How the Victorians Invented the Regency:
Historicizing the Recent Past

by

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Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to my parents, Dan McAdams and Rebecca Pallmeyer.

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Abstract

How the Victorians Invented the Regency: Historicizing the Recent Past argues that Victorian literary responses to the Napoleonic Wars and Regency period (1800-1820) generated non-deterministic, non-teleological theories of history. As both a foil against which writers could crudely delimit a materialistic, oversexed past from a staid, moral present, and a persistent challenge to totalizing visions of History on a grand scale, the Napoleonic Wars and Regency raised questions about historical causality and experience that are played out in Victorian literary texts. My project examines refigurations of this period in four groups of Victorian texts: historical fiction, namely William Makepeace Thackeray's *Vanity Fair* (1848) and Thomas Hardy's *The Trumpet-Major* (1880); women's life-writing, including Harriette Wilson's *Memoirs* (1825), the Countess of Blessington's *Conversations of Lord Byron* (1832-33), and Elizabeth Abell's *Recollections of Napoleon* (1844); texts by and about the John Murray publishing house circle, including Samuel Smiles's *A Publisher and His Friends* (1891) and Benjamin Disraeli's *Vivian Grey* (1826); and textual representations of Napoleon memorabilia and effigies in William Hazlitt's *Liber Amoris* (1823), Arthur Conan Doyle's "The Adventure of the Six Napoleons" (1905), and Hardy's *The Dynasts* (1903-1908), among other texts. Using new materialist methodologies and drawing upon theories of temporality, I illuminate how literary texts and material culture offer complementary and competing historical narratives. As scholars question the meaningfulness of the period term

"Victorian" for literary-historical study, my project analyzes the way Victorian literature itself narrated the transition from past to present.

INTRODUCTION

Prologue

Gazing upon Napoleon's disintegrating shoes at an 1855 exhibition of the dead ex-emperor's personal effects, Victorian journalist George Augustus Sala imagines an alternative course of history. Remarking that "for want of boots—for he had no money to buy them—Napoleon Buonaparte could not go to the Indies," Sala speculates: "if those boots could have been obtained . . . there would probably have been no eighteenth Brumaire, no empire of France, no kingdom of Italy, no Russian campaign, no Austrian marriage, no Spanish ulcer, no Moscow, no Waterloo, no St Helena" (Sala 512). Engaging in counterfactual speculation whose crux is Napoleon's footwear, Sala exemplifies a tendency of Victorian British thinkers to comprehend the recent past by wrestling with seemingly frivolous indicators of historical distance and their relationship to larger demographic, socioeconomic, and ideological shifts. Sala finds the shoes on display disgustingly effeminate in their *ancien régime* sartorial style and notably small size; yet while the shoes reflect the change of male clothing fashions over time, they also allow Sala to theorize a surprising understanding of historical causality. Their survival into the Victorian present, furthermore, prompts an imaginative encounter that reflects the complicated layering of past upon present animating the texts I study.

How the Victorians Invented the Regency: Historicizing the Recent Past argues that Victorian literary responses to the Napoleonic Wars and Regency period (1800-1820) generated non-deterministic, non-teleological theories of history. As both a foil against which writers could crudely delimit a materialistic, oversexed past from a staid, moral present, and a persistent challenge to totalizing visions of History on a grand scale, the Napoleonic Wars and Regency period raised questions about historical causality and experience that are played out in Victorian literary texts. Using new materialist methodologies and drawing upon theories of temporality, my dissertation reconsiders what it means for a text to be historicist. Engaging debates about literary-historical periodization in the long nineteenth century, my work examines the way Victorian literature itself narrated the transition from past to present. My dissertation aims to change our understanding of how other eras understood their pasts, bringing new theories to bear on some of the oldest questions of literary studies—how does literature relate to the historical moment of its origin, and how does it engage with History on a grand scale?

Nineteenth-Century Theories of History

The nineteenth century witnessed the emergence of a number of "philosophies of history"—ways of conceptualizing what history is, how it unfolds, and where it is going. This widespread interest in theorizing history grew out of German Idealist philosophy and its influence on historians in Germany and France, whereas historiography developed later in Britain, as History began to be understood as a modern academic discipline and a profession.[1] In *Metahistory: The Historical Imagination in Nineteenth-Century Europe*

[1] The nineteenth-century evolution of British history writing has been studied by Christopher Parker, who discusses the idealist tradition in British philosophies of history in *The English Idea of History From*

(1973), Hayden White elaborates the contrasting rhetorical and ideological approaches taken by nineteenth-century historians and historiographers, tracing the development of these approaches over the course of the century. White describes the nineteenth century as a time of intense, sincere debate between historiographical modes, predicated on an assumption that a clear resolution could be reached as to "the unique characteristics of a specifically *historical method* of inquiry" (White, *Metahistory* 1). He narrates the way these debates gave way to a "crisis of historicism" characterized by a "theoretical torpor" around the beginning of the twentieth century (White, *Metahistory* xii). In the interim, there arose a variety of large-scale secular, systematic models of history that aspired to a universal vision, including the intensely teleological theories of G. W. F. Hegel, Arthur Schopenhauer, and Karl Marx. In Britain, the writings of Thomas Carlyle and Whig progressive historians like Thomas Babington Macaulay similarly claimed to explain history as a whole. Carlyle swiftly summarizes his philosophy in the blanket statement: "Universal History, the history of what man has accomplished in this world, is at bottom the History of the Great Men who have worked here" (Carlyle 3).

Although Victorian Britain is often considered an age of great popular historians like Macaulay, Carlyle, and Archibald Alison, their definitive multi-volume histories

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Coleridge to Collingwood (2000); Leslie Howsam, who draws attention to the role of publishers in the professionalization of history in "Academic Discipline or Literary Genre?: The Establishment of Boundaries in Nineteenth-Century Historical Writing" (2004); and Michael Bentley, who explores the shift from "Whig" history and alternatives to it to the more analytical and skeptical historical writing of the late Victorian period in "Shape and Pattern in British Historical Writing, 1815-1945" (2011). Mike Goode's *Sentimental Masculinity And the Rise of History, 1790-1890* (2009), Rohan Maitzen's *Gender, Genre, and Victorian Historical Writing* (1998), and Bonnie Smith's *The Gender of History: Men, Woman, and Historical Practice* (1998) bring a focus on gender to the study of nineteenth-century British historical writing. See also J. W. Burrow's *A Liberal Descent: Victorian Historians and the English Past* (1981), Rosemary Jann's *The Art and Science of Victorian History* (1983), John Kenyon's *The History Men: The Historical Profession in England Since the Renaissance* (1983), and Philippa Levine's *The Amateur and the Professional: Antiquarians, Historians, and Archaeologists in Victorian England, 1838-1886* (1986).

constituted only a tiny portion of Victorian writing on historical topics.[2] In fact, White's central insight that "the historian performs an essentially *poetic* act" also suggests the opposite—that the representation of history was a common subject of nineteenth-century literary and artistic works (White, *Metahistory* x). Victorian literary texts produced a messy array of ideas about history, many of which challenged systematic models. The art historian Stephen Bann describes these artistic representations of history as contributing to "historical-mindedness," a popular historical consciousness that stood at odds with professional historiography (Bann xi). Indeed, the historiographical questions taken up by Victorian literary texts are related, but not identical, to those of history writing. This literature asks: Who is responsible for historical change? How can individuals witness history unfolding? And, could things have happened differently? The conclusions they reach are different too. As White describes, nineteenth-century historical theory arose in opposition to the ironic tone of late-Enlightenment historians, experiencing a period of intense commitment to systematic philosophies before returning to irony at the end of the century (White, *Metahistory* 38-42). Victorian literary texts, by contrast, suggest no such commitment to systematic philosophy of history, engaging but ultimately rejecting prevailing visions of capital-H History.

[2] Andrew Sanders's *In the Olden Time: The Victorians and the British Past* (2013) surveys a staggering variety of Victorian literary, artistic, and architectural engagements with history from the time of Queen Elizabeth through the early nineteenth century. Stephen Bann's *The Clothing of Clio: A Study of the Representation of History in Nineteenth-Century Britain and France* (1984) and *Romanticism and the Rise of History* (1995) take similarly broad approaches. Studies of British Romantic literature have also considered the way a growing awareness of their own historical situatedness is reflected in these works. These studies include James Chandler's *England in 1819: the Politics of Literary Culture and the Case of Romantic Historicism* (1998), Ann Rigney's *Imperfect Histories: The Elusive Past and the Legacy of Romantic Historicism* (2001), Damian Walford Davies's edited collection, *Romanticism, History, Historicism: Essays on an Orthodoxy* (2009), and G. A. Rosso and Daniel P. Watkins's collection *Spirits of Fire: English Romantic Writers and Contemporary Historical Methods* (1990). In *Literary Historicity: Literature and Historical Experience in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (2009), Ruth Mack takes a similar approach to eighteenth-century literature.

Literary Historicism

The temporal closeness of the Regency and Napoleonic Wars to the Victorian present resulted in a historicism that was qualitatively different from that evident in their classicism, medievalism, and interest in the Renaissance.[3] B. W. Young's *The Victorian Eighteenth Century* (2007) demonstrates the way that Victorians defined their era through pointed, often problematic contrasts with "their own immediate predecessor culture" (Young 2). Yet with the exception of Carlyle's *The French Revolution* (1837), Young analyzes later Victorian engagements with earlier eighteenth century history—a temporal distance that stretches our understanding of the Victorians' "immediate predecessor." By contrast, the Napoleonic Wars and the Regency period continued to be an era of living memory for many Victorians, even as it was being transformed into the subject of history.

Yet the question remains as to where to find the Regency and Napoleonic Wars in Victorian literature. Victorian realist novels are often set in an unspecific recent past, frequently around 1830, though sometimes earlier in the century—but these novels vary in the extent to which they use temporal markers to identify the setting as a point in historical time. George Eliot's *Middlemarch* (1871), for example, depicts the period surrounding the first Reform Acts through frequent references to contemporary events

[3] On the Victorian engagement with the classical tradition, see Simon Goldhill's *Victorian Culture and Classical Antiquity: Art, Opera, Fiction, and the Proclamation of Modernity* (2011), Richard Jenkyns's *The Victorians and Ancient Greece* (1980), and Yopie Prins's *Victorian Sappho* (1999). On Victorian medievalism, see Florence Saunders Boos, *History and Community: Essays In Victorian Medievalism* (1992); Inga Bryden, *Reinventing King Arthur: the Arthurian Legends In Victorian Culture* (2005); Alice Chandler's *A Dream of Order: The Medieval Ideal in Nineteenth-Century Literature* (1970); Mark Girouard's *The Return to Camelot: Chivalry and the English Gentleman* (1981); Rosemary Hill's *God's Architect: Pugin and the Building of Romantic Britain* (2007); and Loretta M. Holloway and Jennifer A. Palmgren, *Beyond Arthurian Romances: the Reach of Victorian Medievalism* (2005). On the Victorian engagement with the Renaissance, see *Victorian and Edwardian Reponses to the Italian Renaissance* (2005), by John E. Law and Lene Østermark-Johansen, and *The Victorians and Renaissance Italy* (1992), by Hilary Fraser.

and issues, although it is not a historical novel on the model of Walter Scott.[4] Yet realist fiction is typically vaguer in its historicity. The early parts of Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* (1847), for example, depicting the heroine's youth, must take place in the 1810s or 1820s, and yet the novel suppresses or ignores the historicity of that setting—its fictional world is not linked back into historical time.

Historical fiction seems like a promising place to look for representations of the early nineteenth century, and yet the Victorian historical novel rarely depicts history this recent. The reasons for this are complicated and not fully clear. Inaugurated by Scott's *Waverley* (1814), the historical novel is itself a product of the Regency period, and yet as the genre developed, writers did not apply this model to Scott's own moment. In its influential theorization by Georg Lukács, the historical novel dramatizes paradigmatic changes to the structure of society and traces a genealogical relationship between past and present. For much of the Victorian period, the first years of the nineteenth century may have been too recent to allow for this perspective—with many survivors of this era still alive, it might not have seemed fully in the past. Furthermore, stereotypes about the Regency made it ill-suited for Lukácsian historicization. Its reputation as materialistic, oversexed, and frivolous meant that writers may not have understood this period as part of a narrative of large-scale, tectonic historical change. I discuss this topic in greater depth in Chapter I. Indeed, the Regency falls temporally between the settings of the Victorian historical and realist novels and persistently troubles any clear distinction between them.

[4] On *Middlemarch*'s historicism, see: Sophia Andres, "The Unhistoric in History: George Eliot's Challenge to Victorian Historiography" (1996); Michael Carignan, "Fiction as History or History as Fiction? George Eliot, Hayden White, and Nineteenth-Century Historicism" (2000); and Henry Staten, "Is *Middlemarch* Ahistorical?" (2000).

Recognizing the spectrum of approaches to historical time in nineteenth-century fiction, critics have recently brought new attention to the way that literature represents real people, places, and events. In *Matters of Fact in Jane Austen* (2012), Janine Barchas identifies in Austen's work a particular kind of reference to time and place that is neither Lukácsian historicism nor the unspecific time of some realist fiction. Observing Austen's witty use of real people and place names, Barchas argues that Austen "created . . . hyperrealistic, historically based fictions" that provided a prototype of the historical novel before Scott (Barchas 9). In a different vein, Elaine Freedgood analyzes "realism's weird—although thoroughly naturalized—combination of fictionality and factuality," through a reading of the way that Catherine Parr Traill's colonial adventure novels explain the totally unfamiliar Canadian landscape to British readers (Freedgood, "Fictional" 394). Freedgood's study of the metaleptic use of real place names in fiction might serve as a model for thinking about the way that diverse texts incorporate information about history as well.

As Sala's meditation on Napoleon's shoes suggests, counterfactual speculation is another place that historical thinking and diverse literary texts come together. Catherine Gallagher has studied how the genre of alternative or counterfactual history developed in the wake of Napoleon from its eighteenth-century predecessors, theological debates about providence and critical military history. Although the alternate-historical novel did not arise until the twentieth century, nineteenth-century historical fiction flirts with counterfactual possibilities through characters who speculate about a variety of futures that the reader knows will never come to fruition. As Andrew Miller has documented, counterfactual or optative speculation on the level of the individual defines nineteenth-

century realist fiction as well, in which characters frequently imagine how their lives might have turned out differently, as a consequence of different choices or circumstances. Yet these speculations often mix the world-historical and the personal. In Thomas Hardy's *The Trumpet-Major* (1880), for instance, Anne Garland's mistaken belief that Napoleon has invaded sets in motion a course of events in which she narrowly escapes a sexual assault—in this moment, luckily-avoided national and personal disasters stand in for each other. Counterfactual possibilities seemed especially consequential when thinking back on the Napoleonic Wars, but in fact, they permeated a variety of Victorian discourses on the early nineteenth century. For example, in her biographical sketch *Conversations of Lord Byron* (1832-33), the Countess of Blessington imagines an alternative scenario in which Byron's choice of a slightly different course of travels in his youth resulted in a radically different literary output—one with "a less reprehensible character" (Blessington, *Conversations* 230).

Victorian fiction's limited interest in the historicity of the Napoleonic Wars and Regency period has led me to explore the way this history is engaged outside these canonical genres. In fact, historiographical questions about causality, experience, and contingency are played out in a surprising range of Victorian literary texts that hotly contest the relationship of the recent past to the present. This dissertation examines refigurations of the Napoleonic Wars and Regency period in four groups of Victorian texts: historical fiction, women's life-writing, texts by and about the John Murray publishing house circle, and textual representations of Napoleon memorabilia. This selection of materials highlights meaningful reflections on the past in unexpected places in Victorian literature. As texts about the Napoleonic Wars and Regency period accrued

and influenced each other over the course of the nineteenth century, a unique historicization formed.

Periodizing the Nineteenth Century

Victorian literary texts that theorize the transition from past to present also demonstrate the historiographical tension between continuity and rupture that attends the dawn of their era. Although social and cultural historians long understood the years around 1830 as witnessing a paradigm shift visible in the Reform Acts, Catholic Emancipation, and the ascension of Queen Victoria, recent scholarship has complicated this narrative.[5] Similarly, in literary studies, the relative neglect of the 1820s and 1830s has served to reinforce a distinction between the Romantic and Victorian periods. An era whose most devoted critic, even, calls "a shadowy stretch of time sandwiched between two far more colourful periods," the 1820s and 1830s have been characterized as marginal and derivative, neglected by both Romanticists and Victorianists (Cronin 1). Yet these decades produced many texts that ponder historical questions and position themselves as reflecting upon the Napoleonic Wars or Regency from an emerging new present. Benjamin Disraeli's first novel, *Vivian Grey* (1826), for example, fictionalizes the publisher John Murray II's failed attempt to start a Tory daily newspaper and uses thinly-veiled caricature to depict major figures of the Regency as drunken, incompetent schemers. As scholars question the meaningfulness of the period term "Victorian" for literary-historical study, analyzing texts from this transitional period reveals the way they themselves theorize this historical break.

[5] Recent work that troubles the understanding of 1830 as a historical break includes Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall's *Family Fortunes: Men and Women of the English Middle Class, 1780-1850* (1987) and Boyd Hilton's *A Mad, Bad, and Dangerous People?: England, 1783-1846* (2006).

Furthermore, understanding Victorian conceptions of literary periodization involves analyzing the persistence of older texts in the nineteenth century and taking account of complicated temporalities of literary reception. Whereas traditional literary history presumes that new works are disseminated, read, and digested—that literature "happens"—at the moment of its composition or initial publication, more recent scholarship has looked at the delayed effects of literary production in the long nineteenth century.[6] Although there has been longstanding interest in the Victorian canonization of the Romantic poets, the Victorians read a promiscuous set of early-nineteenth-century texts on topics such as parliamentary bickering, celebrity sex scandals, and Napoleonic War battles.[7] As William St. Clair has documented, the texts that people actually read often differ from the modern canon, and the study of reading material often disrupts our understanding of literary history. St. Clair demonstrates that restrictive copyright laws and a tightly controlled publishing industry dictated that most people during the Romantic period had access only to the works of the past. Although legal and economic realities undoubtedly delimited what people could read, St. Clair does not explore the possibility that readers may have consciously approached older texts as an engagement with the past. In Chapter III, I demonstrate that Victorian responses to Regency texts often expose a tension between historicizing and de-historicizing ways of reading,

[6] William St. Clair's *The Reading Nation in the Romantic Period* (2005) describes traditional literary history as operating on a "parade model" wherein canonical writers pass by in clear succession, or alternatively on a "parliament model" wherein contemporaneous authors are understood to be in dialogue with each other (St. Clair 2-3). Beyond St. Clair, influential studies of the significance of older texts and books for nineteenth-century readers include Leah Price's *The Anthology and the Rise of the Novel* (2000), Deidre Lynch's *Loving Literature: A Cultural History* (2015) and, in the American setting, Meredith McGill's *American Literature and the Culture of Reprinting, 1834-1853* (2003).

[7] On the Victorian canonization of the Romantic poets, see, for example, William H. Galperin's "Anti-Romanticism, Victorianism, and the Case of Wordsworth" (1986), Stephen Gill's *Wordsworth and the Victorians* (1998), David S. Hogsette's "Coleridge as Victorian Heirloom: Nostalgic Rhetoric in the Early Victorian Reviews of Poetical Works" (1998), Andrew Elfenbein's *Byron and the Victorians* (1995), and James Najarian's *Victorian Keats: Manliness, Sexuality, and Desire* (2002).

engaging in debates over the relationship between literature and its historical context that resonate with Matthew Arnold's work. *Vivian Grey*, for example, remained popular well into the mid-Victorian period, taking on new notoriety as a youthful indiscretion in Disraeli's life and a window into the Machiavellian scheming of pre-Reform political culture.

The continuities between early- and late-nineteenth-century literatures also bring into focus the Victorian conception of the Regency as a distinctive historical era. Whereas in twentieth- and twenty-first-century literary scholarship, the 1810s belong to Romanticism, the Victorians understood the literary and cultural history of the early nineteenth century differently. For them, the Regency was a unit of time in cultural and literary history that was meaningfully distinct from both the late eighteenth century and the Victorian present. Samuel Smiles's official biography of Murray II, for example, carves out a literary culture particular to the Regency, populated by an exclusively male, metropolitan circle of commercially and critically successful authors. Although this group includes familiar pillars of Romanticism, notably Byron, Smiles contextualizes him within the Murray firm's journalistic and political output, presenting Byron as a figure of the Regency.

Stereotypes of the Regency

Victorian representations of and meditations on the Regency were characterized by a number of clichés, the most famous of which was the period's reputation for sexual permissiveness among social elites. This reputation may have originated with the high-profile sexual scandals of Queen Caroline and Lord Byron, but it is, of course,

questionable as a historical characterization of the era.[8] Regardless, it allowed the Regency to serve as a foil for the Victorians: thus, the past was produced and reproduced to fill the needs of the present. The link between the Regency period and sexuality was actively constructed by Victorian commentators, often as a way to profit from access to historical documents, such as when the Murray firm's Victorian periodicals repeatedly drew attention to Byron's scandalous marital separation in order to flaunt the wealth of unpublished correspondence in their archive. Furthermore, as I document in Chapter III, a text's claim to originate in the Regency could even signal pornographic content, as in *The Rodiad* (1873), an anonymous piece of flagellation pornography whose title page spuriously claims that it is a reprint of a Regency text.

Similarly, Victorian readers and writers associated the Regency with male effeminacy and dandyism, often crystallized as an obsession with fashionable dress. In *The Trumpet-Major*, for example, Thomas Hardy satirizes Bob Loveday's fashionable clothing as completely inappropriate to the season and makes a similar critique of his fiancée Matilda Johnson's impractical travelling outfit. Although this satire implicitly contrasts Regency frivolity with Victorian seriousness, it also leads to epistemological questions about whether and how the material trappings of daily life in the past illuminate meaningful aspects of the era. Changes in clothing fashions obviously marked the shift between the beginning and the middle parts of the century—as we saw in Sala's response to Napoleon's shoes—but it was uncertain whether they reflected or explained any larger social or cultural shift. Whereas some writers suggest that fashion differences, or changes in military wear, are a way, albeit an imperfect one, to gauge otherwise inaccessible

[8] For an analysis of the political and constitutional implications of sexual scandal in the late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries, see Anna Clark, *Scandal* (2004).

historical changes, others mark a radical separation between these mundane indicators of the historical moment and larger historical shifts. Sala is not alone in finding the encounter with historical clothing to be a prompt for his engagement of serious questions about historical causality and contingency.

Witty conversation is another hallmark of Victorian representations of the Regency. This literature registers that in the nineteenth century, particular speech patterns and slang terms were becoming historically coded, perhaps for the first time, and thus some represented speech signals its own historical setting. When Disraeli revised *Vivian Grey* (1826) in 1853, he removed many of the novel's uses of 1820s slang in order to render the setting historically ambiguous. Because it leaves no trace in the historical record, furthermore, conversation can also function as a reminder of the ephemeral quality of time, as it does in Elizabeth Abell's elegiac account of her childhood friendship with Napoleon on St. Helena, as I discuss in Chapter II. Beyond this, Victorian texts appear to suggest that there is something about speech itself that is particular to the Regency, that the Regency might be understood as an age of speech.

Financial speculation is another theme that runs through these texts, often serving as a way to think about historical contingency. When Mr. Sedley is ruined in *Vanity Fair*, his reversal parallels the ups and downs of Britain's experience of the Napoleonic Wars, as personal financial management becomes a metaphor for the way that wartime decisions can have wide-ranging consequences. A Victorian interest in Napoleon's career is also expressed indirectly through representations of scheming and strategizing in various non-military contexts. As Becky Sharp's personal ambition parallels Napoleon's, representations of the Regency often focus on interpersonal politics and petty feuds. To

some extent, the caricature of the Regency as absorbed in fractious bickering is a result of the Victorian look back at a pre-Reform political culture open only to social elites. Yet it also reveals the perennial challenges of grasping the stakes of political debates from the past—as the ideological landscape shifts, hindsight renders all politics as scheming.

Chapter Overview

The chapters of *How the Victorians Invented the Regency* are arranged conceptually to consider engagements with the past that are increasingly mediated through the material world. I thus begin with Victorian literary representations of the Regency and Napoleonic Wars in historical fiction and life-writing, moving then to look at encounters with recent history refracted through the publishing industry, and finally through memorabilia. Studying Victorian responses to the relatively recent past of the early nineteenth century allows for these rich juxtapositions between different kinds of historical thinking, as well as the reconsideration of what it means for a text to represent the past.

Chapter I, "'The Days of High-Waisted and Muslin-Gowned Women': Napoleonic History on the Surface in William Makepeace Thackeray's *Vanity Fair* (1848) and Thomas Hardy's *The Trumpet-Major* (1880)" begins with the observation that these novels demonstrate an alternative historicism, a historicism of surfaces, that has been overlooked by Georg Lukács and subsequent scholars of the historical novel. My reading of the temporality of objects in these novels reveals the experience of time to be relative. For example, these novels satirize the Regency past as obsessed with rapidly changing clothing fashions, suggesting that history, like fashion, is something with which

characters are struggling to keep up. Yet by analyzing clothing, I demonstrate that fashion operates on unexpected timelines. Next, I trace the way these novels use prolepsis to explore counterfactual possibilities, commenting on the nature of history itself. As I argue at the end of the chapter, *Vanity Fair* and *The Trumpet-Major* adapt the trope of the encounter between the historical figure and the fictional character into a superficial celebrity sighting in order to suggest that historical agency is not only shifting between actors, but is radically de-centered and just out of reach.

Analyzing nonfictional accounts of the kind of encounters with "great men" of history fictionalized by Thackeray and Hardy, Chapter II, "'Ladies Scorn Dates!': Women Life-Writers Look Back on the Regency" analyzes women's retrospective life-writing from the transitional years between the Romantic and Victorian periods, focusing on the way these writers use nonlinear models of temporality when representing encounters with prominent men that occurred many years in the past. In readings of Harriette Wilson's *Memoirs* (1825), the Countess of Blessington's *Conversations of Lord Byron* (1832-33), and Elizabeth Abell's *Recollections of the Emperor Napoleon* (1844), I argue that these works reflect a theory of personal character and a philosophy of history similar to that advanced by Thomas Carlyle in *On Heroes, Hero-Worship, and the Heroic in History* (1841). Defamiliarizing the period of their youth, these writers theorize a break between the Regency past and an emerging Victorian modernity. Their vision of the Regency as a separate and self-contained era, resistant to narratives of historical progress and historicized through conversation, contributes to a gendered historiography of the early nineteenth century.

Chapter III, "The Johns Murray and Publishing's Invention of the Regency," uses

the John Murray publishing house as a case study of the way that Victorian publishing theorized the Regency as a literary period, distinct from Romanticism. I analyze the self-reflexive meditations on their Regency history in the Murrays' Victorian periodicals and institutional histories, as well as unsympathetic depictions of the Murray circle in Disraeli's *Vivian Grey* (1826) and its 1853 revision, in order to document a complicated struggle between different kinds of evidence about literary history. Through these texts, we see the Victorian afterlives of a number of successful literary figures—Byron and Scott among them—who were understood to have a unique relationship to their historical moment, as both profoundly embedded and yet able to transcend their limited view. Taking the publisher's perspective, these texts highlight connections between writers that were based on contemporaneous commercial success rather than thematic or ideological consonance. This management of Regency literary materials in the Victorian period demonstrates a tension between different ways of understanding a text's relationship to its historical context.

Whereas Chapter III traces encounters with the past mediated through a publisher's archive, the final chapter examines objects as touchstones of history. Chapter IV, "A Taller Napoleon: The Historical Effigy in Nineteenth-Century Literature and Culture," analyzes the broken busts and shattered figurines of Napoleon Bonaparte that appear in William Hazlitt's *Liber Amoris* (1823), Charles Dickens's *Pictures in Italy* (1846), Arthur Conan Doyle's "The Adventure of the Six Napoleons" (1905), and Thomas Hardy's *The Dynasts* (1903-1908). I argue that these fictional objects, and the real ones they represent, depict Napoleon's body as a composite of separate parts that never quite resolve into a single whole in order to think about counterfactual possibilities

and roads not taken. The suggestion that Napoleon is an amalgam of body parts and articles of clothing is an aesthetic feature of Victorian busts and effigies, but it is also a persistent way of reading them. Using Napoleon's body as a vector for alternative possibilities, these texts suggest an object-oriented or posthuman understanding of historical causality in which agency can be found in body parts and accoutrements.

Methodology: Historicism and Time

My dissertation is part of a turn toward time as a subject and an axis of analysis in literary studies. In recent years, there has been growing dissatisfaction with the way that New Historicism has privileged synchronic over diachronic explanations of complicated phenomena, and a related interest in theorizing historical time for literary studies, as we see in Wai-chee Dimock's concept of "deep time," for example. Within Victorian studies, John Bowen has urged us to return time to the center of historicist thinking about literature by undertaking a robust consideration of the theoretical questions raised by temporality—questions "of memory, temporal arrest, retrospective causality, untimeliness, the messianic, and the punctual" (Bowen 284). Sue Zemka's *Time and the Moment in Victorian Literature and Society* (2012) has taken up this charge, documenting and questioning the increasing importance given by the Victorian novel to momentary and sudden events. Looking at longer durations of time, Mary Mullen's work has deftly analyzed complex representations of historical time in Elizabeth Barrett Browning's *Aurora Leigh* and George Moore's colonial bildungsroman, *A Drama in Muslin.* Building on Mullen's examination of the way that gender and nationality implicate the subject's experience of time, my dissertation focuses on the Regency's

reputation for sexual permissiveness as a way to contribute to discussions about the relationship between gender, sexuality, and time. For example, in Chapter II, I draw upon Julia Kristeva's "Women's Time" and theories of queer temporality to illuminate the way asynchronous models of temporality allow women's life-writing to invent the Regency period.

Even more recently, the "Manifesto of the V21 Collective" has reignited debate about the place of historicism within Victorian studies. Though a critique of "*positivist historicism*: a mode of inquiry that aims to do little more than exhaustively describe, preserve, and display the past," the Manifesto argues for a more reflective and theoretically nuanced scholarly methodology that embraces abstraction and makes critical use of presentism ("Manifesto"). The writers of the V21 Manifesto suggest that Victorianists have uncritically adopted the positivist historicism of the influential nineteenth-century German historian Leopold von Ranke, whose goal was to tell history "*wie es eigentlich gewesen*" (as it actually was) ("Manifesto"). Ranke's assumptions about the purpose and methods of historical study were widely criticized in the twentieth century, and the V21 Manifesto suggests that there is something problematic about the way our scholarship on Victorian literature is silently shaped by theories of history characteristic of the Victorian period. My dissertation examines Victorian historicism specifically as it relates to the Regency because it is at this point that we see Victorian thinkers theorizing their method by examining a past to which they are profoundly indebted and from which they have not fully escaped. These Victorian writers are struggling with some of the same questions—about changes in mores, continuity and rupture, and the diversity of historical experience—that drive our scholarly debates about

the study of the past.

As suggested by Andrew Elfenbein's analysis of the way Byron's Victorian legacy unfolded phenomenologically, the Regency period comes best into focus and seems most like a distinctive historical era in studies that span the long nineteenth century. Conversely, Victorian historicism is especially focused on the Regency as a way to engage particular topics, especially relating to sex and politics. Although the Regency period and the Napoleonic Wars could always be subsumed into larger historical narratives, as they often are in modern social and cultural history, they came to the fore for Victorians as a thorny test case for theorizing the nature of historical causality and contingency. In the texts I consider in the following chapters, we see in greater detail how the Victorians invented the Regency.

Chapter I.

"The Days of High-Waisted and Muslin-Gowned Women": Napoleonic History on the Surface in William Makepeace Thackeray's *Vanity Fair* (1848) and Thomas Hardy's *The Trumpet-Major* (1880)

In a review that appeared in *The Athenaeum* in April 1832, the anonymous author of the historical novel *Tales of the Early Ages* is derided as belonging to "the Wardrobe School of Novelists, viz. to those writers who give the costume of the time without the life and nerve" ("*Tales*" 251). Indeed, nineteenth-century commentators as well as more recent critics have been eager to distinguish the historical novel proper, whose meaningful engagement with the past is marked by an attention to large-scale socio-economic, demographic, and ideological shifts, from "mere costumery"—that is, the novel whose nominal setting in the past belies an overattention to surface details, and especially, a preoccupation with historical clothing, weaponry, and architecture (Lukács 19).[9] In what is still the most influential theory of the genre, *The Historical Novel* (1937,

[9] For nineteenth-century critics, the fact that many historical novels seemed obsessed with depicting historically accurate clothing was one of the most widespread aesthetic weaknesses of the genre, and this judgment has been largely replicated in recent scholarship. On the very first page of *The Historical Novel,* Lukács describes Walter Scott's innovation in these terms. Distinguishing Scott's historical novels from "the so-called historical novels of the seventeenth century," he describes the latter as "historical only as regards their purely external choice of theme and costume" (Lukács 19). He singles out Horace Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto* in particular as being "mere costumery" that stands in contrast to the way the classical historical novel historicizes characters' inner lives (Lukács 19). While Lukács praises Scott's

trans. 1962), Georg Lukács outlines generic criteria so narrow that no Victorian work qualifies. Only truly possible between the French Revolution and the 1848 uprisings across Europe, the classical historical novel, as Lukács formulates it, dramatizes paradigmatic changes in the structure of society through "characters who, in their psychology and destiny, always represent social trends and historical forces" (Lukács 34).[10] As such, the historical novel must be minimally distracted by the material trappings of life in past ages. This requirement that not only characters' external circumstances but also, and more importantly, their inner lives must be shaped by social and economic realities proves remarkably restrictive for Lukács, who understands the works of Walter

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deeply historicized characterization, other scholars have identified Scott himself as the earliest example of costumery. In *The Novelist as Historian* (1973), for example, James Simmons argues that the myriad historical novels written in imitation of Scott in the 1830s and 1840s pick up on and exaggerate the worst features of Scott's weaker fiction, namely his tendency to focus excessively on surface details. Simmons both documents and concurs with the response of contemporary critics to the adventure novels of William Harrison Ainsworth and the self-serious antiquarian works of Edward Bulwer Lytton in roundly disparaging the technique of providing "details of costume, manners, architecture, weapons, and armor to pad out the picture" (Simmons 13). In *The Historical Novel and Popular Politics in Nineteenth-Century England* (1975), Nicholas Rance echoes this, observing in a brief section that explains why he does not study Scott's imitators, that these works generally stage modern issues "in period costume" (Rance 38). Although Andrew Sanders's *The Victorian Historical Novel, 1840-1880*, by contrast, gives considerable attention to Ainsworth, he nevertheless observes that Ainsworth "had, in fact, no real idea about history, simply a delight in being surrounded by its trappings" (A. Sanders, *Victorian* 33). He appears to agree with a contemporary critic who calls Ainsworth "little more than a reviver of old clothes," whose works were "destructive of the real potential of historical fiction" (A. Sanders, *Victorian* 46). The critique of costumery in historical fiction is certainly strongest against Scott's immediate imitators in the 1830s and 1840s. Yet the tendency of all historical fiction to drift toward costumery haunts discussions of the Victorian historical novel.

[10] Lukács understands the conditions that fostered the rise of the genre as follows: "It was the French Revolution, the revolutionary wars and the rise and fall of Napoleon, which for the first time made history a *mass experience,* and moreover on a European scale," that allowed for a new sort of novel set in the past to come into being (Lukács 23). He describes the genre's demise as a consequence of a shift in the way class was understood and history was conceived. As Lukács demonstrates, after 1848 the idea that progress—industrialization, the rise of capitalism, urbanization—was a mixed blessing was abandoned in favor of a full support for the idea of progress as inherently good (Lukács 178). For Lukács the consequences for the historical novel in this period were disastrous. He chronicles the decline of the genre in the works of Gustave Flaubert and others, in which characters' inner subjectivity becomes increasingly divorced from social and economic reality. The historical novel of this period may be set in the past, but only superficially, either as an escape from the present, or as a covert commentary on it. Lukács admits a few exceptions, pointing to *War and Peace* (1869) as a classical historical novel written later, but in general he sees 1848 as a clear endpoint to the genre. That a committed Marxist like Lukács would find an ally in the politically conservative Scott illuminates a central feature of Lukács's theory of the classical historical novel: while the novel appears to legitimize the new order, it expresses ambivalence about what has been lost (see Lukács 32-33).

Scott and only a few successors, mainly in France, to conform to this model. More recent scholars, furthermore, have shared Lukács's view that the best historical novels after Scott were written outside of Britain.[11]

Scholarship on the British historical novel in the Victorian period has been less systematic than Lukács's work, often eschewing any attempt to theorize a unified genre. Although Victorian historical fiction is diverse, for many scholars a clear hierarchy exists, in which the truest historical novels are those that most closely adhere to Lukács's model.[12] Scholars have varying levels of commitment to this implicit preference for strong (Lukácsian) over weak (other) historicism. Harry Shaw's *The Forms of Historical Fiction: Sir Walter Scott and His Successors* (1983) makes explicit that history functions in varying ways in Victorian historical fiction, and outlines three main approaches, "history as pastoral," "history as source of drama," and "history as subject," with the last best meeting Lukács's requirements. Shaw establishes but also expresses ambivalence

[11] Lukács's genre theory sees genres arise not as the result of groups of writers or works influencing each other, but rather as an objective response to real social conditions. Therefore, despite the classical historical novel's origins in Scotland, the genre was or could be as widespread as industrial capitalism itself. Many of the scholars influenced by Lukács's work, often having a different understanding genre formation, nevertheless shared his interest in tracing the historical novel across cultures. Richard Maxwell's *The Historical Novel in Europe, 1650-1950* (2009) has been the most substantive and compelling response to Lukács's work. Deeply sympathetic with Lukács's original principles, Maxwell makes a number of important updates and corrections to Lukács's argument, including expanding both the geographical and temporal range of the classical historical novel—to include its origins in the seventeenth- and eighteenth-century French *nouvelle* tradition as well as a wider range of nineteenth- and twentieth-century works. Maxwell nevertheless does not consider Victorian historical fiction to be a part of this tradition. Although he sees Victorian historical fiction for children as an alternate take on the classical historical novel, he understands Victorian historical fiction for adults as lacking the intense engagement with real social and cultural changes that is evident, by contrast, in French historical novels from the same period. Brian Hamnett's *The Historical Novel in Nineteenth-Century Europe* (2011), is less theoretically deft than Maxwell's work, but represents an impressively international approach to the subject, giving extensive consideration to works ranging from Spain to Russia, with relatively little attention to Britain after Scott. There has also been extensive work on the historical novel outside Europe. See especially George Dekker, *American Historical Romance* (1987) and Doris Summer, *Foundational Fictions: The National Romances of Latin America* (1991).

[12] See, for example, Avrom Fleishman's *The English Historical Novel: Walter Scott to Virginia Woolf* (1971), which appears to be in a state of constant lament that the Victorian novels it considers do not live up to Lukács's requirements of the genre.

about the hierarchy between these modes of engagement:

> Whatever their other merits, novels that use history as pastoral or as a source of drama will lack the potentiality to be as richly and integrally historical as novels that find their subject in history. [Earlier], I pointed out the dangers of using a distinction between true and false historicity as the basic tool in approaching historical fiction, but we can hardly escape such judgments altogether (H. Shaw 53).

Though Shaw expresses mixed feelings here, the idea that some historical novels are more historical than others, with its aesthetic judgment, is endemic to scholarship on the Victorian historical novel.

The historical setting also implicates a novel's ability to conform to restrictive criteria for the genre,[13] and novels set in the very recent past have prompted lively debate over the relationship between the historical novel and the realist novel.[14] The effort to

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[13] Victorian Britain was captivated by historical novels set during Antiquity and the Middle Ages, yet these works receive little attention in scholarship on the Lukácsian historical novel because they appear necessarily to be doomed to a weak historicism. As the review quoted above suggests, this may have been the case with *Tales of the Early Ages*. Stanwood Walker has analyzed the challenges of adapting Scott's model for the historical novel to a setting in the classical past, using Lockhart's *Valerius* (1821) as a test case. As Walker demonstrates, novelists found it difficult to establish a genealogical relationship between antiquity and the nineteenth century, as Scott's model requires. Although Scott's *Ivanhoe* faced this problem to some extent, as Walker suggests, the unique status of the classical past in nineteenth-century discourse meant that "antiquity remained in large measure impervious to the powers of the novelists who ventured into it" (Walker 205). As a consequence, the historical novel about classical antiquity frequently uses history as "pastoral," in Shaw's sense, to comment upon ongoing debates about Christian faith in the modern world.

