ur Phytogenesis of 1838, on the microscopic structure of plants, drew attention to the nucleus as a characteristic part of the cell, and, drawing on his work, Theodor Schwann showed in his Mikroscopischt Untersuchungen iiber die Ubereinstimmung in der Struktur und dem ^achtstum der Thiere und Pf lanzen (l&39) that even complex animal tissues develop only from cells. From about 1850 cells came to be seen as the essential living substance, and ^udolf Virchow's Gellulapathologie of 1858 enunciated the idea that all cells derive from other cells, as well as applying cell theory to pathology and morbid histology. In i860 Lewes could declare that 11 jtj he last twenty years ... will be known in history as the cell-epoch,
so manifold have been the researches, and so striking the results, with respect to the parts played by cells." The cell is the "true biological atom," and, instead of Lydgate's primitive tissue, there are now myriad centres of vital activity.
although Lydgate is very interested in medical reform, his attitude
to political reform is a mixture of cynicism and indifference. However two doctors mentioned in the novel, Thomas ^akley and ^ran^o is- Vincent Raspail, did try to combine political and medical careers. In 1823 "akley founded the Lancet, on which George -i^liot drew for much of the novel's medical background, and in the early years of the journal attacked wrong hospital practice and opposed the exclusiveness, nepotism and incompetence

" " I, 9j °iuger and Underwood, 320ff; Harvey, p. 36.
2
^eorge Henry Lewes, The Physiology of Common Life, II (^dinburgh and London: '"'illiam Blackwoud and Sons , i860), pp.

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rife in the "oyal 7 Colleges, especially the ^oyal College of 6'urgeons. .1

However his frustration over this latter campaign niade him decide to enter Parliament, and after two unsuccessful efforts in 1832 and 1834 he managed to become M.P. for Finsbury in 1835. Despite the fact that his main moti-vation was to urge on the House the need for medica,! reform, he also sup-ported Radical principles such as religious liberty and free trade, and actually made his reputation as a speaker on 25 June 1&35 with a defence of the "Tolpuddle Martyrs" (six Dorsetshire labourers transported for admini-stering illegal oaths to fellow members of a union^'which was instrumental in achieving their pardon the following year. Medical and political re-form were for him parts of the same movement.
Nevertheless by the time his biography appeared in 1897 - and hence possibly also by 1&71/2 - '"'akley was best-known for having been coroner for West Middlesex from 1839 "to 1862, and it is in the context of his struggle to make the coronership a medical rather than a legal office that he is mentioned in the novel. rt hen in a discussion of the hospital chaplaincy issue Lydgate argues that "'in general, appointments are apt to be made
too much a question of personal likingj1 " Mr Chichely, a lawyer and the local coroner, says he hopes Lydgate is "'not one of the 'Lancet's 1 men ...
- wanting to take the coronership out of the hands of the legal profession/" Dr Sprague then interposes that he disapproves of •'•'akley:

"he is an ill-intentioned fellow, who would sacrifice the respectability of the profession, which everybody knows
depends on the London Colleges, fo-r the sake of getting some
notoriety for himself"

^ir ^amuel Squire Sprigge, The Ljfe and Times of, Thomas '"akley (London: Longmans, G reen and Co., Ib97), p. 167.
^ Sprigge, 224ff.
3 3prigc;e, pp. 236, 263ff.

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but on the other hand he "'could mention one or two points in which "akley is in the right 1 " (II, 279-80). Sprague's mixed feelings about Wakley were in fact very characteristic of doctors of his period. Lydgate goes on to offend Chichely further by claiming that "'legal training only makes a man more incompetent in questions that require knowledge of another kind"1 and that "*[aj lawyer is no better than an old woman at a post mor-tem examination'" since he had! no knowledge of how a poison acts. It was on such grounds that Wakley campaigned for years in the Lancet for the coronership to be made a medical office; he stood himself as coroner for

2 iSast Middlesex in 1830, to be narrowly defeated at the poll. His campaign

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succeeded to the extent that between 1629 and 1&39 about twenty medical coroners did receive appointments, but he had to wait till 1839 to obtain one himself. By supporting Wakley's innovatory views Lydgate runs foul of Middlemarch vested interests and general resistance to change, but he arouses more anger than he need by losing sight of "the fact that Mr Chichely was His Majesty's coroner" (JT, 282); he manages to be controver-sial, without really achieving anything.
•But it is a measure of how far Lydgate is misunderstood by Middlemarch
that he is later compared to one of Wakley's arch-enemies, the quack St. John Long, whom Sprigge in 1897 could still call "one of the most notorious charlatans of this century." In Chapter 45 "t ne narrator observes that
11 [i] n those days the world was agitated about the wondrous doings of Mr
St John Long, 'noblemen and gentlemen' attesting his extraction of a fluid like mercury from the terrifies of a patient." Sprague and Minchin have

Sprigge, p. 498«
2 Lancet (1829-30), II, 930-38; (1830-31), I, 40-54; "Quarry," I, 1.
3 p. 360.

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suggested that Lydgate is "given to that reckless innovation for the sake of noise and show which was the essence of the charlatan," and, "the word 'charlatan once thrown on the air could not be let drop"; Mr Toller tells Mrs Taft that St. John Long is "'the kind of fellow we call a charlatan, advertising cures in ways nobody knows anything about; a fellow who wants to make a noise by pretending to go deeper than other people, '" since
" ' [t] he other day he was pretending to tap a man's brain and get quicksilver out of it 1 " - thus implying that Lydgate indulges in similar practices. Hence "it came to be held in various quarters that Lydgate played even with respectable constitutions for his own purposes, and how much more likely
in his flighty experimenting he should make sixes and sevens of hospital patient s""(V, 46-47)• Long's technique was to prophesy the imminent death of his (usually wealthy or titled) clients and frighten them into trying his treatment, which involved using his ointment to create a wound, allowing it to heal, and pronouncing the patient cured. Between July 1829 and July 1830 he made £13, 400 • *n January 1630 tfakley had denounced him in the Lancet as the "King of Humbugs," and quoted the testimony of a noble lord high in the naval service, that Long could esxtract a fluid like mercury
2 from the head of a patient. Some months later however a Catherine Cashin died under his treatment and in October he was convicted of manslaughter, largely on account of Wakley's medical evidence. Unfortunately he was merely fined ^2^0, which he paid on the spot, and was only defeated by con-sumption, of which he died in 1834 •

Sprigge, pp. 361-62.
2 Lancet (1829-30), I, 506; "Quarry," I, 5, ?•
3 Lancet (1830-31), I, 200-207; Sprigge, pp. 363-66.

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Unlike that of Wakley, the career of Raspail suggests the difficulty
of combining campaigns for political and medical reform with scientific research, ^hen Lydgate tells Farebrother that he is "'more and more con-vinced that it will be possible to demonstrate the homogeneous origin of all the tissues, 1 " he goes on to observe that "'Raspail and others are on the same track"' (V, 48). In "Quarry" I, George Eliot transcribes a pas-sage from Raspail*s Nouveau ^ysteme de chimie organique (l833) which con-firms this, discussing as it does "une substance blanche comme I'albumine coagulee, que les alcalis ou les acides concentres ... ne dissolvent jamais entierement," and observing that ' les membranes de tous les organes ani-maux, meme les plus disparates par leur (sic) fonctions, sont done d'une homogeneite desesperante pour la physiologie, 1'anatomie- et la chimie microscopique." This book, soon translated into English, established ^aspail's reputation as a scientist. He had published too fifty scientific papers before 1830, some of which showed that he was working towards the

2 ideas which would later - and in other minds - become the Cell Theory.