[14] The origins of this debate go back to Lukács, whose teleological history of the genre argues that the historical novel evolved in the later nineteenth century into the realist novel that depicts a historicized present. For Lukács, Scott's novels trained readers to understand life in the past as shaped by social and economic conditions, leading them ultimately to apply the same logic to their own moment. Lukács praises the works of Balzac for "pass[ing] from the portrayal of *past history* to the portrayal of the *present as history,*" reflecting that in his view, the historical novel could and indeed should be used to depict a historicized present (Lukács 83). Subsequent scholarship has developed and complicated Lukács's vision of the historical novel as a forerunner to the realist novel. Hamnett shares this view, arguing that in the later nineteenth century, "there no longer seemed to be a need for specifically historical novels, except perhaps in the decorative sense. . . . In many respects, it could be argued, that most novels are historical" (Hamnett 184). Maxwell acknowledges that "a good deal of what is taken to be 'the novel' can be alternatively

maintain firm boundaries for both historical and realist fiction has led to the development of a third term, the "novel of the recent past," first coined by Kathleen Tillotson in *Novels of the Eighteen Forties* (1954) and repeated in more recent scholarship (Tillotson 91-93; see Fleishman 3 and H. Shaw 38). Set between twenty and sixty years in the past, the "novel of the recent past" is an umbrella term that encompasses diverse works, both those that "hav[e] obviously a 'historical' colouring" and those that do not (Tillotson 93). Furthermore, its boundaries are porous, with *Vanity Fair* serving as the central example of this ambiguity:

> The line between [novels of the recent past] and the historical novels may not always be easy to draw; no two readers may quite agree as to how 'historical' *Vanity Fair* is intended to be; obviously the past here is more definite and documented than the remoter past of *Jane Eyre*, in which a battle, even as much offstage as Waterloo, is inconceivable. Yet Thackeray's main field is surely private life, although he chooses to borrow for his own purposes something of the historical novel, something (in Lord Steyne, for example) of the *roman à clef,* something even from the 'military novels' which he repudiates (Tillotson 94).

Despite its vagueness, Tillotson's concept has repeatedly been used to mark the limits of the Victorian historical novel.[15] For example, Shaw explains, "I also avoid discussing the

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understood as the historical novel in a mildly sublimated form," but argues that "a conspicuous line of historical fiction has resisted co-optation" into the "realist mainstream," resulting in a "large, troublesome subset, half assimilated, half autonomous, and itself possessed of a largely unacknowledged past" (Maxwell 7-8). Shaw is similarly interested in the historical novel as a distinctive tradition, suggesting that a Lukácsian understanding of the genre as leading inexorably toward realism fails to honor what is meaningfully historical about these works.

[15] Fleishman alters Tillotson's timeline slightly, claiming that novels set between forty and sixty years in the past are historical novels whereas those set more recently are novels of the recent past, but he repeatedly uses this term to mark the limits of his project, citing *Vanity Fair* specifically as outside his

representation of history in novels set in the recent past or the present. I believe that the representational problems that shape historical fiction touch such works as well, but in ways complex enough to demand a much longer discussion than I can here provide" (H. Shaw 12). Later, he reiterates that "the distinction between 'novels of the recent past' like *Vanity Fair* and 'historical novels' like *Henry Esmond* or *Waverley* seems intuitively clear, though difficult to theorize" (H. Shaw 38).

As this discussion suggests, William M. Thackeray's *Vanity Fair* (1848) is paradigmatic of a novel that fails to satisfy restrictive criteria for historical fiction. Inconsistent in the historicization of its Regency characters' inner lives, uninterested in the implications of world-historical events like the Battle of Waterloo, and unserious in its treatment of the uncertainties of life during the Napoleonic Wars, *Vanity Fair* has been seen to embody a facile or weak historicism in nearly every way. In this chapter, I reconsider *Vanity Fair*'s status as a historical novel by arguing that it demonstrates a distinctive alternative historicism that has been overlooked by Lukács and others—a historicism of surfaces.[16] As scholarship has recently turned toward examining the representation of material objects in nineteenth-century literature, it is worth reconsidering the role of clothing, weaponry, and architecture in historical fiction to ask how these occasionally tolerated, usually maligned objects function in these texts. Pairing *Vanity Fair* with *The Trumpet-Major* (1880), Thomas Hardy's historical novel of the Napoleonic Wars, I trace a major feature of their surface historicism: its interest in

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scope for that reason (Fleishman 146). Although it does not cite Tillotson explicitly, Sanders's *Victorian Historical Novel* shares her sense that the proper historical novel must not be set too close to the present day, and arbitrarily draws a line by asserting that he is only interested in novels set before the author's own lifetime.

[16] There has been some work on surfaces and objects in *Vanity Fair,* but none on their role in the novel's historicism. See Brink-Roby on the role of mirrors in *Vanity Fair* and for an excellent summary of how nineteenth-century reviewers identified the novel's fascination with surfaces (Brink-Roby 138).

ephemeral objects and its exaggeration of the speed with which objects reflected historical change. Looking at the way these novels pay attention to diverse material surfaces, from clothing to visual propaganda, I argue that they theorize a philosophy of history very different from Lukács's, one that sees historical experience as nonlinear, highly relative, and hard to grasp.

Then, I trace the way these novels use prolepsis to explore counterfactual historical possibilities, suggesting a vision of history that emphasizes the speculative and contingent. In so doing, I demonstrate that this surface historicism is not merely a way of looking at the past, but a reflection of that past itself. Whereas most scholarship assumes that the nature of a work's historicism is determined by the milieu in which it is composed and the relative temporal distance between the composition and the historical setting, I suggest that the setting itself also shapes a historical novel's form. Finally, I analyze the way these novels depict a particular kind of encounter between a fictional character and a historical character, which I call the historico-celebrity encounter. Rewriting this trope of the historical novel for the Regency setting, these novels present meetings between fictional protagonists and the "great men" of the time in ways that are indebted to the celebrity culture of the Regency period itself. Despite their composition, more than thirty years apart, by profoundly different writers, *Vanity Fair* and *The Trumpet-Major* use similar formal features to make similar claims about the early nineteenth century and about history writ large.

JOS SEDLEY'S WAIST

Vanity Fair introduces Joseph Sedley with the following description of his daily

life and regular habits in London:

> He never was well dressed: but he took the hugest pains to adorn his big person: and passed many hours daily at that occupation. His valet made a fortune out of his wardrobe. His toilet-table was covered with as many pomatums and essences as ever were employed by an old beauty: he had tried, in order to give himself a waist, every girth, stay, and waist-band then invented. Like most fat men he *would* have his clothes made too tight and took care they should be of the most brilliant colours and youthful cut. When dressed at length in the afternoon he would issue forth to take a drive with nobody in the park: and then would come back in order to dress again and go and dine with nobody at the Piazza Coffee House (Thackeray, *Vanity* 21-22).

Certainly, this account of Jos's habits swiftly sketches his character. Taking "the hugest pains to adorn his big person" and having "his clothes made too tight," Jos's feminized personal grooming habits suggest a vain and lazy man inappropriately obsessed with his poor appearance, or more charitably, a lonely man desperate for companionship. Yet the way the narrator makes this point about Jos relies heavily on evocative and conspicuous descriptions of objects, from Jos's "pomatums and essences" to "every girth, stay, and waist-band then invented" to his too-tight, brilliantly colored clothes. In *The Ideas in Things* (2006), Elaine Freedgood offers a way of reading fictional objects that insists that they can be more than weak metonyms that contribute in a straightforward way to characterization. She argues that although mid-Victorian realist novels are filled with accounts of physical objects, "the protocols for reading the realist novel have long

focused us on subjects and plots; they have implicitly enjoined us *not* to interpret many or most of its objects" (Freedgood, *Ideas* 1). Countering this approach, her reading of *Jane Eyre*, for example, demonstrates that whereas one might interpret the brief mention of mahogany furniture as merely reflecting Jane's wealth and good taste, it in fact reveals an otherwise unseen imperial narrative about the colonization and deforestation of Madeira and Jamaica.

Yet the historical novel necessarily prompts a different protocol for interpreting objects. Namely, in historical fiction, objects may serve as metonyms for character, but that character is constituted at a time in the past, when the objects themselves and their significance may differ from the object landscape of the present. In this passage, Jos's behavior marks not only his individual vanity, but also the culture of a particular historical moment—a moment when, we are led to believe, middle-class men like Jos were especially interested in copying the dress of the wealthy, who were especially interested in flashy clothing and personal appearances. To some degree, the increased attention that historical fiction gives to objects—that is, the creeping "costumery" of historical fiction—may be understood as a result of the need to explain objects' significance for characterization. Whereas realist fiction set essentially in the present can assume that readers know what to make of, say, mahogany furniture and allow it to remain implicit, in historical fiction the weak metonymic significance of an object at a time in the past might require an explicit gloss.[17]

[17] For example, the sustained attention given to Gurth and Wamba's clothing in the opening chapter of Scott's *Ivanhoe* (1819) might be understood as a necessary explanation of how their dress indicates their social position in post-Norman England. In "Fictional Settlements," Freedgood suggests that nineteenth-century colonial novelists like Catherine Parr Traill faced a similar problem in having to "both present and represent" a totally foreign landscape to British readers (Freedgood, "Fictional" 404). Parr Traill responded by including footnotes with a lot of expository detail about local topography, wildlife, and indigenous peoples that could have remained implicit in novels set in contemporary Britain.

Vanity Fair, however, unsubtly and repeatedly draws readers' attention to objects, in ways that go far beyond the explanation necessary to grasp their weak metonymic function. Freedgood's readings run against the grain of realist texts that direct readerly attention away from objects. Yet if Jane Eyre's mahogany furniture is hidden in plain sight, Joseph Sedley's clothing is not hidden at all. Thus, while Jos's clothing does serve as a metonym for a historicized individual character, the conspicuousness of that clothing suggests that more is at stake. Satirizing Jos's obsession with his appearance, *Vanity Fair* associates this kind of masculinity with the Regency period, implicitly distinguishing it from Victorian models. And yet in so doing, the novel also participates in that attention to clothing, suggesting that the Regency past and the Victorian present might not be so different after all.

In fact, just before this passage, the novel uses prolepsis to illustrate the unreliability of these retrospective narratives of the Regency: "On returning to India, and ever after he used to talk of the pleasures of this period of his existence with great enthusiasm and give you to understand that he and Brummell were the leading bucks of the day" (Thackeray, *Vanity* 21). Thus Jos himself later looks back on this time in London as distinctive and memorable, and engages in some creative revisionism in associating himself with Beau Brummell, the era's most influential sartorial taste-maker. Like *Vanity Fair* itself, Jos is engaged in the vexed project of retrospectively casting the Regency period as a discrete historical era dominated by a culture of rapidly changing clothing fashions. Exemplifying the historiographical tension between continuity and rupture, references to clothing in *Vanity Fair* both contribute to the novel's efforts to distinguish past from present, and yet also demonstrate how such period distinctions are

manufactured and self-interested.

The tendency of clothing to prompt meditations on historical distance is clearest in another early passage. After mentioning that George Osborne "went to Bond Street and bought the best hat and spencer that money could buy" (Thackeray, *Vanity* 63), Thackeray includes a footnote that explains:

> It was the author's intention, faithful to history, to depict all the characters of this tale in their proper costumes, as they wore them at the commencement of the century. But when I remember the appearance of people those days, and that an officer and lady were actually habited like this—[*vignette* (Fig. 1)]—I have not the heart to disfigure my heroes and heroines by costumes so hideous; and have, on the contrary, engaged a model of rank dressed according to the present fashion (Thackeray, *Vanity* 63-64).

Yet although the footnote ostensibly clarifies that the novel will depict clothing anachronistically, it in fact raises questions about the extent to which clothing fashions can be used to signal specific historical moments at all. First, it is unclear whether the footnote's explanation is meant to apply to both the prose descriptions and the images of clothing, or only to the images. In an unsigned review, George Henry Lewes assumes the latter, suggesting that in this footnote, Thackeray became "suddenly aware of the discrepancy between the costume of the period in which he has laid his scene and the costume in which he has depicted the characters in his pictorial illustrations," and so he "flippantly pretend[ed] that the real costume was too hideous for his purpose" (Lewes 754). Yet elsewhere, such as in the passages about Jos Sedley, the novel includes

historically accurate representations of fashionable dress during the Regency in which the prose and the images closely correspond. Unlike those florid accounts of clothing, furthermore, this passage straightforwardly describes George's purchases as a hat and a spencer—a short jacket without tails that ends at the waist—without including any further details that might position these garments within a more specific fashion milieu. Thus, the passage does not seem to necessitate an explanation of the novel's representational policy on historical clothing.

Furthermore, the clothing described in the text and that depicted in the vignette do not clearly reflect two different historical moments. Although the woman's high-waisted dress contrasts with the Victorian styles anachronistically depicted on female figures in other illustrations, this image features a man wearing a coat with long tails, which, like the spencer, was a popular style more or less throughout the century. Thus, the disjunction between these two modes of representation is not easily explained through the change of clothing fashions over time. Just as the text is not detailed, the image is small and sketchy, de-emphasizing the sartorial differences between this image and the others. Rather than playfully mock the clothing of the past, this passage and the footnote further complicate any understanding of clothing as signaling specific historical moments. Again, clothing functions as the prop equivalent to the formal feature of prolepsis, revealing the progress of history to be messy and unpredictable.

In fact, depictions of Jos's clothing throughout the novel serve as opportunities for the narrator to question the implications of historical distance. At Amelia's wedding, for example:

> Jos Sedley was splendid. He was fatter than ever. His shirt collars were

> higher; his face was redder; his shirt-frill flaunted gorgeously out of his variegated waistcoat. Varnished boots were not invented as yet; but the Hessians on his beautiful legs shone so, that they must have been the identical pair in which the gentleman in the old picture used to shave himself (Thackeray, *Vanity* 217).

Observing that varnished boots had not yet been invented, the narrator marks the difference between men's footwear, then and now. Geoffrey and Kathleen Tillotson have observed that by "the old picture," Thackeray is probably referring to George Cruikshank's woodcut advertisement for Warren's Blacking that appeared regularly in the *National Omnibus* in 1832, which depicts a man shaving with his face reflected on a well-polished boot (G. and K. Tillotson 207n). Thus, while the advertisement is "old" from the reader's perspective, it had not yet appeared at the time of this fictional scene. In describing Jos's appearance by reference to an image from the period between the novel's fictional setting and the moment of reading, the passage points to a historical continuity—regardless of how it is achieved, a shiny boot is always desirable.

Similarly in *The Trumpet-Major,* Thomas Hardy's satire of the excesses of men's and women's fashion in the first years of the nineteenth century often serves as a way to signal characters' nonlinear experiences of time. The novel opens: "In the days of high-waisted and muslin-gowned women, when the vast amount of soldiering going on in the country was a cause of much trembling to the sex, there lived in a village near the Wessex coast two ladies of good report, though unfortunately of limited means" (Hardy 3). Here, the narrator does not necessarily suggest that Anne Garland and her mother themselves wore muslin gowns with high waists, but rather references this fashion trend

to indicate the novel's setting in time. When Anne's clothing is described, however, the novel complicates this sense of a clear-cut correspondence between specific fashion trends and particular moments. During a trip to see the royal family, Anne "had a very nice appearance in her best clothes as she walked along—the sarcanet hat, muslin shawl, and tight-sleeved gown being of the newest Overcombe fashion, that was only about a year old in the adjoining town, and in London three or four" (Hardy 79). Sketching the way fashion trends move from place to place over time, the passage suggests multiple interpretations of Anne's fashionability—it is unclear whether anyone in Overcombe knows or cares that she is wearing London's fashions of three or four years ago. This moment draws attention to the divergent, if related, timelines for fashion that coexist in different geographical settings, suggesting that historical experience happens at different rates depending on where and who you are. In *The Trumpet-Major*, as in *Vanity Fair,* clothing has a tendency to reveal its wearer as unfashionable. Like the description of Jos Sedley's grooming habits, this passage both mocks and participates in an extreme attention to clothing that these novels seek to associate with the Regency period. Yet the way these passages indicate the temporality and significance of Regency fashion suggest that historical experience is nonlinear and unpredictable.

Elsewhere, Matilda Johnson's and Bob Loveday's elaborate and impractical dress reflects not only their fickle characters, but also the way that fashionable clothing tends to put the wearer out of sync with seasonal and diurnal time. When his fiancée finally arrives in Overcombe after an unexpected delay, Bob is surprised at the contrast between her garments and her mode of conveyance:

> In dress, Miss Johnson passed his expectations—a green and white gown,

> with long, tight sleeves, a green silk handkerchief round her neck and crossed in front, a green parasol, and green gloves. It was strange enough to see this verdant caterpillar turn out of a road-waggon, and gracefully shake herself free from the bits of straw and fluff which would usually gather on the raiment of the grandest travellers by that vehicle (Hardy 98).

The juxtaposition of the rustic road-waggon with Matilda's carefully matched monochromatic ensemble is an early indication that she is duplicitous and shallow, and we later learn that she was forced to take the economical but slower mode of travel because she had spent nearly all her money on clothing. Similarly, Bob later goes to the theater with Anne dressed as follows:

> As finished off by this dashing and really fashionable attire, he was the perfection of a beau in the dog-days; pantaloons and boots of the newest make; yards and yards of muslin wound round his neck, forming a sort of asylum for the lower part of his face; two fancy waistcoats, and coat-buttons like circular shaving glasses. The absurd extreme of female fashion, which was to wear muslin dresses in January, was at this time equalled by that of men, who wore clothes enough in August to melt them (Hardy 181-82).

This passage reflects both Bob's personal character and the way his clothing choices are conditioned by the dominant practices of the time, yet it also suggests that fashionable clothing operates independently of seasonal cycles, or perhaps in deliberate opposition to them. On this particular evening, Bob's outfit is especially ill-timed—pursued by the press-gang, Bob is forced to run and hide in his impractical and visually distinctive

clothing. Both Matilda's and Bob's adherence to fashion puts them at odds with other temporal contexts, from the season to the ongoing wars against France.

The Trumpet-Major's interest in fashionable dress is matched by its attention to military wear and weaponry, which ultimately mark time in complicated ways. Anne and the other villagers frequently observe troops marching and preparing for battle, often at a distance, and their military dress has a dramatic visual impact. At one point, the York Hussars come into view: "Their uniform was bright and attractive; white buckskin pantaloons, three-quarter boots, scarlet shakos set off with lace, mustachios waxed to a needle point; and above all, those richly ornamented blue jackets mantled with the historic pelisse—that fascination to women, and encumbrance to the wearers themselves" (Hardy 7). In these sightings, pristine weaponry and dress often blend together to create one brilliant image, such as when Anne sees two cavalry soldiers: "The burnished chains, buckles, and plates of their trappings shone like little looking-glasses, and the blue, red, and white about them was unsubdued by weather or wear" or another group whose "arms and accoutrements reflect[] the sun through the haze of faint flashes, starts, and streaks of light" (Hardy 5-6, 6).

Descriptions of military wear and weaponry are prominent in the historical novel genre because, like fashionable clothing, they are relatively obvious physical markers of the time. While the gleaming arms in the passages quoted above might seem to suggest newness and self-conscious modernity, weaponry in this novel actually serves as a more ambiguous symbol of the coexistence of new and old at any historical moment. At one point, Anne and Bob observe a group of volunteers engaged in a makeshift drill outside the local church before the Sunday service. There are not enough firelocks available for

all the men to practice with a real weapon, so the sergeant instructs them to use a substitute: "You middle men, that are armed with hurdle-sticks and cabbage stumps just to make-believe, must of course use 'em as if they were the real thing. Now then, cock fawlocks! Present! Fire! (Pretend to, I mean, and the same time throw yer imagination into the field o' battle)" (Hardy 141). A smooth-barreled musket, the firelock of the Napoleonic Wars was essentially unchanged from the guns used in the early parts of the eighteenth century, and was vastly inferior in terms of accuracy and distance to the more recently developed rifle, with its innovative striated barrel. Nevertheless, the rifle had only limited use during the Napoleonic Wars—the Coalition forces each had a few rifle regiments, but the French tried the rifle, did not like it, and did not use it at all (Haythornthwaite 24-25). An emerging technology that eventually transformed warfare altogether, the rifle's potential went largely unrealized during this period, as the majority of combatants used the traditional musket or firelock. Beyond their inadequate provision, then, the use of firelocks in this scene also reflects the persistence of older technology, even at war.

The persistence of the past in the present is reinforced just afterwards, as Anne and Bob see some even older weapons on display in the village church. In this description of the church's ceremonial pikes, the narrator uses a long-outdated technology to situate the novel in time:

> The religion of the country had, in fact, changed from love of God to hatred of Napoleon Buonaparte; and, as if to remind the devout of this alteration, the pikes for the pikemen (all those accepted men who were not otherwise armed) were kept in the church of each parish. There, against

> the wall, they always stood—a whole sheaf of them, formed of new ash stems, with a spike driven in at one end, the stick being preserved from splitting by a ferule. And there they remained, year after year, in the corner of the aisle, till they were removed and placed under the gallery stairs, and thence ultimately to the belfry, where they grew black, rusty, and worm-eaten, and were gradually stolen and carried off by sextons, parish clerks, whitewashers, window-menders, and other church servants for use at home as rake-stems, benefit-club staves and pick-handles, in which degraded situations they may still occasionally be found.
>
> But in their new and shining state they had a terror for Anne whose eyes were involuntarily drawn toward them as she sat at Bob's side during the service, filling her with bloody visions of their possible use not far from the very spot on which they were now assembled (Hardy 142).

Ancient weapons used for centuries but now obsolete, the pikes nevertheless bear witness to the passage of time, as the narrator's digression into their fate after the war reflects. Understood as a weapon of last resort, the symbolic presence of the pikes in the church in this scene reflects the town's readiness for invasion, whereas their later removal signals peace (Lanning 56; Hardy 141). Furthermore, the deterioration of the pikes over the subsequent years situates the story temporally—not only at a time when pikes would have been found in a church, but also at the time when these particular pikes were new. Contrasting the moldering never-used object that the reader can imagine encountering in the present with the description of a shiny new pike, ready for combat at any moment, Hardy traces the pikes' shifting condition and appropriateness to the situation. The pikes,

which initially seem both timeless and of a past time, ultimately reflect the surprising rapidity of historical change. The coexistence of older with newer technologies of weaponry during this period underscores the way the novel persistently historicizes them all.

A Triumph of the Year 1805

The Trumpet-Major exaggerates the occasional quality of visual propaganda, playing with the tension between the ephemeral and the permanent. The novel suggests that propagandistic effigies were important to the lived experience of this period—something that, like fashions in clothing, is especially difficult to understand in the present. In an unexpected use of the pronoun "we," the narrator describes the mood in England during the years that a French invasion seemed possible: "We punned on Buonaparte and his gunboats, chalked his effigy on stage-coaches, and published the same in prints" (Hardy 153). When Anne tells Bob that she is worried about what will happen to him at war, he pulls out a piece of paper, "something to make us brave and patriotic" (Hardy 151):

> It was a hieroglyphic profile of Napoleon. The hat represented a maimed French eagle; the face was ingeniously made up of human carcases [*sic*], knotted and writhing together in such directions as to form a physiognomy; a band, or stock, shaped to resemble the English Channel, encircled his throat, and seemed to choke him; his epaulette was a hand tearing a cobweb that represented the treaty of peace with England; and his ear was a woman crouching over a dying child (Hardy 151-52).

Hardy based this remarkable description on a real caricature of Napoleon, published in London by Rudolf Ackermann in December 1813, which was one of a number of adaptations of a famous German print, Johann Michael Voltz's "Triumph des Jahres 1813" (Ashton 358; Broadley II.246-47; Trezise 62; Fig. 2).[18] In Voltz's original caricature, each element of Napoleon's portrait is composed of a smaller image representing his duplicity and brutality; when the wildly popular print was reproduced in other countries, the imagery was slightly altered to fit the particular national context, as Ackermann's print did for Britain (Broadley II.244-45; Trezise 62). Hardy's 1895 preface makes a claim reminiscent of Walter Scott's belated introductions to the Waverley Novels when it asserts that Hardy found this print "in an old woman's cottage near 'Overcombe,'" although the differences between Ackermann's version and the fictional print are likely Hardy's own invention (Hardy, "Preface" xxv-xxvi).

Hardy's adaptation of Ackermann's caricature reflects the way the novel emphasizes and even exaggerates the dramatic rapidity with which circumstances changed from day to day during the Napoleonic Wars. Although the novel's prose description of the image is indebted to the text that accompanied the original prints, Hardy changes many of the details to emphasize Napoleon's threat to England specifically, going beyond even Ackermann's already Anglified imagery. Whereas Voltz's original caricature explains that "THE COLLAR (coloured red) is the great stream of blood so long outpoured for his ambition" and Ackermann claims that "His throat is encircled with the *Red Sea*, in allusion to his Drowned Hosts," for Hardy the collar represents the English Channel (Broadley II.244, 247). Similarly, both Voltz and

[18] J. M. Voltz based his caricature on a flattering portrait of Napoleon in profile by the artist Heinrich Anton Dähling, which was a popular print in 1806 (Broadley II.242-44; Trezise 62).

Ackermann describe the epaulette as a hand leading and tearing apart the Confederation of the Rhine, while for Hardy it is tearing apart the broken Peace of Amiens between Britain and France (Broadley II.245, 247).[19] Hardy's adaptation of the image focuses it on Napoleon's aggression toward Britain specifically, heightening the patriotic significance.

Yet Hardy's version also locates the image at a different and more precise historical moment, corresponding to the novel's setting between the breaking of the Peace of Amiens in May 1803 and the decisive Battle of Trafalgar in October 1805. When Voltz's and Ackermann's caricatures appeared in 1813, they referenced Napoleon's atrocities over a wide temporal as well as geographical range—from his early campaign in Egypt, to his later aggression in Prussia and Russia. In fact, A. M. Broadley credits the caricature and its many adaptations with helping to unify Napoleon's disparate enemies at a late stage in the war (Broadley II.256). Whereas the real caricatures are international and temporally cumulative, Hardy's fictional caricature is geographically local and temporally specific. In both changing the real image's historical context and giving its references a much tighter temporal range, the novel suggests that people who lived through this era took a remarkably short historical view of the struggle against Napoleon.

The novel also features a propagandistic representation of George III, and here again, this fictional effigy exaggerates the rapidity of the monumentalizing process. Just after the novel reports the victory at Trafalgar, some local men work on creating a memorial on a hillside that will be visible from the town. John explains that they are "cutting out a huge picture of the king on horseback in the earth of the hill. The king's

[19] Hardy's description of the ear as a woman crouching over a dying child appears to be entirely original.

head is to be as big as our mill-pond and his body as big as this garden; he and the horse will cover more than an acre" (Hardy 232). In *The White Horses of the West of England* (1885), the Rev. William C. Plenderleath describes the phenomenon of hillside carvings of horses, prevalent in Wiltshire and the surrounding counties. Plenderleath explains that these carvings are created by cutting deep grooves in the hill and refilling them with crushed chalk, which is plentiful in the local soil (Plenderleath 12). Two of these carvings are thought to have ancient origins, although this has been hard to prove: the Uffington and Westbury White Horses are believed to commemorate the victories of King Alfred over the Danes in the 870s A.D., but even if this is true, the horses would have required frequent and substantial upkeep in order to remain visible, and the Westbury Horse is known to have been entirely redesigned in 1778 (Plenderleath 24). As Plenderleath demonstrates, although the horse carvings give an impression of permanence and antiquity, they are in fact highly vulnerable to degradation over time.

In using a monument carved out of a constantly changing surface of foliage to commemorate a battle, *The Trumpet-Major* suggests the fleeting nature of victory—Trafalgar was hardly the end of Napoleon's career. Yet the carving described in the novel in fact strongly resembles the Osmington White Horse in Dorset, a hillside carving dating from 1808, built to commemorate the King's regular visits to the area (*Osmington*; Fig. 3). Thus, although the real-life horse carving honored the King's repeated practice, the novel's fictionalized monument commemorates a specific event. By contrast, just a few miles from the Osmington White Horse, there is a belated and more permanent monument to Trafalgar, a stone pillar built in 1844 in memory of Vice-Admiral Sir Thomas Masterman Hardy (the author's very distant relation), the flag-captain of Lord

Nelson's *HMS Victory* (National Trust). The novel's fictional hill carving effectively combines the immediacy and ephemerality of the Osmington White Horse with the event-specific nature of the Hardy Monument. The fictional composite represents an immediate effort to preserve the memory of events that were passing by extremely quickly—a sense among the characters living through this period that each moment was fleeting.

In *Vanity Fair*, similarly, monuments and memorials tend to throw into relief the speed of historical change. A few months after George's death at Waterloo, his sisters discover that their father has commissioned a monument in the church:

> they saw an elaborate monument upon the wall, where Britannia was represented weeping over an urn, and a broken sword, and a couchant lion, indicated that the piece of sculpture had been erected in honour of a deceased warrior. The sculptors of those days had stocks of such funereal emblems in hand, as you may see still on the walls of St Paul's, which are covered with hundreds of these braggart heathen allegories. There was a constant demand for them during the first fifteen years of the present century (Thackeray, *Vanity* 353-54).

While the monument's symbolism at first appears to associate George with a canon of dead "warrior[s]" going back to time immemorial, the narrator immediately clarifies that this imagery in fact identifies George as one of the war dead from this specific period. Although they aim toward an appearance of timelessness, these church memorials actually reflect the specific moment of their creation. Complicating further the novel's play on permanence and impermanence is the ekphrastic woodcut illustration of George's monument (Thackeray, *Vanity* 351; Fig. 4). It depicts the durable artistic medium of

stonemasonry, but the aesthetic style of the woodcut resembles ephemeral social commentary, both the caricatures of the Napoleonic War period, and the graphic satire that appeared in the 1840s in the magazine *Punch,* to which Thackeray was a regular contributor.

In fact, *Vanity Fair*'s initial images and tail-pieces frequently depict stone statues and memorials that exploit the tension between the seeming timeless permanence of stonemasonry and the seeming sketchy ephemerality of printed caricature. Whereas the woodcut illustration of George's monument visually represents an object described in the text, elsewhere the illustrations depict monuments that have no textual referent. Becky meets George IV in Chapter XLVIII, but the statue of him standing on a pedestal that is depicted in the chapter's initial image appears neither here nor elsewhere in the novel's text (Thackeray, *Vanity* 473; Fig. 5). The chapter's prose description of George is fulsome, but the statue is relatively understated: wearing a military uniform and holding a bicorn hat under his left arm, this somewhat modest image depicts George as a civilian, reflecting the fact that his status was in transition over the course of the novel's temporal scope. In its humble appearance, the fictional statue does not resemble any of the major surviving statues or monuments of George IV. It also stands in sharp contrast to the ostentatious, real monuments to figures from this period that are depicted on the cover of the novel's first installment (Fig. 6). Joan Stevens has analyzed this paper cover, focusing on the two statues in the background—on the right, the equestrian statue of Wellington in Hyde Park, erected amid much debate shortly before the novel's serialization began, and on the left, a column with a figure standing on its head, either the Duke of York Column in Carlton Gardens or Nelson's Column in Trafalgar Square. To Stevens, this image's

critique of the excesses of the monumentalization of the heroes of the Napoleonic Wars situates the novel in the present of the 1840s. Yet in the fictional monument to George IV, the novel's illustrations seem less interested in the extravagant wastefulness of public monuments, and more in the gradual process by which a living figure becomes monumentalized. In using the seemingly permanent technology of stonemasonry to document a transitional period in George IV's life, the image suggests that monuments always belie the constancy of change.

The novel's other image of George IV further reflects the way representations of great men indicate that historical time is moving rapidly. The initial image of Chapter LVI, "Georgy is Made a Gentleman," features Georgy Osborne as George IV in his coronation robes, reflecting Georgy's social ascent upon moving to his grandparents' home (Thackeray, *Vanity* 557; Fig. 7). Similarly, the initial image of Chapter LXIV depicts Becky as Napoleon, after the Benjamin Robert Haydon portrait *Napoleon Musing at St Helena,* during a period when Becky is down on her luck (Thackeray, *Vanity* 637; Fig. 8). These images of fictional characters as contemporary "great men" are part of a larger set of illustrations, concentrated in the novel's second half, that depict *Vanity Fair*'s fictional characters as gods, mythological figures, or other fictional characters, especially from drama—for example, we see Becky as Clytemnestra and Circe, and Jos as Falstaff, among others (Thackeray, *Vanity* 512, 626, 652). The inclusion of Napoleon and George IV alongside Clytemnestra and Falstaff suggests that these historical figures are like theatrical characters whose identity can be assumed through dress.

The illustrations of fictional characters in costume contribute to the novel's shifting historicism described by David Kurnick. Observing that the novel's references to

period details disappear in its latter half, Kurnick argues that "Thackeray pursues a specific historiographical technique in starting his novel so definitively 'in' history before moving so abruptly 'out' of it. Abandoning a fictional universe of historical meaning for one characterized by a blurry, empty temporality, Thackeray imagines the mid-Victorian present as a de-historicized temporal zone" (Kurnick 34-35). As the plot of the novel moves from the 1810s to the 1820s, the images of Georgy as George IV at his coronation and Becky as Napoleon on St Helena both reference specific transitional moments in the lives of the men they represent. These images dramatize a process of change in which figures like George IV and Napoleon move from one phase of their career to another, in which they evolve from being *zeitgeist* figures of the present moment to entering a transhistorical canon of individuals whose reference serves to color the actions of fictional characters.

The novel's woodcuts also frequently feature anachronistic details. The vignette to Chapter V, for example, illustrates the schoolyard fight between Dobbin and Cuff, with the two boys wearing paper hats, while one rides a rocking horse, and the other wields a toy sword; one of the hats is made out of the *Daily News*, a paper that was first published in 1845 (Thackeray, *Vanity* 38 and n; Fig. 9). The image is one of many in the novel that depicts adult, or in this case adolescent, fictional characters as young children, and the identification of this particular newspaper as the source of the paper hat is the only detail that anchors the image in any specific time period. Elsewhere, in a scene that takes place before Waterloo, the text mentions, and a vignette depicts the characters using an omnibus, which was not introduced until the late 1820s (Thackeray, *Vanity* 227 and n, 414). In fact, at times, the characters of *Vanity Fair* seem to possess a body of knowledge

that is more appropriate to the 1840s than the 1810s.

Thackeray's introduction of anachronistic details of daily life has been interpreted by some critics as reflecting the novel's satire of the present, although it is by no means clear that all of them were fully intentional (Rance 55; Hammond 20). Yet to dismiss these details as an eruption of Thackeray's present is to miss an opportunity to analyze their function in the world of the novel. The juxtaposition of the novel's anachronistic elements with what Kurnick calls its "welter of period detail" raises persistent questions about how individuals are embedded in history and how fiction can depict the past (Kurnick 34).

Indeed, the more incidental a detail in *Vanity Fair,* the more likely it is to be anachronistic—such as when Becky appears to have read *The Heart of Mid-Lothian* several years before it was published, or when she mentions seeing an actor at a particular theater many years after he actually appeared there (Thackeray, *Vanity* 23, 67). As these examples reflect, Becky is a locus of anachronism, perhaps suggesting that her extraordinary skills of social manipulation and advancement extend to some degree of omniscience across time. When features of daily life are accurate, the novel often points this out, such as when the narrator pokes fun at Jos's attempt to treat his hangover: "Soda water was not invented yet. Small beer, will it be believed? was the only drink with which unhappy gentlemen soothed the fever of their previous night's potation!" (Thackeray, *Vanity* 59). If Becky is a locus of anachronism, Jos is the novel's epicenter of historical accuracy.

In a way, these details betray what one might expect about a historical novel focused on surfaces. As the scholarship discussed above suggests, a pedantic accuracy

with regard to irrelevant details was a prominent feature of the historical fiction of the 1830s and 1840s, and these works were often criticized for being only superficially interested in historical experience. Yet Thackeray plays on and exploits the reader's expectation that a novel set in the past will bend over backward to depict historically accurate details. This inconsistency with details heightens the reader's awareness of the material elements of life in the past. Alternately collapsing and then expanding the distance between how the reader lives and how the characters would or should live, the novel raises questions about how the moment in time shapes our experiences.

IN WHICH NAPOLEON INVADES ENGLAND

Vanity Fair and *The Trumpet-Major* each make extensive use of what Harry Shaw calls "history as a source of drama," wherein historical events have instrumental consequences for the fictional narrative. Although the reader cannot always foresee the way a coming event will affect a novel's characters, the use of history as a source of drama tends to highlight the disparity between the characters' historically situated viewpoint and the reader's seemingly broader perspective. In Lukács's reading, these moments work to raise the historical consciousness of the reader by generating sympathy for fictional characters who make decisions based on imperfect knowledge, and teaching them to recognize that their own lives are hemmed in by historical circumstance. Yet while the individual's embeddedness in the historical moment is presumably invariant across all times and places, certain moments—during war, for example—suggest a heightened sense of historical contingency. Perhaps for this reason, characters in *Vanity Fair* and *The Trumpet-Major* are especially prone to misunderstand their present, and

palpably sense a wide range of possible futures

In recent work on nineteenth-century genres that explore counterfactual possibilities, Catherine Gallagher observes the explosion of critical military history in the wake of the Napoleonic Wars and the rise of alternate history in the following decades (Gallagher 322, 323). Similarly, Andrew Miller has identified counterfactual or "optative" speculation as a central feature of Victorian realist fiction, one that "situate[s] individuals within one identity, while instilling, as a defining feature of that identity, an identification with—often a longing for—other identities, apparently unattainable" (Miller 193). What Miller traces on the level of the individual is played out on the level of the nation in *Vanity Fair* and *The Trumpet-Major.* In repeatedly pointing out the way things could have happened differently, these novels highlight the way the actual course of history was but one of a number of possible outcomes, and perhaps even exaggerate how plausible these ever alternatives were.

In tracing the way its characters are affected by the course of war, *Vanity Fair* repeatedly emphasizes the role of chance. Mr. Sedley's ruin, for example, is ultimately guaranteed when he invests in French bonds on the very morning that Napoleon lands on the continent after escaping from Elba (Thackeray, *Vanity* 178, 201n). Embittered, Mr Sedley interprets the reversal as the result of "collusion, Sir, or that villain never would have escaped. Where was the English Commissioner who allowed him to get away? He ought to be shot, Sir—brought to a court-martial, and shot, by Jove" (Thackeray, *Vanity* 201). Yet the narrator suggests a less conspiratorial explanation: "All his speculations had of late gone wrong with the luckless old gentleman. Ventures had failed: merchants had broken: funds had risen when he calculated they would fall. What need to particularise?

If success is rare and slow, everybody knows how quick and easy ruin is" (Thackeray, *Vanity* 178). Whatever the larger forces that shaped the course of the Hundred Days, Mr Sedley's unconvincing theory of Napoleon's escape only underscores his powerlessness in the face of this world-historical event, whose implications are played out in the vagaries of financial speculation. Similarly, the novel's decision not to depict Waterloo means that the reader is surprised finally to learn that George is "lying on his face, dead, with a bullet through his heart" (Thackeray, *Vanity* 326). Had the reader followed George through the battle, we might have seen his movements and activities as contributing, effectively or ineffectively, to some larger strategy, successful or unsuccessful. Without this context, the passage suggests that George's death was a matter of bad luck—the likely but not inevitable outcome of a devastating battle.

Furthermore, Amelia's experience of the battle develops the novel's meditation on the difference between inevitable and non-inevitable aspects of the course of history. In a fictionalized version of a historically documented incident, Amelia and the other military wives accompany their husbands to Brussels, only to be caught unawares when the battle breaks out unexpectedly near the city. Weeks earlier, in deciding to follow the regiment, Amelia reasons, "Though war and danger were in store, war and danger might not befal [*sic*] for months to come" (Thackeray, *Vanity* 248). The novel uses this dramatic turn of events to reveal characters' true colors—as the Battle of Waterloo nears and civilians begin to flee, Amelia and the stalwart Mrs. O'Dowd remain to tend to the wounded and await their husbands, while Jos's increasingly desperate antics reveal his cowardice and selfishness. Commanding his servant in broken French to shave the mustaches he had grown in order to fit in with the soldiers, "*les moustaches—coupy,*

rasy, vite!," Jos rapidly remakes himself as a civilian and flees (Thackeray, *Vanity* 318). Just as the retrospectively obvious mistake of accompanying George's regiment to Brussels serves to advance the novel's plot, it also suggests the limits of what characters can and cannot accurately predict about their future. By trying to recapture the element of surprise from a history that the reader already knows, the novel emphasizes that history unfolds in a contingent and unpredictable manner. War and danger were indeed in store, but when and how they befell was anyone's guess.

By contrast, Walter Scott's novels, written in the wake of the Napoleonic Wars but set earlier, presume a reader whose belatedness provides limited insights beyond what the characters themselves already possess—after all, the history Scott depicts is not always universally known. At the end of *Ivanhoe* (1819), for example, Rebecca and her father leave England for the court of "Mohammed Boabdil, King of Grenada," because Jews have equal freedoms there (W. Scott, *Ivanhoe* 399). Only the especially knowledgeable and attentive reader will register the novel's subtle suggestion that Rebecca has extremely limited control over her own fate. Muhammad XII, known as "Boabdil"—whose rule occurred three hundred years after the plot of *Ivanhoe,* anyway—was the last Muslim Sultan of Grenada, ultimately surrendering to Ferdinand and Isabella, who promptly expelled the Jews from Spain. *Waverley* (1814), set more recently around the failed Jacobite uprising of 1745, comes closer to registering the sort of contrast between reader and character knowledge that we see in *Vanity Fair*. Yet in joining a rebellion the reader knows to be doomed, Edward Waverley makes an impassioned and foolish decision that ultimately has remarkably limited negative consequences for him. Unlike Scott's novels, *Vanity Fair* and *The Trumpet-Major* focus

closely on stark contrasts between characters' and readers' knowledge, suggesting plausible alternative courses of history unfulfilled only by chance.