Still alive when Middlemarch was written, he was involved all his life in left-wing politics, especially in the early years of the July Monarchy (1830 -) and in the 1848 Revolution - the Nouveau Systeme was actually written in prison. He connected his ideas for political reform with his campaigns for medical reform, believing that as biology proved men to be similarly constituted, it pointed to their political equality, and, since he thought health and hygiene inalienable human rights, campaigning for cleaner and wider streets, sewage disposal, better diet and ventilation

1 "Quarry," I, 21-22.
J^ora B. Weiner, Francois-Vincent Raspail, 1799-1878; Scientist and Reformer (New York and London: Columbia University Press, 1968),pp. 4"
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Seiner, p. 10.

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(cf. Lydgate's interest in "'ventilation and diet, that sort of thing, 1"1
as Brooke puts it, I, 159)» and attacking industrial prisons, insanitary working conditions in factories, as well as the routine of medical acade-

2 mies and the negligence and greed of doctors. However his growing preoccu-

pation with politics and social medicine more or less put a stop to his original scientific research in the early l&30's, and he became an advocate of particular ide^es fixes (notably the value of camphor as an antiseptic) rather than a researcher working through experiment, observation, statis-tical analysis. Lewes in fact seems to have been doubtful about the pos-sibility of combining a medical career with scientific research: in his 1662 article "Physicians and Quacks," he attacks what he sees as the still-too-prevalent habit among doctors of acting on unproveable hypotheses and discredited authorities, and argues that there should be a special cadre

4 of scientific doctors devoting their full time to research.

The novel is obviously concerned with the education and social role of wo-i

men, and with the preconceptions men have about women s nature which cause much of the unhappiness of marriages like those of the Casaubons and the Lydgates. Rosamond Vi nCy, as well as being very beautiful, has been educa-ted so as to become the embodiment of the contemporary male's image of the ideal wifej having learnt at Mrs Lemon's school "all that was demanded in the accomplished female - even to extras, such as the getting in and out of a carriage" (I, 166), so th^-t she becomes

1 Weiner, pp. 274-75.
<- IriJ T £ ""einer, p. 16.
3 '"'einer, pp. 2-3, 139ff, 162-63.
Patrick J. McCarthy, "Lydgate, 'the New, Young Surgeon' of Middle-march," /?. 812.

that combination of correct sentiments, music, dancing, drawing,
elegant note-writing, private album for extracted verse, and
perfect blond loveliness, which toade the irresistible woman for
the doomed man of that date (ill, ?8l
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concealing her social ambitions and making statements which were "no direct clue to fact. In the class above Rosamond's Dorothea has a very limited education, made up of the "small tinkling and smearing" in which "domestic music and feminine fine art" consisted "at that dark period" (l, 108-9) and a "toy-box history of the v;orld adapted to young ladies" (l, 147)> an^- it is her ignorance, as well as her yearning for "some lofty conception of the world which might frankly include the parish of Tipton and her own rule of conduct there" (l, 3) which makes Casawbon's knowledge seem so impres-sive. By the time the novel was written Rosamond's taste for the poetry of Lady Blessington, L.E.L. and annuals like the Keepsake would have been anachronistic, and there had been some progress in improving women's educa-tion, notably the foundation of Bedford College in l849> the North London Collegiate School in 1850, Cheltenham Ladies' College in l853> and, in 1869? of the Cambridge College which would become Girton four years later. George Eliot supported this last initiative, telling Mrs Nassau Senior
that she believed women were entitled to the same educational opportunities as men, so as to be able to acquire the same faith as to their duty and
its basis. -^ut education for girls of the upper middle-class and gentry still often consisted of rote-learning of disconnected facts and the pursuit of superficial accomplishments: in 1868 the Report of the Schools Inquiry Commission was to find want of thoroughness and foundation; want of system;

"Letter to Mrs Nassau Senior," 4 October l869» in ^liot Letters, V,
58.

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slovenliness, showy superficiality ... undue time given to accomplishments, as well as

a vast deal of uninteresting task work, rules put into the memory
with no explanation of their principles ... a very false estimate
of the relative value of the several kinds of acquirement, a
reference to effect rather than to solid worth, a tendency to
fill or adorn rather than strengthen the mind

Kathleen Blake has pointed out the similarities between the consequen-
ces of ^osamond's education in the late 1820 *s and Margaret Fuller's cri-ticism of women's upbringing in her Women in the Nineteeth Century, reviewed by George filiot in 1855 : "[u] nacquainted with the importance of life and its purposes, trained to a selfish coquetry and love of petty power, she does not look beyond the pleasure of making herself felt at the moment." Mrs 5arah Ellis's books of 1842-43, ''J he Paughters of -^ngland, The Wives of England, and The Mothers of England, which had stressed that women were mentally inferior to men and should always defer to their husbands, were still popular in 1871/2, but issues concerning the status and opportunities of women were controversial by this time, more so than in the early l&30's. In June 1870 George ^liot wrote to Lady Amberley, commending her on a lec-ture advocating female suffrage, equal rights for women in education, the professions, and employment, equal wages, and property rights for married women. In the same year a bill providing for Women's suffrage was defea-ted. Novels like Jane Brookfield's Influence (1871) and ^liza Lynn Lint on *s

I, 548ff , quoted in Barnard, A. Short History of English -Education
from 1760 t£ 1944, PP- 189-90.
P
"Margaret Fuller and Mary Wollstonecraft ," Leader, 13 October 18-55,
pi). 9&&-&9; rpt. Essays, pp.iqi-lOb, at p. 2^2. oee Kathleen Blake, "Middlemarch and the rt oman Question," Nineteenth-Century ^iction, 31 (1977) 285-312.
Gail ^unningham, IJ-'he New Woman and the ^ ictorian Novel (London and Basin^stoke: Macmillan, 1978), p. 9.
4 2 June 1870, m ^liot Letters, VlII, 477, and n.;:.

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0 owing the idirid (1867) dealt with the possibilities for higher education and careers for women as alternatives to marriage, while Mrs Linton s novel, as well as Trollope's He Knew He Mas Hight (1868-69) and Florence ^ilford's Nigel -^artram's Ideal (1869) focussed on the problems faced by women who tried to achieve some kind of independence within marriage. By 1868 Mrs Linton already felt however that women were seeking too much independence, and set off a counterblast in her famous Saturday Review articles, "The Girl of the Period," which regretted the replacement of the "tender, loving, retiring, or domestic" girl of the past by the modern girl who dyed her hair* painted her face, loved strong, bold talk, pleasure, and money, was indifferent to duty, discontented with ordinary life, and had a horror of

2 useful work. In 1869 Mill f s widely-read The Subjection of Women was to

present a comprehensive argument for better education and more employment opportunities for women, and his view of the consequences for ma.rriage of girls' upbringing as it was in 1869 has much in common with George -Eliot's presentation of Rosamond's effect on Lydgate in 1830-32:

by making it the business of her life to work upon iher husband'sj sentiments, a wife may gratify herself by influencing, and very
probably perverting, his conduct . . . She neither knows nor
cares which is the right side in politics, but she knows what
will bring in money or invitations, give her husband a title,
her son a place, or her daughter a good marriage

In fact a young man of the greatest promise generally degenerates after marriage:

Patricia Thomson, The Victorian Heroine: A. Changing Ideal 1837-
1873, pp. 64-66, 78-81, 101-107.

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Saturday Review, 14 March 1668, pp. 339-40, quoted by Gail
anij pp. 8-9.
1st edn (London: Longmans, Green, Reader, and Dyer, 1869), pp. 70-71

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He ceases to care for what she does not care for; ... his higher faculties both of mind and heart cease to be called into acti-
vity ... after a few years he dif 1 ers in no material respect
from those who have never had wishes for anything but the
common vanities and the common pecuniary objects

He becomes, in other words, one of the middle-aged men who are "shapen after the average and fit to be packed by the gross" (II, 257). The way women's influence could hamper progress is also suggested by Huxley's strictures in a letter to Lyell of i860, on "man-traps for the matrimonial market," forced to "stop in the doll stage of evolution to be the ... drag on civilization, the degradation of every important pursuit with which they mix themselves*" 2 The -British Quarterly Review described Rosamond as "the deadliest blow at the common assumption that limitation in both
heart and brain is a desirable thing for women, that has ever been struck."
- Between 1832 and 1872, then, what has changed is not so much women's social lot as the public awareness of the "^oman Question" as an issue.
As -Barbara Hardy has pointed out, the feminist consciousness of the novel belongs to the narrator, not io Dorothea. She is "struggling in the bands of a narrow teaching, hemmed in by a social life which seemed nothing but a labyrinth of petty courses, a walled-in maze of small paths that led no whither" (l, 40), and is the victim of "the stifling oppression of that gentlewoman s world, where everything was done for her and none asked for her aid" (ill, 89), but she does not protest against her own lot as the consequence of social restrictions on women, ^hat George -Eliot felt that

'^'he Subjection of rtomen, pp. 176-77.
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Leonard Huxley, Life and Letters of Thomas Henry Huxley (1900), I,
212, quoted by Ray, Thackeray; The *ge of Wisdom (1847-1863), p. 452n.36. IR.II. Hutton?J, ^ritish Quarterly Review, 57 (1873), 407-23, 429;
rpt. Kiddlemarch; _A Casebook, pp. 68-83, at p. 80.
"Kiddlemarch; Public and Private .Vorlds," pp. 23, 26n.8.

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her problems were just as characteristic of 1871/2 as of 1829-32 is never-

theless made clear in the "Prelude" and "Finale" The "Prelude" describes the

lot of girls like 3t Theresa, who are still born "[hJere and there," but

are "helped by no coherent social faith and order which could perform the

function of knowledge for the ardently willing soul" (I, vi-vii), and the

"Finale" asserts:

A new Theresa will hardly have the opportunity of reforming a
conventual life, any more than a new Antigone will s^end her
heroic piety in daring all for the sake of a brother s burial:
the medium in which their ardent deeds took shape is"for ever
gone. But we insignificant people with our daily words and
acts are preparing the lives of many Dorotheas, some of which
may present a far sadder sacrifice than that of the Dorothea
whose story we know (VIII, 370)

In the original part-issue and the first edition of the novel more weight

was given to the social conditions, still present in 1872, which made Doro-

thea's first marriage possible. Earlier in the paragraph from which I have

just quoted, George Bliot wrote:

Among the many remarks passed on her mistakes, it was never said
in the neighbourhood of Middlemarch that such mistakes could not
have happened if the society into which she was born had not smiled on propositions of marriage from a sickly man to a girl
less than half his own age, - on modes of education which make
a woman s knav/ledge another name for motley ignorance, on rules
of conduct which are in flat contradiction with its own loudly-
asserted beliefs. While this is the social air in which mortals
begin to breathe, there will be collisions such as those in
Dorothea, 1 s life...

In the 1874 edition and thereafter, alT.this is summarised and generalised

as "the conditions of an imperfect social state," as many reviewers had

pointed out that most people who commented on Dorothea's marriage to Casaubon

had not smiled on his proposal. On the other hand the concern that a girl

should not marry below her social class and accustomed standard of living

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which is one motive behind her family's opposition to ^orothea^s second marriage, was still prevalent in the early l&70 f s: John Morley claimed in 1874 that money, social position, and good connections were considered im-portant in marriage, but not temper or intellectual quality, while in 1872 Blackwood's even published an article called "Old Maids," argu/ing that nove-lists were not paying sufficient attention to the fact that "[mjoral and religious worth ••• cannot be entertained as valid reasons for union, nntil its worldly suitableness is satisfactorily proved."
Had -Dorothea lived forty years later, she would have had more opportu-nities for philanthropic activity, on account of the expansion from the 1840' s onward of endeavours such as nursing, ragged-school teaching, super-intendance of hospitals and reformatories, and v<rorkhouse and prison visiting
2

among women. The novel makes much of the lack of contact between the county gentry and the townspeople, one cause of Dorothea's frustration in 1829-32 which would not have existed in the early 1870 's. At the dinner
to celebrate Dorothea's engagement, since, "in that part of the country, before Reform had done its notable part in developing the political con-sciousness, there was a clearer distinction of ranks and a dimmer distinctioj of parties," Mr Brooke invites only the men of Middlemarch, not their wives and daughters (l, 152, 154)« At ^' eat her stone 's funeral the gentry watch from an upper windoiv, and Mrs Cadwallader, who makes it her business to know all about the affairs of her own parish, cannot identify Mrs Vincy or Fred. Dorothea regrets that she knows nothing of her neighbours, apart from the cottagers, and her predicament is attributed to the fact that

Morley, On Compromise, p. 95; CW »G- HamleyJ , "Old Maids," Blackwood's
112 (1872), 94-108, at 94-95-

2 Thomson, The Victorian Heroine, 15ff •

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The country gentry of old time lived in a rarefied social air: dotted apart on their stations up the mountain they looked down with imperfect discrimination on the belts of thicker life

below (IV, 185)

Dorothea pays her first visit to Rosamond, "there was a sort of con-trast not infrequent in country life when the habits of the different ranks were less blent than now" (V, 5). This separation of country and town, gentry and middle class, was however already breaking down:

Some slipped a little downward, some got higher footing: people denied aspirates, gained wealth, and fastidious sentlamen stood
for boroughs; some were caught in political currents, some in ecclesiastical, and perhaps found themselves surprisingly-

grouped in consequence; ... Municipal; town and rural parish
gradually made fresh threads of connection - ... while squires
and baronets, and even lords who had once lived blamelessly
afar from the civic mind, gathered the faultiness of closer acquaintanceship (I, 164-65)

In 1859 Mill was to notice how the circumstances of the different classes were becoming more similar, and the widening of the franchise in the two Reform Bills meant that aristocrats and gentry who sought to become borough M.P.'s had to take even more account of middle and working class views than does Brooke in the novel. Moreover after the mid-nineteenth century country communities tended to become satellites of towns, reliant on urban areas
for goods and services, especially after the decline of cottage industries. 2 It is nevertheless doubtful how much the possibility of being more
closely involved in Midcllemarch life would have benefited either -^orothea or the townspeople. Lydgate's career, after all, shows how difficult it

p. 130. On Liberty; rpt. Utilitarianism, Liberty, Representative Government

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G.£. Mingay, Rural Life in Victorian England (London: Heinemann, 1977), P. 182. ——— '

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could be to break free of the limits of one's class background and carry out reforms in a medium resistant to change, without becoming fatally en-tangled in its web of intrigues, jealousies, gossip, and complex personal relationships. Porothea is able to relieve Lydgate of his debt to Bulstrode and to give him great emotional support by expressing her belief in his innocence and persuading her circle to believe in it too. Later she is able to overcome the great personal distress cauSsd by her misunderstanding of the relationship between Rosamond and Ladislaw, by coming to feel f^di she is part of "the largeness of the world and the manifold wakings of men to labour and enduranoe" (VIII, 282-83), but she is soon at a loose end again^ finding nothing to do in the village, and unable to concentrate on the books on "political economy and kindred matters, out of which she was trying to get light as to the best way of spending money so as not to injure one's neighbours (VIII, 313). ''•'he is only rescued from this restless inertia by the appearance of Will, and, as I noted earlier, their son declines to stand for Middlemarch because he feels the town would stifle his opinions. Nor does Dorothea's intervention in the Lydgate marital crisis protect Lyd-gate from his wife's "torpedo-like contact" or enable him to continue his career in Middlemarch. -^orothea always felt "that there was always some-thing better which she might have done, if she had only been better and known better"(VIIJ, 365), and it is presumably Ladislaw, rather than she, who in his career as an "ardent public man" is able to connect "political economy with "the manifold wakings of men to labour and endurance." But, as Felix Holt had shown, even the "young hopefulness of immediate good" with which he embarked on his career "has been much checked in our days" (VIII, 366).