Just as readers probably suspects that Amelia and Jos are getting in over their heads in accompanying George's regiment to Brussels, they would immediately realize that the reports of a French invasion in *The Trumpet-Major* are false. There were a number of false alarms of invasion on the Dorset coast, the most serious happening on 1 May 1804, contemporaneous with the novel's setting (Clammer 48). Even if readers knows this history, however, the false alarm exploits the tension in these novels between what the characters believe—that Napoleon might invade—and what the readers know—that he never did

A persistent anxiety about the possibility of invasion foreshadows the false alarm. Near "Budmouth," Hardy's fictionalized name of the town of Weymouth, on England's south coast, Hardy's characters see themselves as especially vulnerable to a French attack. The narration takes a light-hearted tone in describing their activities:

> The regular way of passing an afternoon in the coast towns was to stroll up to the signal posts and chat with the lieutenant on duty there about the latest inimical object seen at sea. About once a week there appeared in the newspapers either a paragraph concerning some adventurous English gentleman who had sailed out in a pleasure-boat till he lay near enough to Boulogne to see Buonaparte standing on the heights among his marshals; or else some lines about a mysterious stranger with a foreign accent, who, after collecting a vast deal of information on our resources, had hired a

> boat at a southern port, and vanished with it towards France before his intention could be divined (Hardy 154).

In presenting Napoleon-spotting as a leisure activity and a way of passing an afternoon, Hardy demonstrates the way that the fear of invasion prompted the circulation of variably plausible rumors and tall tales.[20]

Festus Derriman's cowardly and deceptive behavior during the false alarm is similar to Jos Sedley's at Waterloo, only considerably more malicious. Panicked, Festus attempts to use his concern for Anne's safety as an excuse to avoid joining the townsmen in pursuit of the invaders. Then, accidentally "caught like an eel in a water-pipe" in a group heading toward the beach, Festus learns of the report's falsehood, but rather than spread the word, he puts on a show of bravery when others express fear, announcing, "I'll take three frog-eating Frenchmen single-handed!" and "The man who quails now is unworthy of the name of yeoman" (Hardy 160-61). Festus himself thus takes advantage of the very ignorance in others that characterizes being historically situated. Like an unsympathetic historical novelist, Festus cruelly draws out expressions of fear in others that he himself would and did experience under the same circumstances (Hardy 162).

Festus's later behavior takes a further nasty turn that suggests the potential consequences that the false alarm may have for Anne. After their carriage suffers an accident during their flight from Overcombe, Mrs Garland and a servant seek assistance while Anne waits in an abandoned cottage, where she is discovered by Festus, who seizes

[20] At one point, the narrator claims that "only five-and-twenty miles of shallow water had divided quiet English homesteads from an enemy's army of a hundred and fifty thousand men" (Hardy 153). Although the distance from Dover to Calais is 27 nautical miles, Weymouth lies significantly further to the west, about 37 nautical miles from the closest French port of Cherbourg, and 172 nautical miles from Boulogne (ports.com). Unless the adventurous English gentlemen departed from a port much further to the east, a day-trip by sail from England to the coast of Boulogne is unlikely to have been possible.

the opportunity to continue his pursuit of her. When she refuses to open the door, he argues,

> 'Tis no use for you to lurk inside there. You'll have to turn out as soon as Boney comes over the hill. – Are you going to open the door, I say, and speak to me in a civil way? What do you think I am, then, that you should barricade yourself against me as I was a wild beast or a Frenchman? Open the door, or put out your head, or do something; or 'pon my soul I'll break in the door! (Hardy 166-67).

In this moment, Festus plays on Anne's fear of violence at the hands of the French to further his own ends. When she continues to refuse him admittance, he makes his intentions even clearer: "Now, dash my wig, I will get at you! You've tried me beyond endurance. One kiss would have been enough that day in the mead; now I'll have forty, whether you will or no!" (Hardy 168). Anne eventually escapes on Festus's horse, but this close call reveals the possibility of sexual assault, whether by Festus or invading Frenchmen. In this scene, the narrative contingency of Anne's possible rape makes immediate to the reader what is otherwise difficult to grasp: the historical contingency of Napoleon's possible invasion. Through this parallel, the experience of reading the novel simulates the experience of being historically embedded, with ambiguous implications for the status of historical roads-not-taken. If the experience of history is like reading a novel, then the reader does not know how it ends, but knows that the ending is already written. In this sense, although it seemed possible, Anne was never going to be raped and Napoleon never could have invaded. For Anne, however, these possibilities are terrifyingly real and narrowly avoided.

Anne's experience highlights plausible alternative possibilities never actualized, but *The Trumpet-Major* also uses prolepsis to gesture toward the inevitability of death. The final sentence reveals that John, the title character, "went off to blow his trumpet till silenced for ever on one of the bloody battlefields of Spain," and numerous other moments reveal the fate of minor figures (Hardy 256). In an early idyllic scene, troops pick cherries on Miller Loveday's land: "It was a cheerful, careless, unpremeditated half-hour, which returned like the scent of a flower to the memories of some of those who enjoyed it, even at a distance of many years after, when they lay wounded and weak in foreign lands" (Hardy 17). Similarly, after describing the King's procession with fifteen thousand soldiers, the narrator remarks: "how entirely they have all passed and gone! – lying scattered about the world as military and other dust, some at Talavera, Albuera, Salamanca, Vittoria, Toulouse, and Waterloo; some in home churchyards; and a few small handfuls in royal vaults" (Hardy 76). These moments serve to remind the reader of the novel's setting many years ago by pointing out that any fictional character alive during this period would already have died (Collister 150). In listing the locations of their remains—sites of famous battles—the narrator also reminds us of just how many of these fictional soldiers would have died in subsequent combat. For George Osborne, John Loveday, and the unnamed fictional troops, death was inevitable, but death is battle was not. This meditation on the extent to which historical circumstances shape individual fates continues throughout the novel, and comes to no conclusion, as the experience of Bob Loveday illustrates below. In demonstrating the way that destines are shaped by historical realities obvious to the reader but unclear to characters themselves, *Vanity Fair* and *The Trumpet-Major* repeatedly suggest the plausibility of alternative courses of

history—in these novels at least, Napoleon really could have invaded.

"In the Lack of Other Distraction": The Historico-Celebrity Encounter

Ever since Edward Waverley's dramatic meeting with Bonnie Prince Charlie in Scott's *Waverley*, encounters between fictional characters and real historical figures have been a prominent and to many critics a defining feature of the historical novel. Yet such encounters do not always have the emotional power of Waverley's conversation with the Young Pretender, or its transformative consequences for the plot. *Vanity Fair* and *The Trumpet-Major* refigure this trope as a distant and superficial meeting that I call the historico-celebrity encounter, revealing historical experience to be de-centralized and difficult to gauge.

Like the famously omitted Battle of Waterloo, encounters between historical and fictional characters in *Vanity Fair* occur offstage.[21] The only character to lay eyes on Napoleon is Joseph Sedley, who "saw the ex-emperor" during a stop on St Helena on his way back to India shortly after Napoleon's final exile (Thackeray, *Vanity* 384).[22] Although this moment may have been inspired by Thackeray's own sighting of Napoleon

[21] Julian Jimenez Heffernan helpfully reviews the various ways that *Vanity Fair*'s failure to depict Waterloo has been understood, beginning with Elizabeth Rigby's suggestion in *The Quarterly Review* that the battle is incidental to the novel. Similarly, some scholars have been willing to explain away the battle's "conspicuous" absence as a sign that the novel's primary focus is social satire and the domestic lives of its female protagonists, as Tillotson suggests above (Barnaby 41). Others argue that Waterloo's absence responds to the political climate of Thackeray's present. For example, John Schad observes that the association of Waterloo with the Peterloo massacre tarnished its memory (Schad 26-27). Mary Hammond similarly sees the treatment of Waterloo as influenced by the politics of the 1840s, contributing to Thackeray's critique of the way official history is rewritten for the benefit of the present (Hammond 23). By contrast, Heffernan argues that "the battle's resistance to mimesis works as an index to its centrality in the novel's overall design," asserting that despite the failure to describe the battle itself, the Waterloo episode "plays a pivotal role in the novel, structurally, thematically, and symbolically" (Heffernan 25, 26).

[22] Napoleon looms large behind the action of the novel but never actually appears, and it is a critical commonplace that Napoleon is a foil for Becky. Her reflexive identification with Napoleon is made clear early on, when she horrifies Amelia by declaring "Vive la France, Vive l'Empereur, *Vive Bonaparte!*" (Thackeray 10).

on St Helena as a child, in the context of the novel, it sounds like yet another one of Jos's self-aggrandizing tall tales, albeit a comparatively understated one.[23] Whereas Jos talks endlessly of his (in fact nonexistent) heroism at Waterloo, "with such an accurate knowledge of [Wellington's] sentiments and proceedings, that it was clear he must have been by the conqueror's side throughout the day," his almost plausible sighting of Napoleon on St Helena is reported matter-of-factly in a way that suggests that the reality of encountering great men of history is significantly less exciting than Jos imagines (Thackeray, *Vanity* 384).

George IV's presence in the novel is similarly attenuated, with the narrator declining to describe Becky's meeting with him, relying again on the tongue-in-cheek modesty that excused the absence of Waterloo:

> What were the circumstances of the interview between Rebecca Crawley, née Sharp, and her Imperial Master, it does not become such a feeble and inexperienced pen as mine to attempt to relate. . . . [T]here was no more loyal heart than Becky's after this interview. The name of her king was always on her lips, and he was proclaimed by her to be the most charming of men. . . . Perhaps the little woman thought she might play the part of a Maintenon or a Pompadour (Thackeray, *Vanity* 478).[24]

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[23] After Thackeray's father's death in India, he and his mother traveled back to England on *The Prince Regent,* which made a stop on St Helena on 8 March 1817. Aged six, Thackeray went walking with a servant, who pointed out Napoleon from a distance, walking in his garden, warning "that is Bonaparte! He eats three sheep every day, and all the little children he can lay hands on!" (Ray 66; Thackeray, *Oxford Thackeray* XIII, 753). Thackeray recounted this anecdote years later in "George the Third," and of course there is room for skepticism of this story as well as Jos's.

[24] This is one of several passages later in the novel that refer obliquely to Becky's progress in high society. See, for example: "After Becky's appearance at my Lord Steyne's private and select parties the claims of that estimable woman as regards fashion, were settled; and some of the very greatest and tallest doors in the metropolis opened to her—doors so great and tall that the beloved reader and writer hereof may hope in vain to enter at them. Dear brethren, let us tremble before those august portals. I fancy them guarded by

The fact that Becky not only travels in elite aristocratic circles populated by fictional Lords, but also meets the actual King serves instrumentally to signal her incredible social ascendency. Her ambitions—we assume unrealized—to be the King's mistress seem like the logical extension of what we already know about her character.

Whereas these encounters occur entirely offstage in *Vanity Fair*, *The Trumpet-Major* is full of royal encounters that resemble celebrity spotting. The novel's temporal and geographical settings—at a royal resort town; during wartime, when military leaders are especially important; and, indeed, during George III's twilight years—contribute to the sense that the King and his family are largely irrelevant to world-historical affairs. Their celebrity vastly exceeds their real influence. Relatedly, when fictional characters encounter the royals, it is at a considerable distance and in a superficial way. In an early scene, Anne Garland, her mother, and the Loveday family travel out to the main road to await the King, who is predicted to pass by in the middle of the night (Hardy 67-68). After a long and tiring wait, the royals finally arrive:

> Then there arose a huzzah from the few knots of watchers gathered there, and they cried, 'Long live King Jarge!' The cortège passed abreast. It consisted of three travelling-carriages, escorted by a detachment of the German Legion. Anne was told to look in the first carriage—a post-chariot drawn by four horses—for the King and Queen, and was rewarded by seeing a profile reminding her of the current coin of the realm; but as the party had been travelling all night, and the spectators here gathered were

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grooms of the chamber with flaming silver forks with which they prong all those who have not the right of the *entrée*. They say the honest newspaper-fellow who sits in the hall and takes down the names of the great ones who are admitted to the feasts, dies after a little time. He can't survive the glare of fashion long." (Thackeray 500).

> few, none of the royal family looked out the carriage windows. It was said that the two elder princesses were in the same carriage, but they remained invisible (Hardy 71).

The spectators are disappointed in varying ways by their encounter with the royals. One villager remarks that "the sight of dusty old leather coaches was not worth waiting for," perhaps suggesting that he had hoped for a better view of the royal passengers. Yet for others, who "expected a more pompous procession than the bucolic tastes of the King cared to indulge in," it is clearly the modest appearance of the coaches that is the problem (Hardy 71). Anne's reaction is slightly different, reflecting the variable and relative way that characters encounter historical figures, and history, in this novel. Unlike Edward Waverley, for whom encountering Bonnie Prince Charlie is a disruptive, transformative moment that changes the course of his whole life, for Anne, seeing George III does not even disrupt her understanding of how he looks. Remarkably, the King resembles his stylized representation on a coin, an image that indicates his position as monarch more than anything else. In comparing the living body of the King to a flat, motionless image of him that exists in many circulating and interchangeable copies, the novel suggests the way that historical experience is decentralized—maybe as close as your pocket, but also out of reach.

Soon afterwards, the townspeople's desire for pomp is fulfilled as the troops line up to be inspected by the royal family. Villagers gather to watch the family watch the troops, and this time the encounter does not disappoint:

> At ten the royal personages were said to be drawing near, and soon after the King, accompanied by the Dukes of Cambridge and Cumberland, and

> a couple of generals, appeared on horseback, wearing a round hat turned up at the side, with a cockade and military feather. (Sensation among the crowd.) Then the Queen and three of the princesses entered the field in a great coach drawn by six beautiful cream-coloured horses. Another coach, with four horses of the same sort, brought the two remaining princesses. (Confused acclamations, 'There's King Jarge!' 'That's Queen Sharlett!' 'Princess 'Lizabeth!' 'Princess Sophiar and Meelyer!' etc., from the surrounding spectators.) (Hardy 73).

It is mainly the clothing and carriages of the royal family that are visible in this passage—as the final lines suggest, even their identities are a matter of some confusion and debate, as the spectators peer into closed carriages from a distance. Through the difficulty of getting a good look at the royal family in scenes like this one, the novel suggests that the experience of history is intangible to these townspeople.

The King's ceremonial duties at Budmouth, constant sources of excitement for the villagers, are complemented by his performance of more banal tasks. In one passage, we see just how far the locals are fascinated by anything that he does:

> The royal bathing-machine had been drawn out just as Bob reached Gloucester Buildings, and he waited a minute, in the lack of other distraction, to look on. Immediately that the King's machine had entered the water a group of florid men with fiddles, violoncellos, a trombone, and a drum, came forward, packed themselves into another machine that was in waiting, and were drawn out into the waves in the King's rear. All that was to be heard for a few minutes were the slow pulsations of the sea; and

> then a deafening noise burst from the interior of the second machine with power enough to split the boards asunder; it was the condensed mass of musicians inside, striking up the strains of 'God save the King,' as his Majesty's head rose from the water. Bob took off his hat and waited till the end of the performance, which, intended as a pleasant surprise to George III by the loyal burghers, was possibly in the watery circumstances tolerated rather than desired by that dripping monarch (Hardy 202).

The passage reflects the novel's by-now familiar gentle critique of the pageantry associated with the monarchy. Yet the speculation as to George III's internal response to this ostentatious display of patriotism adds a new dimension to this encounter. The idea that the King puts up with rather than enjoys the music is consistent with his limited characterization in this novel as relatively uninterested in pomp. This idea, however, appears to be entirely the narrator's or Bob's own speculation about what the King is "possibly" feeling. Although body language could give clues to the King's inner thoughts, the novel presents none: the reader sees no bemused smile or expressive hand gesture, and overhears no comment that might indicate the King's feelings toward this display. Bob's speculation about what the King might be thinking draws attention to just how inscrutable his thoughts and feelings are.

These distant sightings contrast with one more substantive encounter between the King and Anne. Shortly after Bob joins the navy, Anne is sitting by a spring, in tears, when she is approached by an elderly gentleman whom she recognizes. He inquires as to the cause of her sadness and Anne eventually reveals the truth. The King then asks:

> "Well, well, well; what is his name?"

> In spite of Anne's confusion and low spirits, her womanly shrewdness told her at once that no harm could be done by revealing Bob's name; and she answered "His name is Robert Loveday, sir."
>
> "Loveday – a good name. I shall not forget it. Now dry your cheeks, and don't cry any more. Loveday – Robert Loveday" (Hardy 215).

This surprising scene was likely directly influenced by a passage in Scott's *The Heart of Mid-Lothian* (1818). Written shortly after the *Trumpet-Major* takes place but set in the late 1730s, *The Heart of Mid-Lothian* features an extended sequence in which Jeanie Deans journeys from Scotland to London to petition Queen Caroline to pardon her sister, who stands wrongly accused of infanticide (W. Scott, *Heart* 384-388). Jeanie's meeting with Queen Caroline, like Anne's meeting with her grandson, George III, takes place in a wooded area, with royal attendants present, and when the female protagonist is totally desperate. In both cases, the monarch is impressed by the sincere concern of the humble young woman and suggests a willingness to help.

Yet the differences between these two scenes illustrate the way Hardy's encounters with historical figures differ from Scott's. Whereas Jeanie seeks out the Queen with a specific purpose in mind, the King approaches Anne unprompted. Jeanie's petition to the Queen is a moving performance of plainspoken eloquence, and despite some initial awkward missteps, the two women have an extended conversation that ends with the benevolent Queen promising to help secure the pardon—a major turning point in the novel. Although Scott's novels take a fairly unromanticized, often critical view of royal power, his monarchs still make an occasional momentous decision.

Anne's encounter with the King, by contrast, is over almost as soon as it begins,

and comes to nothing. After the King leaves, Anne grows excited by:

> visions of Bob promoted to the rank of admiral or something equally wonderful, by the King's special command, the chief result of the promotion being, in her arrangement of the piece, that he would stay at home and go to sea no more. But she was not a girl who indulged in extravagant fancies long, and before she reached home she thought that the King had probably forgotten her by that time, and her troubles, and her lover's name (Hardy 216).

Despite this foreshadowing, there appear to be no consequences of Anne's conversation with the King—perhaps he did forget. We never hear again about this encounter, or of any developments in Bob's career that might be traced back to it.

In fact, Bob is extremely lucky. Inspired by the appearance of another historical figure, the charming and impressive Captain Hardy (Hardy 203-206), Bob leaves the merchant service for the navy, on no less than the *HMS Victory,* just before that ship saw the death of Lord Nelson, witnessed scores of casualties, and was disabled at the Battle of Trafalgar. Just as *Vanity Fair* fails to depict Waterloo, *The Trumpet-Major* treats Trafalgar almost as an afterthought, particularly in comparison to the dramatic false alarm earlier. If Bob had died, the novel could be seen to demonstrate the results of his meaningful encounter with Captain Hardy. Instead, Bob survives without a scratch (Hardy 218-219). The seeming possibility that the King will intervene in Bob's career is undercut by a different kind of unlikely plot twist, one that replaces the monarch with the novelist—or maybe with luck—as the arbiter of fates. Thus, Anne's encounter with the King, the most substantive contact between a fictional and a historical character in the

novel, illustrates that such encounters are irrelevant, in the end, to characters' lives.

THE ROMAN-À-CLEF CHARACTER

These encounters with historical figures must be understood in contrast to the more sustained attention that *Vanity Fair* pays to Lord Steyne. Ostensibly fictional, Lord Steyne is widely speculated to have been based on Francis Charles Seymour-Conway, Earl of Yarmouth and third Marquis of Hertford (1777-1842); Hertford was a notoriously debauched Regency aristocrat who was also fictionalized in Benjamin Disraeli's novel *Coningsby* (1844), and about whom the memoirist Charles Fulke Greville wrote, "no man lived more despised or died less regretted" ("Periodicals"; "Original"; Hochstrasser; Stevens, "Roundabout"; Greville 90). Whatever the merit of such speculation, it reflects the formal features of Steyne's character, which indeed give the impression of having been based on someone in particular.

A shadowy figure who enters the story gradually and remains somewhat obscure, Steyne first appears, half-way through the novel, as part of an undifferentiated group of men "seated around [Becky's] crackling drawing-room fire" late at night (Thackeray, *Vanity* 376). He is only mentioned by name later in the scene, when, in response to Becky's petulant demand for a sheep-dog, Lord Southdown instead proposes "a little pug that would go into one of Lord Steyne's snuff-boxes"—suggesting either a very small puppy or an assiduous use of snuff (Thackeray, *Vanity* 376). Of this scene, Tillotson remarks parenthetically "It is our first introduction to Lord Steyne; Thackeray's method is to make us feel that he has been there a long time" (Tillotson 249). Indeed, this brief introductory reference hardly suggests the important role Steyne will ultimately play in

the plot. Some predictable flirtation follows, with Steyne suggesting that he will be her sheep-dog (that is, he will keep the wolves at bay) and we learn that he had a reputation for gambling in his youth—a fairly unremarkable male vice in this novel. Inconspicuous as this scene is, it was rendered even more so after the second printing, when a woodcut portrait-style illustration of Steyne that originally accompanied this passage disappeared—an omission that some conspiratorially believe was motivated by its too-close resemblance to the Marquis of Hertford (Thackeray, *Vanity* 377 and n).[25]

Steyne is neither a historical character, nor a fictional character, nor merely a caricature of the type of debauched aristocrat associated with the Regency. Although the Marquis of Hertford was not a world-historical figure, the fictionalization of Hertford as Lord Steyne is a kind of historicity.[26] Tillotson suggests above that Steyne's character reveals the novel's indebtedness to the *roman-à-clef* tradition, a genre, I would add, that experienced a minor renaissance during the celebrity-obsessed Regency, in works like Caroline Lamb's *Glenarvon* (1816) and Thomas Love Peacock's *Nightmare Abbey* (1818), both of which contain portraits of Byron. In recent work on the persistence of the *roman-à-clef* long after its alleged death in the eighteenth century, Sean Latham observes that "unlike the novel, [the *roman-à-clef*] does not insist on the full autonomy of its characters from the world of historical fact," prompting an "idiosyncratic mode of reading" characterized by a "sleuthlike effort to decode" characters (Latham 27). In

[25] The novel contains other illustrations of Steyne (e.g. Thackeray 469), and there is debate over which Marquis of Hertford the image actually resembled. As the editor of the Norton Critical edition suggests, the likelier explanation is that the image disappeared because the woodblock was damaged.

[26] Beyond his reputation for debauchery, immortalized in *Vanity Fair* and *Coningsby,* the Third Marquess of Hertford has gained posthumous renown for his art collection. The works he acquired, along with a much larger group amassed by his son the Fourth Marquess, and the latter's illegitimate son Sir Richard Wallace, were bequeathed to the public by Wallace's widow. In 1900 they became a museum in London, The Wallace Collection (*Wallace* 7-11). Although the third Marquis of Hertford was dead by the time *Vanity Fair* appeared, his son had acceded to the title, and thus it may have been libelous to refer to Hertford by name.

Latham's view, historical fiction does not prompt this sort of reading, since "the line between fact and fiction is clearly marked," a claim that certainly obtains for Scott's novels (Latham 39). *Vanity Fair*'s ability to prompt this sort of speculation about Steyne's original, however, establishes it as a different sort of historical novel with a more literal relationship to real people and places.

The nature of Steyne's character also resonates with other recent studies that have worked to add greater nuance to our understanding of the referential nature of literary characters. In "What Would Napoleon Do?" Catherine Gallagher has explored some of the epistemological problems posed by historical characters in fiction, and theorizes the category of the counterfactual character in opposition to both the fictional and the historical character. Although Steyne is not a counterfactual character, Gallagher models a way to think through the different kinds of characters with differing relationships to reality that fiction can produce. Similarly, Janine Barchas's work on Jane Austen has challenged the long-term resistance to the idea that Austen's fiction referenced real people. She argues that by punning on real person (and place) names, Austen "created . . . hyperrealistic, historically based fictions" that combine elements of the eighteenth-century tell-all and the nineteenth-century historical novel (Barchas 9).

Steyne's distinctive kind of referentiality, unique in this novel, renders him a historico-celebrity character. Unlike the world-historical characters who appear glancingly in *Vanity Fair*, Steyne appears on numerous occasions and gets things done. Unlike the novel's fictional protagonists, furthermore, he lingers in the background, with a palpable extra-textual reputation. In Steyne, the novel suggests its interest in the kind of history that cannot be presented under its own name and the kind of historical figure

about whom no official history exists. Whereas *The Trumpet-Major* demonstrates just how insignificant encounters between fictional and historical characters are to its story, *Vanity Fair* takes the rejection of these encounters one step further, locating one of the engines of its plot in a veiled depiction of an exceedingly minor and recently deceased "historical" figure.[27]

CONCLUSION

The tantalizing distant sightings of and inconclusively brief interactions with historical figures obviously reflect a Victorian caricature of the Regency and Napoleonic War period as obsessed with celebrity—hanging on George III's every word and crazed for details of Napoleon's private life. More subtly, these sightings also suggest that history is encountered in indirect ways, channeled through unexpected individuals, and difficult to gauge. On first glance, these novels dramatize a historical transformation in who counts as a historical figure—as influence and power move away from figures like the King and toward figures like Captain Hardy and the Marquess of Hertford. Yet this transition is incomplete and morally ambiguous. While historical agency is clearly

[27] The treatment of Steyne resonates with the way both novels represent geographical place. In turning Weimer into "Pumpernickel" and Weymouth into "Budmouth," Thackeray and Hardy draw a light fictional veil over easily identifiable towns. In "Fictional Settlements," Freedgood observes that the representation of place plays a special role in "realism's weird—although thoroughly naturalized—combination of fictionality and factuality" (Freedgood, "Fictional" 394). She argues that the movement of fictional characters through real places is technically an instance of metalepsis, in which the distinction between diegetic and extradiegetic elements breaks down (Freedgood, "Fictional" 398). The example of Hardy's Wessex, she suggests, makes clear the ambiguous status of real place names throughout realist fiction—we can know that "Christminster" stands for Oxford, but even a novel that names "Oxford" as its setting is moving diegetic characters through extradiegetic space. The majority of *Vanity Fair* smoothly overlays the fictional story on top of real London locations, but in the Pumpernickel scenes, the relationship between fictional and factual elements seems to be in flux. After six hundred pages of what appears to be omniscient narration, the narrator first uses "I," changing the nature of his knowledge of the story: "It was on this very tour that I, the present writer of a history of which every word is true, had the pleasure to see them first, and to make their acquaintance" (Thackeray 622). Unlike *The Trumpet-Major,* in which the entire landscape is fictionalized, in *Vanity Fair*, fictional and real locations coexist, reflecting the novel's hybrid genre.

shifting between actors, it is also radically de-centered and just out of reach. Even a petition to the King himself cannot effect change.

Similarly, *Vanity Fair* and *The Trumpet-Major* do not just ruthlessly historicize objects, revealing what might initially look timeless to be crushingly of its time, but also use objects to exaggerate the rapid speed of historical change during this uncertain period, suggesting that history, like fashion, is something with which characters are struggling to keep up. And yet fashionable clothing, which initially seems to indicate swift and unceasing change, ultimately operates on an unpredictable schedule. In these novels, "costumery" does more than, as Lukács would have it, distract from the serious work of depicting historical change. Rather, this interest in clothing and weaponry raises questions about what it means to be historically situated, how history is encountered, and how the objects we interact with do and do not constitute our present. Prompted by objects, but also elsewhere, these novels suggest the radical contingency of historical progress, using prolepsis to explore counterfactual possibilities that they suggest were indeed plausible.

Furthermore, this particular kind of historicism appears to be a consequence of the Napoleonic War period itself, whose fictionalization seems necessarily to prompt insights into the way rapid change is and is not expressed through objects. Rather than understand these novels' interest in surfaces as telling a self-congratulatory narrative in which the materialist, time-bound past transforms into an anti-materialist, ahistorical Victorian present, I see these works as engaging with the question of how the Napoleonic Wars bear on our understanding of the nature of historical experience. Dramatizing the ways that objects could lag behind, run parallel to, and sometimes even outpace the movement

of events, these novels depict historical experience as a constant clash of narratives moving at different rates.

In so doing, *Vanity Fair* and *The Trumpet-Major* evince an alternative historicism that demonstrates that historical experience is not always deep. The Marxist and Hegelian historiography that underlies Lukács's theory of the historical novel sees history as capital-H History, and recognizes only its deep structure and large tectonic shifts. These novels, and the Victorian interest in the Napoleonic Wars and Regency that they reflect, suggest another way of thinking about historical experience in fiction. Through them, we see an interest in marking things that happen extremely quickly, things that you can blink and miss. These novels are advancing and not just satirizing a claim that sees historical consciousness as an awareness of changes that cannot be witnessed directly—whether because the change is happening too fast, or because it is happening elsewhere. By characterizing the Napoleonic Wars and Regency period in this way, these novelists are re-imagining what history is.

Chapter II.

"Ladies scorn dates!": Women Life-Writers Look Back on the Regency

As a young girl living on St. Helena in 1815, Betsy Balcombe met Napoleon Bonaparte. When she learned of the recently defeated emperor's imminent arrival, Betsy feared "a huge ogre or giant, with one large flaming red eye in the middle of his forehead, and long teeth protruding from his mouth," but within days of their acquaintance, she began to feel "perfectly at ease in his society," inaugurating an unlikely friendship that lasted until her family left the island in 1818 (Abell 12, 30). Nearly thirty years later, Betsy – by then Mrs. Abell – wrote about these experiences in *Recollections of the Emperor Napoleon* (1844). Although "desirous to shun publicity, and unequal to the task of authorship," Abell apparently felt, despite the passage of years, "an almost imperative duty" to write about her friendship with Napoleon, arranging the events of her narrative "as nearly as possible in the order in which they took place" (Abell iv, iii, 30). Abell's enigmatic *Recollections* is in fact one of a number of texts that appeared in Britain in the 1820s, 1830s, and 1840s, in which women writers belatedly describe their encounters with famous men from the earliest years of the century—texts that range from Abell's *Recollections of Napoleon* to the courtesan's infamous tell-all account, *Memoirs of Harriette Wilson, Written by Herself* (1825) and the acclaimed biographical sketch,

Journal of the Conversations of Lord Byron with the Countess of Blessington (1832-33).

In bringing together Wilson's *Memoirs*, Blessington's *Conversations of Byron*, and Abell's *Recollections of Napoleon*, I am looking past their differences in content, style, and reception. Wilson's bestseller publicized the sexual affairs of fashionable aristocrats, largely celebrating their excesses. Despite her notoriety and prominence in popular history, Wilson's *Memoirs* has until recently been neglected by literary criticism. The Countess of Blessington, a society beauty and hostess, by contrast, launched a successful literary career with her *Conversations of Byron*. Critical interest in Blessington has grown in the past fifteen years, but her *Conversations* has rarely been taken up outside of studies of Byron's posthumous celebrity.[28] Similarly, Abell's *Recollections of Napoleon* implicitly defends a divisive figure, and although the work was translated into French, German, and Russian, and pirated in the United States, it seems to have been overlooked entirely by literary scholars.[29] Yet despite their differences, these texts converge in the fact that they report encounters with famous men of a particular historical moment from a considerable distance of time and in a nonlinear way. But what does this temporal distance do? How do these acts of recollection produce texts whose asynchronous temporality contributes to a historiographical tension between continuity and rupture? And how do these texts not only report but also create the "Regency" period

[28] Of Blessington's critical history, Susanne Schmid writes: "Nearly all twentieth-century critics ignored her, apart from a few Byron scholars, whose main interest in dealing with her has been the reconstruction of the great poet's whereabouts" (Schmid, *British* 120). Schmid reads Blessington's *Conversations* as taking the form of an imagined literary salon, to which readers are invited (Schmid, *British* 127-128). Jane Stabler has recently analyzed the *Conversations* in the context of the aesthetics of exile (Stabler 53-60). Richard Cronin and Julian North have each analyzed it in studies of the development of literary biography in the Romantic period (Cronin 23-34; North, *Domestication* 96-100; North, "Self-Possession" 126-134). See Ann R. Hawkins, Harriet Devine Jump, and Schmid for recent work on Blessington's novels, poetry, travel writing, and editorship.

[29] Betsy's friendship with Napoleon is sometimes discussed by Napoleonic historians, with her text cited as evidence of his St. Helena period (Korngold 72-79; A. Roberts 782-795; Rosebery 133-135). Her story has recently been fictionalized in Brooks Hansens's *The Monsters of St. Helena* (2003), Staton Rabin's *Betsy and the Emperor* (2004), and Antoine de Caunes's film *Monsieur N.* (2003).

as a broad social and cultural milieu, ambiguously poised between memory and history?

Wilson, Blessington, and Abell depict encounters that took place between about 1801 and 1823, but their texts appeared during the transitional years between the Romantic and Victorian periods. Richard Cronin and Julian North have each analyzed the way that biographies of the Romantic poets written between the mid-1820s and mid-1840s negotiated the literary and cultural transition to a new era (Cronin 18-23; North, *Domestication* 3-6). Yet Wilson's, Blessington's, and Abell's texts seem to expose a tension between the way scholars have usefully understood the life-writing of this period as enacting a transition, and the way the works themselves represent historical time, which is far closer to Walter Benjamin's historical materialism, in that they eschew any understanding of individual moments as transitional. Furthermore, these texts theorize a distinct historical and cultural era—the Regency, understood broadly—whose relationship to an emerging modernity is uncertain. As Daniel Cook and Amy Culley have observed, British women's life-writing is especially ill-served by the conventional period distinctions of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries—terms like Restoration, Romantic, or Victorian (Cook and Culley 5). A recent special issue of the *Keats-Shelley Journal* on "British Women Writers of the Regency Period" reflects the more capacious understanding of the Regency as the latter half of the Romantic period.[30] As Anne Mellor suggests, the "financial, moral, and personal dissipation" associated with the Prince Regent and the Regency period had especially profound consequences for women writers (Mellor 43). In calling the era that Wilson, Blessington, and Abell represent the

[30] Essays from this issue freely discuss women's writing from the 1800s, 1810s, 1820s, and even 1830s under the aegis of the Regency, without detailed justification. Roger Sales similarly suggests that "[a] more general, but nevertheless still acceptable, definition [of the Regency] would include the decade immediately before the [Regency] Crisis as well as George IV's reign, which lasted until 1830" (Sales xv).

"Regency," I am following their logic—these writers establish their own periodization of the recent past, inventing an era that took place sometime in the first quarter of the century and that need not exactly coincide with the Regency of the future King George IV.

Devoney Looser, Rohan Maitzen, and Bonnie Smith, among others, have done important work on women's contributions to historical scholarship in the early- and mid-nineteenth century. Yet women's life-writing can also be understood as a form of historical writing. Mary Spongberg demonstrates that during the early nineteenth century, "[f]or women biography functioned as a gendered diminutive of history," while Culley has examined the way that women's memoirs of the Regency court were understood to "provide insight into the mentalities of a milieu" (Spongberg 10; Culley, "Prying" 135). Rather than mine women's life-writing for its documentary historical evidence, as Sidonie Smith and Julia Watson have warned against, we can examine it for its representation of time, both historical and personal (S. Smith and Watson 13).

Following Looser, we might understand these writers' reliance on the rhetoric of retrospection as a response to their own aging (Looser, *Women*). Indeed, each of these authors can be read as engaged in a romanticized fantasy about her youth through the lens of the encounter with a prominent man. Yet I am less interested in these works as female literary self-fashioning, or in their development of a longer tradition of women's life-writing, or, for that matter, in their contribution to the legacies of the men they represent. Instead, I am interested in their representation of time and how it informs what Stuart Sherman calls "a cultural texture—how people measured, used, conceived, and placed themselves in time" (Sherman, *Telling* 28). Whereas Sherman's focus is on conceptions

of diurnal time, I want to examine Wilson, Blessington, and Abell's representations of large intervals of time for the way they place themselves in history and conceive of its development.

Wilson's *Memoirs,* Blessington's *Conversations of Byron*, and Abell's *Recollections of Napoleon* each rely on nonlinear, or asynchronous models of temporality—similar to those analyzed by recent work on women's and queer time.[31] Julia Kristeva observes that under patriarchy, women are excluded from linear or historical time, "time as departure, progression, and arrival," and instead associated with repetition and eternity, or cyclical time and monumental time (Kristeva 192):

> On the one hand, there are cycles, gestation, the eternal recurrence of a biological rhythm which conforms to that of nature and imposes a temporality . . . . On the other hand . . . there is the massive presence of a monumental temporality, without cleavage or escape, which has so little to do with linear time (which passes) that the very word 'temporality' hardly fits: all encompassing and infinite like imaginary space (Kristeva 191).

While noted for their association with women, Kristeva's concepts of cyclical and monumental temporality have resonances with the way history is conceived in Thomas Carlyle's *On Heroes, Hero-Worship, and the Heroic in History* (1841). Carlyle argues that heroism, or greatness, is an immutable feature of the men who possess it, one that recurs cyclically, in every historical age. The inert quality of greatness means that it stands outside of linear time and instead inhabits monumental time in Kristeva's sense, in that it is changeless and invulnerable. Although "circumstance" determines which of

[31] On queer temporality see Carolyn Dinshaw, Carolyn Dinshaw et al, Jane Gallop, Judith Halberstam, and Valerie Traub.

Carlyle's six varieties of heroism each great man adopts—"the sphere in which they . . . display[] themselves"—greatness is largely impervious to contingent factors (Carlyle 94, 93). This theory of character as fixed leads Carlyle to a philosophy of history, an understanding of history as a whole, in which "[t]he History of the world is but the Biography of Great Men" (Carlyle 34). For Carlyle, history's unfolding is not a contested, phenomenological interaction between multiple trends and forces, but rather the expression, albeit an imperfect one, of the greatness of individual actors. He argues: "all things that we see standing accomplished in the world are properly the outer material result, the practical realization and embodiment of Thoughts that dwelt in the Great Men sent into the world" (Carlyle 3).

Wilson, Blessington, and Abell share with Carlyle an ideological commitment to understanding character as static, enhanced by their rhetorical situation, narrating events from a distance of several years. Using cyclical and monumental time to suggest that what seems like the variable and unceasing movement of historical events is actually a stable reflection of the traits of individual actors, these writers present the recent past as a period outside of linear time. In this chapter, I read these texts as a distinctive kind of literary historiography wherein female testimony of encounter defamiliarizes the recent past and cordons it off as a separate and self-contained era. Theorizing a break between the Regency past and an emerging Victorian modernity, these writers contribute to a gendered historiography of the early nineteenth century.

Furthermore, as the title of Blessington's *Conversations* makes plain, these texts are intensely interested in recording the speech patterns of prominent men, and rely heavily on dialogue. Wilson, Blessington, and Abell may have understood the trope of

including ostensibly accurate accounts of actual conversations as a way of authenticating their work and highlighting their contribution as living eyewitnesses to the past. Certainly, these conversations flaunt their privileged access to elite men. Yet this commitment to representing dialogue is remarkable in light of the years that separate the conversations depicted from the moment of writing, and has implications for understanding their historical method. Indeed, the fleeting nature of conversation means that the representation of speech in print tends to emphasize what is inevitably lost from the historical record. In these texts, dialogue often reveals the past to be inscrutable.

Beyond the way these texts use conversation to map the scope and limits of historical knowledge, they also suggest that the practices, norms, and cadences of speech are implicated by the course of history, and are not constant over time. Wilson, Blessington, and Abell characterize the early-nineteenth century as a time of spoken wit and flirtatious banter. These texts suggest that this specific kind of dialogue embodied the historical moment, which can be accessed through representations that, if not accurately transcribed, at least mimic the style and rhythms of the period's great men. Finally, in addition to using conversation as one measure of the spirit of any age, these texts indicate that there is something about conversation that is particularly illuminating in the case of the Regency—establishing a link between this period and conversation as a way to historicize it.

PART ONE. LADIES SCORN DATES

I. "Dates make ladies nervous and stories dry"

A scandalous tell-all that named names, Harriette Wilson's *Memoirs* prompted an

"avalanche of censorious comment" and a flurry of lawsuits upon its serial publication in 1825 (O'Connell 167).[32] Over the past fifteen years, scholars such as Caroline Breashears, Patricia Howell Michaelson, Lisa O'Connell, Julie Peakman, Bryan Rivers, and Sharon Setzer have worked to recuperate Wilson's *Memoirs* as an example of female literary self-fashioning, reading the text as Wilson's attempt to capitalize on her notoriety and assert control over her image.[33] Scholarship on Wilson has had little to say about the way her text represents temporality, beyond occasionally defending its many chronological inaccuracies as expressions of Wilson's creative license. In a 1955 introduction to the *Memoirs* that is frequently reprinted, Lesley Blanch announces with relish that the *Memoirs* show "a fine disregard for exactitude, either in names, places, or dates. Incidents which most likely occurred are set wildly, some years out of date. Wellington is referred to as the Duke some years before he obtained that title. Harriette and Byron discuss Lady Caroline Lamb's *roman à clef, Glenarvon* seven years before it

[32] See Lisa O'Connell for a thorough discussion of public response to the *Memoirs,* including their extensive coverage in *Bell's Life in London* and other print media. See David Saunders for an account of the legal cases brought in the wake of the *Memoirs,* including successful prosecutions for libel and the denial of copyright protection to the work upon its being deemed obscene. See also Colette Colligan for a reading of these libel cases in the context of piracies of *Don Juan*. Finally, see St Clair 657-58 for documentation of the text's incredible sales, which K. D. Reynolds claims forced the publisher to erect a barrier to control the crowds.