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Reviewing the novel for Blackwood's, W. Lucas Gollins observed that

the story itself dates back to the days of "Mr Peel" and
the Catholic Question, we see some of the political and social
problems of our own times already casting their shadows before
them, and they are evidently present to the author's mind

He does not elaborate, but, apart from the condition-of-women problem, one set of issues he may have had in mind were the questions of landlord— tena^nt relations and the plight of agricultural labourers. -Dorothea is eager to have cottages built for the labourers on the ^reshitt estates, and Sir James arranges for her plans TLO be carried out, eventually by Caleb Garth, ^he is also anxious for Mr Brooke to have 1he farms on his estate repaired; as well as the poverty-stricken Pagleys there is, she says, "'Kit Downes, ... who lives with his wife and seven children in a house with one sitting-room and one bedroom hardly larger than this table!™ (IV, 303), In Frick the old labourer Timothy Cooper declares to Garth that he can see no benefits for himself in the railway being laid out in the area, since none of the changes during his lifetime-have ever improved his lot:

"I'n seen lots o' things turn up sin 1 I war a young un - the war
an 1 the peace, and the canells, an* the oald King George, an 1 '
the Regen'j an 1 the new King George, an 1 the new un as has got a
new ne-ame - an* it's been all aloike to the poor mon. What's
the canells been t f him? They'n brought him neither me-at nor
be-acon, nor wage to lay by, if he didn f t save it wi ' clemmin 1
his own inside. Times ha 1 got wusser for him sin 1 I war a young
un. An 1 so it'll be wi ' the railroads. They'll on.'y leave the
poor mon furder behind..." (VI, 240-41)

This is an argument which neither Caleb nor the narrator attempts to refute, as it is an "undeniable truth" which Timothy knows "through a hard process

1 "Middlemarch," ^lackwood 1 s, 112 (1672), 727-45, at 742.

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of feeling""(VI, 241). Cobbett in his Rural Rides frequently highlights the plight of the ill-fed, ill-housed agricultural labourers of the post-war depression period, and on 26 April 1830 describes their cottages in the Leicester area as "hovels, made of mud and of straw; bits of glass, or of old cast-off windows, without frames or hinges," with furniture consisting of "bits of chairs or stools; the wretched boards tacked together, to serve for a table." ^orothea^s and Sir James's interest in cottage-building reflects the paternalistic backlash of the early 1830*s against the proposal* which were to be embodied in the 1834 New Poor Law. In Biackwood's in 1829-

30 Michael Sadie/r and ^avid Robinson advocated protective tariffs on agri-cultural imports. The local institutions of church and squire could allevi-ate the conditions of the working poor by granting tenants long leases of land for cottage building, with small holding attached to each for cow, potatoes, and other crops, ^he schemes generally failed because they tended to attract weavers, who disliked outdoor work. '^here were further initia-tives in cottage-building during the 1840*3 and 1850's, and Prince •"•Ibert even arranged for model labourers' cottages to be shown at the Great -Exhibi-tion of 1851. Nevertheless at the time Middlemarch was written agricultural labourers still often suffered from low wages, inadequate food, and wretched, insanitary housing. In his The -Economic Position of the British Labourer (1865)? which George Eliot had read before writing ffelix Holt, Henry Fawcett had argued that the agricultural labourer had not benefited at all from Britain's increased wealth - what the novel calls "that gorgeous plutocracy

1 Rural Rides, II, 348.
Alan Mintz, George Eliot and the Novel of Vocation, p. 107; Harold
Perkln, ^he Origins of Modern -^nglish Society 1780-1880 (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul; Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1969), 2?41ff.
Norman Gash, Aristocracy and People; Britain 1813-1865 (London:
Edward Arnold, 1979), p. 326.

which has so nobly exalted the necessities of genteel life" (I, 5;. A labou-rer's life, he says is one of "incessant toil for wages too scanty to give

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I him] even a sufficient supply of the first necessaries of life," ending with a "pittance from parish relief." Labourers often live on tea and bread and butter, in cottages which are "frequently so bad, that they scarcely deserve the name of human dwellings." Hence Cooper's speech was possibly intended to remind readers of 1871/2 that, although the growth of the rail-ways since the early 1830 's had meant cheaper travel and lower transport costs, and opposition to them had been based on the kind of ignorance and self-interest exemplified by ^olomon ^eatherstone, Mrs ^aule, and the Frick labourers, the change had not necessarily improved the labourers' lot. By 1872 too the labourers had organised to make their grievances known - at Wellesbourne on 14 February Joseph Arch addressed the first meeting of the Warwickshire (later National) ^gri cultural Labourers 1 Union, '•'•'he period from 1868 onwards had also seen an increase in tBnsion between tenants and land-

2 lords, especially over the financing of farm improvements by tenants, and

s outburst to Brooke may well have brought this issue to mind. More-
over ^incy*s references to the bad state of the silk-manufacturing business in the early 1830 f s possibly reminded contemporary readers that the ribbon-weaving industry centred in Coventry had more or less collapsed when the duty of French silk ribbons was lifted in i860: by 1865 fifty of the city's seventy manufacturers were bankrupt, and by 1870 the annual value of ribbons sold was down to less than £l million, from £2-g- million in the latt l&50's.

The •Economic Position of the British Labourer (Cambridge and London: Macmillan and Co., 1865)> pp. 4> 46.
G. KVtson Clark, '•'•'he Making of "ictorian England (London: Methuen &
^o., 1962), p. 244-
John Prest, The Industrial ^ evolution in Coventry (Oxford: Oxford University Press, I960), pp. 122, 127.

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Vincy catches typhoid fever from walking through a back street of
Houndsley "where you might as easily have been poisoned without expense of drugs as in any grim street of that unsanitary period" (ill, 22). The cholers epidemic of 1831/2, mentioned several times in the novel, gave great impetus to efforts to clean the streets, improve sewage disposal, water supply, and housing standards. In 1831 the Manchester voluntary Board of Health instruc-ted Dr J.P. Kay (later Sir James Kay-Shuttleworth) to investigate the causes of the disease, and in 1833 the Manchester Statistical Society studied social conditions in the city. In 1842 Edwin Chadwick's Report to the Royal Commission on the Health of '^owns was a best-seller, and by 1844 the Health of '^owns •a ssociation, formed five years earlier, had branches in fourteen towns. The influence of local doctors was important in this field, which suggests another opportunity Lydgate misses when he declines into a fashion-able London practitioner. Manchester began sewerage in l845» and the Sani-tary ^ct in Liverpool (1846/7) appointed the first medical officer of health, a lead followed the next year in London with the appointment of Dr John °imon as the City of London (later National) Medical Officer. A Public Health Act was passed in 1866. Also significant was the v;ork of the Local Government Act Office, which between 1858 and 187! helped local sanitary authorities by mounting 1,2OO enquiries, approving over 1,600 schemes, promoting thirty-four Bills, and spending more than £7 million, mainly on