[33] Caroline Breashears suggests that the tendency to see Wilson's *Memoirs* as a late example of the late-eighteenth-century genre of the scandalous memoir reveals the problems inherent in using this term to encompass diverse women's life-writing, arguing that criticism has "silenced many writers by reducing them to their transgressions rather than attending to their strategies for self-fashioning" (Breashears 200-201, 188). Patricia Howell Michaelson reads Wilson's conversational bravura as a defiant move of self-expression, as I discuss below (Michaelson 15). Lisa O'Connell observes that "modes of posturing for male audiences that were part of [Wilson's] professional repertoire were not dissimilar to the forms of self-promotion required within literary culture" and argues that Wilson's *Memoirs* that "sought to extend the dynamics of the demirep coterie into the broader public sphere of print" (O'Connell 175). Similarly, Julie Peakman analyzes how Wilson's *Memoirs* negotiate the place of the courtesan in society and highlight an alternative discourse on female sexuality, one that valued assertiveness and independence (Peakman, "Memoirs of Women" 164). Bryan Rivers suggests that by including her opinions on Shakespeare in one memorable scene, Wilson "wished to present herself to the general public not simply as a sexually captivating courtesan, but also an intellectual, articulate woman, capable of formulating and defending her own literary opinions" (Rivers 36). Setzer argues that Wilson's self-fashioning is evident in her imagined encounter with Byron at Wattier's masquerade ball, and in the Byronic way she addresses readers.

is published" (Blanch, "Game" 33).[34] Blanch thus celebrates the same audacious manipulations of temporality that Wilson's contemporaries criticized.[35]

Yet to remark upon these purported errors is only to echo what the text acknowledges about its relationship to the events it describes. Early in the account, Wilson declares:

> I will not say in what particular year of his life, the Duke of Argyle succeeded with me. Ladies scorn dates! Dates make ladies nervous, and stories dry. Be it only known then, that it was just at the end of his Lorne shifts, and his lawn shirts. It was at that critical period of his life, when his whole and sole possessions appeared to consist in three dozen of ragged lawn shirts, with embroidered collars, well fringed in his service; a threadbare suit of snuff colour, a little old hat with very little binding left, an old horse, an old groom, an old carriage, and an old chateau. It was to console himself for all this antiquity, I suppose, that he fixed upon so very young a mistress as myself (H. Wilson, "Memoirs" 30).

In fact, George William Campbell, Marquis of Lorne, heir to the dukedom of Argyll was 36 years old when 18-year-old Wilson became his mistress in 1804, already several years into her career as a courtesan (F. Wilson 61). In this passage, however, Wilson seems

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[34] These claims are echoed in an abridgement of this introduction (Blanch, "Introduction" 10). In fact, Blanch's final claim is slightly inaccurate: the (fictional) conversation between Wilson and Byron about *Glenarvon* at Wattier's masquerade ball is supposed to have occurred only two years before the novel's publication (F. Wilson 142). Wilson's *Memoirs* also discuss *Glenarvon* in a letter to her sister Fanny, supposed to have been sent in early 1812, four years before the novel's appearance.

[35] Wilson's tendency to refer to her lovers by titles they later acquired was harshly criticized by her contemporaries. In *The Confessions of Julia Johnstone,* Wilson's erstwhile friend and rival asserts that Wilson's intent was to give the false impression that her lover was married when they met. Johnstone explains: "The Marquis of Lorne was a bachelor, a thing which Harriette, in her Memoirs, does not wish to be clearly understood—thus she calls him, his Grace the Duke of Argyle, when he was only his grace-less son, and the same with many others, whom she terms Lords, who, at the time she knew them to be mere Honorables or Mrs. [*sic*]" (Johnstone 39).

deliberately to cultivate a sense of abandon with regard to chronology that suits her authorial persona—Culley interprets it as indicating Wilson's "gendered conception of women's life writing as fragmentary and non-linear" (Culley, *British* 130). Referring to her lover alternately as Lorne, his title at the time of their affair, and Argyll, the title he later inherited, Wilson deliberately draws attention to her text's manipulations of time. Elsewhere as well, Wilson repeatedly admits that she is altering the order of events to enhance the interest of her narrative, passages that lend themselves to a reading of Wilson's temporal manipulations, whether explicitly observed or silently introduced, as form of posturing in which her seemingly slapdash writerly persona provides opportunities for wit.[36]

The twisted chronology of Wilson's *Memoirs* is also in part a symptom of the conditions of its composition and publication. "Written in a breathless style, . . . reflect[ing] the fast pace of Wilson's life, a heady cocktail of swirling parties and gay abandonment," the *Memoirs* bear evidence a rushed writing process, as Wilson's publisher encouraged her to write more volumes quickly (Peakman, "Memoirs of Wilson" 1-3; F. Wilson 192-193). Just as contemporary women's diaries reflect the pressures on women's time that dictated that they "*must* write selectively and intermittently," so does Wilson's text indicate the constraints under which it was written (Sherman, *Telling* 253). Wilson asserts that her *Memoirs* "might have been better still—but that Mr. Stockdale won't let me, or any one else, study and correct them. The merits of such a light work as this, stupidly says he, is [*sic*], that it is written without study" (H.

[36] For example, when she inserts an unrelated incident into the middle of a long section about the Worcester family, Wilson explains: "I will venture to vary this dry Beaufort story by whipping in a little anecdote, which occurred either before my acquaintance had commenced with that noble family, or after it had ceased, I forget which, but that is of no consequence" (H. Wilson, "Memoirs" 279).

Wilson, "Memoirs" 162). Furthermore, the text itself gives impression that Wilson indeed wrote without revision, such as when she announces "Oh, *mon Dieu!* it has just occurred to me, that to have told this story of Elliston and Livius, in due time, it ought not to have come in these eight years at soonest; . . . but what does it signify to my readers, the story will do as well, and amuse as much now, as later on" (H. Wilson, "Memoirs" 185). Furthermore, the composition of Wilson's *Memoirs* seems at times influenced by the latest developments in the hush-money negotiations, ongoing during the entirety of the work's serialization.[37] The most obvious of these moments occurs when Wilson interrupts the narrative about her on-again-off-again relationship with Fred Lamb to insert a story about an earlier experience with Wellington, whose response to her attempted extortion was particularly hostile.[38] As Wilson here implies, this anecdote is her revenge:

> Above all, I wanted Wellington to be exhibited, dripping with wet, standing opposite my street door, at midnight, bawling up to Argyle, who should be representing my old Abigail, from my bed-room window. Good gracious! I quite forgot to tell this adventure!! How could I be so ridiculous and negligent? Never mind, you shall have it now—But there is poor Fred Lamb waiting all this time, in my select library! I can't help it—

[37] In order to wring more money from her *Memoirs,* Wilson attempted to blackmail her former clients—pay up, and she would remove one's name from her account. Since the *Memoirs* appeared in parts, correspondence and transactions were still taking place even as the first installments were being published (F. Wilson 222-232).

[38] Wellington's biographer Elizabeth Longford reports that "the Duke of Wellington's reply to this unpleasant document has disappeared, but not without leaving a resounding echo behind[,] which is now a part of the English language: *publish and be damned*" (Longford 166-67). Although Longford admits that this response may be apocryphal, Blanch, Reynolds, and Patricia Michaelson cite it as fact. Peakman also notes that there is no proof that Wellington ever uttered these words (Peakman, "Memoirs of Wilson" 3). Indeed, Wilson's erstwhile confidante Julia Johnstone's *Confessions* recall a slightly different reply: "write and be d----d" (Johnstone 217).

> There's no getting on with Fred Lamb. I never could use him to any purpose in all my life (H. Wilson, "Memoirs" 147).

Wilson goes on to relate an incident in which Wellington turns up to her apartment unannounced and encounters Argyll disguised as a maid. With characteristic bile, Wilson makes Wellington look desperate and gullible, but also uses the very fact that she is digressing to insult Fred Lamb, whose story she interrupts.

Whatever the reasons for Wilson's manipulations of temporality, their rhetorical effect is to present her social scene as remarkably stable. Although Wilson moves between male protectors, and those around her also change their alliances, the basic practices and concerns of this culture remain constant. Whereas Frances Wilson's biography *The Courtesan's Revenge* catalogues the way the culture gradually shifted during Wilson's career, growing more sexually conservative, the *Memoirs* appear to recognize no such evolution (F. Wilson 153, 215-216). Despite constantly shifting loyalties, Wilson's set-piece incidents can occur in any order because they depict a culture of affairs and rivalries that is unchanging. Representing the experience of time as cyclical, if not in the reproductive sense suggested by Kristeva, the *Memoirs* set Wilson's Regency outside of linear time, leaving indeterminate its relationship to the present.

Wilson's narration at the beginning, middle, and end of her *Memoirs* suggests that her text, if not her career, could go on indefinitely. Wilson memorably begins *in medias res*, after her initial fall from propriety:

> I shall not say why and how I became, at the age of fifteen, the mistress of the Earl of Craven. Whether it was love, or the severity of my father, the depravity of my own heart, or the winning arts of the noble lord, which

> induced me to leave my paternal roof and place myself under his protection, does not now much signify (H. Wilson, "Memoirs" 13).

O'Connell reads this opening salvo as a rejection of the tropes of the literary genres Wilson hoped to transcend, observing that this passage is by far the most quoted of the *Memoirs* because it is a "flaunting, flagrant expression" of writerly bravado (O'Connell 172). Yet the passage is also remarkable for the way it bypasses the period of Wilson's life before she participated in a long-established culture of high-society philandering. The "why and how" of her personal initiation into this lifestyle "does not now much signify"—it is not even part of her narrative. Whereas her biographer catalogues the way Wilson strategically launched her career as a high-class courtesan by moving up the social ladder from Craven to Fred Lamb to Argyll, Wilson's own *Memoirs* present her career as fully formed, at its apex, from the first sentences of her narrative. Just paragraphs later, she attempts to solicit the future George IV as her lover—tired of Craven's "ugly cotton nightcap" she wonders "what sort of nightcap the Prince of Wales wears," and finally writes to him, blithely announcing: "I am told that I am very beautiful, so, perhaps you would like to see me" (H. Wilson, "Memoirs" 14). As she tells it, Wilson arrives on the scene having already arrived.

As the *Memoirs* continue, Wilson's status in society remains extremely stable. Wilson's narration resembles what Hayden White calls the chronicle—rather than build toward a climax, events are organized paratactically (White, *Metahistory* 5-6; *Content* 16). Frances Wilson documents that Wilson's career was in long decline during the later years of the *Memoirs*. In the latter half of the text, it is clear that Wilson is dimly aware that her "health and freshness are gone" (H. Wilson, "Memoirs" 365). In particular, her

controlling and abusive relationship with Meyler, "a torment to me," whose "temper [had] become so provoking," is something she never would have tolerated earlier (H. Wilson, "Memoirs" 365). Yet by the text's end, Wilson only grudgingly admits that her "habits and character became more serious and melancholy" after her mother's death, and in the same breath promises that a "continuation of my Memoirs[,] provided you are all grateful and civil" is forthcoming (H. Wilson, "Memoirs" 458). An expanded, eight-volume version of the *Memoirs* in fact appeared in 1831 and included new anecdotes, padded out by her publisher's lengthy account of his legal trials, a reprint of Wilson's novel *Paris Lions and London Tigers,* and an index. Wilson's career may have been over, but it might continue to yield the same kind of anecdotes featured in the *Memoirs*.

In depicting the progress of her affairs, Wilson presents time as cyclical, but elsewhere in the *Memoirs*, time is monumental in Kristeva's sense, in that the process of getting to know others does not unfold in time, but is always already done. Just as Wilson refers to her lovers as Argyll and Wellington years before they acquired these titles, Wilson knows everything about everyone immediately, and her opinions do not change. Her love for Ponsonby is fully formed before she knows his name, upon first sight of him "in Sloane-Street, riding on horseback, and followed by a large dog" (H. Wilson, "Memoirs" 47). Similarly, Wilson professes always to have understood the strained nature of Beau Brummell's finances, describing him as "entirely ruined" years before his troubles became public knowledge (H. Wilson, "Memoirs" 222).[39] Two volumes later, Wilson describes the anger among Brummell's friends when they discover that he is

[39] Wilson makes this claim in a letter to her sister Fanny, which appears in the *Memoirs* sometime shortly before their other sister Sophia's marriage to Lord Berwick in February 1812 (H. Wilson, "Memoirs" 221-23; F. Wilson 106). Yet in this letter, Wilson discusses several events that did not occur until 1816 (F. Wilson 151-52).

unable to pay his debts. Wilson herself reports, however, that she is completely unsurprised by these developments: "I asked Meyler how he could be so very stupid as to have been deceived, even for an instant, about Brummell" (H. Wilson, "Memoirs" 434). Whereas others were initially under one impression and later under another, for Wilson, the state of Brummell's finances had always been clear.

Wilson's narrative collapsing of changes in her relationships and her knowledge is most conspicuous in the discussion of her affair with Worcester. In real life, Wilson seriously mishandled this situation, making it difficult for her to find another aristocratic protector. Believing he would eventually marry her, Wilson removed herself from high-society circulation during Worcester's military service, only to be rejected upon his return, and denied an annuity promised earlier by him and his father (F. Wilson 109-135). Wilson's narration of what could have been a dramatic turn, however, is entirely without suspense. From the beginning, Wilson makes known that she is motivated to write "because a certain duke and his son, all! all! honourable men, and with very honourable titles and ancient names, have taken such unfair advantage of my generous treatment of them, that I think they ought to be exposed" (H. Wilson, "Memoirs" 93). Yet she also emphasizes in equal measure Worcester's total devotion throughout their three-year affair, claiming, "[i]t would be tedious to attempt relating all, or even one twentieth part, of the tender proofs of love and affection, which Worcester was in the daily, I may say, hourly habit of evincing towards me" (H. Wilson, "Memoirs" 244). Indeed, this protracted and complex episode is difficult to follow in Wilson's account, precisely because it only makes sense if we understand Worcester's feelings, and Wilson's own, to have changed over time.

To some extent, Wilson's manipulations of temporality seem motivated by her desire as a courtesan to subvert the social and financial implications of aging, looking back nostalgically on earlier successes and writing in a genre that was itself past its prime (Culley, *British* 89). By depicting her career as stable and her interpersonal insights as precocious, Wilson presents a flattering self-portrait that refuses to age. Yet in the process, she also produces a historiography of the period that emphasizes a changeless culture of high-society affairs and rivalries, in which individuals can be repeatedly reorganized into infinite alliances and antipathies. Whereas Wilson's text sketches social breadth, Blessington's *Conversations of Byron* plumbs character depth. Like Wilson, however, Blessington also writes about the past in the slightly out-of-date genre of the Byron conversation. Both texts emphasize inert characters and attitudes, undercutting a sense of gradual historical change or an evolution into the present. For both writers, the period being documented is static and foreign, temporally self-contained and outside the progress of linear time.

II. A "Nearly Daily Intercourse of Ten Weeks"

Teresa Guiccioli, Byron's Italian mistress, wrote an emphatic "No!" in the margin of her copy of the *Conversations of Byron* (1832-33), beside the passage in which Blessington describes her 1823 acquaintance with Byron in Genoa as a "nearly daily intercourse of ten weeks," and Guiccioli later told Blessington's biographer that Byron had paid her only "five or six [visits] at the utmost" (Blessington, *Conversations* 145n; Madden 73). Blessington herself was inconsistent on exactly how often and over how long a period she and Byron met—elsewhere she indicates only twenty-one meetings in a

two-month period (Lovell 42-43). Yet Blessington's text has an ambivalent relationship to the in-person meetings that it ostensibly recounts. Over the course of the *Conversations*, the text evolves from an annalistic account that links specific conversations to particular meetings, reported in chronological order, to a retrospective account that presents Byron's conversational substance without reference to contexts of time and place.

Blessington kept a travel diary that included the period of her acquaintance with Byron, eventually published as *The Idler in Italy* (1839), and it is similar to the *Conversations* in their descriptions of the beginning of the friendship. Initially the *Conversations,* like the *Idler,* adopts the style of a diary, using date headings to indicate exactly when specific conversations occurred. Blessington's first impressions of Byron are expressed almost identically in the two texts. The *Idler* reports: "April 1st—I have seen Lord Byron; and am disappointed! But so it ever is, when we have heard exaggerated accounts of a person, or when, worse still, we have formed a *beau idéal* of him" (Blessington, *Idler* I: 393). Similarly, the *Conversations* open: "April 1st, 1823. Saw Lord Byron for the first time. The impression of the first few minutes disappointed me, as I had, both from the portraits and descriptions given, conceived a different idea of him" (Blessington, *Conversations* 5). A few pages later, the *Conversations* and *Idler* are again nearly identical in their description of Byron's foot. The *Idler* states: "I do not think that I should have observed his lameness, had my attention not been called to it by his own visible consciousness of his infirmity—a consciousness that gives a *gaucherie* to his movements: yet, even now, I am not aware which foot is the deformed one" (Blessington, *Idler* I: 395). Likewise, the *Conversations* reports: "There is a *gaucherie* to his

movements, which evidently proceeds from the perpetual consciousness of his lameness, that appears to haunt him; . . . the deformity of his foot is so little remarkable that I am not now aware which foot it is" (Blessington, *Conversations* 6). The strong similarity between the early passages of the *Conversations* and the corresponding moments in the *Idler* suggests that these passages are deeply indebted to the original diary.[40]

Just a few pages further, however, the *Conversations* abandons the diary format and begins to depart considerably from the *Idler.* A second date heading appears for April 2nd, but within this section Blessington includes several transcribed letters exchanged over a period of weeks. Jane Stabler observes that what Blessington presents in the *Conversations* as a single scene is "diffused over a series of entries" in the *Idler*—although, from another perspective, the series of incidents reflected in the *Idler* was collapsed into one for the purposes of the *Conversations* (Stabler 58). Gradually, the text refers less frequently to the events and activities with Byron that prompted their conversations, and ultimately these details disappear altogether. From this point onward, the text describes only the content of their conversations, moving unpredictably between topics and sometimes returning to issues considered earlier. Susanne Schmid interprets "[t]he structure of Blessington's text, neither linear nor systematic" as "resembl[ing] a real-life conversation" (Schmid, *British* 132).

Taken as a whole, the text is ambiguously positioned between diary and autobiography, reflecting the way these opposing categories often bleed into one another

[40] Published in 1839, *The Idler in Italy* is a probably revised version of Blessington's original travel diary, beginning in August 1822. Although it was published after the *Conversations*, the *Idler* appears to be a less highly processed document, and formally resembles a diary. There is no way to know how nearly the *Idler* reflects the original, but it seems as though the *Idler* was considerably closer to it than the *Conversations*. Although it is possible that the *Idler* lifted passages from the *Conversations,* it seems more likely their strong similarity in the early passages reflects their common source material—the original diary, which has not survived (Schmid, *British* 124).

(Sherman, "Diary" 654-655). Yet read from beginning to end, the *Conversations* enacts a process in which individual events and contextual details fade away, leaving only the conversational substance and style. All utterances are presented as though they require no context. Blessington is especially interested in Byron's "chameleon-like character": she extensively documents his "instability of opinion, or expression of opinion" on numerous issues (Blessington, *Conversations* 72, 197). Just as Wilson's frequent shifts between male protectors belie the stability of her social scene, the frequent self-contradictions of Blessington's Byron, the instability of his "expression of opinion," ultimately suggests that perhaps his "opinion" is consistent after all.

Whereas Wilson's text itself is the product of life after notoriety, Blessington's *Conversations* takes up explicitly the question of what happens after a period of fame. Blessington's Byron is obsessed with a variety of past social slights, particularly relating to his separation from Lady Byron, with whom he "most anxiously desired a reconciliation" (Blessington, *Conversations* 99). Blessington's Byron is bitter and unable to live in the present, preoccupied by "the events in life that have most pained me—that have turned the milk of my nature into gall" (Blessington, *Conversations* 179). Explaining his tendency to hold grudges, he admits that "it was my own nature, prompt to receive painful impressions, and to retain them with a painful tenacity, that supplied the arms against my peace" (Blessington, *Conversations* 179). Blessington's sketch renders Byron invulnerable to a sense of ongoing development, or an ability to change with time, depicting his character as permanently forged long ago by a combination of his inherent traits and early experiences.

Yet Byron's immersion in the past parallels the text's own, a fact that has shaped

its scholarship. Blessington's *Conversations* is a relatively late example of the genre of Byron biography based on first-hand evidence of his conversations, appearing years after the large wave of these texts that followed his death in 1824 (Cronin 19-21; North, *Domestication* 82-92). Ernest Lovell has argued that "the bitterness and other peculiar qualities of the *Conversations*" are a consequence of a financial disagreement between Blessington and Byron shortly after their acquaintance in Genoa (Lovell 63, 63-66). Schmid identifies a later breech, observing that the deterioration of Blessington and Byron's relationship, palpable over the course of the text, reflects that Blessington learned in the midst of serialization that Byron had spoken poorly of her ten years previously (Schmid, *British* 131-132). Furthermore, Blessington's social and financial positions had suffered setbacks in the intervening years.[41] Cronin and North have each argued that Blessington's Byron becomes what Cronin calls "the mouthpiece for her own opinions . . . suggest[ing] a much more radical self-identification with Byron" (Cronin 24; North, *Domestication* 96). Although this work has reasonably assumed that Blessington identified with Byron due to their shared experience of social ostracism, it is also possible that she forgot, in the intervening years, which were Byron's opinions and which were her own. Whatever Blessington's personal anxieties at the time of writing, her belated narratorial stance presents Byron's character as solidified into bitterness. Just as Wilson suggests that she always already had perfect knowledge about everyone around her, similarly Blessington's Byron, although silently influenced by her consciousness of

[41] After a childhood and first marriage marred by abuse, Blessington lived out of wedlock with Captain Jenkins and then Lord Blessington prior to their marriage; this history marked Blessington with a certain degree of social stigma, although it is unclear how widely these details were known during her life (Hawkins, "The Portrait" 52-53; Schmid, *British* 120-121; Hannay 24-26). The scandal multiplied further after 1829 due to rumors of an affair between Blessington and Alfred D'Orsay, her stepson-in-law (Lovell 38; Schmid, *British* 121-122; Hannay 26-27).

more recent developments, is presented as static and predetermined.

Blessington's final comments, in which she speculates about alternative courses of Byron's life and career, ironically only reinforce her view of Byron as inert. Blessington ventures that had Byron, "instead of going to Greece in his early youth, spent the same period beneath the genial climate, and surrounded by the luxuries of Italy" he would have written *Don Juan* first, and with "a less reprehensible character," and would have followed it "in natural succession by atoning works produced by the autumnal sun of maturity, and by the mellowing touches of experience," works that, had he lived longer, "would have had all the genius, without the immorality of his more youthful productions" (Blessington, *Conversations* 230). Another example of Andrew Miller's concept of optative speculation, Blessington longs on Byron's behalf, for an identity that differs dramatically and seemingly implausibly from that which Byron actually lived, firmly situating him within that lived identity. Prefiguring Carlyle's argument, in *On Heroes,* that Shakespeare was hampered by circumstances—"No man works save under conditions" (Carlyle 129)—Blessington laments that various external factors prevented Byron from producing works quite as great as he could have. The predeterminism of Blessington's biographical portrait is thus both formal, resulting from her belated rhetorical stance, and ideological, reflecting her Carlylean theory of character formation. Gesturing toward other possible Byrons, Blessington in fact undermines the idea that he might ever have been otherwise.

Blessington's metonymic method of using snapshots of fleeting moments to represent larger truths about Byron's life effectively magnifies their brief acquaintance into a lengthy biographical account. Betsy Balcombe similarly arrives late in her

subject's life, when his formative experiences are behind him, and her text shares with Blessington's the challenges of sketching a character through fragmentary and temporally limited evidence. For both writers, Carlyle's view of heroism as an inherent trait that exists independent of actions allows them to depict greatness that is thwarted or flawed.

III. Boxing Ears on St. Helena

In the *Recollections of the Emperor Napoleon* (1844), to which Blessington was a subscriber, Elizabeth Abell makes ambiguous statements about the extent to which she actually remembers the events her text describes.[42] Abell admits, "I shall never cease regretting that I did not keep a journal of all that occurred, but I was too young and too thoughtless to see the advantage of doing so" (Abell 28). At the same time, she claims, "[m]any of the circumstances I am about to relate, however, I did write down shortly after they occurred, and others have been kept fresh in my memory by being repeated to friends" (Abell 29). Furthermore, she cryptically asserts that time and hardship have "erased things from my recollection, which I thought I never could have forgotten, but of which I now retain nothing but the consciousness that they took place, and the regret that I am unable to record them" (Abell 29). The rhetorical challenges Abell faces here are somewhat different from those in Wilson's *Memoirs* and Blessington's *Conversations* not only because Abell's text looks back even further in time, but also because it reflects on childhood experiences. Notably, Wilson was about Betsy's age when she first ran off

[42] She publishes under the name "Mrs. Abell (Late Miss Elizabeth Balcombe)." I will use "Abell" when referring to her adult life and writing, and "Betsy" when referring to the character depicted in her *Recollections*. Abell's publisher John Murray III printed an initial run of one thousand copies in June 1844, with an additional thousand in October 1845 (Murray, *Stock-Book* 97). Abell appears to have solicited a large number of subscribers herself, with Murray taking a 10% commission on the sales (Murray, *Commission Book* 67, 84).

with Lord Craven, but whereas Wilson narrates her entire text as though she were perennially around eighteen years old, Abell speaks from a thirteen-year-old's perspective, despite the passage of years.[43] Like Wilson's, Abell's fixed narratorial stance may be an effort to defy the passage of time, but it also reflects a vision of history in which Napoleon's character is immune to contingent circumstances and unsullied by his actions.

The fact that Abell narrates from the perspective of childhood is most noticeable in the moments when the narrative deals with her sexuality. For example, Betsy relates that Napoleon "was fond of quizzing me about" the fourteen-year-old son of a member of his retinue whom they call "Le petit Las Cases," frequently "telling me I should be his wife" (Abell 35-36). To this suggestion, she responds:

> Nothing enraged me so much; I could not bear to be considered such a child, and particularly at that moment, for there was a ball in prospect, to which I had great hopes papa would allow me to go, and I knew that his objection would be founded on my being too young (Abell 36).

Betsy's feelings and Abell's narration thus walk a line between sexual awareness and innocence that characterizes the *Recollections.* Betsy is offended not because she has been perceived as a potential romantic partner, but because this attention is figured as a matter of child's play, rather than adult courtship. She is not necessarily concerned by the unwanted advance, but rather by how it implicates her chances of attending an adult event whose appeal is ambiguous. As the scene continues, Napoleon and the younger Las Cases gang up on Betsy: "Napoleon, seeing my annoyance, desired young Las Cases to

[43] As such, Abell's actual life-writing differs markedly from *bildungsroman* novels of the 1840s that mimic life-writing, like *Jane Eyre*, where adult insights obviously shape the way the narrator presents Jane's childhood.

kiss me, and he held both my hands whilst the little page saluted me. . . . The moment, however, that my hands were at liberty, I boxed le petit Las Cases' ears most thoroughly" (Abell 36). Although Betsy is clearly angered by Napoleon's complicity and even participation in this assault, it is unclear whether she views it as sexual in nature. Her response of physical violence, which seems intentionally comic, works to portray the confrontation as a squabble among children, undermining any reading of this incident as sexually charged.

Betsy's revenge goes further, however, to a carefully planned attack on a narrow pathway, worthy of Napoleon himself:

> There being barely room for one person to pass at a time, Napoleon walked first, Las Cases next, then his son, and lastly, my sister Jane. I allowed the party to proceed very quietly until I was left about ten yards behind, and then I ran with all my force on my sister Jane,—she fell with extended hands on the little page, he was thrown upon his father, and the grand chamberlain, to his dismay, was pushed against the emperor (Abell 36-37).

A serious physical fight then erupts between the boy's father and Betsy: "He seized me by the shoulders, and pushed me violently on the rocky bank. . . . I burst into tears of passion" (Abell 37). Napoleon intervenes, this time on Betsy's side, holding down the adult Las Cases so that Betsy can "box[] the little man's ears until he begged for mercy" (Abell 38). Napoleon's role in this fight is complicated—he instigates the original teasing, but he ultimately comes to Betsy's defense. In the end, she is triumphant: "I was in ecstasies at the confusion I had created, and exulted in the revenge I had taken for the

kiss" (Abell 37). At no point does Abell the adult writer reconsider this turn of events, or express remorse for injuring others, including her sister, who, walking last, took the brunt of the attack. Abell ends the chapter with a matter-of-fact account of the consequences: "Las Cases never liked me after this adventure, and used to call me a rude hoyden" (Abell 38).[44] The physical violence to which Betsy resorts in this scene suggests either a lack of awareness of her sexuality or a refusal of it, both on the part of the girl living it and the woman writing it. Speculation about the possibly sexual nature of Betsy's relationship with Napoleon is as old as the friendship itself, and although historians consider these rumors baseless, the relationship depicted in Abell's account—with Betsy's spirited behavior and Napoleon's potentially flirtatious teasing—is indeed hard to categorize (Markham 15; A. Roberts 782). Narrating from a thirteen-year-old's perspective helps neutralize the possibility of reading these encounters as sexual.

Abell's narration also theorizes a kind of authority specific to the female child, able to appreciate Napoleon's kindness but not his romantic appeal, allowing her to isolate and defend his domestic character—a review acknowledged that "[i]n all that concerns herself, Mrs. Abell is a reliable witness" ("Napoleon at Play" 176). She asserts, "young people are generally keen observers of character. Their perceptive faculties are ever on the alert, and their powers of observation not the less acute, perhaps, because their reason lies dormant, and there is nothing to interrupt the exercise of their perceptions" (Abell 237). In aligning the subjectivities of the girl and the writer, Abell is not expected to address the potential conflict between Napoleon's apparently admirable private character and his imperial ambitions.

[44] The *Oxford English Dictionary* indicates that although "hoyden" was once a gender-neutral term, by the nineteenth century it was applied to women only. It is defined as "a rude, or ill-bred girl (or woman); a boisterous, noisy girl, a romp." It does not appear to have a sexual connotation.

The timing of Abell's publication, however, does not quite support a reading of her text as participating in a project of recuperation. British sympathy with Napoleon had been growing steadily since his final defeat, fueled at first by "accounts of Napoleon's mundane, quotidian concerns [on St. Helena], turning the superhuman figure into a weak and vulnerable human" (Semmel 222). The Irish doctor Barry O'Meara's *Napoleon in Exile; or, A Voice from St. Helena* (1822), furthermore, explicitly aimed to draw attention to the injustice of Napoleon's imprisonment in the months after his death, and won many converts to Napoleon's side. Appearing more than twenty years later, Abell's text was not an early participant in debates over Napoleon's legacy. By the 1840s, Napoleon had been the subject of multi-volume biographies by Walter Scott and William Hazlitt, famous paintings by Benjamin Robert Haydon and J. M. W. Turner, and numerous sympathetic portrayals in British drama (Semmel 329-334).

Betsy had not fared as well. One review observed that her life had "borne a resemblance to [Napoleon's] misfortunes" and another called her "a sad and suffering woman" ("Napoleon and Miss Balcome" 392; "Napoleon at Play" 176). In 1821 or 1822, she married and was soon deserted by Charles Edward Abell, eventually settling in London, where she supported herself and her daughter by teaching music until her death in 1871 (Markham 18; A. Roberts 809). Abell's text describes her later life as "chequered and melancholy" and explains that the publication "would have been delayed still longer but for the pressure of calamitous circumstances which compels her to hesitate no more" (Abell 29, iv). Financial necessity, evident also in correspondence with her publisher John Murray III, may explain Abell's decision to publish in 1844, and her desire to relive "the happy days of my childhood" (Abell 1; Murray, *Correspondence* ff. 31-44). Like

Wilson, Abell is reticent about the way the past she describes has evolved into a different present, either in her own life or for others, casting this period as outside the progress of historical time.

The text's rejection of linear time also furthers Abell's argument about Napoleon and the progress of history. Touching briefly on the notorious petty bickering between Napoleon and the governor who oversaw his captivity, Abell observes, "[i]nto the merits of these quarrels, it is not my intention to enter. With all my feeling of partiality for the emperor, I have often doubted whether any human being could have filled the situation . . . without becoming embroiled with his unhappy captive" (Abell 240). Abell locates the cause of this conflict in an inevitably expressed feature of Napoleon's character, rather than in the specifics of the governor's oversight. Despite their brief friendship, she asserts a comprehensive view of Napoleon's innate character: "after seeing Napoleon *in every possible mood*, and in his most unguarded moments, when I am sure, from his manner, that the idea of acting a part never entered his head, I left him, impressed with the most complete conviction of his want of guile, and the thorough amiability and goodness of his heart" (Abell 237, emphasis mine). In these passages, Abell echoes not only a Carlylean theory of character as stable, but also a number of Carlyle's comments about Napoleon—"our last Great Man!"—in *On Heroes* (Carlyle 286). Carlyle sees Napoleon as a flawed hero, and shares Abell's sense that Napoleon's greatness lay in his "sincerity" and his "insist[ence] on the practical, the real": "Across these outer manoeuverings and quackeries of his, which were many and most blameable, let us discern withal that the man had a certain instinctive ineradicable feeling for reality" (Carlyle 281, 282). Abell similarly understands Napoleon as an occasionally imperfect reflection of his true colors,

suggesting that his whole career, with its potentially dramatic ups and downs, is only a flawed expression of innate greatness.

PART TWO. REGENCY CONVERSATION AND 'CONVERSATION'

I. "Mere Harmless Conversations" in Harriette Wilson's *Memoirs*

Despite the text's reputation for exposing salacious details about extramarital affairs among the Regency elite, Harriette Wilson's *Memoirs* are in no way sexually explicit. The *Memoirs* reveal who was sleeping with whom, but with greater relish they relate who said what to whom. Much more than Abell or Blessington, Wilson deliberately exploits the conceptual and linguistic pun on "conversation." *Bell's Life in London* at one point described Wilson, living in Paris in 1825 as "although on the wane in point of personal attractions, . . . much admired for her conversational talents," recognizing Wilson's appeal as a combination of her appearance and her conversation ("Memoirs," 20 Feb 1825). As the *OED* suggests, "conversation" could mean either oral discourse or sexual intercourse during this period, and although the latter meaning was waning in use, the conceptual link between talking and sex persisted. The *Memoirs* never use the word "conversation" as a euphemism for sexual contact, and yet the way conversation is represented suggests its potential to stand in for something else. In a comic interlude, Wilson writes of another woman: "I remember hearing this very excellent creature abused for being a nasty, stiff, tiresome prude, because she seriously assured a stupid, ugly fop, who was teazing her with the most insipid impertinence, that the style of his conversation was extremely disagreeable to her" (H. Wilson, "Memoirs" 280). Here Wilson briefly rejects the idea that a woman's sexual prudery can be fairly

determined on the basis of her rejection of a fop's conversation, but in the rest of this scene, Wilson seems to accept this, and refers to the woman as "Mrs. Prude" (H. Wilson, "Memoirs" 280-83). In Wilson's *bon ton*, conversation nearly always has sexual undertones.

Readers have responded to Wilson's extensive use of dialogue since the text's initial reception. Even Walter Scott praised Wilson's mimicry of the speech patterns of the famous men she depicts. In his *Journal,* amid expressions of general disapproval for the work and its author, he admits, "there is some good retailing of conversations in which the stile of the speakers so far as known to me, is exactly imitated" (W. Scott, *Journal* 38). More recently, Wellington's twentieth-century biographer Elizabeth Longford observes that Wilson "certainly has caught Arthur Wellesley's quick, peremptory speech, noted by all his friends, as well as the paternal touches and wry humour. Even the taciturnity broken by rather naïve gestures of homage sound [*sic*] perfectly authentic" (Longford 166).

Wilson herself seems to have taken pride in this aspect of her work, understanding it as an important authenticating mechanism. Just as she playfully draws attention to the chronological mistakes in her account, Wilson is cavalier about the way that actual conversations are represented in her work:

> As to mere harmless conversations, I do not profess more than general accuracy; I often add, a yes, a nod, or a no, or I neglect my dates and relate anecdotes together, which happened at different periods, but happen they did; and no conversation is described herein which did not take place within my own knowledge, and, for the most part, in my own hearing. (H.

Wilson, "Memoirs" 156)

On the one hand, this passage exposes that the conversations represented in Wilson's *Memoirs* are reconstructions of questionable accuracy. Yet on the other hand, the passage asserts the fundamental truthfulness of these conversations and suggests that they are the central assets of Wilson's text. Despite Wilson's admission here, throughout the rest of the text she goes to great lengths to represent conversation in extensive detail, using long direct quotations in quotation marks, and featuring complicated banter. More so than documenting her encounters with famous men—which, after all, went beyond talking—Wilson's conversations replicate a style of speech that she suggests is characteristic of her time and place.

In *Speaking Volumes,* Patricia Howell Michaelson argues that Wilson's *Memoirs* demonstrate her mastery and strategic deployment of a wide range of conversational styles. Michaelson analyzes Wilson's shifts among linguistic registers in her own speech, mimicking that of others—from prominent figures like Wellington to the diverse strangers she meets during a shared carriage ride (Michaelson 14-15). For Michaelson, Wilson's conversational bravura is a defiant move of self-expression: "Wilson revels in her freedom to control the conversation. She is a master of one-upmanship, winning verbal contests through ritualized insult" (Michaelson 15). Michaelson offers a persuasive reading of Wilson's conversation as a part of her self-presentation, yet Wilson is also clearly committed to speech as a kind of historical evidence and the representation of speech as a historiographical technique.

The memorable scene in which Wilson meets Byron at Wattier's masquerade ball in 1814 demonstrates the way that Wilson uses dialogue to imagine what might have

been. As *Bell's Life in London* noted immediately, Wilson's encounter with Byron in the *Memoirs* was "pure invention," and the passage itself contains telltale signs of fabrication ("Memoirs of Wilson, &c.", 4 Sept 1825).[45] Frances Wilson argues that Wilson's invention of this meeting was an attempt to place herself at the epicenter of fashionable society at a point when her career was already in slow decline (F. Wilson 141-43). Other scholars have noted the Byronic echoes of this self-consciously literary scene. Lisa O'Connell argues that Wilson's Byronism in this scene "trumps Byron from within the world of fashion and celebrity" (O'Connell 178). Similarly, Nicola Watson argues that Wilson adopts a Byronic identity in this scene as a "strategy of self-empowerment by out-Byroning Byron" (Watson 200). Susan Wolfson argues that the masquerade ball encounter is specifically indebted to the ending of Canto XVI of *Don Juan,* in which Juan encounters the Duchess of Fitz-Fulke disguised as the Black Friar.[46] Wolfson focuses in particular on Wilson's description of Byron, when she spots him across the room, as "[a] solitary individual, fixed on something invisible to any beholder, unmasked, but with the effect of being masked, with captivating bright penetrating eyes, fit for a portrait, . . . iconic 'Byron,' Byron playing 'Byron'" (Wolfson 784). Watson echoes this claim, seeing Wilson place herself in the role of Juan to Byron's Duchess Fitz-Fulke (Watson 199). Watson furthermore expands our sense of Wilson's literary influences, suggesting that her portrayal of Byron in disguise may also have been influenced by *Glenarvon,* the

[45] F. Wilson (141-42), Peakman ("Memoirs of Wilson" 4), and O'Connell (178) confirm that the meeting between Byron and Wilson never occurred. Byron and Wilson traveled in similar social circles and corresponded, but never met in person. Wilson claims that at this meeting, she and Byron discussed Caroline Lamb's *Glenarvon*, which did not appear until 1816, shortly after Byron left England permanently, two years after Wattier's masquerade ball (Douglass ix).

[46] Canto XVI of *Don Juan* appeared in 1824, nearly ten years after the alleged meeting, and shortly before Wilson's own publication. As such, this scene is a classic example of Wilson's manipulations of historical chronology for her own ends, eliding her understanding of Byron's character earlier in his life with the insights she gained through his last work. See also Setzer.

subject of Byron and Wilson's conversation; in this novel, the character of Glenarvon, based on Byron, first appears at a masquerade ball disguised as an Italian monk (Watson 191).

These intertextual analyses make clear Wilson's debts to *Don Juan* and *Glenarvon* in the early part of this passage, before the disguised figures recognize each other and begin to speak. Yet once they do, the scene continues for several pages of dialogue that does not resemble either work.[47] Wilson's deception in making up this scene out of whole cloth is fairly obvious, and the extended conversation seems to undermine further her credibility as a living eyewitness to the Regency past. Yet the emphasis on dialogue in her imagination of what could have, or might have been has the effect of reinscribing conversation as what it means to have lived through an era. Although Wilson and Byron exchanged letters, these appear only briefly in her *Memoirs*; instead, their relationship is retold through this conversation. In fact, Wilson suggests that conversation even trumps sexuality as the central feature of the age when she conspicuously asserts that she is interested only in Byron's friendship, and not a romantic relationship. Although this scene can be reasonably understood as Wilson's self-aggrandizing fantasy, her method of representation is remarkably similar to that of Byron's real-life conversation partner, Blessington.

II. "Preserved or Pickled": Byron Talks

[47] Both Philip W. Martin and Simon Bainbridge have read *Don Juan* as a dialogic text, with Bainbridge calling it "[t]he culmination of [Byron's] poetic exploration of the ethical value and artistic potential of conversation" (Bainbridge 212). Although both scholars provide compelling readings of conversation as a theme in Byron's poetry, they understand conversation in terms of an abstract formal dialogism, rather than the literal meaning of conversation I am considering here. Furthermore, neither scholar discusses the scene with Duchess Fitz-Fulke in disguise.