2 drainage and water supply. However the burgeoning of the industrial slums

through the century meant that sanitation problems persisted - there was another cholera epidemic in 1866, and the disease remained a "hotly debated mystery" - and when enquiries of the l860's revealed the physical and moral

cf. Kings ley's Dr Tom Thurnall in Two Years *go_ (1850). Perkin, p. 335*
Briggs, "Middlemarch and the -^octors," p. 756.

degradation of the city slums there was a conscious revival of the paterna-listic attitudes which had motivated the supporters of cottage-building and more generous poor relief in the 1830's, 1 but now applied to an urban con-text. In 1665 Octavia Hill, grand-daughter of the leading fever expert and sanitary reformer -^r Southwood Smith, set herself up as a benevolent land-lady in the Marylebone slums, and in 1869 she, ^dward Denison and others founded the Charily Organisation Society, which at the end of 1870 organised the Calmer St. Industrial Experiment under the supervision of the Hev. ^illiam Fremantle. ^uskin bought the houses, and Octavia Hill managed them for the benefit of the poor. George Eliot expressed her enthusiasm for the scheme to Mrs Congreve in -^ecember l£?0, describing it as "a plan which is being energetically carried out for helping a considerable group of people 2 without almsgiving, and solely by inducing them to work" - that is, the

charitable impulse of porothea, combined with the work-ethic of Caleb Garth. •'•he project was in fact supported by few landlords, most people involved being urban business and professional men and their children.
Another aspect of Middlemarch which nay still have been recognisable
to the readers of 1871/2 is the type of mental habits exemplified by Mr ^rooke, with his desultory talk, his indefinite opinions, and his anxiety not to go "too far." In Blackwood 1 s Collins described his conversation as ii

the sort of talk to which we have all listened in a country house, the master of which has travelled a little, and read a little, and dabbled a

q, little in accomplishments in his younger days,' while George ^liot herself

Perkiri, p. 445*
p
"Letter to Mrs R-i chard Congreve," 2 ^eceuber 1870, in ^liot Letters
V, 124« For Octavia Hill's scheme, see Perkin, pp. 263-64, 446-47. Her sister Certrude was married to Lewes' son Charles.
3 Perkin, pp. 263-64, 447-
4 Collins, p.

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evidently had Bpooke-like traits in mind when in her review of Lecky's History of the Hise and Influence of the Spirit of Nationalism in Europe in 1865 she claimed that the contemporary "general reader ... does not exactly know what distance he goes: he only knows that he does not go 'too far/ 11 and is fond of "disembodied opinions, that float in vapoury phrases above all systems of thought or action," since he has "a spongy texture of mind, that gravitates strongly to nothing." And although Brooke in 1831 fails to be returned to Parliament, ^alter Bagehot felt that many elected M.P.'s
of the mid-1860's lived in an "intellectual haze":

^ithout committing myself to the tenet that 3 & 2 make 5> though
I am free to admit that the hon» member for Bradford has advanced
very grave arguments in behalf of it, I think I may, with the
permission of the Committee, assume that 2 & 3 do not make 4,
which will be c. sufficient basis for the important propositions
which I shall venture to submit on the present occasion

More tentative is a possible connection between Casaubon's views on mythology and ideas on the subject which still had some influence when Middlemarch was writien. In his Key to All Mythologies Casaubon aims to show that "all the mythical systems or erratic mythical fragments in the world were corruptions of a tradition originally revealed"(l, 32). Later the narrator says of this theory that it "floated among flexible conjectures no more solid than these etymologies which seemed strong because of likeness in sound, until it was sliown that likeness in sound made them impossible"
(V, 92). rt ill Ladislaw points out to Dorothea ,that Casaubon's work is al-ready out of date 5ince he has not read the German scholars, who "'have taken the lead in historical inquiries'" (II, 376-77)• Later he elaborates,

"'i'he Influence of Rationalism," Fortnightly Review, 15 May l£65,
Pp. 43-55? rpt. Essays, pp. 397~414» at p. 398.
Q

"The House of c ommons," *'ortnightly fteview 15 March Ib66, 257-63,
(Chapter 5 of The English °onstitution, 1867); rpt. Collected ^OTKS, V, 266-316, at 296.

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telling her that Casaubon has no first-hand oriental knowledge, and that in a subject which is "'as changing as chemistry 1 "

"it is no use now to be crawling a little way after men of the
last century - men like Bryant - and correcting their mistakes?
- living in a lumber-room and furbishing up broken-legged
theories about Chus and Mizraim" (II, 402-403)

Casaubon is working in the tradition of the seventeenth and eighteenth century mythographers who saw the myths of antiquity as corrupted records of the persons and events of the Old Testament, the process of corruption and diversification having occurred as a result of the scattering of the peoples of the world and the loss of their original language after the destruction of the Tower of Babel. In two of the notebooks she kept while writing Middlemarch George Eliot spelt out the theories of Jacob Bryant set out in his £ New System, £r jan Analysis of ^-ntient My t ho logy (1774-76). *'or him the deluge is the ultimate fact for all nations, and Gentile accounts of the •^lood, and Egyptian chronology, coincide with the Mosaic version — the resem-blance of rites and names among various nations all over the world is due
to the wide settlement of one family, the children of Ham, or Amonians (henc-the Egyptian sun-god Amon). Collateral branches of this family included

2 the descendants of Chus and Mizraim. Later she notes from Ersch and Gru-ber's Allgemeine Encyclopaedie der ^issensehaften und Kunste (Vol. 82)
other eighteenth-century mythographers 1 views that mythology all derives from a prinitive religion revealed in the Old Testament, and also notes the •^ivine Legislation of Moses (1737) by William ^arburton, one of the critics

E.B. Hungerford, Snores of Parkness (New York: Columbia University
Press, 194l)> PP« 6-9? ^«J» Harvey, " 1J-'he Intellectual -Background of the Novel: Casaubon and Lydgate," pp. 33-34*
2 Folger Notebook, ff. 87-61, in Pratt and ^eufeldt, p. 48; Berg
Notebook, f. o!V, in Pratt and ^eufeldt, p. 228.

with whom Casaubon takes issue. A contemporary of Casaubon's who worked along the same lines was J.C. Prichard (1766-1848), whose Analysis of Egyptian Mythology aimed to show the unity of mankind on philological grounds. The G erman work both should have read was Karl Otfried Muller's Prologomena to a Scientific Mythology (1825), which ruled out etymological proofs that tried to trace diverse myths to a common Hebrew origin, showing that the Greek and Germanic peoples had developed independently when sepa-rated from the Indian Aryans. Three years earlier the second edition of Jacob Grimm's Deutsche Grammatik, which dealt with the shift from general Germanic to Old High German, had enunciated the law that "identity rests in constant fashion on exterior diversity" - that is, when spellings agree, there need be no relationship between the words. In the forty years bet-ween Casaubon s death and the publication of Middlemarch, the vague theori-zing of the kind entombed in Casaubon's notes for his Key came to seem in-creasingly implausible as more actual research was done into other ancient civilisations and languages, - for example, in Egyptology by Mariette and ri ichard Lepsius, and in the translation of Persian and Babylonian by ^ir Henry ^awlinson, while -^arwin's evidence as to the antiquity of human society as such in The Vescent of Man (1871) put out of court any efforts to trace civilisations back to the scattering, of peoples after the destruc-tion of the Tower of Babel. In the l660's comparative mythology became fashionable in -^igland on account of the popularity of F. Max Muller's two series of Lectures on the Science of Language (l86l, 1864), from which

i''olger Notebook, ff. 91-92, in Pratt and /Veuf eldt, pp. 50-51.
2
J.i/J. Burrow, i^volution and Society, pp. 123n-24»
^mery Neff, The Poetry of History (New York: CoiumMa. University
Press, 1947), p. 108.
4 Neff, pp. 107-108.
G.P. Gooch, History and Historians in the Nineteenth Century, 419ft'.

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George ICliot took notes. In these and his earlier book A History of Ancieat ^anskrit Literature (1859), Muller had stressed the importance of knowing about the language and ancient literature of India in order to under-stand "the first germs of the language, religion, and mythology of our fore-
O

fathers." he other development which had made ^asaubon's type of research even more irrelevant was the growth of Biblical criticism, and George -^liot had of course provided the first -^nglish translations of D.F. Struass's
Das Leben Jesu in 1846, and of Ludwig Feuerbach's Das Ivesen des ^hristentums in 1854.

C^saubon s ideas were not quite dead in 1871/2 however. In a book of
1869, Huventus Mundi; The ^ods and Men of the Heroic £ge, the the then Prime Minister W.M. Gladstone suggested that the pagan deities of the Greek and ttoman pantheon might be distorted or depraved copies of the primitive sys-tem revealed by God to man. The god who embodies the higliest conception (Athene) represents, he says, the impairment of the pure and lofty tradi-tions of the primitive revelation shown in its greatest purity in the Holy

3 °criptures. Her characteristics, aid to a lesser extent those of Apollo,

can be explained by recourse to Hebrew traditions, while Zeus in many
4-

points is formed on the conception of the One and ^upreme God.

The portrayal of the clergy in Middlemarch sets up a contrast between •^are-brother, the "sweetf>tempered, ready-witted^ frank" clergyman devoted to his family and given to preaching non-doctrinal, "ingenious and pithy" sermons,

1 i'olger Notebook, ff. 100. 106, 108-109, in Pratt and iMeufeldt, pp.
54, 56-58; Berg Notebook, ff. ?6V -77, in Pratt and ^eufeldt, pp. 223-24. See ;',lso Burrow, -Evolution and Society, pp. 149~50-
p
History of Ancient J anskrit Literature (London, 1859)» P« 3; quoted
in Pratt and Neufeldt, p. xlix.
Rt Hon lA/illiam Ewart Gladstone, luventus Mundi: The Cods and Men of
the Heroic Age (London: Macmillan and ^o., 1869), pp. 204, 209-10. 4 luventus Mundi, pp. 219, 26?ff, 287-88.

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"like the preaching of the ^iglish Church in its robust age" (II, 319) >
the nc4,rrow-minded Evangelical Tyke, preoccupied with doctrine and with making his own presence felt (V, 124). This contrast is similar to those between G ilfil and £arton, and Irwine and his successor Hyde. The main representative of Evangelicalism in the novel is of course Bulstrode, whose career in Middlemarch more or less coincides with the early nineteenth-century Evangelical revival, but, as has often been noticed, George Eliot is careful to point out that his immoral behaviour is not a consequence of Evangelicalism as such, nor any less characteristic of the present than of the past (VI, 352-53). His switch from Dissent to Anglicanism which accom-panies his increase in prosperity and respectability was characteristic of both periods too: ...a writer in the ^'ongreg^tional Magazine in 1C20 complains of the defection of opulent Dissenters to Evangelicalism, and in 1874 Morley notes how Leeds manufacturers tend to become Churchmen for respectability's sake. In the Church of England as a whole from the early 1830's onward there was an increased concern over the pastoral and spiritual role, as distinct from the worldly respectability, of the clergyman, and this is reflected in the novel. Before this period the Church was seen as the natural occupation of gentlemen of bookish tastes or a scientific turn of

2 mind but no private fortune. No religious vocation v/as thought necessary,

and this traditional style of clergyman of good birth preoccupied with gentlemanly pursuits is represented in the novel by Cadwallader, and recalle nostalgically by Mrs ^arebrother (II, 304-306). -f'arebrother himself differs however from clergy of an earlier generation like Gilfii and Irwine by

Jay, fi'he ^eligion of the Heart, p. 25; Merley, On Compromise, pp.
16-17-
deader, p. 12.

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feeling uneasy in hio role, frustrated that he has to give a theological veneer to his articles on natural history and play billiards for small sums of money. Hence he advises Fred Vincy, whose father sees a Church career as a form of social advancement, not to become a clergyman merely for this reason. Mary Garth is even firmer in her views, refusing to marry Fred if he enters the Church "'for gentility's sake"1 (V, 163). The increasing an-xiety from the early l830's onward that the clergy be devout, dedicated,
and hardworking, was the result of both the ^angelical and Oxford movements, attacks by Whigs, Radicals and -^issenters on the wealth of the Church and the unequal way it was distributed, and, (after the 1851 religious census),
by the awareness that a majority of the ^glish people were either Dissenters or attended no place of worship at all. Yet in the novel the change of out-look seems to occur on the individual level, unmotivated by wider political and religious currents, and %angelicalism is if anything detrimental in
its effects, while ^eorge Eliot herself felt by 1869 that there was no longer enough good preaching of -F'arebrother 1 s kind-writing to Harriet Beecher ^towe:

The great vocation of the preacher ... has a melancholy emptiness
among us. My soul is often vexed at the thought of the multitu-
dinous pulpits ... for the most part filled with men who can say
nothing to change the expression of the faces that are turned up
towards them

The most ardewtly devout character in the novel is however -^orothea,
and it is interesting that the reviewer in the British ^uar^arly felt in 1873 that her portrayal did not show the religious fervour possible in the early 1830 f s so much as the "low-tide mark of spiritual belief Rmong the

1 10 December 1869, in ^liot Letters, V, 72.

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literary class in the nineteenth century." George Eliot was writing at a

period not only influenced by -^arwin, but also finally feeling the effects

of Strauss's ideas - a new edition of the translation of Das Leben Jesu had

appeared in the l860 l s, and the controversy over Biblical criticism came to

involve many of the rank and file of Church and chapel communities. Histo-

rically none of this can have any influence on Dorothea, of course, but the

reviewer points out that she is "denied a great life within as well as

without" - the ^ivine Spirit lives in her, but she does not live in Him: a

life hidden in God as a resource and a refuge, can sometimes be grandest
->

"when the outward field of opportunity is poorest."

On the other hand, Si^ey Colvin sav; the novel as pervaded by a con-

trast between subject matter and treatment which was the result of histori-

cal change. He described it as "all saturated with modern ideas, and poured

into a language of which every word bites home with a peculiar sharpness to

the contemporary consciousness." He goes on:

She has taken the lead in discussing the ways and lives of common
folks ... in terms of scientific thought and the positive synthe-
sis. She has walked between two epochs, upon the confines of two
worlds, and has described the old in terms of the new. '^0 the old
world belong the elements of her experience, to the new world the elements of her reflection on experience ... the many-sided cul-ture which looks back upon prejudice with analytical amusement; the philosophy which declares the human family deluded in its higher dreams, dependent^n itself, and bound thereby to a closer if a sadder brotherhood; the habit in regarding and meditating physical laws, and the facts of sense and life, which leads up to that philosophy and belongs to it; the mingled depth of bitterness and tenderness in the human temper of which the phi-losophy becomes the spring ... The matter is antiquated in our recollections, the manner seems to anticipate the future of our thoughts.

Middlen.arch: _A Casebook, p. £>3.
A.D. Gilbert, Religion and. Society in Industrial England, p. 177 • Middlemarch: A ^asebook, pp. L1-&2.