The title of Blessington's work—*Journal of the Conversations of Lord Byron with the Countess of Blessington*—suggests two assumptions that underlie all three texts under consideration in this chapter. First, it assumes that reported conversations have a special ability to pin down an otherwise elusive personality, and second, that these conversations can be adequately reproduced textually. To some extent, this emphasis on conversation seems to have been a response to Byron's celebrity itself. Richard Cronin has observed that in the case of Byron in particular, biographical treatments tended to rely on conversation rather than correspondence, which had previously been the dominant biographical mode (Cronin 21). Cronin suggests that readers felt that Byron "had transmuted [himself] into [his] own fictional character[]" through writing, and that first-hand accounts of conversations provided insight that Byron's writing could not (Cronin 22). Furthermore, in giving her work this title, Blessington was following a genre established by Thomas Medwin's 1824 publication with a nearly identical name. Despite this title's tacit assumption about the power of conversation to shed light on someone's inner life, Blessington's text ironically documents the limits of its explanatory power. In Blessington's account, Byron's fascinating conversation ultimately thwarts insights into his character.

Blessington's text is true to the promise of the title, in that she not only offers detailed accounts of specific conversations she had with Byron, but also analyzes the nature and style of his speech, attempting to draw conclusions about Byron's personality on the basis of what he said, and how he said it. In actively analyzing rather than merely reporting conversation, the *Conversations* differ from Wilson's and Abell's texts. Whereas Wilson and Abell generally report direct speech with little interpretive

commentary, Blessington's work includes far more indirect speech, shaped by her own opinions and perspective.

At one point, Byron declares that all clever people are great talkers, and indeed, in this text, his own speech is an elaborate and effortful performance constructed to give the impression of cleverness, often at the expense of sincerity and generosity (Blessington, *Conversations* 36). Blessington observes: "from the love of displaying his wit and astonishing his hearers, he affected to despise and ridicule them" (Blessington, *Conversations* 35). She furthermore notes the difference between his conversational style in large group settings and the way he comports himself one-on-one: "his flippancy ceases in a *tête-à-tête*, and he becomes sententious, abandoning himself to the subject, and seeming to think aloud, though his language has the appearance of stiffness, as is quite opposed to the trifling chit-chat that he enters into when in general society" (Blessington, *Conversations* 19). Blessington both laments and is fascinated by the way Byron uses conversation to distance himself from others, and she gently mocks his transparent efforts to arouse interest in his interlocutors:

> The love of mystification is so strong in Byron, that he is continually letting drop mysterious hints of events in his past life: as if to excite curiosity, he assumes, on those occasions, a look and air suited to the insinuation conveyed: if it has excited the curiosity of his hearers, he is satisfied, looks still more mysterious, and changes the subject; but if it fails to rouse curiosity, he becomes evidently discomposed and sulky, stealing sly glances at the person he has been endeavoring to mystify, to observe the effect he has produced (Blessington, *Conversations* 83).

But just as Byron's conversation is strategically constructed to rouse curiosity, it also appears to be careless. Blessington is surprised and dismayed to discover Byron's willingness to discuss the details of his marital separation with near-complete strangers, and she goes so far as to write a poem encouraging him to raise this topic only with close friends (Blessington, *Conversations* 33-34). Similarly, Blessington makes sure to point out that she has redacted Byron's cavalier remarks on the Caroline Lamb affair, calling them "anecdotes and statements that are calculated to give pain to several individuals" (Blessington, *Conversations* 151). In doing this, Blessington is able to gesture toward Byron's lack of propriety without fully participating in it, and yet by calling his statements "calculated to give pain," she suggests that what seem like careless emotional effusions might actually be part of Byron's well-constructed conversational persona.

Indeed, Byron emerges in this account as a deeply anxious conversationalist, worried not only about making an impressive performance in the moment, but also about his posterity. At one point, he jokes that the desire to control his posthumous reputation prevented him from suicide: "I should positively have destroyed myself, but I guessed that ------- or ------- would write my life" (Blessington, *Conversations* 42). Here Byron offers his living self as a corrective for the kind of biography his friends might have written.[48] It is unclear whether the prospect of Blessington's *Conversations* would have had the same sobering effect, and yet Byron clearly treats every acquaintance as a potential biographer. He goes on to describe that after the near-suicide, since he did "not wish my poor fame to be either *preserved* or *pickled*, I have lived on and written my Memoirs, where facts will speak for themselves" (Blessington, *Conversations* 42). Of

[48] Lovell speculates that these blanks might represent Moore and Hobhouse (Blessington, *Conversations* 42n).

course, by the time Blessington's text appeared, Byron's Memoirs had been destroyed, an act that profoundly shaped Victorian reflections on the Regency, as I discuss in the next chapter.

Tellingly, Blessington's final interpretive commentary about Byron takes the form of imagined speech. Blessington ultimately concludes that Byron's conversation, rather than provide insight, actually conceals his inner character. She observes, "[t]here was a sort of mental reservation in Byron's intercourse with those with whom he was on habits of intimacy that he had not tact enough to conceal" (Blessington, *Conversations* 228). She goes on to explain:

> It was as though he said, I think aloud, and you hear my thoughts; but I have no feeling of friendship towards you, though you might imagine I have from the confidence I repose. Do not deceive yourself; few, if any, are worthy of my friendship; and only one or two possess even a portion of it. I think not of you, but as the first recipient for the disclosures that I have *le besoin* to make, and as an admirer whom I can make administer to my vanity, by exciting in turn surprise, wonder, and admiration; but I can have no sympathy with you. (Blessington, *Conversations* 228).

This passage is one of Blessington's harshest critiques in a work that mixes criticism and sympathy in complicated ways. This is perhaps one of the passages that Lovell has in mind when he asserts that the *Conversations* were shaped by Blessington's bitter resentfulness of Byron; it also seems to corroborate a persistent critique of the *Conversations* that Blessington puts her own ideas into Byron's mouth (North 96;

Cronin, *Domestication* 24).[49]

What interests me, however, is the way that Blessington's insight into Byron's character—that his speech is a performance designed to keep others at bay—is presented as Byron's own speech. That Byron would never make such a self-disclosing remark is exactly Blessington's point. In this passage, Blessington imagines that Byron simply came out and told her something that was actually her own astute interpretation. Blessington's only partially successful effort to use Byron's conversations to shed light on his character is here supplemented by her own reading of what his behavior actually communicated. In contrast to Wilson, who is not particularly interested in inner character anyway, Blessington subtly questions whether conversations can really shed light on an elusive personality. Yet like Wilson's *Memoirs*, Blessington's *Conversations* uses imagined dialogue to dramatize something that is otherwise hard to see, revealing a longing that Byron's conversation in particular will directly express something about the historical moment. Elusive and inscrutable in real life, Byron's speech, in these texts, comes to stand for historical experience itself—fleeting, and full of unrealized possibilities.

III. Who Burned Moscow?: Conversations with Napoleon

Abell's *Recollections of Napoleon* upholds her pledge to "confine myself, as far as possible, to what concerns Napoleon personally," and thus it consists largely of

[49] Cronin sees this as a persisent problem with biographies of Byron that extends well beyond Blessington. He observes "an odd tendency for the biographer to usurp the place of the biographical subject, so that the biography of the poet tends to be reduced to an episode in the autobiography of the biographer" (Cronin 30).

accounts of conversations, encounters, and activities with Napoleon (Abell 1).[50] Like Wilson's *Memoirs* and Blessington's *Conversations*, Abell's *Recollections* places a particular emphasis on the exact reproduction of conversations—a feature all the more remarkable due to the fact that they took place thirty years previously (Abell 29). Abell shares Wilson's and Blessington's interest in documenting wit, both Napoleon's and, to a lesser extent, her own, but in Abell's text, the wit is translated. All of Betsy and Napoleon's real-life conversations took place in French. Abell's *Recollections,* however, uses a strategically shifting mixture of French and English that domesticates Napoleon for the English audience and reminds the reader of the way that Abell's textual account necessarily differs from lived experience. By the end of the *Recollections,* Abell asserts that conversations, although they illuminate their subject's inner character, are not fully reproducible in textual form.

Their first conversation is a useful point of comparison that demonstrates how the representation of Napoleon's speech shifts over the course of the *Recollections*. Quizzing her on geography, Napoleon asks Betsy, "What is the capital of France?" (Abell 23). When she answers correctly for both France and then Italy, he asks her the capital of Russia—a question that quickly leads to a sensitive topic. When Betsy replies "Petersburg now, . . . Moscow formerly," Napoleon grows stern and asks "*Qui l'a brulé*?"[51] referring to the infamous burning of Moscow in the aftermath of his invasion. Abell stalls, and Napoleon continues: "*Oui, oui . . . vous savez très bien, ç'est moi qui l'a*

[50] Additionally, the *Recollections* focus predominately on a very narrow window of time: the first two months of Napoleon's captivity, during which he was a guest in the Balcombe residence, while his permanent home was being renovated.
[51] Who burned it?

brulé"[52] (Abell 24). Abell writes, "I stammered 'I do not know, sir.' . . . On seeing him laugh I gained a little courage and said, 'I believe, sir, the Russians burnt it to get rid of the French.' He again laughed and seemed pleased to find that I knew anything about the matter" (Abell 24).[53] Although this entire conversation took place in French, Abell chooses to translate Napoleon's speech selectively, using English initially, and then moving into French when Napoleon grows combative. In this early, nervous encounter, Abell uses the untranslated French to indicate her own apprehension. By not translating all of Napoleon's utterances, Abell creates a linguistic gulf between his questions and Betsy's responses that did not actually exist when they spoke, and a linguistic foreignness to Napoleon's speech for the British reader.

As the *Recollections* go on, however, Abell's use of untranslated French to represent Napoleon's speech becomes less frequent and eventually stops altogether. Just as Betsy becomes friendly with the emperor, he begins to sound more like everyone around him. By the end of the *Recollections*, it is as though even their author has forgotten that all his speech has been translated. In a memorable passage toward the end, Betsy questions Napoleon on one of his worst alleged atrocities, the massacre of the Turkish prisoners at Jaffa. Abell prefaces Napoleon's long response as being "recorded, as far as my memory serves me, in the emperor's own words" (Abell 218). The quotation

[52] Yes, yes . . . you know very well that I burned it.

[53] Recent historians David A. Bell, David G. Chandler, and Charles Esdaile have each basically corroborated Betsy's theory: despite what Napoleon claims here, it was probably the Russians who burned Moscow, in order to drive out French troops (Bell 259; Chandler 815; Esdaile 478). The plan eventually worked. Napoleon lingered in Moscow for more than a month, in one of his worst tactical errors, finally retreating just as the brutal Russian winter set in (Esdaile 477-78). Napoleon's war-weary army suffered additional catastrophic losses due to the heavy snow and extreme cold on the long journey home (Esdaile 478-79). Of course, in *War and Peace*, Tolstoy interprets this whole turn of events differently, theorizing an intensely contextualist understanding of historical causality in which agency was highly diffuse.

In claiming to have burned Moscow in this passage, Napoleon may be attempting to put a positive spin on what was actually an all-around disaster for the French army. Although Napoleon and Betsy come to this topic of conversation through a discussion of capital cities, the burning of Moscow had no impact on the capital of Russia, which had been located in St Petersburg since 1732.

that follows lasts several pages, in which Napoleon offers a protracted and unconvincing defense of his behavior (Abell 218-21).[54]

The sheer length of this quotation casts doubt on the suggestion that Abell could have remembered Napoleon's explanation in this level of detail. In fact, this passage is clearly indebted to O'Meara's *Napoleon in Exile.* Using many identical or similar phrases, Abell's account of Napoleon's explanation is actually a simplified and shortened version of the even longer and more complex defense Napoleon gives in O'Meara's text (O'Meara 330-33). At one point in Abell's text, Napoleon even addresses O'Meara by name, although there was no reason to expect that he was present. Of the two versions, O'Meara's seems markedly closer to a spoken idiom; whereas in O'Meara's account Napoleon rambles and repeats himself, in Abell's, his explanation sounds like a prepared speech. Given that Abell's source is clearly as much O'Meara's text as her own memory, and that the entire monologue is translated anyway, it is remarkable that she decided to represent this explanation as direct quotation rather than paraphrase, suggesting the strength of her commitment to conversation as an authenticating strategy.

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[54] Napoleon claims that upon encountering a large group of dying prisoners at Jaffa, some of whom were already infected with the plague, he had wanted to euthanize them with opium, rather than abandon them to certain torture at the hands of the Turks before their inevitable deaths. His medical staff dissuaded him from this plan, and instead a rear-guard was left to wait with the prisoners until they all expired. Recent historians have roundly dismissed this explanation of one of Napoleon's most barbaric acts. David A. Bell explains that after the French took Jaffa in March 1799, four thousand Ottoman troops surrendered: "Napoleon ordered all but the officers taken to the beach, lined up, and shot—allegedly over the protests of his own senior staff. Bourrienne later constructed an elaborate justification for this action, insisting that the French had no food or drink to give to the prisoners. It is a spurious argument—if Napoleon cared only about provisions, why would he bother insisting in his written orders, that 'precautions be taken to prevent any of the prisoners from escaping'?" (Bell 213). David Chandler similarly criticizes Napoleon's "attempt[] to explain this foul butchery in terms of military necessity" (Chandler 236). Both Chandler and Bell speculate that through this "obscenely grand gesture" (Bell 213), Napoleon may have been trying to impress the allegedly ruthless local ruler, Djezzar Pasha (Chandler 236). Robert Harvey goes even further in his condemnation of Napoleon's actions at Jaffa, describing the massacre as "one of the most cold-blooded atrocities ever committed by Europeans in a modern war, a forerunner of Nazi atrocities in the Second World War" (Harvey 263). Whether this massacre is best understood in these terms is unclear, and Philip G. Dwyer reviews the ongoing historiographical debate over the extent to which the massacre was an aberration from accepted codes of military practice at the time. See Dwyer also for a fascinating discussion of a number of chilling eyewitness accounts of the Jaffa massacre.

The passage about Jaffa shows Abell relying on direct quotation to document Napoleon's response to a serious accusation. Yet Abell's *Recollections* more frequently use conversation for comic effect, and despite the text's focus on others, a clear picture of Betsy emerges as a spirited and sassy child. As their first conservation about the capital of Russia demonstrates, Betsy is not afraid to talk back to Napoleon. The jokes and mundane chatter reproduced in Abell's *Recollections* suggest that it is through this kind of conversation that one's true colors are shown. In the brief final chapter, Abell begins to theorize her own authority to speak about Napoleon. After first announcing that she will leave the question of Napoleon's character to the reader's judgment, she stakes a claim for her own insights on the basis of what she could not write:

> In a personal intercourse, incidents occur, of too trivial or subtle a nature to be communicated to others, but which are still the truest indications of character, from being the result of impulse, and unpremeditated. Even a look, a tone of the voice, a gesture, in an unreserved moment, will give an insight into the real disposition, which years of a more formal intercourse will fail to convey; and this is particularly the case in the association of a person of mature age with very young people. There is generally a confiding candour and openness about them which invites confidence in return, and which tempts a man of the world to throw off the iron mask of reserve and caution, and to assume once more a simplicity of a little child. This, at least, took place in my intercourse with Napoleon (Abell 232-33).

In this passage, Abell asserts her own authority to judge Napoleon's character through her witnessing of his conversation—with its combination of linguistic and embodied

features. In emphasizing looks, tones of voice, and gestures that no textual account could reproduce, this passage suggests the inadequacy of represented conversations to illuminate Napoleon's generosity of spirit on a daily basis. Although sharing in the assumption that conversation is the way to get to a person's inner character, Abell nevertheless observes that the insights that live, in-person conversation yields cannot be fully communicated on the page.

Conclusions

Wilson's *Memoirs*, Blessington's *Conversations of Byron*, and Abell's *Recollections of Napoleon* are easily read as nostalgic reflections on happier and more successful phases in their authors' lives, written during a time of dissatisfaction. Yet they are also a kind of historical writing that contributes to an emerging historiography of the early nineteenth century. Because these writers understand their own character, and that of famous men, as inert, changeless, and invulnerable to contingent circumstances, they tend to represent time either as cyclical and repetitious, or as monumental, frozen in a place outside of linear progress. Such conceptions of time suggest a vision of history characterized by periods of stasis, linked to the lives of individual great men, whose punctuation remains untheorized. Wilson, Blessington, and Abell carve out the very beginning of the century, the Regency, as a distinctive era, different from the present and in an uncertain relationship to it. Highlighting the inaccessibility of the Regency, these texts reject a genealogical relationship between past and present, suggesting that although they themselves lived through it, this era is profoundly unknowable.

Fleeting and unrepresentable, conversation is a fitting symbol of the way that this

Regency past remains just out of reach, even to survivors. Allowing these writers to document their privileged access to famous men, representations of dialogue repeatedly brush up against their own limits in communicating what is inevitably ephemeral about the past. Yet at the same time, these writers do present the Regency as characterized by a particular kind of witty conversation, thus putting into practice a historiography in which dialogue is both the form and content. In these texts, to have lived through the Regency is to have participated in its conversations. While conversation embodies the historical moment, it also becomes a way to imagine what might have been, channeling counterfactual energies into the phenomenon of speech.

These texts speak to the way that ideas about history and time in general were reconceived in the wake of the Napoleonic Wars, while at the same time they represent the Regency period specifically as characterized by frequent and repetitious encounters with great men of history and larger-than-life personalities. Encountered through real and imagined conversations, this ineffable Regency sets the tone for many Victorian meditations on the early part of the century, suggesting that these texts may have played an uncredited role in negotiating the transition from one historical era to another. Understood in this way, they help to suggest the diversity of texts that make literary and historical periodization happen.

Chapter III.

The Johns Murray and Publishing's Invention of the Regency

In the May 1891 issue of *Murray's Magazine*, William Gladstone reviewed Samuel Smiles's *A Publisher and His Friends: Memoir and Correspondence of the Late John Murray, with an account of the Origin and Progress of the House, 1768-1843* (1891). This was a particularly intense moment of self-reference, in which a periodical published by John Murray printed a review of a book, commissioned by John Murray, about John Murray. Furthermore, it had been Gladstone who some years earlier suggested to the son and successor, John Murray III (1808-1892) the idea of commissioning a biography of his father, John Murray II (1778-1843) (Carpenter 212). By the time Smiles's work appeared, Gladstone's review could claim that, "though two distinguished ladies still survive, I am the only man now living, who has had Mr. Murray, second of his race, for his publisher. *His saltem accumulem donis.* And may that race long continue" (Gladstone 587).

Unsurprisingly, Gladstone's review is very positive, touching on the major topics of Smiles's two-volume, one-thousand-page account, from the salon-like aspect of the "literary Court of John Murray" and his innovations as a publisher, to the establishment

of *The Quarterly Review* and the disaster of *The Representative*, to his friendship with Byron and the destruction of Byron's memoirs (Gladstone 586). For Gladstone, Smiles's work "form[s] not only the biographical record of a very able man, and of a most interesting personality; but a chapter of great importance in the history of literature, especially but not exclusively on its industrial side" (Gladstone 577).

As Gladstone's review demonstrates, John Murray was both a subject of literary history and an institution that produced it. Smiles's official biography was designed to capitalize on the literary value of the firm's massive archive, and quotes extensively from its unpublished correspondence (Carpenter 5-6).[55] Still an invaluable source of information about Murray's career, Smiles's account is also a Victorian meditation on the early nineteenth century, engaged in creative historical work and shaped by the conditions of its production. Smiles's biography and Gladstone's review of it suggest that responses to the Murray publishing house tended to be self-reflexive, relying on the complicated interplay of a number of different ways of accessing the past—from the testimony of living witnesses, like Gladstone; to the evidence of archival documents, like the correspondence Smiles quotes; to printed literary history, like Smiles's biography itself; to the ongoing productions of the Murray firm, like *Murray's Magazine*.

This chapter uses the Murray firm as a case study of the contributions of Victorian publishing in theorizing the Regency as a literary, cultural, and political period. Victorian texts by and about the John Murray publishing house and its authors depict a Regency literary culture, concomitant with Romanticism but distinct from it, that brought together

[55] Smiles himself is said to have recoiled in horror when he first saw the vast archive, and his work took twelve years to complete, even with the help of John Murray IV (1851-1928) as an unpaid research assistant (Carpenter 212). Although the title indicates that the story begins in 1768, the earlier career of John Murray I (1737-1793) is covered in a brief introductory chapter that aggrandizes his social status and passes lightly over his heavy drinking and philandering.

diverse successful writers including Byron, Jane Austen, Robert Southey, and Walter Scott. As such, this chapter is not a story about the belated celebration of writers overlooked in their own day, but rather about the afterlives of a number of successful literary figures, seen in the long shadow cast by Regency publishing in the Victorian era.[56] As a study of afterlives, it is complicated by the persistence of the John Murray publishing house, with its ambiguous nineteenth-century history of continuity and rupture. Looking at authors like Byron, Austen, and Scott through their relationship to Murray allows us to see them as part of a Regency coterie brought together by contemporaneous commercial success, rather than by thematic or ideological connections in their works. Instead of tracing the way that the influence and reception of Regency literature has unfolded over time, the texts I consider in this chapter engage the literature of the past by analyzing, fictionalizing or imagining its publication history. Untangling this complicated strand of thinking about early-nineteenth-century publishing and the Murray firm, this chapter uncovers the unique place of the Regency in Victorian literary history.

Indeed, the afterlives of the John Murray II circle offer a revealing new angle on a larger tension in Victorian understandings of culture, between a sense of great literary works as timeless and the awareness that they are products of specific historical

[56] The Victorian consolidation and canonization of Romantic poetry has been widely documented in a variety of studies. William St. Clair demonstrates that the Romantic poets reached their widest readerships during the Victorian period, while Julian North examines the role of literary biography in consolidating their legacy (St. Clair 413-432; North, *Domestication*). See also Cronin. There are also several studies of the Victorian legacy of single poets. See, for example, William H. Galperin's "Anti-Romanticism, Victorianism, and the Case of Wordsworth" (1986), Stephen Gill's *Wordsworth and the Victorians* (1998), David S. Hogsette's "Coleridge as Victorian Heirloom: Nostalgic Rhetoric in the Early Victorian Reviews of Poetical Works" (1998), Andrew Elfenbein's *Byron and the Victorians* (1995), and James Najarian's *Victorian Keats: Manliness, Sexuality, and Desire* (2002). The growth of the cult of Jane Austen was a Victorian phenomenon, while Walter Scott's works continued through the Victorian period to be considered some of the greatest productions of British literature.

moments, between de-historicizing and historicizing ways of looking at the past, and between the canon and literary history. This tension is especially evident in Matthew Arnold's work. Although Arnold influentially describes culture as a timeless collection of "the best which has been thought and said," elsewhere he values literary texts that illuminate their specific historical context, texts that "in their day and for their own nature have adequately comprehended, have adequately represented, the spectacle before them" (Arnold, "Culture" 233; Arnold, "On the Modern" 21). He argues that literature should, at all times, aim to comprehend and represent the "spectacle [of] the collective life of humanity," but acknowledges that this spectacle is different from one age to another (Arnold, "On the Modern" 20). Similarly, Arnold's "Preface to the First Edition of *Poems* (1853)" ostensibly argues that the elements that characterize great poetry are historically stable: it must depict an "excellent action," making the "expression" or style of the writing subservient to the representation of that action (Arnold, "Preface" 4, 5). Yet he admits historical variability in the extent to which these criteria are understood, comparing ancient Greece favorably to contemporary Britain (Arnold, "Preface" 5).[57] He furthermore allows that the relationship between literature and its own historical moment is different in modern Britain and in ancient Greece. Whereas the ancient Greek writer could produce great literature about their own epoch, the nineteenth-century British writer is advised to depict the past, since contemporary Britain, being "wanting in moral grandeur" and "an age of spiritual discomfort" is unlikely to yield the great actions that are the ideal subjects of literature (Arnold, "Preface" 14).

[57] Arnold's "Preface" struggles to account for the huge formal differences between the ancient Greek tragedies that he values and nineteenth-century poetry. He doubts that great poetry can be about the state of one's mind, and retrospectively admits in the "Preface to the Second Edition of *Poems* (1854)" that the entire argument is not applicable to lyric poetry, revealing his lack of engagement with a major branch of contemporary literature (Arnold, "Preface" 8; Arnold, "Preface to Second Edition" 16).

Arnold's understanding of literary greatness as timeless is thus always confronting and accommodating historical change, and Regency texts in particular tend to bring this out. In the 1853 "Preface," Arnold has a sense of the contemporary in British literature that encompasses the famous works of the recent past. Byron's *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* (1812), Wordsworth's *The Excursion* (1814), and Keats's "Isabella, or the Pot of Basil" (1820) all serve as foils that reveal the superiority of the *Iliad* and *Oresteia,* suggesting that there is a temporal interval between a work's appearance and its being understood as symptomatic of the present. Yet these three texts, written before Arnold's birth, arise not only from a previous generation but also from a narrow historical window—Arnold's examples do not range back in time to Cowper's *The Task* (1785) or Wordsworth and Coleridge's *Lyrical Ballads* (1798, 1802), but rather focus exclusively on the 1810s. Although the "Preface" sets out to argue about what makes for timeless greatness in literature, in fact Arnold's analysis reveals the unique place of the Regency in British reflections on the relationship between past and present.

Their management of these Regency literary materials reveals that the Victorians were fascinated by the way these texts were forged in the marketplace and in the fracas of personal and political acrimony. As a member of a famous dynasty of publishers, both connected to and yet detached from politics and high-society scandal, John Murray II was the emblematic figure of a Regency literary culture that was understood to have a unique relationship to its historical moment, as both profoundly embedded and yet able to transcend its limited perspective. This distinctive relationship to time arises from several themes that dominate Victorian texts about the Murray publishing house. First, Murray's friendship with Byron inaugurated an association between the firm and sexual scandal,

and I trace the way this reputation is both created and managed by Victorian commentators. As I discuss in the final section, a Victorian hoax spuriously credited Murray II as the publisher of a work of flagellation pornography whose subtle historicism suggests a fantasy of a sexualized past in the form of a physical book. Second, these texts emphasize Murray's connection to a number of personal and political feuds, whether through Byron's reputation for mean-spirited personal attacks, Murray's involvement in partisan journalism, or his engagement in foolish business practices. Later in the chapter, I demonstrate that Benjamin Disraeli's first novel, *Vivian Grey* (1826) and its 1853 revision fictionalize Murray as an incompetent schemer associated with political and economic risks, a reputation countered years later in Smiles's institutional history. Taken together, these materials suggest a shared interest in the way that the figure of John Murray reveals the relationship between the Regency past and the Victorian present and helps to theorize the nature of historical progress itself.

PART ONE: BEING JOHN MURRAY

I. Generational Continuity and Change

In his recent history of the firm through 250 years and seven generations of Johns Murray, Humphrey Carpenter describes the relationship between successors as follows:

> For all the differences between the generations, there is, particularly during the nineteenth century, the continuous personality called "John Murray": John Murray II dissolves, in the cinematic sense, almost unnoticed into John Murray III, both of them being made of the same

> mixture of the cautious and the adventurous, the same canniness and naivety, decisiveness and procrastination; both of them conservative and innovative at the same time (Carpenter 193-194).

Despite Carpenter's claims about the personal continuity between Murray II and Murray III, the house's changing output over the course of the nineteenth century meant that the figure of John Murray could serve as a complicated symbol of the relationship between Regency and Victorian literary cultures. After inheriting a modest bookselling business from his father when still an adolescent, Murray II became one of the major publishers of the Regency period. His wide and varied output encompassed diverse nonfiction prose, some of the era's most successful poetry and novels, and the influential Tory magazine *The Quarterly Review*, established 1809. By the late 1820s, however, the Murray business was undergoing a profound institutional shift as it gradually stopped publishing poetry, fiction, and drama.

The decision to stop publishing these genres was overdetermined. It was, at first and in part, a pragmatic response to Murray's share in Byron's success. Although Murray II was long established as a publisher of poetry, he was "inundated with poems and novels from all parts of the country" and "manuscripts without end" after Byron's early works appeared (Smiles I: 283). Overwhelmed by this glut of unsolicited material, Murray ultimately declined nearly all of the manuscripts, believing them to be poor in quality (Smiles I: 283). Eventually, the firm began turning down poetry, fiction, and drama unilaterally because, according to Smiles at least, none of it was any good:

> The burst of inspiration which had marked the commencement of the present century had all but died out, and the public demand for poetry, as

> well as the quality of the supply, had waned. From this time forward we find Mr Murray making it his rule to refuse all original works of this kind, and when Henry Taylor offered him his 'Philip van Artevelde,' the drama by which he established his reputation, Mr Murray, mindful of the ill-success of 'Isaac Comnenus' [Taylor's first drama, published 1827], declined the proposal. In the department of fiction, too, the quality of the MSS. submitted was so disproportionate to the quantity, that few of them found favour [with Murray]. Mr G. P. R. James, historian and novelist, had some correspondence with Mr Murray . . . [but] he did not succeed in getting any of his books accepted (Smiles II: 374).

In this passage, Smiles both establishes and undermines a literary history that sees the interest in and the quality of poetry and fiction on the decline after its apex at the beginning of the century. On the one hand, Smiles uses empirical, businesslike language when he observes a mismatch between the "demand" and "supply" as well as between the "quality" and "quantity" of poetry, fiction, and drama in the later nineteenth century. On the other hand, Smiles's specific examples suggest that Murray might nevertheless have missed potentially successful works from Taylor and James. Yet if Smiles is ambivalent here, his concluding chapter returns to the pronouncement that there was a "great outburst of poetry at the beginning of the century," implicitly in contrast with the years that followed (Smiles II: 510). Smiles suggests that Murray's publishing career traced the natural contours of a nineteenth-century literary history characterized by an early boom followed by a bust.

Yet in the late 1830s, the Murrays went beyond ceasing to publish new poetry,

fiction, and drama, and in fact sold to other publishers the copyrights of several novels they had already published, refocusing the firm exclusively on nonfiction as the business was being taken over by Murray III (Smiles II: 428). In contrast to his father, Murray III was uninterested in poetry and fiction, and instead published major works in the natural sciences, including those of Charles Lyell and Charles Darwin, as well as exploration and travel literature, including David Livingstone's journals and an innovative and successful series of travelers' handbooks.[58] The decision not to publish poetry, fiction, or drama could also be construed as a financially conservative one. Smiles's history of the firm under Murray II suggests that the market for imaginative literature was always volatile, while nonfiction was consistently a safer investment. Yet it is debatable how risky literary genres really were for Victorian publishers, and this aversion to the kind of risk presented by literary publishing was also ideological. Whatever was behind this transition, by the late 1830s, a ban on poetry, fiction, and drama was in place, lifted only by John Murray IV after his father's death in 1892 (Carpenter 220).

Yet just as the Murrays were turning away from publishing new fiction and poetry, they were consolidating their legacy as Byron's publisher. In the late 1820s, Murray bought up the copyrights of Byron's poetry that belonged to others, and by 1833 had published a magisterial seventeen-volume complete *Works of Byron* that began with

[58] The copyrights sold in 1838-39 included Thomas Hope's *Anastasius*, which was mistaken for Byron's work when it was published in 1819, and went through several editions, and Benjamin Disraeli's *Contarini Fleming,* whose publication by Murray in 1832 had marked the reconciliation between the Murray and Disraeli families after several years of tension (Smiles II: 73-76; 332-40). Although Smiles implies that Murray II was in charge of all the business's decisions until very shortly before his death in 1843, Carpenter traces a slower and messier transfer of leadership to Murray III over several years (Carpenter 163-68). Whereas Murray II had relied on an extensive network of contacts and friends when reviewing manuscripts of fiction and poetry, Murray III cultivated a social circle that generally shared his interests in nonfiction prose. This generational shift furthermore took place in the context of a growing reading public (see Altick, *English*) and evolving business practices for marketing poetry and fiction (see Erickson and Weedon). Murray III was highly successful at maintaining a reputation as a leading publisher in many nonfiction genres.

Thomas Moore's *Life*, heavily interspersed with Byron's correspondence (Smiles II: 305-306).[59] The edition was reissued regularly in various formats through the end of the century, suggesting that it remained a steady source of income. The extent to which the Murrays' official edition shaped Byron's legacy is certainly debatable.[60] Yet if the Murrays did not really control Byron's legacy, Byron was a powerful force shaping theirs.

By contrast, the firm's diverging relationship with Jane Austen's posterity helped to create the Victorians' association of Austen with a vague temporality—both timeless and of a past time—but also reinforced the Murray II's legacy as the central figure of a metropolitan, male-dominated political and literary culture.[61] Remarkably, given the modest sales of her early works with another publisher, Austen's *Emma* was one of the only new novels Murray agreed to publish in the immediate wake of Byron's success in 1815.[62] Although Murray marketed *Emma* aggressively as a possible commercial breakthrough, it was ultimately only a modest success (Carpenter 89-91).[63] After Austen's death, the family arranged for Murray to publish *Persuasion* and *Northanger Abbey*, which appeared in 1818 and included Henry Austen's "Biographical Notice." Yet

[59] Murray III apparently helped Moore research Byron's childhood in Scotland—much like Murray IV later helped with Smiles's biography of Murray II (Carpenter 165).
[60] Andrew Elfenbein argues that Byron's reputation was always multiple and contested, despite Murray's efforts to maintain control of Byron as a brand (Elfenbein 14).
[61] See Kathryn Sutherland for a discussion of how 1890s illustrators "represent[ed] the Regency period-details of the novels as part of an idealized historical time just out of reach" (K. Sutherland 6)
[62] Austen had published *Sense and Sensibility* (1811), *Pride and Prejudice* (1813), and *Mansfield Park* (1814) with Thomas Egerton. Because *Mansfield Park* was published on commission, Austen retained the copyright, allowing her to publish a second edition with Murray in 1816 (Austen-Leigh 245). The switch from Egerton to Murray reflects Austen's success, since the latter was the more impressive imprint (Austen-Leigh 237).
[63] Murray made sure to send a presentation copy to the novel's dedicatee the Prince Regent in a lavish binding, and arranged to have it reviewed by Walter Scott in the *Quarterly* (Carpenter 89-91). According to William St. Clair, however, Murray also considerably overcharged Austen for paper in calculating her share of the profits of *Emma*, although this may have been a common practice (St. Clair 164-165).

this was the end of the firm's relationship with Austen's legacy for some time.[64] In 1831, Murray approached Cassandra Austen about buying the copyrights held by the family, but was refused (Carpenter 91). Within two years, however, Bentley had succeeded in purchasing these copyrights and those from Austen's first publisher, and all six of the novels appeared in his "Standard Novels" series in 1833, accompanied by Henry Austen's expanded "Memoir of Miss Austen" (K. Sutherland 1). Thereafter, Bentley was Austen's publisher, periodically reprinting the novels and ultimately spurring the development of the cult of Austen through his publications, James Edward Austen-Leigh's *A Memoir of Jane Austen* (1870), Lord Brabourne's *Letters of Jane Austen* (1884), and the deluxe Steventon Edition (1882) (K. Sutherland 1-4; St. Clair 578-580).

Yet while the Murrays failed to capitalize on their history of publishing Austen, Austen-Leigh's account emphasizes and perhaps overstates the warmth of the author-publisher relationship (Austen-Leigh 244). In the second edition of his *Memoir*, Austen-Leigh writes,

> Since the first publication of this Memoir, Mr. Murray of Albemarle Street [i.e., Murray III] has very kindly sent me copies of the following letters, which his father received from Jane Austen, when engaged in the publication of 'Emma.' The increasing cordiality of the letters shows that the author felt that her interests were duly cared for, and was glad to find herself in the hands of a publisher whom she could consider as a friend (Austen-Leigh 99).

This characterization stands in contrast to Austen's own famous description of Murray, in

[64] It was not until they published Mary Augusta Austen-Leigh's *Personal Aspects of Jane Austen* in 1920 that the Murrays returned to Austen material.

a letter to Cassandra, as "a Rogue of course, but a civil one," and furthermore, their correspondence indicates that the Austens and Murrays maintained strictly professional contact (Austen-Leigh 244; Carpenter 87-88). Still, by 1870, both Austen-Leigh and Murray III clearly felt that suggesting a friendship between author and publisher was in the best interests of both legacies.[65]

Murray II's attempt to buy up Austen's copyrights in the early 1830s suggests that despite the disappointment of *Emma*, he retained faith in Austen's commercial potential, even as he was turning away from fiction in general. The fact that Murray missed out on Austen's slow-growing success effectively distanced her from her metropolitan contemporaries, and instead contributed to the Victorian association of Austen and her novels with a vague historicity, somewhere ambiguously between past and present. Yet the loss of Austen from the Murrays's portfolio reflected back on Murray II as well, allowing his history as Austen's publisher to languish as the Byron history was continually reinforced. At the height of his career as a publisher, Murray II was able to work with both Austen and Byron; in his Victorian legacy, however, he was increasingly Byron's publisher, and not Austen's.

II. The Separation, 1870

Under Murray III, the firm's periodicals regularly reminded readers of a few key incidents in Byron's career through the lens of his relationship with Murray II. For

[65] Furthermore, Austen's relationship with Murray expresses itself in other ways. Janine Barchas observes Murray's influence in *Persuasion*'s references to other Murray publications, including both the *Baronetage* and the *Navy-List*, as well as to other Murray authors, namely Byron and Scott (Barchas 208). Austen may even have deliberately given the novel's heroine, Anne Elliot, the maiden name of Murray II's wife (Carpenter 91). Although coincidence is possible, Barchas notes that Austen's naming practices often manifest a complicated network of references to real people and places.

example, the very first item to appear in the first installment of Murray's *The Academy: A Monthly Record of Literature, Learning, Science, and Art,* in October 1869, is a contribution to the debate over Byron's marital separation, then recently reignited by Harriet Beecher Stowe's accusation in *Macmillan's Magazine* that Byron had had an affair with his half-sister Augusta Leigh. In the *Academy,* under the heading "The Late Lord Byron," a previously unpublished letter from Byron asserts that he has absolutely no idea why Lady Byron wants to separate, and reiterates that he is happy to "go into Court" so that "her and hers [might] say their worst, pledging myself to meet their allegations—whatever they may be" ("Late" 1). A headnote does little to contextualize this document for the *Academy*'s readers, explaining only that it is "printed as a contribution to literary history. . . . The document speaks for itself sufficiently to need no comment on our part"—a statement that all but admits that it is primarily intended to grab the reader's attention through its reference to the central, again-topical scandal of Byron's life ("Late" 1).

Furthermore, the headnote ostensibly clarifies the provenance of this document, but in fact leaves out part of the story:

> It was drawn up by Lord Byron in August, 1817, while Mr. Hobhouse was staying with him at La Mira, near Venice, and given to Mr. Matthew Gregory Lewis for circulation among friends in England. It was found amongst Mr. Lewis's papers after his death, and is now in the possession of Mr. Murray. ("Late" 1).

Yet Lewis predeceased Byron by several years, so it is unclear why the letter was omitted from Moore's edition, or when and how it entered the possession of the Murrays. This

detailed but ultimately vague note reinforces Murray's place at the center of a circle of prominent literary figures with privileged access to Byron that, many years after the death of all parties, continues to yield juicy letters.[66]

Around the same time, the *Quarterly Review* assiduously critiqued Stowe's claims in lengthy articles in October 1869 and January 1870 that did not mine the Murray archive, though they did corroborate the authenticity of the August 1817 letter published in *The Academy* ("Art. IX" 233). These articles assert categorically that there never was an affair with Augusta Leigh, but their main rhetorical strategy is to demonstrate that all parties' actions during the separation were inconsistent with their knowledge of an affair. To that end, the first article painstakingly reviews numerous accounts of the separation as it unfolded moment-by-moment in early 1816, whereas the second includes long excerpts from Lady Byron and Augusta Leigh's correspondence before, during, and after the separation in order to demonstrate that "[t]he relations between the sisters-in-law continued unaltered" ("Art. IX" 228).[67] The writer argues that Lady Byron became deluded over time, radically reinterpreting Augusta Leigh's earlier behavior after their relationship soured over a disagreement about money in 1830 ("Art. IX" 233-34). According to the *Quarterly*, Lady Byron's own friends did not believe the rumors she spread about the affair later in life, and the article quotes one friend's letter to a newspaper to that effect ("Art. IV" 426).

For the *Quarterly*, the belated nature of Lady Byron's accusations undermines

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[66] A review of the most recent edition of *Obermann* (1804), an epistolary novel by Étienne Pivert de Senancour (1770-1846), follows "The Late Lord Byron," and appears to confirm that *The Academy*'s literary interests lie in the early part of the nineteenth century. However, the remaining installments of *The Academy* do not bear this out.

[67] The author furthermore observes that Augusta Leigh was with Lady Byron during her confinement in December 1815, and that Byron communicated with his wife through letters to Augusta Leigh until his death ("Art. IX" 222, 228).

them, and her internal inconsistency must be resolved in favor of her initial actions, rather than later ones: "Lady Byron's statement is utterly irreconcilable with her own words and deeds. One-half of her life gives the lie direct to the other half" ("Art. IX" 247). Lady Byron's experience thus seems to parallel that of Harriette Wilson and the Countess of Blessington, in that all three women's accounts are criticized for bringing later insights to bear on their understandings of earlier experiences. For these women, the passage of time has the ability to clarify profoundly their understanding of past events, and they retain throughout their lives an ongoing eyewitness status that allows them to revise earlier interpretations in favor of new ones. For the *Quarterly*, by contrast, hindsight only confuses and obscures what was originally knowable and even obvious.

Yet the epistemological challenges of evaluating Stowe's incendiary claim haunt the writer, whose analysis pits rumors against letters as competing modes of accessing the past, in order to demonstrate the greater reliability of the latter. The writer wonders, not entirely rhetorically, why Lady Byron "persisted in making a mystery of her specific charge until [Byron's] death, his sister's death, the destruction of his autobiography (in which she concurred), and the lapse of time had destroyed all of most of the direct evidence in refutation of it?" ("Art. IV" 412). For the writer, the passage of time means that living witnesses can no longer resolve the issue, whether because, like Lady Byron, they had become deluded and then died, or because time itself has eroded their authority. Although the writer interprets the actions of a young Dr. Lushington during the separation as evidence that there was no affair, even the testimony of the now elderly doctor would be insufficient to quell the rumors: "the time is past when Dr. Lushington could affect the impartial judgment of society by speaking out" ("Art. IX" 246). Instead,

the writer puts faith in written records as the only way definitively to know what happened, observing that Stowe's account betrays "a complete ignorance of the literary history of the period" ("Art. IX" 247). Although the letters that provide evidence of the *Quarterly*'s argument are not from the Murray archive, the firm is nevertheless invested in correspondence as increasingly the only authoritative road to historical knowledge.

Yet the writer also remarks at how the passage of time has changed the stakes of the debate. Although obviously exorcised by the accusation against Byron, the writer also concurs with another journalist in "regrett[ing] that, since so crushing an exposure was to come, it had not come in time to benefit the generation that read [Byron], and took an interest in him, instead of being delayed until his fame and influence have passed away" ("Art. IV" 401). The fact that the debates over Byron's personal life had languished exposes Stowe to the critique that her contemporary interest in these salacious rumors is itself prurient, and ironically damages Lady Byron's reputation ("Art. IX" 239, 245-6). This response reveals a major rhetorical problem in the effort to distinguish an oversexed past from a moral present—drawing attention to it undermines the argument. In these materials, the Murray firm is negotiating between their vested interest in Byron's continued popularity and the fact that interest in Byron is focused on salacious and, in their view, spurious rumors. In the 1870 debate over Byron's separation at least, the firm's publications clearly privilege the evidence of original letters over any subsequent reinterpretation of the facts. Paradoxically, as the century progresses, those publications focus increasingly on forms of historical knowledge that rely upon personal testimony.

III. The Destruction of Byron's Memoirs, Witnessed First-Hand

Whereas the first article in *The Academy* responds to a reignited debate about Byron, another less topical article in the same issue addresses the central incident in the Murrays' management of Byron's posterity. Under the heading "Destruction of Byron's Autobiography" appears a letter to the editor of *The Academy*, signed by John Murray (that is, Murray III), that aims to clarify "a few points connected with the destruction of Byron's Autobiography upon which a great deal of misconception exists" ("Destruction" 8). Murray swiftly makes three points: first, that the entire manuscript was destroyed, and that he saw it happen; second, that the idea to destroy it was his father's; and third, that his father owned the copyright outright at the time, and that Murray II had ensured that Moore, the other claimant, was well remunerated for his work in preparing the *Life* ("Destruction" 8). It seems doubtful that additional explanation of this well-known incident was required in *The Academy*'s inaugural issue, and again, the article serves to remind readers of the Murrays' proximity to Byron and their prudent management of this legacy.[68]

Twenty years later, in Smiles's biography, the incident is given extensive consideration that makes use of both printed sources and interviews, including a series of long direct quotations in which "the present Mr. Murray—then John Murray, Junior"

[68] Another piece in the inaugural issue of *The Academy* describes the posthumous fate of Byron's heart, which, it claims, "was begged and obtained by the Greeks, who enclosed it in a silver case. Four years later, after the protracted siege of Missolonghi, a sallying party, carrying the relic with them, cut a way with great sacrifice of life through the Turkish lines; but the heart was lost in crossing the marshes ("Heart" 9). Unlike the other Byron materials in this issue, which make attention-grabbing claims about their origin in the Murray archive, this article cites no source for this posthumous incident. The story is doubtful and likely to have been influenced by Edward Trelawny's *Recollections of the Last Days of Shelley and Byron* (1858), which publicized the posthumous peregrinations of Shelley's heart. If Byron's heart did circulate after his death, it is possible that the very act of separating the heart from the rest of the body was influenced by the example of Shelley, whose cremation Byron witnessed. Despite the intensity of these references in *The Academy*'s first issue, references Byron and to the early nineteenth century in general are far more limited in the magazine's later installments. *The Academy* announces and later reviews William Michael Rossetti's *Complete Poetical Works of Percy Bysshe Shelley* (1870), as well as a pair of works on Austen, including J. E. Austen-Leigh's *A Memoir of Jane Austen* and a new edition of *Sense and Sensibility* by H. Lawrenny.

expands upon the claim made in *The Academy* that he actually witnessed the burning of the memoirs in the family drawing room in May 1824 (Smiles I: 267). Of the group assembled to debate the Memoirs' fate, Smiles writes: "There were present Mr. Murray, Mr. Moore, Mr. J. C. Hobhouse, Colonel Doyle representing Lady Byron, Mr. Wilmot Horton representing Mrs. Leigh, and Mr. Luttrell, a friend of Moore's. Young Mr. Murray—then sixteen; the only person of those assembled now living—was also in the room" (Smiles I: 442-443). Even in Smiles's own account, then, the presence of Murray III is an afterthought, tempered by the admission that no one is alive to corroborate his claim. In fact, none of the other eyewitness accounts mention Murray III's presence, and Carpenter speculates that his father was unlikely to have exposed the young man to this heated and vitriolic debate (Carpenter 139). Regardless, although the burning of the Memoirs was noted at the time, it took on greater meaning as the years passed. Carpenter suggests that although Murray II may not have realized it, the decision to burn the Memoirs helped ensure the firm's long-term success. Murray gained status by publicly sacrificing financial gain for propriety's sake, while at the same time stimulating demand for biographical accounts of Byron that he filled by commissioning Moore's *Life* (Carpenter 147-148; North, *Domestication* 59).

In addition to the destruction of the memoirs, Murray III tells Smiles about the day in April 1815—when he was six years old—that his father introduced Byron to Walter Scott, and the two struck up an unlikely friendship. In direct quotation in Smiles's work, Murray III reports:

> Lord Byron's deformity in his foot was very evident, especially as he walked downstairs. He carried a stick. After Scott and he had ended their

> conversation in the drawing-room, it was a curious sight to see the two greatest poets of the age—both lame—stumping downstairs side by side. They continued to meet in Albemarle Street nearly every day, and remained together or two or three hours at a time (Smiles I: 267-68).

Again, this anecdote emphasizes Murray II's prominence in Regency publishing, and Murray III's unlikely eyewitness account emphasizes generational continuity at the firm. Yet this scene also tells a literary history of coteries and networks arising from rather than producing literary fame. In contrast to Wordsworth and Coleridge, for example, whose friendly collaboration catalyzed their greatest work, Byron and Scott are brought together as a consequence of their contemporary success, their shared limp belying creative, personal, and political differences. Seeing literary history from the publisher's perspective, the Murrays' accounts of the Regency revel in contrasts between contemporaneous writers whose popularity perhaps suggests that—as Arnold would describe it—they have "adequately comprehended, have adequately represented, the spectacle before them" (Arnold, "On the Modern" 21).

Finally, Smiles mentions off-handedly that while a student at Edinburgh University in 1827, Murray III attended the dinner at which Scott admitted authorship of the Waverley novels (Smiles II: 279). This serendipitous occurrence again places a young Murray III at a famous moment in early-nineteenth-century literary history. Scott's admission itself was largely retroactive—by 1827, he was still writing novels "By the Author of Waverley," but his best work was behind him and his authorship was an open secret. Like the burning of Byron's Memoirs, Scott's public acknowledgement of the Waverley novels is a scene where literary legacies are managed, and again Murray III is

there to see it. Smiles's emphasis on Murray III's testimony about these famous events reflects a remarkable investment in the idea of personal connections between literary generations in the nineteenth century. The Murray firm's connection to the careers of Scott and Byron was already extensively documented in published and archival materials, yet the firm's texts pointedly supplement these written records with Murray III's variably plausible personal accounts, suggesting anxious determination to demonstrate the firm's role in literary history.

IV. *Murray's Magazine*

Whereas Smiles's biography emphasizes personal, cross-generational connections between the Murray firm and Regency literary figures, *Murray's Magazine* proudly displays the firm's archive of unpublished material. Just as the first item to appear in *The Academy* was a letter from Byron to Murray, the "Editorial Announcement" that inaugurates *Murray's Magazine* includes a letter from Murray to Byron. In late 1816, Murray writes:

> I am thinking more seriously than ever of establishing a monthly literary journal, and am promised the contributions of the greater characters here; if I succeed, I will venture to solicit the favour of your powerful assistance, in the shape of Letters, Essays, Characters, Facts, Travels, Epigrams, and other, to you, small shot, and to intreat the favour of your influence amongst your friends. Everyone can communicate something,--a fact or perhaps some curious letter, etc. ("Editorial" 1)

Publicizing one of Murray II's abandoned plans, the editor observes the irony that

Byron's "powerful assistance" is finally now helping to launch the new publication, so many years later:

> Is it not a strange coincidence that we are able to inaugurate MURRAY'S MAGAZINE in 1887, with a series of 'Byroniana' anticipated in 1816? If good wine gains by keeping, the flavour of Lord Byron's verse will not have been impaired with age. May the auspicious performance of this goodly promise propitiate our readers to-day! ("Editorial" 1)

Through the metaphor of fine wine, the editor suggests that the lapse of time will have improved "Byron's verse," while at the same time Murray's letter makes clear that the Byroniana will consist primarily of miscellaneous "small shot," rather than Byron's major works. The Byroniana series features eight extracts spread over the *Magazine*'s January, February, and March 1887 issues. While a few of these were already published—the first extract, for example, is the opening 24 lines of *Lara* (1814)—the majority of the Byroniana is unpublished material accompanied by an explanation of its provenance that, like the one affixed to Byron's account of the separation discussed above, is detailed but ultimately vague. For example, a footnote to the second extract, "Some Recollections of My Acquaintance with Madame de Stael," explains that this letter "form[s] a portion of the papers bequeathed by Lord Byron to Sir John Hobhouse, [and is] published by the kind permission of Lady Dorchester," but does not mention that Lady Dorchester is the late Hobhouse's daughter ("Byroniana [Jan]" 4).[69]

In this letter from Ravenna, dated August 4, 1821, Byron relates meeting Madame de Staël at a dinner party eight years previously. Byron's account registers the passage of

[69] A number of the "Byroniana" items have a connection to Hobhouse, perhaps suggesting that Lady Dorchester supplied them as well.

time in various ways and serves as model for the kind of historical thinking that the Byroniana prompts. Byron remarks that a number of people present at that gathering are now dead, and describes Staël's captivating if verbose conversation, while acknowledging, "Of this 'Symposium' of these now Immortals, I recollect less than ought to have been remembered" ("Byroniana [Jan]" 5). Byron is thus both the object of the reader's retrospection and a figure for retrospection itself.

Despite the extract's title, Byron's letter says little about Staël and instead discusses George IV ("Byroniana [Jan]" 4-5).[70] Byron observes:

> he is not a bad King, and he *was* a fine fellow; it is a great pity he did not come to his crown thirty years before. I cannot help thinking that, if he had done so, all this outcry about morals and wives and frivolities might have been prevented. . . . Let it not be forgotten that he was one of the most persecuted of princes; and the fruit of persecution has been in all ages the same. I shall not presume to be so treasonable as to say he is bad, but if he were, with the provocation he has had, I should only wonder that he is not worse. ("Byroniana [Jan]" 5-6)

Byron here prefigures a number of commentators in suggesting that the Queen Caroline scandal signaled a shift in public morality, and by printing this letter in 1887, *Murray's Magazine* presents Byron as having prescient insight into nineteenth-century history as it was unfolding. Furthermore, by imagining two counterfactual scenarios—in one, George IV came to the crown earlier, and in the other, he turned out even "worse"—Byron is engaged in the same kind of thinking about roads not taken that characterizes

[70] A more vivid account of Byron and Staël's conversation is found in a letter from the poet Catherine Fanshawe (1765-1834), appearing after Byron's, that describes a different occasion on which the two met.

Blessington's account of his life. Indeed, for both Byron himself and the readers of *Murray's Magazine*, George IV's situation could parallel Byron's own, in that each made an ill-advised marriage that led to a public backlash. Yet Byron here seems also to anticipate the way that his own life would be understood through the counterfactual.

The February issue of *Murray's Magazine* resumes the series of Byroniana with extracts three through five, accompanied by a footnote clarifying that the material is published here for the first time and threatening to protect its copyright vigorously. In six four-line stanzas of iambic pentameter, "Verses by Lord Byron" describes friendship or perhaps unrequited love between male comrades.[71] A headnote signed by Hobhouse explains that they were "[t]he last [verses] he ever wrote . . . . A note attached to the verses by Lord Byron states they were addressed to no one in particular, and were a mere poetical Scherzo" ("Byroniana [Feb]" 145). This dismissal belies that these verses, which may have already circulated in manuscript, could be interpreted as evidence of the longstanding rumor that Byron had sexual encounters with men.[72] Here again, the Murrays both draw attention to and disavow Byron's scandalous sexual reputation.

Accompanying these last verses, the fifth extract, "Mr. Gifford and Sir W. Scott" prints letters to Byron from Gifford and Scott respectively that "supply an important link in the chain of Lord Byron's correspondence," in that they respond to or prompt letters that already appeared in Moore's *Life* ("Byroniana [Feb]" 147). Both letters reflect the way that Murray mediated Byron's relationships with these figures. The headnote

[71] "Verses by Lord Byron" appears with "Last Words on Greece," consisting of ten lines of iambic pentameter.

[72] See Elfenbein, Chapter 6 on the Victorian use of Byron as a model for cultivating an image of sexual deviance that suggested male homosexual practices. Carpenter also describes the early-twentieth-century interest in these verses and in Byron's rumored homosexual encounters among Murray confidants (Carpenter 264-265).

explains that Byron sent his response to Gifford through Murray, and in the letter itself, Gifford mentions that Murray told him of Byron's plans to leave the country. Scott writes in February 1814 to thank Byron for having sent *The Corsair* and for the compliment paid to him in its preface. Scott's allusion to the fact that he and Byron have not yet met in person subtly reminds the reader that it was Murray who introduced them a year later.

The March issue of *Murray's Magazine* includes the final extracts in the series, including a pair of verses for and about Hobhouse. The "Farewell Petition to J. C. H. Esq." is light-hearted verse that gently pokes fun of Hobhouse as he and Byron prepared to part ways on their travels in 1810. "My Boy Hobbie O!" however, presents a more biting satire of his former travelling companion's recent Reform agitation, written in March 1820 ("Byroniana [March]" 291). The headnote explains that Byron sent "My Boy Hobbie O!" to England with a note predicting that Hobhouse might "subside into Newgate"; in fact, at that very moment, unbeknownst to Byron, Hobhouse was briefly imprisoned for an anti-government pamphlet ("Byroniana [March]" 291; Cochran). The poem may thus have been selected to highlight this strange coincidence, and to suggest Byron's uncanny ability to predict events as they unfolded. Yet in 1820, Hobhouse had been hurt by the newspaper publication of "My Boy Hobbie O!" and by reprinting this extract in the context of the "Byroniana"—juxtaposed with evidence of Hobhouse and Byron's friendship—*Murray's Magazine* draws attention to Byron's willingness to insult even his friends (Smiles I: 417). As I discuss later in the chapter, elsewhere in their productions, the Murrays anxiously manage and mitigate Byron's reputation for mean-spirited outbursts, revealing an ambivalent relationship to this attention-grabbing element of Byron's personality.

The final extract, "Lord Byron's Opinion of Isaac Disraeli and Robert Southey," a letter to Murray from November 1818, emphasizes Murray status as a node of connection between literary figures while again underscoring Byron's sometimes cruel remarks. Byron responds to a number of texts Murray had recently sent, both the work of Murray's old friend Isaac D'Israeli and reviews of *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* ("Byroniana [March]" 295). He also reiterates in particularly direct terms a well-known animosity: "You may make what I say here as public as you please, more particularly to Southey, whom I look upon—and will say so publicly—to be a dirty, lying rascal, and will prove it in ink—or in his blood, if I did not believe him to be too much of a poet to risk it!" ("Byroniana [March]" 294). Although Byron here asserts that he would gladly share these sentiments publicly, he also acknowledges that merely writing to Murray is already a kind of scribal publication, since Murray might either circulate or publish the letter—as he did here many years later. Whereas Byron criticizes Southey's poetry extensively elsewhere, this seemingly unprompted personal attack is especially intense for having been taken out of its original epistolary context.

The Byroniana series ends with the third monthly issue of *Murray's Magazine*, but materials relating to Byron and to the Regency period appear occasionally during the rest of its five-year run.[73] The most significant account of the early years of the century is the two-part "Personal Recollections of the Great Duke of Wellington," by Georgiana, Dowager Lady de Ros (1795-1891) in the January and February 1889 issues. The 94-

[73] For example, the May 1887 issue contains Byron's poem "Cavalry," dated April 18, 1814, and "published by permission of Lord Wentworth," Byron's grandson. The October 1891 issue includes "Glimpses of Byron, with Some Reflections on Them" by the Rev. Henry Hayman (1832-1904), which argues that Byron's ideas on religious topics were changing in his last months of life, and that he died just as he was becoming morally upright. *Murray's Magazine* also featured material that engages the Regency more generally, including, in December 1889, a history of Holland House, occasioned by the fact that it had recently gone vacant, which traces its origins in the Elizabethan period and gives considerable attention to its hosting of Whig salons in the early nineteenth century.

year-old De Ros's text is another example of the kind of retrospective women's life-writing about prominent Regency men that I discussed in the previous chapter. The Napoleonic period—including De Ros's account of the interruption of her father the Duke of Richmond's ball by outbreak of the Battle of Waterloo, fictionalized in *Vanity Fair*—is a major focus of the piece, but De Ros's panoptic view of the nineteenth century also allows her to make a number of observations about historical change, large and small. She remarks that a fan Wellington once gave her has since gone out of style, but she also registers geo-political shifts by contrasting her two visits to the Elysée Bourbon, the first during Wellington's occupation of Napoleonic France and the second while a guest of Britain's ally Napoleon III during the Crimean War (De Ros I: 38-39, 46). As the example of the fan suggests, De Ros's account also resembles the practice, in *Vanity Fair* and *The Trumpet-Major,* of using changes in clothing fashions as a symbol of the asynchrony of historical time.

Just as Harriette Wilson, the Countess of Blessington, and Elizabeth Abell emphasize conversation in their relationships with Regency men, De Ros's account of Wellington includes both transcribed letters and "narratives and anecdotes [that] were told me on various occasions by the Duke" (De Ros II: 193). These include his narratives of various famous incidents from his political career, his sayings on sundry topics, and brief references to his military past that notably use direct quotation: "The Duke's invariable comment on Napoleon was 'He was not a gentleman'" (De Ros II: 197). Here again, the Murrays supplement their rich archival materials with what must be one of the last examples of this genre of women's life writing about the Regency past. Whereas their earlier responses to the 1870 debate over Byron's separation unambiguously present

historical letters as the only way to access the past, the later contributions in *Murray's Magazine* demonstrate a more complicated interplay between competing modes of historical knowledge.

PART TWO: FICTIONALIZING JOHN MURRAY

Murray II's failed attempt to start a Tory daily newspaper, *The Representative,* had a long Victorian afterlife that demonstrates how the figure of John Murray was used to register changes in political partisanship and risk-taking between Regency and Victorian cultures. In the early 1820s, while still in his late teens, Benjamin Disraeli was an aspiring writer who was becoming a literary advisor to his father's friend John Murray II (Blake 20; Carpenter 151; Smiles II: 107). It was with Disraeli's encouragement that Murray embarked on the *Representative,* a decision that reflected staggeringly poor judgment on both parts, and led to a fiasco that had lasting personal and financial consequences (Blake 27-34; Carpenter 151-155; Smiles II: 180-218; Nickerson). The paper was perhaps doomed from the start—a lack of editorial leadership, a focus too serious for popular taste, and a rapid loss of capital all conspired to bring about its demise in July 1826, just six months after it began (Carpenter 154-155; Smiles II: 209-215).

The conflict that initially undermined Disraeli and Murray's partnership was complicated and somewhat obscure—in short, Disraeli mishandled some negotiations undertaken on Murray's behalf, and may have lied about it.[74] Disraeli then poured salt in

[74] According to the biographer Robert Blake, Disraeli was acting as Murray's agent in Scotland, ostensibly on *Representative* business, when he appears to have disclosed to John Gibson Lockhart the sensitive information that some of the contributors to the *Quarterly Review* were opposed to his assuming its editorship (Blake 31). Other commentators are less certain about the exact cause of the initial conflict (Nickerson 305-306; Smiles II: 206-207). Shortly thereafter, Disraeli failed to come up with the capital he had promised (Blake 32; Carpenter 154). Blake offers a tepid defense of Disraeli's reckless behavior,

the wound when he fictionalized the incident in his first novel, *Vivian Grey* (1826). Appearing anonymously from the publisher Henry Colburn, *Vivian Grey* is an episodic silver-fork novel and a *roman-à-clef* that follows the Machiavellian schemes of the unscrupulous title character. The novel caused an immediate sensation in which Disraeli was even compared to Harriette Wilson (M. Sanders xliv). In the central plot of Part One, the story of the *Representative* is retold in the realm of politics as the failed attempt to form a new political party. Murray appears as the Marquess of Carabas, "an inebriate of limited intellectual ability," who tries to spearhead the "Carabas Party" but is undermined by conniving advisors (Schwartz xlvii). Murray was deeply hurt by this treatment at the hands of a former friend, and the relationship between the Murrays and Disraelis never fully recovered (Blake 42; Carpenter 155; Schwartz xlvii).

As silver-fork fiction gave way to Victorian realism, *Vivian Grey* took on new notoriety as an embarrassing youthful indiscretion in the life of the increasingly prominent Disraeli, whose attempts to suppress the novel could not limit its continued popularity (Blake 49; M. Sanders xliv). The biographer Robert Blake claims that "*Vivian Grey* haunted Disraeli to the end" and Michael Sanders documents that it was being used against Disraeli as late as 1868 (Blake 49; M. Sanders lvi-lvii). In 1853, after Murray's death, Disraeli drastically bowdlerized the novel, creating greater ironic distance between the narrator and Vivian (Blake 49). In the process, he made a number of significant changes to the character of Carabas, not only removing references to his drunkenness, but also changing the nature of his political ambitions in a way that has implications for the novel's historicity.

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noting that Murray gave him too much responsibility for the *Representative*'s complicated interpersonal and financial matters. Regardless, the breach was widened considerably by *Vivian Grey*.

Although the 1853 revision makes changes to the novel's plot and style throughout, Book II Chapter 17, "The Cabinet Dinner," in particular, is entirely rewritten and especially significant.[75] This chapter depicts the drunken gathering at Carabas's where the attendees hatch their plan to form the new party. The most obvious change to the 1853 version is that the references to the drunkenness of all participants are dramatically reduced (Blake 43). Vivid and comical descriptions of intoxication are removed, as for example, the 1826 version reads: "The Marquess halloed, 'Bravo!' – the rest laughed, and rose in confusion; Lord Beaconsfield fell over a chair, and, extricating himself with admirable agility, got entangled in a dumb-waiter, which came tumbling down with a fearful crash of plates, bottles, knives, and decanters" (Disraeli 90). The revised passage reads simply: "The Marquess said 'Bravo,' the rest smiled, and rose from the table in some confusion" (Disraeli 592).[76]

Similarly, several quotatives are changed, with the effect of dampening the sense of revelry. "'Noble!' halloed the Marquess; who was now quite drunk" is changed to "'Noble!' said the Marquess" (Disraeli 89, 591). Later, "bawled the Marquess" is changed to "exclaimed the Marquess" and "shouted" is twice changed to "exclaimed" (Disraeli 90, 591). "[B]urst forth Vivian" becomes "said Vivian" (Disraeli 89, 591). The more subdued quotatives of the 1853 version contribute to a calmer and more sober gathering, but their revision also suggests Disraeli's sense that the animated and witty dialogue of the original needed to be reigned in. As conversation was central to the

[75] *Vivian Grey* was originally conceived and published as a two-volume novel whose success prompted a three-volume sequel. Part One fictionalizes the failure of the *Representative*, whereas Part Two follows Vivian through various schemes in Europe. The 1853 version is a heavily revised combination of Parts One and Two, and is considerably shorter than the original. Book II Chapter 17 is one of the only places where the revision involved adding substantial new material, rather than just removing old (see M. Sanders xxxvii). In 1853, this scene is Chapter 16 and has no title.

[76] Readers in the late Victorian period and thereafter might note an additional ironic resonance between fact and fiction, in that Disraeli himself was named the Earl of Beaconsfield in 1876 (see Blake).

retrospective gaze of the life-writing of Wilson, Blessington, and Abell, similarly Disraeli's revision of *Vivian Grey* focuses on oral speech as a marker of the historical moment, confirming a link between conversation and the Regency period itself.

As drunken revelry is de-emphasized, the political aspirations of the Carabas party become more coherent. In the 1826 version, Carabas explains his ambitions in an addled rant regularly interrupted by references to the wine:

> My Lords and Gentlemen, when I take into consideration the nature of the various interests, of which the body politic of this great empire is regulated; (Lord Courtown, the bottle stops with you) when I observe, I repeat, this, I naturally ask myself what right, what claims, what, what, what, - I repeat, what right, these governing interests have to the influence which they possess? (Vivian, my boy, you'll find Champagne on the waiter behind you.) Yes, gentlemen, it is in this temper (the corkscrew's by Sir Berdmore,) it is, I repeat in this temper, and actuated by these views, that we meet together this day (Disraeli 88).

In 1853, the speech is rewritten as a longer, tempered, and fairly coherent critique of the current political establishment. While the revised version is still somewhat vague, it comes far closer to making the argument that there is a political class whose monopolization of power suppresses young talent. Sounding somewhat like a critique of pre-Reform political culture, Carabas complains that "[t]here are few distinctions now between the two sides of the House of Commons" (Disraeli 590). He goes on: "The question then naturally arises, why a certain body of individuals, who now represent no opinions, should arrogate to themselves the entire government and control of the country?

A second question would occur, how they contrive to succeed in such an assumption?" (Disraeli 590). Although hardly eloquent even in this version, Carabas's revised speech starkly contrasts with his vacuous ramblings in the original.

Lest these arguments appear too much like a call for Reform, Carabas clarifies that "I am far from wishing to witness any general change, or indeed, very wide reconstruction of the present administration. I think the interests of the country require that the general tenor of their system should be supported; but there are members of that administration whose claims to that distinction appear to me more than questionable" (Disraeli 591). Whereas in the original version, Carabas is engaged in a bald grab for power, in the revision he argues for a slightly more meritocratic system that happens to benefit his political allies, taking a position that is at once principled and self-interested. To some extent, the argument resembles a retroactive critique of 1820s politics from the perspective of the 1850s, while at the same time it avoids taking any identifiable partisan viewpoint. In downplaying Carabas's drunken folly here, the later version depicts him as more politically competent and frames his ambitions as a response to an insular political culture that was about to be reformed.

The revision of the scene also eliminates several instances of temporally specific slang, including two uses of "tipsy" and one of "toper" (Disraeli 89, 90, 88). In addition to mitigating the drunkenness of the characters, these changes reduce the use of words that were slang terms in the 1820s, but whose status had since changed. Although the *Oxford English Dictionary* documents uses of "tipsy" as early as the sixteenth century, Francis Grose's *Lexicon Balatronicum: A Dictionary of Buckish Slang, University Wit, and Pickpocket Eloquence* in 1811 saw fit to define "tipsey" as "almost drunk" ("Tipsy,

adj."; Grose n.p.). By the middle of the century, however, "tipsy" appears to have entered the mainstream, to the point that John Camden Hotten's *A Dictionary of Slang, Cant, and Vulgar Words* (1859) uses tipsy as the definition of other terms for drunkenness (Hotten 8, 28, 41, 59, 65). "Toper" seems to have had the opposite trajectory: Grose defines it at "one who loves his bottle; a soaker," but it does not appear in Hotten at all, suggesting that it fell out of favor (Grose n.p.). Indeed, high-society slang is reduced throughout the novel, a practice that I understand as de-historicizing (Blake 42). The removal of some of the 1820s literary gossip elsewhere, furthermore, has the effect of lessening the novel's insistent references to the fashionable culture of the 1820s, moving the action of the novel into a vague recent past.

Like Disraeli's other early novels, *Vivian Grey* is often read as "the biography of his soul," and the 1853 revision clearly reflects his increasing discomfort at being known as its author, and perhaps lingering feelings of regret over how he lampooned Murray (Schwartz ix; Blake 37-40). Yet the revision of *Vivian Grey* is also a Victorian representation of Regency publishing that focuses on its political partisanship and its management of financial risk. By reimagining the *Representative* incident as a political event, the novel helps to associate John Murray with politics, an image sharpened in the revision as the Carabas Party's ambitions become more specific. Similarly, whereas the original emphasizes the grandiose folly of Carabas's plans, the revision mitigates this by incorporating them into a historical arc.[77]

Indeed, the Murray firm's reputation for partisanship, established in the Regency,

[77] There is more to say about Disraeli's representation of the Regency period in his other novels. *Venetia* (1837), for example, is based on the careers of Byron and Shelley (Schwartz xxi). *Coningsby* (1844) includes very negative portrayals of Murray editor J. W. Croker (in the character of Rigby) and the Marquess of Hertford (in the character of Monmouth), who was also fictionalized as Steyne in *Vanity Fair,* as I discuss in Chapter I.

was hard to shake later in the century. On the occasion of the transfer of *The Academy* from Murray to another publisher in 1870, an editorial explains:

> Mr Murray, to whom the ACADEMY will always be indebted for its introduction to a wide circle of readers, did not call in question the fact of our theological impartiality, but disapproved of it. The Editor, on the other hand, felt that the adoption of the theological principles of the *Quarterly Review*, or of the organ of any given class of the English public, would have involved the surrender of one of the fundamental characteristics of the ACADEMY, one, too, which we have pledged ourselves to maintain. Under these circumstances, Mr Murray has come forward in the most honourable manner, and offered to resign all his interest in the copyright of the Journal. Holding the principle at issue to be an important one, we have accepted his offer: and we now bid him, not ungratefully, a courteous farewell! ("Our" 1).

This reference to the "theological principles of the *Quarterly*" is surprising, not least because the *Quarterly Review* was a rare Victorian periodical associated with a political party rather than a religious group (Shattock, "Problems" 146). Furthermore, although the *Quarterly* was widely understood to be a Tory publication, its partisanship was in fact muted throughout its history (Shattock, "Showman" 173; Shattock, *Politics* 13; Houghton 10-13). In mentioning the *Quarterly,* the editor is also suggesting that Murray's kind of partisan journalism is old-fashioned. During its Regency heyday, the *Quarterly* consolidated a reading public, but was understood to be in decline after the retirement of

founding editor William Gifford in 1824 (see St. Clair).[78] In the *Fortnightly Review* in 1877, Mark Pattison describes the "venerable old wooden three-deckers, the *Edinburgh Review* and the *Quarterly Review*" as being "still put out to sea under the command, I believe, of the Ancient Mariner," suggesting both their antiquity and their connection to the early nineteenth century (Pattison 663). There is some evidence that even the Murrays themselves understood the *Quarterly* as a relic already in the Victorian period: Murray III made notes in preparation to write a history of the *Quarterly Review* that never came to fruition (Cutmore).

Nearly two decades after the transfer of *The Academy*, the January 1887 "Editorial Announcement" to *Murray's Magazine* that included Murray's request for Byron's "small shot" suggests that the reputation for partisanship still clung to the firm. That Announcement attempts to circumvent the reader's assumptions by explaining immediately that the monthly magazine will have no political slant and that the editors have "therefore resolved to open our pages freely to legitimate controversy, believing that no good cause will be damaged by discussion which affords the best antidote to error" ("Editorial" 2). The announcement frames this nonpartisan posture as a sign of the times: "The place once occupied by Monthly publications, as direct and powerful organs of Party, is now filled by Daily and Weekly newspapers; but the influence of Periodical Literature has been transferred to a wider and more independent sphere." ("Editorial" 1). It goes on to explain that political articles will be signed, reflecting a relatively recently

[78] Print runs of the *Quarterly* declined slowly after a peak of 12,000-14,000 in 1817 and 1818 (St. Clair 573). 10,625 copies were printed in 1831, then 9,083 in 1849, then around 8,000 in 1860 (Bennett 236; Houghton 7). The size of its readership at any point is more difficult to determine (see Shattock, *Politics* 11-12, 157-158). Although scholarship has generally neglected the later history of the *Quarterly*, which continued publication through 1967, Joanne Shattock argues that it remained influential in politics through the 1830s and in criticism through the 1840s, before being eventually overtaken by newspapers and magazines (see Shattock, *Politics* 19-20).

shift in Victorian periodical culture.

The firm's self-conscious and arguably unsuccessful efforts to establish a reputation for a new, nonpartisan journalism are echoed in the way that Smiles's biography treats the firm's history of managing interpersonal controversy. Smiles eagerly demonstrates the way that Murray opposed and mitigated potentially damaging material, such as, for example, the mean-spirited "personalities" in *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* that ultimately led Murray to end his business relationship with William Blackwood (Smiles I: 404, 494). Similarly, whereas the sexually risqué content of Byron's works obviously could present challenges for his publisher, Smiles highlights that Murray also routinely steered Byron away from *ad hominem* attack. For example, Smiles quotes a correspondence in which Murray gently persuades Byron to alter stanzas about Lord Elgin and the Duke of Wellington in a draft of *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* (Smiles I: 208-209).

Murray's concern over "certain approximations to indelicacy" in the first two cantos of *Don Juan* similarly responds to both the sexual and political dimensions of the work (Smiles I: 402). Smiles relates that Murray successfully persuaded Byron to remove "some offensive words in Canto II. 'These,' he said 'ladies may not read'" (Smiles I: 401, 402). Yet Murray's very first objection to *Don Juan* is to passages about one of Byron's enemies, the politician and lawyer Sir Samuel Romilly, whose recent suicide, Murray felt, "should save him" from Byron's attacks (Smiles I: 401). Smiles goes so far as to suggest that Murray declined to publish the later cantos on account of these mean-spirited remarks, reproducing a long letter from J. W. Croker that allegedly persuaded him. Croker explains that the real problem with *Don Juan* was that it contained "some phrases

. . . which in reality disparage it more than its imputed looseness of principle; I mean some expressions of political and personal feelings which, I believe, he, in fact, never felt, and threw in wantonly" (Smiles I: 414). For Croker, these seemingly personal attacks are not true expressions of Byron's intentions: "What interest can Lord Byron have of being the poet of a party in politics, or of a party in morals, or of a party in religion?. . . He has no interest in that direction" (Smiles I: 415). As Croker understands it, Murray allowed Byron's seemingly political statements to cloud the truly apolitical nature of his work. Croker blames Murray and Gifford for failing to "point out to [Byron] the cruelty to individuals, the injury to the national character, the offense to public taste, and the injury to his own reputation of such passages as those about Southey and Waterloo and the British Government and the head of that Government" (Smiles I: 415). Coming from Croker, himself a harsh reviewer who was difficult to manage, this is ironic. Smiles's account of this incident thus depicts Murray as surrounded on all sides by cantankerous individuals whose conflicts he is constantly struggling to resolve.

While Smiles combats Murray's reputation for partisan journalism suggested by *Vivian Grey* and the editorial in *The Academy*, he similarly strives to de-emphasize the financial risk-taking inherent in Murray's business. Indeed, Smiles is constantly managing Murray's risk-management—although he occasionally praises Murray's entrepreneurial spirit, he clearly equates competence as a businessman with the avoidance of risk. Smiles makes much of Murray's prescient resistance to becoming too deeply involved in the system of accommodation bills between Archibald Constable, James Ballantyne, and Walter Scott—a system that ultimately brought all three into financial ruin during the 1826 book trade crash (Smiles I: 80-84, 170-174, 241; II: 513). In this

way Murray avoided the fate of Constable, although Smiles is less forthcoming about the fact that Murray nevertheless lost money in the crash, just as he was suffering huge losses from the failure of the *Representative*. In fact, Smiles emphasizes Murray's financial prudence so repeatedly that it paradoxically gives the impression that Murray's business was inherently risky, and that he routinely made poor speculations. Indeed, as John Sutherland demonstrates, the effects of the 1826 crash on the book trade in general have been vastly overstated because many of the influential sources, like Smiles, were chroniclers of the few high-profile individuals who suffered reversals. Thus, while Smiles is eager to mitigate the impression that Murray took big risks, his obsession with risk tends to exaggerate the significance of the natural ups and downs of the publishing business.[79]

Smiles's concluding chapter acknowledges the challenges of gauging risk across historical distance:

> The apparent risk involved in Murray's extraordinary spirit of adventure was in reality diminished by the many checks which in his day operated on competition, and by the high prices then paid for ordinary books. Men were at that time in the habit of forming large private libraries, and furnishing them with the sumptuous editions of travels and books of costly engravings issued from Murray's press. The taste of the time has changed (Smiles II: 517).

Smiles goes on to contextualize Murray's management of risk by explaining that it took

[79] Carpenter's take on Murray II's level of risk-taking, both financially and in terms of questionable materials, is somewhat different than Smiles's. In Carpenter's account, Murray II stands in sharp contrast to his erratic father as the much more organized and competent businessman—that is, he took fewer risks—but he was nevertheless more willing to publish risqué material, as evinced by his publication of Isaac D'Israeli's satirical works, and, of course, Byron.

place before the rise of cheap bookselling, the removal of taxes on paper, and the growth of the circulating library changed the nature of the publishing business.[80] Thus, Smiles claims that Murray II's business practices look highly risky from the present, but were not actually as risky as they seem.

The retrospective consideration of Murray's risk-taking is a moment where the questions about contingency and alternative possibilities that animate Victorian discussions of the Napoleonic Wars come to bear on discussions of literary history. Just as Mr. Sedley's ruin in *Vanity Fair* raises questions about the limits of individual agency within larger forces, so Murray's reversal during the book trade crash is the result of an unknowable interaction of bad decisions with bad luck. Similarly, the intellectual challenge that Smiles faces when narrating Murray's attempts to start the *Representative*—attempts that seem inescapably foolhardy in hindsight—is the same challenge the reader faces when imagining Amelia Sedley's decision to accompany her husband's regiment to Brussels. Financial risk-taking has the potential to serve as a microcosm of historical experience in general, as the volatility of markets dramatizes the buffeting winds of history.

PART THREE: IMPERSONATING JOHN MURRAY

Both Smiles's biography and Carpenter's recent history of the firm begin their accounts of Murray II's career with the same anecdote that suggests his bold ambition as a novice publisher. Having recently acquired sole ownership of his late father's business in March 1803, Murray saw a performance of George Colman's *John Bull*, and was so

[80] Smiles sees these structural changes in the publishing business as having deleterious consequences for the state of public taste, a remarkably negative view of contemporary literary culture for a bestselling author to take.

impressed that he wrote to Colman, without introduction, offering £300 for the copyright (Smiles I: 32; Carpenter 41). Colman politely declined, explaining that custom dictated that he offer the copyright to the proprietor of the theater, and in the years that followed, Murray never did publish Colman's work (Smiles I: 33). Yet Murray and Colman were brought together posthumously, in a clandestine and pseudonymous piece of Victorian flagellation pornography, *The Rodiad*. When it appeared in 1871, *The Rodiad* bore the spurious imprint "London: Cadell and Murray, 1810" and was attributed to Colman.[81] Although its historicism is subtle, *The Rodiad* represents a Victorian fantasy of a sexualized Regency past enshrined in the physical book and connected with the publishing industry. Associating the Regency with sex, and specifically with sexualized flagellation, *The Rodiad* is both a meditation on changing sexual mores over time and a marketing gimmick that would attempt to legitimize pornographic content by associating it with a specific moment in the past.

Running to sixty-two pages in rhymed couplets, *The Rodiad* is told from the first-person perspective of "a schoolmaster of the good old school,-- / One to whose ear no sound such music seems / As when a bold big boy for mercy screams" ([Milnes] 8-9). The poem is fairly graphic at first, with references to blood and quivering flesh as the speaker describes the joy he takes in flogging his pupils and discusses the merits of the different supports to which boys can be tied ([Milnes] 8-9). By the end, however, it has become an explicit argument for, rather than an implicit celebration of flogging as a pleasurable activity. The speaker criticizes the newfound resistance to the rod as a form of discipline among the middle classes, observing that flogging persists among both aristocrats and laborers ([Milnes] 45). In support of this point, he paints an idyllic

[81] Colman's name is misspelled on the title-page, but the intention is clear.

domestic scene in which the poor laboring patriarch takes great joy from whipping his boys—more joy than he would gain from wealth, the speaker suggests ([Milnes] 54).