Fortnightly ^eview, 1 January 1873, pp. 142-47; rpt. Middlemarch; A. Casebook, pp. 47~56» a~t PP- 48-49-

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perpetually applies her own intelligence to the "broad problems and conclusions of modern thought." For example the fa,ct that if1 red Vincy feels his own dishonour more than the losses he had brought on the Garths, leads to the reflection, "we are most of us brought up in the notion that the highest motive for not doing a wrong is something irrespective of the beings who would suffer the wrong." Or, what a character himself thinks and feels will receive a simultaneous commentary showing what the modern analytic mind has to remark upon such thoughts and feelings - he cites here the account
of Gasaubon's motives before marriage and experiences after it, in Chapter

2 29. More specifically, he finds thctt scientific and physiological language

is used to explain or illustrate the character's spiritual processes - for example Bulstrode's misdeeds are said to be:

like the subtle muscular movements which are not taken as count of
in the consciousness, though they bring about the end that we
fix our minds on and desire. And it is only what we are vividly
conscious of-.th.at we can vividly imagine to be seen by Omniscience.

He also observes that much stress *? placed on the physiognomy of characters like Rosamond, Lydgate and Garth, in the manner of Parwin, and that George §liot has a medical habit of "examining her own creations for their symp-toms." '•'•'he reviewer in the Athenaeum praised George -^liot's power of laying bare the "whole anatomy of a soul" in a few words, and asked rhetorically, "[ojf whom have we heard the more, and whom do we know the better, - Fred Vincy or Pendennis?" The use of scientific and medical terminology even
in parts of the novel where it is not obviously related to the subject matter

III, SM j Middlemarch: A Casebook, p. 49-
Casebook, p. 50.
3 VII, 53. Casebook p. 50.
Casebook, p. 51•
Cj

^thenaeum, 7 -^ecember 1^7^, pp. 725-*-6, at p. 126.

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was much more noticeable to readers of 1871/2 than it is now, and Colvin's

comments reflect the great expansion of science and of scientific habits of

thought which had occurred since the l830 f s. The narrator's command of sci-

entific terminology unavailable to the characters in Colvin's case clearly

added to his sense of the historical and intellectual distance between them,

but, as the Athenaeum's comment suggests, it also enabled the narrator to

offer a more searching analysis of the characters - and, according to ^eorge

^liot, greater knowledge generally means greater sympathy. In introducing

Lydgate, the narrator claims

present I have to make the new settler Lydgate better known
to any one interested in him than he could possibly be even to
those who had seen the most of him since his arrival in Middle-
march (II, 251)

Meanwhile, the fact that the narrator can describe Lydgate *s research of the

early 1830 's in similar terms to those used by the l£70's scientist John

Tyndall to characterise his own endeavours would have drawn attention to

how far advanced Lydgate 's projects are: Lydgate aims to use

the imagination that reveals subtle actions inaccessible by any
sort of lens, but tracked in that outer darkness though long
pathways of necessary sequence by the inward light which is
the last refinement of energy, capable of bathing even the
ethereal atoms in its ideally illuminated space (II,!-0^)

while '•'•'yndall writes

Prom a few observations of a comet when it comes within the range of his telescope, an astronomer can calculate its path in regions which no telescope can reach; and in like manner, by means of data furnished in the narrow world of the

u illian Beer, -^arwin* s Plots, p. 149*

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we can make ourselves at home in other and wider worlds, which
can be traversed by the intellect alone

Like the narrators of Thackeray's novels, the Middlemarch narrator some-times consciously adopts the role of historian, observing, for example,
that although Joshua Rigg is a "low subject" he could be elevated by "[hjis-torical parallels":

since there never was a true story which could not be told in
parables where you might put a monkey for a margrave, and vice
versa - whatever has been or is to be narrated by me about low
people, may be ennobled by being considered a parable . . . Thus
while I tell the truth about loobies, my reader's imagination
need not be entirely excluded from an occupation with lords
(IV, 213-14)
A passage a few chapters later points out how a stone may "lie face downmost for ages on a forsaken beach, or 'rest quietly under the drums and tramplings of many conquests, 1 " but may eventually yield "the secret of usurpations and other scandals gossiped about long empires ago." -^ut such things also happen on a much smaller scale, "in our petty lifetime," such that

a bit of ink and paper which has long been an innocent wrapping
or stopgap may at last be laid open under the one pair of eyes
which have knowledge enough to turn it into the opening of a
catastrophe.

This "lofty comparison is however being used once again to draw attention to Rigg, one of the "low people by whose interference, however little we may like it, the course of the world is very much determined" (IV, 347). Rigg's importance to the plot is that he draws Raffles to ^tone Court, where the latter comes upon and steals a letter addressed to Rigg from Bulstrode. This of course set?3 ^oing the course of events which leads to Bulstrode 1 s

George Henry Lewes, Problems of Life and Mind, 1874 edn, p. 261;
quoted in ^eer, -^arwin's Plots, p. 151 •

3s/

and Lydgate's disgrace, and to the revelations about Ladislaw f s family back-ground, but this whole aspect of the novel depends much more on a series of coincidences than the "lofty parallel" would suggest. rhe passages justi-fying the introduction of ^igg are rather laboured, like the defences of characters in humble life in the early fiction, but they are perhaps warran-ted by the reaction of some contemporary critics: Theodore Bentzon in the R-evue des Deux Mondes criticised George ^liot for "obstinately evading the exceptional" and showing "open hostility to anything resembling heroism, the ideal," while the reviewer in the Standard, referring to Lydgate's story, claimed that it was "really impossible to enter into the narrative of dis-honoured bills with anything like that feeling which our best novelists
have accustomed us to entertain.
Sometimes the narrator queries the assumption that the present is neces-sarily an improvement on the recent past, as in the sarcastic comment, just after the passage on "historical parallels," that "any provincial history
in which the agents are all of high moral rank ... must be of a date long posterior to the first Reform Bill" - or implies a criticism of the kind of history which consciously looks at past ignorance from the standpoint of modern knowledge and progress: from the account of Brooke's inability to predict the attack he will later make on bishops* incomes, the passage goes

on:

«Vhat elegant historian would neglect a striking opportunity for
pointing out that his heroes did not foresee the history of the
world, or even their own actions? - ^or example, that Henry of
Navarre, when a Protestant baby, little thought of being a Catho-
lic monarch; or that ^Ifred the ^reat, when he measured his labo-
rious nights with burning candles, had no idea of future gentle-
men measuring taeir idle days with watches (l, 110-11)

"Le ^oman de la vie de province en ^ngleterre," Revue des Deux Mondes
No. 103 (February 1873), 668-69, 678-79> 688-90j rpt. Middlemarch; A q~se^ book, pp. 56-60, at pp. 56-57.
p
Standard, 4 December 1872, rpt. ^eorge -^liot and her Headers t p. 86.

In a more serious vein, the very first words of the novel, " [wj ho that cares much to know the history of man, and how that mysterious mixture behaves under the varying experiments of Time, has not dwelt, at least briefly, on the life of Saint ^'heresa..." introduces both the novelist's role as historian and the scientific terminology which contemporaries were to find so characteristic of the novel, as well as spelling out the assump-tion underlying the generalising commentary throughout, that human nature remains basically the same but responds differently to varying historical circumstances. Later a famous passage compares the narrative commentary to that of Fielding:

A great historian, as he insisted on calling himself, who had
the happiness to be dead a hundred and twenty years ago, and so
to take his place among the colossi whose huge legs our living
pettiness is observed to walk under, glories in his copious
remarks and digressions as the least imitable part of his work...
(II, 250-51)
'•'•his hints that it is partly the lapse of time itself which has made Yielding seem so great by comparison with modern writers, such that the passage can be related to the comment later in the same chapter, that each of the great discoverers, the "Shining Ones" of the past, such as Herschel, seemed commonplace to his contemporaries, who "perhaps thought much more of his gait and his garments than of anything which was to give him a title to everlasting fame" (II, 266-61). furthermore, since ^'ielding lived at a time "when summer afternoons were spacious, and the clock ticked slowly
in the winter evenings," he could linger over long digressions; but for one of the "belated historians" like the Middlemarch narrator:

I at least have so much to do in unravelling certain human lots,
and seeing how they were woven and interwoven, that all the light
I can command must be concentrated on this particular web, and
not dispersed over that tempting range of relevancies called the universe (II, 251)

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is, the provincial society of the recent past being described in the
novel is complex enough, with all its aspects so interrelated, and sufficient-ly illustrative of what is earlier described as "the stealthy convergence of human lots," and the "slow preparation of effects from one life on another (I, 164) to be an absorbing subject in itself, while the "historian" of the 1870*3 is able to make this history interesting and relevant to contempora-ries without recourse to the wide-ranging generalisations which often charac-terised eighteenth-century historiography. A passage much further on even implies that the novelist has a greater power than the historian to unravel the complex web of old provincial society. Caleb Garth tells Hawley that
he has given up working for Bulstrode, and Hawley concludes that xlaffles
had told his story to Garth, so that Garth had relinquished Bulstrode's affairs as a result:

The statement was passed on until it had quite lost the stamp of
of an inference, and was taken as information coming straight
from Garth, so that even a diligent historian might have concluded
Caleb to be the chief publisher of Bulstrode's misdemeanours...
(vii, 152)

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CONCLUSION

in Middlemarch Dorothea hopes that Casaubon's teaching about people
like the Stoics and Alexandrians would eventually satisfy her "eagerness for a binding theory which could bring her own life and doctrine into strict connection with that amazing past, and give the remotest sources of knowledge some bearing on her actions" (I, 147)* Casaubon's kind of knowledge does not of course satisfy Dorothea's eagerness, and George Sliot is habitually sceptical about binding theories, but later in the novel Dorothea learns that His experience in Home has enabled Will to overcome the tendency to see history as "a set of box-like partitions without vital connection" (lI, 385). AS ^arbara Hardy has sho;vn, G eorge £Liot is, in her treatment of Dorothea and Will, internalising the historical consciousness, the need felt to relate past and present, which was so common among nineteenth-century writers,
and which owe<z so much to the influence of Scott, ^eorge -^liot shares Scott's sympathetic apprehension of the people of the recent past, of the ways in which they differ from and are similar to contemporary readers, <&? the way they are affected by their historical conditions, but by comparison with 3cott makes much more use of the omniscient narrative voice to relate past and present, thus emulating the practice of Thackeray, '^here is often a substantial intellectual and social distance between narrator and readers on the one hand,, and characters on the other, which, combined with the time-gap, can militate against the reader's sympathy, but at her best, George J^liot can draw the reader into the mental aid emotional effort requicod to under-stand thy people of the recent past and to perceive what she had early in her career termed "identity of nature under variety of manifestation". tf'e have

1 "Middlemarch; Public and Private Worlds," ^gliah, 25 (1976), 5-26.

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already discussed this in relation to ^ilas Marner; ten years later, in Middlemarchi where the sensibility and articulateness of some of the charac-ters are closer to those of the narrator, the narrative can modulate subtly from a character's experience to its relevance to contemporary readers, and back again:

Lydgate turned, remembering where he was, and saw Dorothea's face
looking up at him with a sweet trustful gravity. The presence of
a noble nature, generous in its wishes, ardent in its charity,
changes the lights for us: we begin to see things again in their
larger, quieter masses, and to believe that we too can be seen and
judged in the wholeness of our character. That influence was be-
ginning to act on Lydgate... (VIII, 233-34)

setting of her fiction in the recent past enables George ftliot to
evoke feelings of nostalgia for customs and habits of thought which were within her readers' experience either through memory or through hearsay - as in the description of Shepperton Church in 'Vfrnos Barton," the "Old Leisure" passage in £dam Bede, the recollection in The Mill on the ft*loss of the grea-ter sense of attachment felt by people of the recent past for the places in which they had grown up, the retrospective of the coach journey at the begin-ning of ^'eliy. Holt. This nostalgic tone is also frequent in '^'hackeray's evocations of the recent past. The implication is of course that change
has not necessarily been for the better, '^hat change is also sometimes more apparent than real; is brought out not only by the many generalisations from the characters' experience, but also by oblique allusions to the present - the reference to anti-catholic prejudice in The Mill on the Floss, ^'elix Holt's speech on the hustings, the treatment of women's upbringing and social role in Middlemarch^ and the same novel's allusions to the condition of agricultural labourers.
& comparison between Hayslope and Ataveloe on the one hand and Tpeby and 1-iiddlemarch on the other, shows that ^eorge Eliot saw society as developing

in the direction of greater complexity and mutual interdependence: •'•reby between 1800 and 1632 "took on the more complex life brought by mines and manufactures, which belong more directly to the great circulating system of the nation than to the local system to which they have been superadded" (p« 43)> while in the Middlemarch area of the early 1830's there are "fresh threads of connection" developing between municipal town and rural parish* Ji'hese processes continued up till the time in which George Eliot was writing but the ending of Felix Holt makes it clear that 'i'reby has altered little, while in the cases of St. Ogg's and Middlemarch it is difficult to see exactly how progressive change has occurred. St. Ogg's is resistant to innovation and has been so for a long time, while Lydgate s story shows how easy it is to become entangled in the complex web of Middlemarch life.
rt hen change has been beneficial it has not been the simple result of legis-lation or of some innovation generally accepted as progressive: Fred Vincy's career as an agricultt/ ral innovator at ^tone Court results ultir-mately from the complicated ramifications of the #igg-Raffles-Bulstrode connections, and from his encounter with Garth during the conflict between labourers and railway surveyors, '-^hat is, the advent of the railways sup-plies an occasion for -f'red to decide on his future career, but this career is not related to the railways themselves. And as in both 3cott and Thac-keray, political issues are interpreted according to private interests and motives, or even ignored because of them. r^he interaction between indivi-dual and society to the benefit of both is clearest in ^ilas Marner, partly because of the double time-shift. However contemporary readers of the other novels would have been aware of the changes between recent past and present without having to be reminded of them - developments such as the expansion of steam power, improvements in medical practice and education, and the greater philanthropic opportunities open to women by the 1870's.

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^cott's novels of the recent past introduce the great men of history
very sparingly, and often focus on characters in humble life. rj-hackeray snows a subtle awareness of how the actions of great men really do affect the lives of ofhers, but feels that the contrast between true nature and pretensions present in most people also applied to"great men; George ^liot often looks back on seemingly-ordinary people of the recent past, and draws attention to the contributions they have made to the "growing good of the world". Her belief in the complex organic nature of social development governed by invariable law meani that she thought that any one individual could have only a limited impact on events, while, like '^hackeray, she was conscious of the divergence possible between public professions and private conduct, ^hese factors, together with liei- distate for the idealised heroes of much contemporary fiction led her to stress the value of the limited but beneficial impact of virtuous but unknown figures like Sdgar Tryan, Adam Bede, Felix Holt, Caleb ^arth and Silas Marner: she urges the people
of her own time to realise what they owe to the hitherto-unsung heroes of the recent past. On the other hand, the social conditions of the recent past did not enable more remarkable people like Maggie Tulliver, Dorothea Brooke, and Lydgate - and, it is implied, many like them - to develop their potential, so that ^eorge -^liot's novels provide as it were the only history for her time of their "unhistoric lives' .

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