Throughout the poem, the speaker characterizes flogging as an archaic, traditional practice, but does not associate it with the Regency specifically. In fact, since the narrator ostensibly speaks from the perspective of 1810, the poem suggests that flogging was already under attack and in decline at that time. In general, the speaker paints this history with a fairly broad brush, asserting: "Time was –before the philanthropic trash— / When jails resounded with the hearty lash" ([Milnes] 49). The poem's rhymed couplets are another ambiguous sign of its historicism. Most associated with early eighteenth-century poetry, rhymed couplets were no longer a cutting-edge formal feature of the poetry written in 1810; yet they persisted in popular poetic forms, and as St. Clair documents, eighteenth-century poetry was still widely read. Thus, it is not clear how rhymed couplets would have marked the poem's historical origin for its theoretical readers in the 1810s, or its actual readers in the 1870s, suggesting that the poem's rhymed couplets are perhaps best understood as signifying a vague antiquity.

That said, *The Rodiad* does make some temporally-specific references that reflect its claimed publication date, including one to "Kemble," although it is not clear who exactly this indicates—there were a few prominent generations of this family of actors between the late eighteenth century and the Victorian period ([Milnes] 30). More definitively, the poem makes two references to the Queen Caroline scandal that confirm that it was written after 1821. In the first, the narrator remarks, "I read his bill of 'penalties and pains,'" referring to the "Bill of Pains and Penalties" under which the Queen was tried for adultery in 1820 ([Milnes] 27; Clark 186; Hilton 269). In the second,

the speaker looks forward to going to Hell where he might "Cut up with red-hot wire adulterous Queens"—although he could refer to any number of adulterous queens from history, it seems clear that the speaker is referring to Caroline, and that she is already dead ([Milnes] 61; Clark 205-206).

Despite these moments, *The Rodiad*'s clearest references to time and place are its claims on the title page—as is the case with many texts. The attribution of the work to George Colman the younger (1762-1836) is especially ironic given the trajectory of his life.[82] At the height of his career when *The Rodiad* allegedly appeared, Colman was friendly with the Prince Regent, and in 1824 was appointed to the position of examiner of plays (Burling). At that point

> his contemporaries claimed that he was censorious far beyond the range of his predecessors and hypocritically moralistic in his standards, since he now censored the very sort of material that appeared in his own successful plays. When questioned on these contradictions by the select committee on dramatic literature in 1832, Colman replied that he was careless in his younger days and that the examiner then ought to have required him to revise (Burling).

Despite the select committee's suggestion that an individual's moral principles should be consistent across time, Colman's personal transition from a writer of mildly bawdy plays to a morally upright censor charts a familiar historical narrative of the development from the relatively lax mores of the eighteenth century to the more rigorous standards of the

[82] Inspired by *The Rodiad*'s false attribution, in 1967 the Canadian poet John Glassco spuriously published his own flagellation poem *Squire Hardman* as another neglected work of Colman, claiming that the two poems were clearly written by the same author (Busby 196-97). He apparently took great pains to ensure that the book's physical appearance resembled those of the early nineteenth century (Busby 198).

Victorian period. Whereas, in fact, Colman's attitudes evolved over the course of his life, and there is no evidence associating him with pornography or flagellation, *The Rodiad* attribution creatively recasts him as unrepentantly clinging to ideas that others consider outdated.

The title-page attribution to the publishers "Cadell and Murray" is a historical claim as well. Thomas Cadell the younger (1773-1836) was a successful bookseller who inherited his father's business in 1802 and partnered with William Davies (Dille). "Cadell and Davies" is thus a common imprint on books from the first decades of the century, though Cadell and Murray were in fact competitors, and bringing them together is perhaps also an ironic nod to the intensely competitive world of Regency publishing. For both names, as with the text's reference to Kemble, the multiple generations of Cadells and Murrays in the same line of work potentially muddles the specificity of the text's references, yet the 1810 date again seems to make clear that the work is invoking the Regency.

The Rodiad's actual publisher, John Camden Hotten (1832-73) was a colorful figure in the history of publishing. An entrepreneur on the fringes of personal and professional respectability, Hotten published a vast range and huge number of works during his short career (Eliot 65-68). Hotten's non-pornographic contributions should not be understated, and included cheap reprints of Shakespeare, Scott, and Percy Shelley, as well as the 1859 slang dictionary cited above; in his assiduous efforts to undercut other publishers, he catalyzed the democratization of access to the canon during this period (Eliot 79-80; Topp; Black f. 188). He published considerable new works as well, including those of Algernon Swinburne, and is noted as the first British printer of many

American works including those of Mark Twain, profiting from the lack of a reciprocal copyright agreement (Kearney 116; Eliot 61). Hotten has received some critical attention for his unusual business model. He was the last major publisher to produce both pornographic and non-pornographic works, but he also anticipated several major trends in publishing that did not take off until after his death (Marcus 67; Eliot 69, 90).[83]

The Rodiad has been attributed convincingly to the literary figure and politician Richard Monckton Milnes, the first Baron Houghton (1809-1885), who lingers on the margins of Victorian literary history (Gibson 240-242).[84] Milnes's most significant

[83] As a consequence of his having produced both pornography and non-pornography, more records survive documenting Hotten's pornographic publishing than exist for his contemporary pornographers. His pornographic works are documented extensively in his friend Henry Spencer Ashbee's definitive three-volume bibliography of pornography, the *Index Librorum Prohibitorum, Centuria Librorum Absconditorum,* and *Catena Librorum Tacendorum,* published between 1877 and 1885 (Ashbee; Marcus 73). Additionally, Eliot observes that Hotten's experiments with how-to books and highly occasional works produced at break-neck speed in response to contemporary events were astute innovations that gestured toward publishing's future (Eliot 90).

[84] Ian Gibson attributes *The Rodiad* to Milnes on the basis of letters between Milnes and Richard Burton and between Milnes and Algernon Swinburne (Gibson 240-242). Like Hotten, Milnes was also friendly with Ashbee and other major collectors of pornography; his own large pornography collection, including many works on flagellation, was partially destroyed by fire in 1876 (Davenport-Hines; Gibson 239-241; Marcus 37). He was furthermore rumored to have been bisexual and to have "corrupted" his friend Swinburne, although this is uncertain (Davenport-Hines). More reliable evidence suggests that Milnes was probably a client of Mrs. Sarah Potter, the madam of a famous flagellation business where clients beat young girls (Gibson 250; Ashbee, *Centuria* 472). Furthermore, Milnes may have been involved in the publication of other pornographic works, as part of a coterie that involved Burton and Swinburne, working with the publisher William Dugdale and later with a publisher known by several aliases including Cameron and Lazenby (Mendes 3-8).

Milnes's early literary works consist of poetry, prose narratives, and antiquarian writings published after travelling in Italy and Greece, including *Memorials of a Tour in Some Parts of Greece, Chiefly Poetical* (1834), *Memorials of a Residence on the Continent, and Historical Poems* (1838), *Memorials of Many Scenes* (1840), and *Palm Leaves* (1840). He was a prolific contributor to magazines, literary annuals of the Countess of Blessington, with whom he exchanged letters and was friendly (Morrison 187-88). Milnes was also a member of parliament who wrote significant political pamphlets. Later, Milnes wrote short biographies of several of his friends, which appear in *Monographs, Personal and Social* (1873) as well as an illustrated children's book designed to look like an illuminated manuscript with etchings by Walter Severn, called *Good Night and Good Morning*, the *Good Night Moon* of its generation. He was depicted as Mr. Vavasour in Benjamin Disraeli's novel *Tancred* (1847) and satirized as Lord Dickiefield in Laurence Oliphant's novel *Piccadilly* (1870); he also appeared as one of Thackeray's companions (called "X") in his account of the public execution of Francois Courvoisier in 1840, "Going to See a Man Hanged" (Davenport-Hines).

Beyond his work on Keats, Milnes may also have played a role in shaping the legacy of other Romantic poets; Samuel Chew records a Cambridge Debating Union debate wherein Milnes argued for the

literary production was as editor of the two-volume *Life, Letters, and Literary Remains of John Keats* (1848), which helped belatedly to establish Keats's literary reputation (Davenport-Hines; A. Sanders, *Olden* 283). Keats is perhaps the paradigmatic example of the underappreciated Romantic poet canonized only later, and thus his Victorian legacy stands in contrast to that of the Murray II circle considered in this chapter. Indeed, Milnes's introductory material reports that Keats was "all but universally believed to have been killed by a stupid, savage, article" by Croker in the *Quarterly Review* (Milnes, *Keats* I: xvii). Yet in dedicating the volumes to Francis Jeffrey as one of Keats's early champions, Milnes also frames the response to Keats as reflecting the differences between the *Quarterly* and its rival, Jeffrey's *Edinburgh Review*. Milnes writes:

> It has no doubt frequently amused you to have outlived literary reputations, whose sound and glitter you foresaw would not stand the tests of time and altered circumstance; but it is a far deeper source of satisfaction to have received the ratification by public opinion of judgments, once doubted or derided, and thus to have anticipated the tardy justice which a great work of art frequently obtains, when the hand of the artist is cold, and the heart, that palpitated under neglect, is still for ever (Milnes, *Keats* I: vi).

In this passage, Milnes identifies Jeffrey as a sort of elder statesman of the literary establishment whose superior judgment allowed him to stand outside the fray of contemporary literary fashion. This is a remarkable view to take of Jeffrey, who perhaps rivals only Croker for embodying the fray of cantankerous literary debate in the

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merits of Shelley's poetry over Byron's, and Milnes was later involved in erecting a statue to Byron that was unveiled in 1875 (Chew 260, 295).

Romantic period. By identifying Jeffrey as the personal representative of staid continuity between the Regency past and the early Victorian present, Milnes associates the *Quarterly* and its writers with the "sound and glitter" that does not last, while at the same time suggesting that the response to Keats was a matter of literary and political partisanship. Whereas in the *Life*, Milnes positions Keats and even Jeffrey as standing outside the petty squabbles of their time, in *The Rodiad* he is memorializing the same historical moment as scandalous and sexual.

The Rodiad was a late addition to Hotten's series of seven flagellation pamphlets ironically titled the *Library Illustrative of Social Progress*.[85] Hotten's advertisements claimed that these were reprints of works first published in 1777, from the collection of the historian Henry Thomas Buckle, but it is unclear whether this is true (Ashbee, *Index* 239; Marcus 73).[86] Regardless, Hotten's advertisement indicates that the *Library*'s paratextual features would also invoke the texts' alleged eighteenth-century origin: "The paper will be made expressly, and ribbed or wire-laid precisely as the paper of the last century. The printing will be of the very choicest description; in fact, neither expense nor pains will be spared in the production" (Ashbee, *Index* 240). Here, Hotten suggests that the intentionally archaic paper used for the *Library* reflects both the work's historical origins and also his high production values as a publisher. Whereas the works that originally appeared in the *Library* may or may not have been eighteenth-century reprints, *The Rodiad* is certainly a Victorian work with a spurious imprint, and was probably marketed as a reprint rather than an antiquarian book. Whether or not Hotten claimed to

[85] *The Rodiad* does not appear in Hotten's original advertisements for the series, but a header on its title-page reads "Library Illustrative of Social Progress."
[86] Ashbee's bibliography asserts that they did not come from Buckle and insinuates that the manuscripts belonged to Ashbee himself and were published without permission (Ashbee, *Index* 241). More recently, Eliot appears to assume that they may indeed have been eighteenth-century reprints (Eliot 70).

use historically accurate paper with *The Rodiad*, as he did with the rest of the *Library*, the text's physical features are obviously inconsistent with the 1810 publication date.

It is uncertain whether Hotten's sleight-of-hand would have been obvious to contemporaries. Henry Spencer Ashbee's 1879 bibliography of pornography provides conclusive evidence that the imprint is spurious: Ashbee points out the text's references to the Queen Caroline scandal and insinuates that he himself may have seen the manuscript (Ashbee, *Centuria* 472). A 1927 introduction to a reprint of the text nevertheless takes the claim on the title page at face value, observing that "Colman's 18th century style may perhaps shock the modern reader by its uncompromising savagery" (Nicolas 5, 11). In this introduction, Yvon Nicolas defends corporal punishment, as distinct from the sexualized "flagellomania" celebrated in the poem. While acknowledging that there are situations where it can be too brutal—such as the flogging in prisons and the navy that took place, ironically, during Colman's time—Nicolas develops the poem's Foucauldian argument that the newfound opposition to flogging is the result of a prudish and hypocritical attitude toward punishment (Nicolas 7).[87] Although the poem claims that the gradual decline of flogging was already palpable in 1810, Nicolas's introduction nevertheless points to Colman's time as a period of intense and potentially problematic flogging.

More recently, Andrea Henderson too has been fooled by Hotten's hoax, and reads *The Rodiad* as part of a larger interest in eroticizing hierarchies at the beginning of the nineteenth century, contrasting the poem's conservatism with the way Caroline

[87] Identifying the same trend toward moving punishment indoors that Foucault chronicles, Nicolas argues: "public executions offend modern opinion yet if prison flogging or capital punishment is to continue it would seem better to have no privacy. Why should we countenance any punishment which even the judge who inflicts it is not prepared to witness?" (Nicolas 12).

Lamb's *Glenarvon* (1816) and William Hazlitt's *Liber Amoris* (1823) use eroticized hierarchies to imagine progressive political change (Henderson 220-223). The fact that both Nicolas and Henderson seamlessly incorporate *The Rodiad* into their larger understanding of early nineteenth-century literary and sexual histories reveals the success of Hotten's hoax at associating the Regency with sexualized flagellation, despite the slightly different historical claim made by the text itself.

The fairly specific historicism of *The Rodiad* appears to be atypical of Victorian flagellation pornography, which often makes vague claims about a work's publication in a distant time and place. It is clear that *The Rodiad* is doing something unusual by attributing the work's authorship and publication to specific, famous individuals from the British Regency period.[88] In the end, *The Rodiad* says less about flagellation pornography than it does about the reputation of Regency publishing for bawdy material and the place of the Regency period in a history of sexuality.

Conclusion

This chapter has reflected on the curious multiple lives of "John Murray" across the long nineteenth century—as a name attached to several generations of publishers, as well as to virtual, impersonated, and fictionalized beings that allowed for literary reflection on the differences between Regency and Victorian cultures. My study of the way the Murray's periodicals marshaled their early association with Byron into continued

[88] Victorian pornography is difficult to research for many practical reasons, including the destruction of Ashbee's personal pornography collection, donated to the British Library after his death, which contained many unique copies of works now lost (Kearney 9-10). In his recent catalogue, *Clandestine Erotic Fiction in English, 1800-1930*, Peter Mendes admits that his work cannot improve on Ashbee's for the period prior to 1885 because many of the items catalogued have since disappeared (Mendes vii). Even with Mendes's catalogue, it is often difficult to determine the most basic information about who published what and when.

profit has cast light on the shifting interplay between archival documents, published material, and personal testimony as competing ways to understand the Regency past in the Victorian period. Although the Murrays had a financial interest in canonizing the authors they published, and in doing so with reference to documents in their archive, their Victorian publications show a surprising commitment to personal, eyewitness testimony that grew as the century progressed.

At the same time, texts about the Murray circle often struggle to accommodate the way that certain individuals' beliefs evolved with time, usually privileging earlier opinions over later ones. Faced with Lady Byron's belated insights into her marital separation, for example, the *Quarterly* argues that her immediate response must be more authoritative than her later reinterpretation of events. Similarly, the spurious attribution of *The Rodiad* to George Colman plays off the reputation for bawdy plays that characterizes his youth, ignoring the fact that his views changed markedly later in life. The inability of Disraeli to shed the reputation he acquired through *Vivian Grey,* even by bowdlerizing the novel reflects the impulse in works about the Regency to freeze individuals in time, imputing to them one set of views that could or should be totally consistent.

In the Murrays' own publications, the emphasis on the way their firm brought together contrasting literary figures through their contemporaneous success had the effect of putting Murray II at the epicenter of personal and political disagreements as well as sexually scandalous behavior. Yet the self-presentation of the Murray as adept at managing strong personalities became an unflattering portrait in the hands of less sympathetic writers, who turned Murray into an inept politician and a pornographer. Members of the Murray circle produced and inspired texts that linked them in

complicated ways to the ideological and cultural shifts that inaugurated Victorian modernity—shifts in attitudes toward sexuality, political power, and the practice of commerce.

Although the Murray circle, and the Regency period itself, could always recede into the background—of the Romantic period, of the early nineteenth century, or of the era before Reform—they came to the fore as a way for Victorians to engage specific issues. Through "John Murray," the Victorians thought about what it meant for a writer to experience immediate success, and to be in sync with the historical moment in the way that Arnold values. "John Murray" could also help them to understand the stakes of debates and disagreements of the past, even when, or perhaps especially when, those conflicts did not rise to the level of world-historical events. He could even speak to the limits of individual agency in the face of larger forces. As the Regency past grew increasingly distant, the figures of John Murray retained their ability to reflect on questions about the nature of history itself, raised by the experience of the Napoleonic Wars.

Chapter IV.

A Taller Napoleon:

The Historical Effigy in Nineteenth-Century Literature and Culture

In 1852, the Duke of Wellington paid his last visit to Madame Tussaud's wax museum, a visit memorialized in a painting by George Hayter (Fig. 10). It depicts Wellington, then an elderly man, gazing upon a wax effigy of the dying Napoleon, lying on the real bed in which Napoleon died, wearing his favorite military uniform, and surrounded by his possessions. The painting, which hung at Madame Tussaud's for many years, was destroyed by fire in 1925, but it survives as a print.[89] John Theodore Tussaud's description of the scene captures how this image is usually read:

> No feeling of triumph passed through the conqueror's mind as he looked upon the poor waxen image, too true in its aspect of death; he rather thought upon the vanity of earthly triumphs, of the leveling hand of time, and how soon he, like his great contemporary, might be stretched upon his own bier (Tussaud 116).

[89] According to the Tussaud firm's official history, one morning Madame Tussaud's son discovered an "elderly gentleman" standing over the waxwork: "In those days it was custom to lower at night the curtains that enclosed the bed, in order to exclude the dust . . . Observing that the visitor was desirous of seeing the effigy, and no attendant being at hand, Joseph Tussaud raised the hangings, whereupon the visitor removed his hat, and, to his great surprise, Joseph saw that he was face to face with none other than the great Duke of Wellington himself" (Tussaud 115-116). The Tussaud family commissioned Hayter's painting, which was complete in December 1852 (Tussaud 117).

What interests me about this scene, however, is the way it suggests a number of counterfactual scenarios. This image depicts a face-to-face meeting that never took place while both men were alive, and it shows Napoleon dying surrounded by the material trappings of his imperial success, visited by foreign dignitaries, when in fact, Napoleon died defeated, on a remote island, thousands of miles from the shawl draped over his feet in the painting. The scene at Madame Tussaud's is not only a romanticized recreation of what was, in fact, an uglier death, but also a place where Napoleon's body is used to prompt counterfactual speculation about history, asking "What if?"

In nineteenth-century British texts, busts and effigies of Napoleon Bonaparte tend to break. Whether thrown to the ground in the heat of a domestic dispute, smashed in furtherance of a theft, or burned at the stake as a political statement, physical representations of Napoleon's body often meet a dramatic end. Furthermore, these broken busts and shattered figurines belie that even when intact, Napoleon memorabilia depicts his body as a composite of separate and separable parts that never quite resolve into a single whole. In this chapter, I analyze representations of Napoleon's body in memorabilia, effigies, and figurines, and the way these representations were represented in texts from the period between Napoleon's death in 1821 and the beginning of the twentieth century, looking especially at William Hazlitt's *Liber Amoris* (1823), Charles Dickens's *Pictures from Italy* (1846), Arthur Conan Doyle's "The Adventure of the Six Napoleons" (1905), and Thomas Hardy's *The Dynasts* (1903-1908). Relatively empty in terms of signification and seemingly circumscribed in interpretive possibilities, historical memorabilia during this period had a widespread appeal and has been overlooked as a site of historical engagement.

I argue that the unique ontological status of memorabilia facilitated a distinctive philosophy of history that ran counter to dominant contemporary thought. Since Napoleon was such a malleable subject for co-optation, feelings toward his effigies and busts were remarkably and often disturbingly transferable, and the sheer quantity with which Napoleon's image was reproduced in nineteenth-century Britain had consequences for the way people understood history. The promiscuous replication of Napoleon's image—vastly outstripping that of his contemporaries—undermined the theory of history that saw agency as distributed across vast interconnected networks and movements. At the same time, the tendency of Napoleon memorabilia to fracture into parts suggests a philosophy of history that radically undermines the role of the individual. Instead, Napoleon memorabilia and textual representations of it present the historical agent as fractured, composed of parts, and surrounded by accoutrements, suggesting an object-oriented philosophy of history. We can see this in the way that Napoleon's disunified body parts and articles of clothing often serve as metonyms for historical roads not taken.

In tracing the connection between the nature of Napoleonic memorabilia and the vision of history that it implies, this chapter negotiates between a number of overlapping phenomena that played related roles in articulating historical knowledge. I place Napoleonic memorabilia in the context of nineteenth-century mass-produced memorabilia in general, and I draw upon scholars of relics, public exhibitions, and visual art, three phenomena that reified the Napoleonic past in similar ways. These categories are difficult to untangle, as evinced by the image of Wellington at Madame Tussaud's with which I began: it depicts an encounter with an effigy, but also an encounter with relics, and when the painting itself was turned into a print, it was subjected to mass

production. Finally, although Victorian busts and effigies themselves depict Napoleon's body as composite, shifting from the neoclassical aesthetic that dominated memorabilia in Napoleon's lifetime to a more highly ornamented style later in the century, I also analyze a way of reading these objects as an uneasy union of parts that characterizes the discourses they produce. Moving between objects and representations of them, we can see writers flirting with the idea that historical agency might be found in the body and its accoutrements.

I. The Little Image

William Hazlitt's *Liber Amoris, or, The New Pygmalion* (1823), is a thinly-veiled autobiographical work that recounts unrequited love and could be described as a story of stalking told from the perspective of the unrepentant stalker.[90] Hazlitt, called "H." in the text, becomes obsessed with his landlord's teenaged daughter, called "S." As the subtitle suggests, the narrative recounts his attempts to transform her into an idealized lover, a statue that ultimately fails to come to life. The text details through twists and turns H.'s

[90] Under the publishing conventions of the time, the fact that *Liber Amoris* was published as the memoir of "a Native of North Britain" made it appear to be a novel (Henderson 172). Hazlitt's contemporaries, however, understood it to be a work of autobiography, and the author's identity was obvious immediately, since Hazlitt had done little to conceal the identities of the major characters, had alluded to Sarah Walker repeatedly in his journalism, and furthermore had recounted the entire saga of the relationship to scores of friends, acquaintances, and total strangers (Dart 5; Wu 336). Within days of the work's publication, the *Literary Register* identified the author and all the principal characters, and within two months, the Tory *John Bull* published one of Hazlitt's unexpurgated original letters (Dart 5-6; Wu 337; Butler 159). The work was widely derided, and although some of the attacks in the right-wing press were clearly politically motivated, even Hazlitt's friends were incredulous that he could have been so foolish as to publish such an unflattering self-portrait (Wu 338; Dart 7; Henderson 189). Marilyn Butler, observing the text's highly allusive nature and the fact that the original letters were "clearly begun with at least half an eye to publication," argues that the work is satirical, although this reading has been debated (Butler 160). Jonathan Gross, for example, notes that the tendency to interpret the work as literary and ironic may be motivated by a desire to recuperate Hazlitt the writer from the highly unsavory character of H. All available evidence suggests that the work accurately reflects the real relationship between Hazlitt and Sarah Walker (see Wu 283-329). Both Gross and Andrea Henderson's readings understand the work as at once self-consciously literary and remarkably sincere.

early flirtatious encounters with S.; his residency in Scotland for the purposes of obtaining a divorce; his quarrel with S. during a disastrous trip back to London in the middle of the proceedings; the eventual granting of the divorce; and a long denouement back in London, during which S. rejects him, he instructs friends to test her virtue, he stalks her, he sees her walking with another man, he confronts her, and he never entirely gives up his suit. S., the literary representation of the real Sarah Walker, is largely opaque, her perspective frustratingly and disturbingly absent from the text. Yet while S. is the object of H.'s desire, his "heart's Idol," their relationship is mediated through an actual object, a small figurine of Napoleon whose physicality stands out in a text that is largely dominated by H.'s thoughts and feelings (Hazlitt 63).

H. gives S. the Napoleon statue at the end of Part I, which recalls their early conversations in a pseudo-dramatic form. He interrogates her about her former attachment to another man, asking whether he and the other man perhaps resembled each other. S. explains that her former lover bore a resemblance, not to H., but "To that little image! (*looking intently on a small bronze figure of Bonaparte on the mantelpiece*)." She clarifies that "all but the nose was just like" and "he was taller!" (Hazlitt 55). In this moment, the previously unseen object comes to the fore—not only retroactively suggesting its presence on the implied stage of H.'s bedroom all along, but also revealing itself as symbolically significant to both parties. Eager to seal their relationship through this object, H. insists that S. accept it as a gift. Although she "refuse[s] at first to take so valuable a curiosity," she ultimately relents (Hazlitt 55). In what is the longest stage direction thus far, the text describes what happens next:

> She immediately came and sat down, and put her arm round my neck, and

> kissed me and I said, "Is it not plain we are the best friends in the world, since we are always so glad to make it up?" And then I added "How odd it was that the God of my idolatry should turn out to be like her Idol, and said it was no wonder that the same face which awed the world should conquer the sweetest creature in it!" (Hazlitt 55).

The incorporation of dialogue into this stage direction destabilizes the pseudo-dramatic form, which breaks down entirely soon afterward. H.'s first utterance, "Is it not plain," appears to be a direct quotation, but his later statement, "How odd it was," shifts into using third-person pronouns, and may be an indirect quotation or a thought. Direct quotation appears to return with "it was no wonder." In comparison to the epistolary sections that follow, Part I is relatively more even-handed in presenting S.'s side of the story; once the figurine is introduced and exchanged, her voice is effectively silenced.

Furthermore, this scene begins to suggest an understanding of historical agency as embodied. In using "awe" to describe Napoleon's effect on the world, but "conquer" to describe S.'s former lover's effect on her, and in playing on "Idol" and "idolatry" the passage suggests a homology between political sympathies, religious devotion, and romantic love. In so doing, Napoleon's "face" becomes the locus of his charismatic power. S.'s analysis of the minor differences that qualify the resemblance between Napoleon and her former lover—taller, with a different nose—has the effect of signaling alternative ways that Napoleon might have looked and raising questions about the possible implications of his bodily form. What if Napoleon had been taller?

H. gives a second, conflicting account of this scene just pages later, in a letter to a friend that presents S.'s behavior with considerably more suspicion. He relates, "[s]he

cajoled me out of my little Bonaparte as cleverly as possible" and goes on to speculate (Hazlitt 59):

> What will you bet it wasn't all a trick? I'll tell you why I suspect it, besides being fairly out of my wits about her. I had told her mother half an hour before, that I should take this image and leave it at Mrs. B.'s for that I didn't wish to leave anything behind that must bring me back again. Then up she comes and starts a likeness to her lover: she knew I should give it her on the spot - 'No, she would keep it for me!' So I must come back for it (Hazlitt 60).

Although it seems obvious that H. would require no inducement to visit S. in the future, this abrupt shift in his understanding of the exchange begins to suggest the indeterminacy of the statue's meaning. Whereas H. initially assumes that S.'s affections for the statue and for him are mutually reinforcing, he here suspects her of a more instrumental relationship to the object, of using it to manipulate his behavior. H. does not say so here, but he may also worry that she sees the figurine as having exchange value, having been reluctant, in the first account, "to take so valuable a curiosity," although what exactly she means here is typically unclear (Hazlitt 55). Regardless, the text suggests the multiple ways that S. might relate to the Napoleon figurine—whether she views it as a reminder of her earlier lover, a symbol of her nascent feelings for H., a way to ensnare him, a source of exchange value, or in some other unknown way. What is clear is that for S., the statue's subject – Napoleon – is incidental. By contrast, the statue's subject appears paramount for H., and yet other than the single moment in which Napoleon is identified as "the God of [his] idolatry," there is no further elaboration upon H.'s admiration

(Hazlitt 55). Like S.'s feelings for her former lover, H.'s feelings for Napoleon precede the text, and thus it appears to require a biographical reading that uses Hazlitt's reputation as lifelong Bonapartist to explain H.'s behavior.

Although the text suggests a divide between the object-like permanence of H.'s love and S.'s wantonly shifting loyalties, in real life, Hazlitt's admiration for Napoleon was a complicated, reactive response to the British wars against Napoleonic France and is best understood as a particularly intense example of what Stuart Semmel has called "anti-anti-Napoleonism" (Semmel 2). As a response to the "excesses of 'loyalism'" in mainstream conservative ideology, anti-anti-Napoleonism "resembled, and . . . could sometimes become flat-out pro-Napoleon feeling" (Semmel 2). Raised in a progressive home, Hazlitt was a stalwart radical who maintained throughout his life the republican principles of the early days of the French revolution, even as British public sentiment shifted dramatically to the political right (see Wu). After 1805, when Napoleon's early partisans became disenchanted with his increasingly autocracy, Hazlitt continued to place in Napoleon his hopes for a more equal society, an attitude Andrea Henderson calls an "uneasy compromise solution to his ambivalence regarding power" (Henderson 193).

British sympathy for Napoleon grew after his final defeat, as the conditions of his imprisonment on St. Helena became a subject of partisan bickering—a proxy war fuelled by fierce ideological divisions over legal and constitutional matters (Semmel 203-207). Radical pro-Napoleonism was sincere, but it was also a strategic cultural and political stance increasingly adopted during the late 1810s by the Whigs in opposition to the Tory government (Schmid, *British* 90). Especially outspoken were Lord and Lady Holland, hosts of a popular Whig literary salon and representatives of a longer, eighteenth-century

Francophile tradition. The Hollands sent books to Napoleon on St. Helena and corresponded with his brother Lucien; when Napoleon died, he bequeathed Lady Holland a snuffbox (Semmel 209; Schmid, *British* 91).[91] Napoleon's death, a crushing blow for Hazlitt, and the publication of Barry O'Meara's influential *Napoleon in Exile* (1822) appeared to vindicate those who had criticized the conditions of his imprisonment (Wu 299; Semmel 217-18). Although Hazlitt stood outside and to the political left of the Whig establishment, by the time *Liber Amoris* appeared in 1823, any expression of sympathy for Napoleon reverberated through a cultural and political echo chamber that was in constant flux.

H.'s corrosive paranoia about S.'s motivations ultimately results in their falling out over a series of complicated and ambiguous encounters in which the statue mediates. Although S.'s conversation is initially "unsatisfactory and evasive" during H.'s return from Scotland, he takes comfort in the fact that "[t]he little Bonaparte, however, was placed in its old position on the mantelpiece, which I considered as a sort of recognition of old times" (Hazlitt 87). S. continues to avoid intimate conversations with him, but they share one brief moment of warmth over the statue. H. says:

> "I see you've brought me back my little Bonaparte" – She answered with tremulous softness – "I told you I'd keep it safe for you!" – as if her pride and pleasure in doing so had been equal, and she had, as it were, thought of nothing during my absence but how to greet me with this proof of her fidelity on my return. . . . I was delighted with the alteration in her manner,

[91] Schmid discusses the occasional coterie poetry prompted by Napoleon's gift (Schmid, *British* 90-95). In a public exchange of light verse, Thomas Moore, the Earl of Carlisle, Byron, and anonymous others debated whether Lady Holland should accept the gift. She did, and the snuffbox is now in the British Museum.

> and I said, referring to the bust – "You know it is not mine, but yours; I gave it you; nay, I have given you all – my heart, and whatever I possess, is yours!" (Hazlitt 87-88).

Yet this moment turns out to be a "[s]hort interval of peace, followed by lasting woe!" (Hazlitt 88). H. confronts S. about avoiding him, vainly appealling to her devotion to the figure: "'Not one five minutes' conversation, for the sake of old acquaintance? Well, then, for the sake of *the little image*!' The appeal seemed to have lost its efficacy; the charm was broken; she remained immovable" (Hazlitt 88; emphasis original). Theorizing the figurine as a sort of "charm" that can be "broken," H. suggests here that S.'s loss of interest in the figurine and loss of interest in himself are inherently linked. He is "sadly afraid the *little image* was dethroned from her heart" because it means that he is also dethroned as her preferred suitor (Hazlitt 97). Elsewhere, however, H. speculates that it is S.'s devotion to the figurine that is stable, while men pass in and out of her affections. He writes: "You see by this she . . . only played with my credulity till she could find someone to supply the place of her unalterable attachment to *the little image*" (Hazlitt 65).

Jonathan Gross and Andrea Henderson have each read H.'s Napoleon figurine as a fetish, whether in the Marxist or Freudian sense, helping to illuminate the text's elusive relationship to Hazlitt's personal and political aspirations.[92] I take a different approach, however, following the lead of Elaine Freedgood, John Plotz, and other scholars of thing

[92] Jonathan Gross sees the figurine as a fetish that has displaced H.'s sexual desire for S. and his political hopes for Napoleon in the wake of the latter's defeat. "Making a fetish of S. (rather than loving her for who she is)" and "worship[ing] a statue rather than the emperor," Gross argues, Hazlitt turns his frustrated feelings into a literary commodity, *Liber Amoris* (Gross 712, 711). Henderson similarly sees the figurine as a second-order fetish: "just as money is arguably a sort of second-order commodity fetish," the figurine "is not only desirable in itself but mediates between H. and the object of his desire" (Henderson 195).

theory in nineteenth-century literature in order to think more literally about the figurine's physical appearance and its implications. Rather than assume that the figurine is straightforwardly symbolic of something else, I trace its changing form in order to uncover how the object speaks to philosophies of history.

Liber Amoris's climax comes, when, overcome by anger, H. "dash[es] the little Bonaparte on the ground, and stamp[s] upon it, as one of her instruments of mockery," breaking it into "fragments . . . which were strewed about the floor" (Hazlitt 90, 93). Although this moment is widely considered "a turning point" and "a crisis moment in an otherwise stagnant narrative," in fact, H.'s pursuit of S. and the text itself nevertheless drag on (Wu 321; Henderson 196).[93] In the scenes following the statue's destruction, attention is drawn to the object's ambiguous form. During a brief rapprochement, H. "asked her if she . . . could get *the little image* mended? 'It was broken in three pieces, and the sword was gone, but she would try'" (Hazlitt 99). In fact, the physical characteristics of the figurine have been inconsistent all along. The statue is initially called a "small bronze figure," suggesting a full-length miniature, whose height S. compares with that of her former lover, but later called a "bust"—this is not a trivial difference (Hazlitt 55, 88). We learn also that H. breaks it into three pieces by stamping it with his foot, which seems unlikely if it is made of bronze. S.'s comment that the sword is missing is the first mention of a sword, and could suggest that the original object had separable parts (Hazlitt 99).

Although *Liber Amoris* is nonfiction—Hazlitt owned a Napoleon "bust" at the time that he moved in with the Walkers—it is nevertheless an imaginative, non-realist

[93] Just as H.'s pursuit of S. carries on after this seemingly destructive episode, Hazlitt's admiration of Napoleon persisted (Gross 717; see also Wu); his four-volume *Life of Napoleon* (1830) "blazed with an ardor undiminished by the passage of years" (Semmel 243).

representation of the material world that need not be internally consistent, let alone refer to real objects (Wu 290). Yet as originally described, H.'s figurine may resemble a small bronze at London's Wallace Collection (Fig. 11).[94] This figure decorates Napoleon's body with predictable and iconic articles of clothing and pieces of weaponry—his bicorn hat, full military uniform, and roll of maps—whose detailed appearance is the object's most striking aesthetic feature. The dramatic breaking of H.'s figurine in *Liber Amoris* thus makes literal what is already suggested by the form of real-life memorabilia—that Napoleon is defined as a historical actor through his potentially removable and replaceable accoutrements.

Compounding the text's inconsistent description of the Napoleon figure before it is broken, the repair transforms it into an entirely new object. As S.'s mother reports, the repair is not straightforward: "She has been to two or three places to see about it, before she could get anyone to undertake it," and later, we learn that "[t]hey had been obliged to put some new pieces to it" (Hazlitt 100, 101). The resulting composite figure thus maintains some of the original statue's features while replacing others. The physical transformation of H.'s Napoleon figurine dramatizes Arjun Appadurai's insight that objects pass through multiple phases over their life cycle. Similarly, analyzing changes in the status of objects within Victorian literature, Jonathan Shears and Jen Harrison have argued that Victorian fictional objects move in and out of meaningfulness, identifying

[94] "Napoleon I" (S230) was likely acquired by either Francis Charles Seymour-Conway, the Third Marquess of Hertford (1777-1842), the original of Lord Steyne in *Vanity Fair*, or his son Richard, the Fourth Marquess (1800-1870). The full-length miniature, 8 5/8 inches tall, depicts Napoleon standing with his arms folded, leaning against a pedestal on which his cloak and a roll of maps are draped. He wears a military uniform with epaulettes and his characteristic bicorn hat, positioned athwart, and a sword hangs from his left hip (Mann 84). The base of the statue is decorated by a "fallen figure of Fortune represented by a nude, winged female with a wheel, and inscribed Isle D'Elbe," reflecting that it was produced in France between April 1814 and February 1815. Like other mass-produced figurines of Napoleon, it depicts Napoleon with an impassive, thoughtful, or opaque facial expression and it subtly suggests his fall while locating its representation at no specific moment in his career.

"bric-à-brac," disordered or valueless objects, as another stage that objects pass through but do not permanently inhabit (Shears and Harrison 5). *Liber Amoris* not only makes these transformations of status literal through the statue's physical transformation, but also uses the statue's changing form to reflect on historical processes. Because the statue represents Napoleon, its instability—the possibility that it might have been taller, might not have had a sword, could be patched and reassembled differently—suggests a multiplicity of unrealized courses of history located in Napoleon's body.

II. RELICS

The conception of Napoleon's body as composed of separable parts arose through the acquisition, production, and display of diverse Napoleon-related objects in Britain after 1815. As Lady Holland's snuffbox reflects, the exchange of objects was part of Napoleon's effort to shape his posterity, and yet the collection of relics immediately and profoundly exceeded his control. As described in *Vanity Fair*, relic hunting, or looting, on the Waterloo battlefield began almost before the battle had ended, and became a business opportunity for local residents as well as speculators.[95]

In the few years that followed, major collections of Napoleon relics were the subject of public exhibitions, the most wildly successful of which, at William Bullock's Egyptian Hall in London, ran initially from January to August 1816 and then toured Britain, raking in immense profits (Pascoe 91, 94; Alexander 126). The centerpiece of Bullock's exhibition was the grandiose carriage Napoleon abandoned when he fled Waterloo on horseback, which Judith Pascoe has called "one of the most alluring relics of

[95] For first-hand accounts of relic-collection at Waterloo, see John William Polidori, *The Diary of John William Polidori, 1816, Relating to Byron, Shelley, etc.* (1911), p. 62-69, and Walter Scott, *Paul's Letters to His Kinsfolk* (1816), p. 194-214.

the period's most alluring reprobate," an object that "took on added glamour because of the glimpse it afforded of his private life" through the personal effects it contained (Pascoe 85, 86). Bullock displayed the carriage accompanied by two of the original horses, and also hired Napoleon's Dutch coach-driver Jean Hornn for the exhibition's opening, his two missing fingers and visible scars offering bodily witness to Napoleon's defeat (Altick, *Shows* 250; Pascoe 98-99; Alexander 125). Although the carriage was a huge draw, Bullock's exhibition competed with numerous others, including the Waterloo Exhibition (at 1 St. James's Street), the Waterloo Museum (97 Pall Mall), and Waterloo Rooms (94 Pall Mall) (Altick, *Shows* 239). These exhibitions were a kind of "public nontheatrical entertainment[]," which often took the career of Napoleon as their theme (Altick, *Shows* 1): there were recreations and representations of famous battles, like Henry Aston Barker's Waterloo Panorama, approved by Wellington himself, as well as depictions of famous scenes from Napoleon's life, like the magic lantern slides featuring dissolving views of Napoleon on St. Helena (Flanders 264; Armstrong, *Glassworlds* 277). Richard Altick describes these exhibitions as "an alternative medium to print, reifying the word; through them, the vicarious became the immediate, the theoretical and general became the concrete and specific" (Altick, *Shows* 1).

Yet public displays of exceptional objects, like Bullock's carriage, were only one such medium, and reflect a much more widespread interest in collecting Napoleon relics, many of which were mundane.[96] Pascoe explains the broad appeal of the practice thus: "Collecting Napoleonic relics could become such a popular pastime because Napoleon

[96] Even Walter Scott collected fairly modest objects (Alexander 128). In *Paul's Letters* to his kinsfolk, he describes purchasing the arms and colors of the anonymous French dead at Waterloo from a local hawker during a visit to the battlefield (W. Scott, *Paul's* 194-214). Accounts of his possessions at Abbotsford also indicate some pistols and other items that had belonged to Napoleon, including a lock of his hair, which were acquired later either as gifts or at auction (M. Scott 23-37; W. Scott, *Reliquiae* 34).

himself was a product of the era's avid consumer culture and heightened sense of historicity. Napoleon had associated himself with so many physical objects that the supply of Napoleonic possessions was bottomless" (Pascoe 96).

Public interest in Napoleon remained strong in the 1820s, 1830s, and 1840s, although its valence changed, as biographical and artistic works treated him increasingly sympathetically (Semmel 228-231, 241-242). The debate about Napoleon's legacy also waned in urgency, as he "gradually ceased to be the subject of broad cultural contention" and "later treatments . . . were, increasingly, independent salvoes, fired at a distance from one another, rather than thrusts and parries in an ongoing battle" (Semmel 237-238). Despite the domestication of Napoleon's legacy by the 1840s, however, an interest in relics persisted. William Bullock sold the carriage and the other Napoleon items at auction in June 1819, in order to fund other commercial ventures (Altick, *Shows* 240; Alexander 127).[97] By 1842, many of these items had been acquired by Madame Tussaud's museum and incorporated into elaborate displays like the one Wellington views in Hayter's painting—these relics were exhibited continuously until 1925 (Alexander 142; Altick, *Shows* 335; Tussaud 81-100; Pilbeam 110-119). Indeed, although there was an initial burst of activity in the late 1810s, exhibitions of Napoleon relics show remarkable continuities over the course of the century: whereas an 1816 exhibition included Napoleon's captured horse Marengo, with conspicuous battle scars, a later exhibition displayed its skeleton (Flanders 265; Altick, *Shows* 300).

[97] Altick reports that Bullock used the proceeds of the 1819 auction to fund a short-lived Museum Napoleon, composed of fine art connected with him (Altick, *Shows* 241-42). Alexander, however, documents that after the auction, Bullock turned the Egyptian hall into "sales rooms," where contemporary British art was displayed and sold, with Bullock both charging admission and making a commission on each sale; although Bullock featured the work of noted Napoleon-admirer Benjamin Robert Haydon in the early 1820s, the art does not seem to have been organized around a Napoleonic theme (Alexander 128-129).

Furthermore, the mortal relics of Napoleon in circulation were often marshaled as evidence in the ongoing debate over his cause of death, believed at the time to be stomach cancer, which had killed Napoleon's father. Two alleged pieces of his intestine acquired by the Royal College of Surgeons in 1841 at first appeared to corroborate this theory, although the debate over their authenticity has continued even after they were destroyed in a World War II air-raid (Pascoe 100). Although most medical historians now believe that Napoleon died from "a perforated ulcer and liver abscess from Malta Fever (Brucellosis)," a sizeable minority maintains the longstanding belief that Napoleon was intentionally poisoned, a theory that may be supported by a recent test that found evidence of periodic concentrated exposure to arsenic in exhumed hair samples (Bierman 579; Pilbeam 116).

These debates use pieces of Napoleon's body as evidence of competing explanations of his death, but these body parts also prompt fantasies about what *might* have happened—a tendency made clearest by the posthumous circulation of Napoleon's penis. Allegedly removed from the body during the postmortem examination, the penis was first displayed by Philadelphia book collector Dr. A. S. W. Rosenbach in the 1920s, by which time it was "barely recognizable as a human body part," and until a few years ago was owned by a Columbia University professor of urology (Pascoe, "Collect-Me-Nots").[98] Napoleon's inability to produce an heir with Josephine—symbolized, perhaps,

[98] The Abbé Vignali allegedly removed the penis clandestinely on 6 March 1821, although many have doubted that he could have done so in front of so many witnesses (Pascoe, "Collect-Me-Nots"; Bierman 579). The organ was inherited first by Vignali's sister and then her son, along with the other keepsakes Vignali had received upon Napoleon's death, including monogrammed cutlery, clothing, and a copy of the death mask (Bierman 580). Sometime after its display by Rosenbach, it was acquired by urologist John K. Lattimer whose relic collection included President Lincoln's bloodstained collar, Hermann Göring's empty cyanide vial, medieval armor, US Civil War rifles, and Hitler's drawings (Pascoe, "Collect-Me-Nots"). After Lattimer's death in 2007, Judith Pascoe called for the remains to be buried, although it is unclear whether this happened.

by the penis—caused his unpopular divorce and unhappy second marriage, and was a proxy for larger questions about how his accomplishments would be carried forward into the future. As a physical locus of unrealized possibilities, first displayed publicly more than a century after those possibilities closed, the penis reflects the way Napoleon's body has come to suggest contingency itself.

Throughout "Second-Hand Sovereigns," George Augustus Sala's account of visiting the Napoleon room at the Louvre, which appeared in *Household Words* in 1855 and in my Introduction, Sala is struck by the modesty, dirtiness, and effeminacy of the clothing on display. He observes, "[t]he Colossus had small feet, and the shoes might belong to a woman," suggesting the way that masculinity and dress have changed in the intervening years (Sala 512). Although here Sala registers the change of clothing fashions over time, he is more often struck by the deteriorating condition of the objects on display. Of Napoleon's gray great coat, he observes: "I don't think, intrinsically, it would fetch more than half a dozen shillings," and yet

> here it is beyond price and purchase. It has held the body of the man whose name is blazoned on the ceiling; whose initial, pregnant with will and power, N, is on wall and escutcheon, on casque and morion, on vase and cup, on keystone and pediment, on coin and ring, on spoon and fork, on the step of the altar, the judge's bench, the footstool of the throne, everywhere in this land (Sala 512).

Making an observation picked up later by Pascoe, Sala remarks on Napoleon's ability to imbue seemingly innumerable possessions—from ceremonial objects to cutlery—with some kind of ineffable value.

Looking at a hat that Napoleon wore during his final exile, he observes, "[i]f any comment were valuable (and no comment *is*) on the futility of human ambition, the rottenness of human grandeur, it might surely be found in this old hat" (Sala 513). Sala is interested in the three hats on display because they reflect Napoleon's rise and fall, but he is even more intensely focused Napoleon's boots. Sala laments at length that boots are not actually present in the Louvre's exhibition—very few survived. For Sala, Napoleon's boots are valuable not only because, like his hats, they reflect different stages of Napoleon's dramatic career, but also because they serve as metonyms for possible alternative courses of history, as we saw in the passage where he speculated: if boots, then no Waterloo.

At another point, Sala remarks that one of Napoleon's boots "was pierced by a bullet at Bellinzona, and there Napoleon received his almost only wound" (Sala 512). In Sala's imagination, this boot, physical evidence a close call, is a reminder of a crux that could have changed the course of history profoundly. The Bellinzona boot furthermore speaks to the shifting interplay of fragility and durability between Napoleon and his clothing, and their different experiences of time. The boot's gaping hole contrasts with Napoleon's intact leg, which ultimately recovered perhaps because it was shielded by the boot from the full force of the bullet. And yet while the boot was destroyed at Bellinzona, it also might prove more durable than Napoleon's body, long since expired. Sala observes that Napoleon's boots were notably intact in the casket when it was exhumed for reburial at Les Invalides in 1840, nineteen years after Napoleon's death. He calls the boots "the most noteworthy appearances in the bier (after the features of that face, which the fingers of death had not been able entirely to efface, nor the grave to vanquish)" (Sala 512). This

brief aside on the exhumation reveals a body composed of parts vulnerable to decay at different rates, with a face preternaturally and relatively intact. Through the Bellinzona boot, we see Napoleon's clothing as alternately durable and vulnerable to degradation over time, both connected to and detached from the fate of the rest of his body.

Yet while Sala imputes longevity to the boots, he ultimately concludes that the inevitable and palpable decay of Napoleon's clothing reflects the leveling of hierarchies over time. He ends his review by observing that visiting this exhibition

> may be somewhat consoling to a man whose state is low, to find that even sovereigns—even the Holy Alliance—even the allied potentates are subject to the indignity of having their old clothes hung up to show; and that the coronation mantle dangles from a peg, in the long run, even as the masquerade domino, the cast-off uniform, or the threadbare great-coat (Sala 516).

Here Sala revises his earlier interpretation of the exhibit as reflecting the foolish ambition of a man whose empire crumbled in his own lifetime, and instead suggests that Napoleon is an Ozymandias-like figure, whose greatness is lost in the distant gaze of posterity. Pulling the camera back from its focus on Napoleon, Sala ostensibly makes the same point about all sovereigns and potentates. Yet his one specific example, the Holy Alliance, undermines any possibility of detached, historically distant neutrality. Formed by Napoleon's former enemies in the wake of his final defeat, the Holy Alliance of Austria, Prussia, and Russia sought to prevent the spread of French revolutionary principles and protect the divine right of kingship, and it was only briefly supported by Britain. By the time of Sala's article in 1855, of course, the British were allied with the

French under Napoleon III against the Russians in the Crimean War. This conflict definitively marked the end of the coalitions established under the Holy Alliance, when the Austrians refused to assist their former allies. Using a term for Britain's enemies that had recently become irrelevant, Sala not only stoically suggests that this war, too, will pass, but also frames the present conflict as an outgrowth of Napoleon's defeat, reminding the reader that present realities are predicated upon contingencies from the past. In this moment, that hole in Napoleon's boot, made at Bellinzona, takes on even greater contemporary significance.

III. The Status of Memorabilia

The commercial trade in busts, effigies, and figurines can be understood in part as a response to ongoing unfulfilled demand for Napoleon relics, which were numerous, but finite. In 1843, the Egyptian Hall in London, which had years earlier displayed Bullock's carriage, featured "The Napoleon Museum," an exhibition of the collection built over twenty-five years by the Napoleon admirer John Sainsbury (Altick, *Shows* 252; Sainsbury iii). Sainsbury's collection included a small number of relics, including a wine bottle and a silk stocking—of this modest haul, Richard Altick comments "one suspects most had been snatched up by showmen long since"—as well as a few examples of high art (Sainsbury 36, 71; Altick, *Shows* 252). Yet the collection primarily consisted of diverse mass-produced objects. An ivory profile head of Napoleon affixed to a black snuff box, busts made of cheap biscuit porcelain, miniatures of Napoleon's family members, a golden bracelet depicting Napoleon's sarcophagus—the bulk of the collection were *objet d'art* that lie somewhere between high artistic genres and household decorative wares

(Sainsbury 60, 14, 63, 68). Despite their common venue, Sainsbury's collection, unlike Bullock's carriage exhibit, was a financial failure. After an eighteen-month run, the collection was sold at auction for significantly less than Sainsbury had paid for it ("Sale" 4; Altick, *Shows* 252)

Yet such exhibitions continued to be popular, and memorabilia held an increasingly prominent place in them. For example, the Napoleon collection of Joseph Mayer of Liverpool, first exhibited in 1854, juxtaposed relics, art, and memorabilia. Beyond two locks of hair (Fig. 12 and Fig. 13) and miniature portraits by famous artists, the collection included an enameled box-top of Napoleon on Elba (Fig. 14), snuffboxes, cameos (Fig. 15), and a full medallic history of Napoleon's career (e.g., Fig. 16) (Collins 212-213).[99] Mayer's catalogue identifies several objects as gifts from Napoleon to others, seemingly in good faith, although subsequent scholarship has suggested that they are more recent in origin—for example, a gold seal probably dating from the late 1840s (Rushton et al; Collins 217; Fig. 17). Yet beyond these oversights, Mayer's collection also includes memorabilia that could not be mistaken for relics, and were produced after Napoleon's death, such as a wooden snuffbox carved with a Napoleonic medallion, mass-produced around 1840 (Fig. 18) and a portrait-ring, also produced in large quantities (Fig. 19) (Collins 217).

The tendency to pad out exhibitions of Napoleon relics with other kinds of objects has continued into the present, as demonstrated by Ben Weider's Napoleon Collection at

[99] It is unclear exactly where Mayer acquired the collection, but it was probably through members of the Bonaparte family (Collins 212). Although Mayer sold the collection to John Mather (1796-1857) before it was first exhibited in September 1854, he nevertheless wrote the original exhibition catalogue (Collins 212). Mayer's collection was displayed again in 1855, but then it disappeared from public view until it was donated to the city of Liverpool by Mather's sister in 1872 (Collins 212-213; Rushton et al). The collection was catalogued by Charles T. Gatty in 1883, but several items were lost to war damage in 1941. The surviving objects from Mayer's collection can still be found at the National Museums of Liverpool.

the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts. The galleries' centerpiece is obviously the one glass case displaying several relics—a hat worn on the Russian campaign, a boot, a pair of riding gloves showing signs of wear, and a sleeping shirt worn on St. Helena. Yet these items are surrounded by a much larger collection that includes later nineteenth-century history paintings, copies of famous busts, visual propaganda, and contemporary decorative arts with variably close connections to Napoleon. The Weider collection is careful to maintain the distinction between artistic representation, memorabilia piece, and actual relic, and yet the blending of these categories reflects that all function as historical artifacts of the Napoleonic period, albeit in different ways.

In fact, mass-produced memorabilia had a distinctive ontological status that allowed for different kinds of historical thinking. The public interest in Napoleon relics, despite their relative ubiquity, rested on "the symbiotic relationship of object and narrative," no matter how spurious (Pascoe 106). As Judith Pascoe puts it: "Where there is a Napoleonic teapot or tongue scraper there is an authenticating narrative ready to lash itself to history" (Pascoe 100). Napoleonic relics in Britain were the spoils of war, but they were also relics in the tradition of medieval Christianity, updated under the conditions of a nineteenth-century object-laden culture. By contrast, memorabilia were consumer goods. As such, they could disrupt the role of the authenticating narrative, since their value was not dependent on literal continuity and exchange.

Whereas a relic links one person to another, a mass-produced item links only itself to a person, metaphorically rather than metonymically. Using Bruno Latour's terminology, we might be tempted to read the relic as merely a passive intermediary that "transports meaning or force without transformation," whereas the mass-produced object

is clearly an active mediator that can "transform, translate, distort, and modify the meaning or the elements [it is] supposed to carry" (Latour 39). Although Latour would understand relics, too, as mediators, mass-produced objects bring to the fore the imaginative work required to make meaning out of a relationship with an object. The mass-produced object, therefore, though unmarked and impersonal, opens a space for its owner to develop a personalized relationship to it. Because Napoleon memorabilia was not linked to specific events in his career, these objects have the potential to detach from the historical record, prompting speculative and revisionist thinking about what might have been.

Indeed, the relative representational poverty of mass-produced objects distinguishes them not only from relics but also from visual artistic representations of Napoleon. Whereas artistic works give shape to multiple but not infinite possible meanings, the mass-produced object is comparatively open-ended in terms of meaning and unresponsive to interpretive practices. Furthermore, as we see in *Liber Amoris,* memorabilia, unlike high art, was often owned by ordinary individuals in their homes and produced meaning in that private context. By contrast, nineteenth-century history paintings, like Ernest Croft's (1847-1911) *Napoleon's Last Grand Attack: Waterloo* (1895), for example, differ from memorabilia in nearly every way (Fig. 20). This large, detailed canvas has a strong narrative component, depicting a specific moment pinpointed in the exhibition catalogue by an inset quotation from William Siborne's 800-page blow-by-blow account, *The Waterloo Campaign, 1815* (1894):[100]

[100] William Siborne (1797-1849), an army officer and military historian, spent several years in the 1830s constructing a detailed scale model of the Waterloo battlefield, which was exhibited in London and elsewhere and is now on display at the National Army Museum. The meticulous research he completed for this project, including interviewing hundreds of eyewitnesses, led Siborne to write a two-volume *History of*

> Napoleon, nervously anxious to strain to its utmost tension the daring spirit and high resolve which animated his troops, galloped forward to the inner gentle slope of the eminence on the left of the Charleroi road, which formed the most prominent point of his whole line, and by which was to pass the leading column of the Guard. As they approached, he pointed significantly to the Allied position, a gesture which drew forth renewed shouts of "Vive L'Empereur" (*Exhibition* 24).

In this passage, Siborne carefully describes a particular moment toward the end of the battle, when Napoleon attempts to encourage his straggling troops (Siborne 519-520). The painting captures many of these details—Siborne may have been a source for Crofts. It features multiple distinct groups of soldiers, with Napoleon in the center, gesturing with his hat toward distant enemies. Napoleon's crazed facial expression, the bloodstained troops, and the smoke situate the painting at this late stage in the battle, and signal Napoleon's increasing desperation against lengthening odds (Fig. 21). Crofts, who specialized in military and historical subjects, painted at least twelve canvasses of scenes surrounding Waterloo over a thirty-year period, but this painting exists in only one copy (Melville; Graves II, 203-206).

Yet sculpture and statuary, often non-narrative and likely to exist in multiple copies, occupy a middle ground between large, detailed, narrative, unique history painting on the one extreme, and small, plain, non-narrative, mass-produced memorabilia on the other. Antoine-Denis Chaudet's famous neoclassical bust, taken from life, exists in a few marble copies and includes no identifying characteristics beyond Napoleon's name

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the War in France and Belgium in 1815 (1844). The work was later republished in one volume as *The Waterloo Campaign* (1894), probably overseen by Siborne's son Herbert (see Vetch).

(Fig. 22). Similarly, Bertel Thorvaldsen's *Apotheosis of Napoleon,* from about 1830, identifies him using the imperial symbols of the eagle and laurel (Fig. 23). Copies of these and other famous sculptures, often in miniaturized form, entered private Victorian collections.[101] For example, Antonio Canova's huge *Napoleon as Mars the Peacemaker,* whose marble original is at the home of the Duke of Wellington, exists in smaller versions at the Wallace Collection, as a two-foot-tall bronze miniature (Fig. 24), and in Joseph Mayer's collection, as a tiny cameo of the statue in sardonyx, mounted on a tortoise-shell snuffbox (Fig. 25) (Mann 85; Collins 222).

Furthermore, as the century progressed, both high-art statuary and related memorabilia moved away from plain neoclassical depictions of Napoleon toward a more highly ornamented style that presented Napoleon as a figure in costume. For example, *Bonaparte Entrant au Caire* (1897), by Jean-Léon Gérôme (1824-1904), is a highly detailed equestrian figurine (Fig. 26).[102] Appreciated for "the extreme delicacy of the modeling and the painstaking attention to details of fabrics," the figure depicts both Napoleon and his horse with complicated and ornate garments and weaponry (des Cars, de Font-Réaulx, and Papet 157). Although the statue situates Napoleon at a particular phase in his career, the Egyptian campaign of 1797-98, it does not depict a specific, historically documented moment. Furthermore, this statue was one of a series of historical equestrian figures, including *Tamerlan* (1898), *Frédéric le Grand* (1899),

[101] In Stendhal's *The Charterhouse of Parma* (1839), the Count Sanseverina-Taxis extravagantly purchases a Canova bust of Napoleon for 10,000 lire, damaging his political career in the reactionary climate of 1820s Parma (Stendhal 112).

[102] Ackerman identifies four different versions in varying heights and materials: a 32 ½-inch bronze, a 21-inch gilt bronze, a 16-inch gilt bronze, and a 16-inch bronze mounted on a wooden base (Ackerman 322). Although it is unclear how many copies exist, the 16-inch versions are far more common. Copies can be found at the Paris Sénat (Musée d'Orsay item 1178; 32 ½ inches); the Musée Municipale, Chateauroux; the Palazzo Primoli, Rome; the Art Institute of Chicago (item 1988.36.8); and the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, as part of the Weider Collection (item 2008.414). Other copies are occasionally sold on the high-end antiques market.

Gérôme's old friend the *Duc d'Aumale* (1899), *César franchissant le Rubicon* (1900), and *Washington à cheval* (1901), that Gérôme produced toward the end of his career (des Cars, de Font-Réaulx, and Papet 316; Ackerman 324-326). Although the incorporation of Napoleon into this canon suggests the profound sameness of the conqueror figure across different historical and geographical contexts, it also throws into relief the striking aesthetic features of his clothing, divorced from any historical action or narrative.

The production method of *Bonaparte Entrant au Caire* furthermore reflects the slide of high-art statuary into memorabilia. Gérôme planned the work with "serial casting" in mind, and "modeled plasters twice the size of the planned edition, as he knew the reduction and casting would be exact" (Ackerman 149, 150).[103] As Susan Stewart has argued in the case of micrographia, the miniaturization of the statue draws attention to the technical skill required in its production, and exaggerates the significance of its subject (Stewart 37-44). The intricate detail of this item demonstrates how clothing and weaponry, rather than identifiable historical incident, had become a way to denote Napoleon visually. Although the image could be interpreted as a propagandistic celebration of Napoleon's ethically questionable and tactically inconclusive military activities in Egypt, the detailed miniature depiction of clothing and weaponry draws the viewer's attention to Napoleon's boots, hat, and hair for their own sake. Just as relic collecting saw Napoleon's clothing and accoutrements as broken-off pieces of the man himself, so too did high art and related memorabilia understand the historical actor as in some meaningful way defined by what he wore.

In a parallel development, Napoleon became the most popular subject of

[103] When Gérôme sold the full-sized work to the French government, he retained the right to profit from a limited number of smaller casts (Ackerman 150).

Staffordshire pottery figurines, especially in the 1840s and 1850s (Pugh 14; e.g. Fig. 27).[104] In a memoir of his time as a child laborer in the Staffordshire potteries during this period, Charles Shaw claims, "the figure of Napoleon Bonaparte was the leading article of our industry . . . [and] must have been in large demand somewhere, for shoals of them were made at that time" (C. Shaw 125). Napoleon was one of a small cadre of contemporary and historical figures who were the subject of Staffordshire pottery, and this group of objects on the whole arguably suggests a great-man theory of history. Yet within that group, Napoleon memorabilia was a distinctive subset, reflecting the special place that Napoleon demanded in all nineteenth-century philosophies of history.

Staffordshire figurines of Napoleon sometimes had prototypes in famous works of art, often those that depict his elaborate clothing. P.D. Gordon Pugh identifies figures based on Jacques-Louis David's *Napoleon Crossing the St. Bernard Pass*, an anonymous painting of Napoleon on St. Helena, and Charles-Emile-Marie Seurre's statue of Napoleon as "the little corporal," all of which depict his military dress (Pugh 49-51). Incorporating Napoleon into a canon of individuals, Staffordshire figurines used details of clothing to distinguish him from others, often focusing on hat, jacket, shirt, and boots. Shaw describes a figure he made as follows:

> When Napoleon was finished, he stood up with arms folded across his breast, his right leg a little forward, looking defiance at his own English makers. He had a dark blue coat on, tightly buttoned, a buff waistcoat and white breeches. There were touches of gold on his coat and on his large

[104] On Staffordshire figurines before 1835, see Myrna Schkolne.

black hat, with flat sides and point, with a high peak (C. Shaw 125).[105]

Reflecting Stewart's argument that miniaturization negates historicity and tends toward description rather than narrative, both miniaturized statuary and the always-miniature Staffordshire figurines focus our attention on Napoleon's clothing and accoutrements (Stewart 65-69). Evacuated of its original narrative content and in the possession of many, the body of Napoleon can become a carrier of other narratives, as we see below.

IV. Napoleon as Vessel

In "The Adventure of the Six Napoleons" (1905), Sherlock Holmes faces a mysterious case: someone has been stealing and destroying plaster busts of Napoleon Bonaparte. The motive for these crimes is hard to fathom. Echoing a point made by Hazlitt and Sala, Doyle's characters emphasize repeatedly that the busts have no use value and limited exchange value. Holmes's police contact, Inspector Lestrade observes, "the plaster cast was not worth more than a few shillings" and Horace Harker, whose bust is stolen, opines, "Why any burglar should take such a thing passes my understanding, for it was only a plaster cast, and of no real value whatever" (Doyle 42, 49). The busts' manufacturer Mr. Gelder clarifies the economics behind their production and sale, explaining, "[t]heir wholesale price was six shillings, but the retailer would get twelve or more," an estimate confirmed when Mr. Sandleford volunteers, "I only gave fifteen shillings for the bust" (Doyle 58, 73).

Furthermore, the city is awash in a surfeit of such objects. Holmes estimates that "hundreds of statues of the great Emperor must exist in London," and Gelder confirms

[105] This passage could describe any one of a number of figurines in Pugh's catalogue, including C-11.19, C-13.29, C-17.36, C-17.53, C-17.54, C-18.55, and C-23A.61(a).

that “hundreds of casts had been taken from a marble copy” of the fictional sculptor Devine’s bust of Napoleon, and sent to numerous shops (Doyle 44, 58). Indeed, it appears that an interest in Napoleonic objects is remarkably widespread in Doyle’s London. Dr. Barnicot, whose two busts—identical copies in his home and office—are destroyed, is “an enthusiastic admirer of Napoleon” with a “house . . . full of books, pictures, and relics of the French Emperor” (Doyle 43). Although the six busts are described as “plaster” and were produced in London, they resemble Staffordshire pottery figurines in their affordability and ubiquity.

The fact that busts of Napoleon are neither valuable nor scarce has uncertain bearing on the story’s central question: whether their theft and destruction has anything whatsoever to do with Napoleon. When Lestrade first approaches Holmes about the case, he calls it “Madness, anyhow. And a queer madness too! You wouldn’t think that there was anyone living at this time of day who had such a hatred of Napoleon the First that he would break any image of him that he could see” (Doyle 41). For Watson, too, the perpetrator’s belated animus requires a sophisticated explanation, as he speculates: “A man who had read deeply about Napoleon, or who had possibly received some hereditary family injury through the great war, might conceivably form such an ‘*idée fixe*,’ and under its influence be capable of any fantastic outrage” (Doyle 45). Watson’s far-fetched psychological explanation is but one of the story’s inchoate and mutually inconsistent theories about what the political act of destroying Napoleonic busts would even mean at this time. In order to throw a reporter off the trail, Holmes tells him that “a dangerous homicidal lunatic with Napoleonic delusions” was behind the spate of thefts—suggesting that the perpetrator identified with rather than hated Napoleon (Doyle 54). Morse

Hudson, the shop owner, offers an outburst that exemplifies the incoherence of these theories of the crime, announcing, "A Nihilist plot, that's what I make it. No one but an Anarchist would go about breaking statues. Red republicans, that's what I call 'em" (Doyle 42, 56).

Holmes, however, is unsatisfied with Napoleonic explanations of the crime, arguing that the busts' shared manufacture "must tell against the theory that the man who breaks them is influenced by a general hatred of Napoleon," suggesting that "it is too much to suppose such a coincidence as that a promiscuous iconoclast should chance to begin upon three specimens of the same bust" (Doyle 44). Yet at this early point in the story, it is by no means clear that his reasoning is correct. Lestrade convincingly rebuts this view, arguing that Morse Hudson, the retailer to whom the first three busts were traced, "is the purveyor of busts in that part of London, and these three were the only ones which had been in his shop for years. So, although, as you say, there are hundreds of statues in London, it is very probable that these three were the only ones in that district. Therefore, a local fanatic would begin with them" (Doyle 45). Given that the story is full of Napoleon admirers who collect busts, it seems possible that their destruction is indeed motivated by hatred.

When a dead body is discovered at the scene of the fourth broken bust, Lestrade focuses on the human victim, since the seriousness of the murder now throws the thefts into relief: "The busts! You can get those busts out of your head. After all, that is nothing; petty larceny, six months at the most. It is the murder that we are really investigating" (Doyle 64). Holmes, however, is struck by the fact that "[t]he possession of this trifling bust was worth more in the eyes of this strange criminal than a human

life," and takes the busts seriously as the key to the crime (Doyle 52). He traces the busts to their source—the manufacturer Mr. Gelder, who confirms, "the three which had been sent to Morse Hudson a year or so before had been half a batch of six, the other three being sent to Harding Brothers, of Kensington. There was no reason those six should be different to any of the other casts" (Doyle 58).

Although Lestrade identifies the dead man as an Italian mobster, Holmes's object-oriented approach solves the mystery. Holmes stakes out the home of the owner of one of the two remaining busts and apprehends the perpetrator in the act. Later that day, he purchases the final outstanding bust from its owner and then "picked up his hunting-crop and struck Napoleon a sharp blow on the top of the head," breaking the bust into shards, ultimately finding "one splinter, in which a dark, round object was fixed like a plum in a pudding" (Doyle 74). Holmes identifies the object as "the famous black pearl of the Borgias," which disappeared from "the Prince of Colonna's bedroom at the Dacre Hotel . . . . You will remember, Lestrade, the sensation caused by the disappearance of this valuable jewel, and the vain efforts of the London police to recover it" (Doyle 74, 75). Holmes explains that several Italian mobsters had conspired to steal the pearl and conceal it within one of the six Napoleon busts then drying at Gelder's factory, and had later begun killing each other over the proceeds of the crime.

The solution to this mystery lies not in the world-historical acts of Napoleon, but rather in the modern, apolitical realm of European aristocratic and criminal circles. Dramatizing the possibility that H. feared in *Liber Amoris*, "The Six Napoleons" sees the bust being entirely repurposed for uses that have nothing to do with Napoleon. By the dawn of the twentieth century, as the Napoleonic past grew increasingly distant,

Napoleon memorabilia could serve many purposes, including that of literal and figurative vessel to conceal stolen property. Yet it retained the ability to invoke the idea of roads not taken. Napoleon proves irrelevant to this crime, but not, I argue, to this text. Through the investigative process, we see the deliberately comic saturation of Napoleon admirers and Napoleon busts in London as a kind of oblique reference to Napoleon's threatened invasion.

Appearing around the same time as Doyle's story, the memoirs of Charles Shaw, the former child potter, express ambivalence about the potential political significance of Napoleon figurines, even as early as the 1840s.[106] At first, the figures prompt Shaw's wonder about the profound shift in Napoleon's legacy over time:

> It was curious how a man who thirty years before had been a veritable ogre and demon to the English people should now have become so popular. If all the Napoleons made at this toy factory could have had life given them, then England, if not invaded, would have been crowned by military Frenchmen, and of the dreaded Napoleonic type. I remember looking pensively at the figure many times, and wondering about all he had been a generation before, and of which I had heard so much (C. Shaw 125).

In marveling at how completely Napoleon's reputation has changed, Shaw also gestures toward the unrealized possibility of Napoleon's potential invasion. Here again, the encounter with the Napoleonic figurine prompts reflection on never-actualized alternative courses of history that hinge on his bodily presence in a particular place. While these

[106] Charles Shaw (1832-1906) first wrote about his experiences as a child laborer in Staffordshire potteries in a series of anonymous articles by "An Old Potter" that appeared in the *Staffordshire Sentinel* in 1892 and 1893. These were later expanded into the book *When I Was a Child* (1903) (Burnett xi; Fyson).

objects prompt Shaw to think about the historical process, they also prove remarkably empty of political significance. He observes: "It is difficult *in these days* to realize how the terror of Napoleon had saturated the minds of the lower classes of England. Yet, as I looked at the figure, it *only then* represented a name" (C. Shaw 125; emphasis mine). At first, speaking from the perspective of the 1890s, Shaw acknowledges the difficulty of grasping in the present what he knows to be true about the past. Yet the next sentence takes this sentiment even further—returning his narration to the 1840s, Shaw suggests that even then, only a generation removed, the statues had already lost their ability to signify anything beyond a name.

V. Napoleon as Marionette

Whereas texts about Napoleon busts and figurines, like "The Adventure of the Six Napoleons" and *Liber Amoris*, can take place in the present, another group of Victorian texts depicts encounters with effigies and marionettes that represent the Napoleonic past. As a form of historical fiction wherein Napoleon was represented indirectly, these texts are even more conducive than texts about memorabilia to presenting Napoleon's body as a disunified collection of parts. For example, in *Pictures from Italy* (1846), Charles Dickens describes seeing a marionette performance that depicts Napoleon's body as comprised of constituent parts that take on independent agency. Contrasting it with Genoa's otherwise mediocre theatrical offerings, Dickens is riveted by a marionette performance called "St. Helena, or The Death of Napoleon," which he describes as "the drollest exhibition I ever beheld in my life," "exquisitely ridiculous," and "unspeakably ludicrous" (Dickens 68, 71). In its artistry, marionette performance inherently highlights

the relationship of body parts to each other, as the audience watches in the knowledge that the movements of the marionette's body are abstracted to a different set of physical manipulations offstage. Describing a different marionette show, Dickens observes of one puppeteer, "[t]here never was such a locomotive actor, since the world began. Great pains are taken with him. He has extra joints in his legs: and a practical eye, with which he winks at the pit. . . . He continually shakes his legs, and winks his eye" (Dickens 68).

"St. Helena," in particular, exploits the genre's tendency to depict the body as composed of multiple, potentially independent parts. Napoleon is depicted "with an immense head," while his overseer and nemesis during his captivity, Sir Hudson Lowe, "(that you could have seen his regimentals!) was a perfect mammoth of a man, to Napoleon; hideously ugly; with a monstrously disproportionate face, and a great clump for the lower-jaw, to express his tyrannical and obdurate nature" (Dickens 69-70). Later, the doctor, "represented by a puppet with long lank hair, . . . in consequence of some derangement of his wires, hovered about the couch like a vulture, and gave medical opinions in the air" (Dickens 72). And finally, on his deathbed, Napoleon lies "with an immense collar to his shirt, and his little hands outside the coverlet" (Dickens 71).

These grotesque, disproportionate bodies are only the beginning of the way the performance presents the historical agent as fractured. Dickens describes:

> Buonaparte's boots were so wonderfully beyond control, and did such marvelous things of their own accord: doubling themselves up, and getting under tables, and dangling in the air, and sometimes skating away with him, out of all human knowledge, when he was in full speech—mischances which were not rendered the less absurd, by a settled

melancholy depicted on his face (Dickens 71).

Taking on a life of their own, Napoleon's boots operate independently from the rest of his body, creating internal contradictions between the actions of the boots, the actions of the other body parts, his words, and his melancholy facial expression. Like Sala's account of the Louvre, and appearing a decade earlier, Dickens's description of this performance identifies Napoleon's boots specifically as a vector of historical causality, suggesting that agency is distributed across the body, and remains multiple and chaotic.

Although the marionette performance is a kind of historical fiction that depicts 1821 in 1846, Dickens's account is equally interested in the contemporary Genoese audience's response, which reveals the overdetermination of Napoleon as a political symbol and the transferability of feelings toward him. The Italian audience is delighted by the performance's rendering of the petty squabbles of Napoleon and Sir Hudson Lowe, over, for example, whether the former should be addressed as "the Emperor Napoleon" or "General Buonaparte," recasting this bitter proxy war as absurdist comedy. Dickens both shares this response and is slightly confused by it. He notes that the audience was "perfectly delighted to have Low [*sic*] bullied; and . . . quite execrated him. It would be hard to say why, for Italians have little cause to sympathize with Napoleon, Heaven knows" (Dickens 70). He suggests that this strange response may be the consequence of the dynamic between the fictionalized characters. Whereas Napoleon's heroism is farcical—he is obstinate and petty, faints in public, and dies with the word "Vatterlo" on his lips—Lowe's performance is "great at all times—a decided brute and villain, beyond all possibility of mistake" (Dickens 71, 72).

Yet Dickens also suggests another explanation, remarking at the "uncommonly

hard and cruel character of the audience . . . But, as there is nothing else of a public nature at which they are allowed to express the least disapprobation, perhaps they are resolved to make the most of this opportunity" (Dickens 67). Although Dickens suggests that their response reflects other frustrations in local civic life, in fact, Napoleon's image appeared to fill a similar function in working-class British entertainment. Writing in 1856, the Liverpool journalist Hugh Shimmin, for example, describes a

> 'Royal Shooting Gallery,' the target of which is composed of the portraits of the Queen, Prince Albert, the Emperor Napoleon, and the Duke of Wellington, and for the low charge of one halfpenny we had the chance of improving our position and practicing our loyalty, shooting our Queen and pocketing the nuts ([Shimmin] 3).

Whereas Dickens remains ambivalent about the Italian audience's sympathy for Napoleon, Shimmin is disturbed by the destructive impulse suggested by the shooting gallery. Napoleon's incongruous place among Victoria, Albert, and Wellington reflects the same confusing political illogic that shapes the early theories of the crime in "The Six Napoleons." In these texts, the transferability of sentiments allows the story of Napoleon to serve as an outlet for other anxieties.

VI. Napoleon as Rag Doll

Thomas Hardy's *The Dynasts: an Epic-Drama of the War with Napoleon, in Three Parts, Nineteen Acts, & One Hundred & Thirty Scenes, the Time Covered by the Action Being About Ten Years* (1903-1908), is a generically indeterminate rendering of the Napoleonic Wars that combines elements of drama, epic, and historical novel.

Hardy's text has a cast of hundreds of named individuals, in addition to thousands of undifferentiated troops whose intricate movements are described in dense stage directions, or "Dumb Shows," that engage in dizzying shifts of perspective.[107] The main action, furthermore, is framed and commented upon by an "Overworld" of spirits.[108] Unlike the other texts considered in this chapter, and to a greater extent, even, than *War and Peace*, *The Dynasts* is a literary reimagination of well-document, nonfictional historical scenes. In the Preface, Hardy perhaps understates the case when he claims that the mammoth work offers "a tolerable fidelity to the facts," paraphrasing real speeches when possible, and relying on "the abundant pages of the historian, the biographer, and the journalist, English and foreign" (Hardy viii).[109]

Although Napoleon is, obviously, a major character in *The Dynasts*, in one scene, crucial for this chapter, he is represented indirectly, when villagers burn an effigy at the stake. Part Three, Act V, Scene 6, set at "Wessex. Dunnover Green, Casterbridge," takes place during the Hundred Days, just after Napoleon has escaped from Elba and is making his way toward Paris. As the scene opens, a rustic arrives to watch Napoleon be burned at

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[107] Hardy's preface indicates that the work is "intended simply for mental performance, and not for the stage," although Marguerite Roberts has detailed Hardy's subsequent cooperation with a theatrical adaptation in 1914 by Harley Granville-Barker, which included the effigy-burning scene, and was revived in 1920 by the Oxford University Dramatic Society (Hardy x; M. Roberts 30-69). Orel describes another adaptation by Hardy himself, focusing on Wessex scenes (Orel 102). Furthermore, *The Dynasts* is obviously proto-cinematic. On this topic, see Joan Grundy and Chester Arthur Garrison (Grundy 117-125; Garrison 187-203). Armstrong calls the poem a "virtual film script" (Armstrong, *Poetry* 488). Tucker "describe[s] the epic innovation here as the replacement of an *objective* narrative viewpoint with a *projective* cinematic one" (Tucker 586).

[108] Susan Dean catalogues the hostility of early critical responses to the Overworld: "the critical consensus has been that the Overworld blocks out whatever drama was inherent in the history dramatized on the world stage below" (Dean 35). Keith Wilson understands the spirits to be "at core quintessential embodiments of various possible human responses to existence," and traces connections between the seemingly distinct spirit and human worlds (K. Wilson, "Flower" 124). Herbert Tucker calls the spirits "ghost readers" who not only "introduce, conclude, and irreverently punctuate the constituent scenes of *The Dynasts*" but also "forestall our proper epic honors of witness and response by acting them out right in front of us" (Tucker 585)

[109] On Hardy's many sources for *The Dynasts*, see Emma Clifford.

the stake, assuming that the man himself is to be killed: "shall I zee en die? I wanted to zee if he'd die hard" (Hardy 3.5.6.450).[110] With great disappointment, the rustic, who has lost work by travelling to Casterbridge for the burning, discovers that the effigy is composed of old garments. A woman explains: "This is only a mommet they've made of him, that's got neither chine nor chitlings. His innerds be only a lock of straw from Bridle's barton" (Hardy 3.5.6.450). Then, Solomon Longways elaborates: "He's made, neighbor, of a' old cast jacket and breeches from our barracks here. Likeways Grammer Pawle gave us Cap'n Meggs's old Zunday shirt that she'd saved for tinder-box linnit; and Keeper Tricksey of Mellstock emptied his powder-horn into a barm-bladder, to make his heart wi'" (Hardy 3.5.6.450). Although the villagers distinguish their effigy from the real Napoleon by explaining to the rustic that it has no innards, in fact the effigy is more anatomically accurate than strictly necessary in that it has a heart.

Here again, Napoleon's body becomes a prompt to meditate on the plausibility of other courses of history. The rustic is operating under the false assumption that Napoleon's ship has been intercepted. He "thought, to be sure I did, that that he'd been catched sailing from his islant and landed at Budmouth and brought to Casterbridge Jail, the natural retreat of malefactors!" (Hardy 3.5.6.450). The other villagers are surprised at the provincialism of the rustic's suggestion that Napoleon might, even temporarily, be incarcerated in the local jail, alongside malefactors considerably less world-historical. Yet the rustic's suggestion echoes the tense negotiations among the Allies over the appropriate place to imprison Napoleon the first time, and the acrimonious partisan bickering in Britain over the material conditions of Napoleon's final imprisonment.

Although *The Dynasts* does not depict the decision to send Napoleon to Elba,

[110] Following other scholars of *The Dynasts*, my parenthetical citations indicate: Part.Act.Scene.Page.

numerous characters identify this as an important historical crux that set in motion the Hundred Days. In an earlier scene at the opera, as they celebrate the Napoleon's defeat at Leipzig, the King of Prussia remarks, ominously, "I wish Bonaparte himself had been sent farther away," to which the Prince Regent responds, "Some of our Government wanted to pack him off to St. Helena—an island in the Atlantic, or the Pacific, or the Great South Sea. But they were overruled" (Hardy 3.4.8.426). Once Napoleon has escaped and is travelling toward Paris, the disembodied voice of Talleyrand tells those of Alexander and the King of Prussia that they "should have sent him to the Azores, Or the Antilles, or best, Saint-Helena" (Hardy 3.5.2.434). The rustic's seemingly ridiculous belief that Napoleon might be held at Casterbridge Jail serves as a reminder of the way that decisions around Napoleon's incarceration ultimately did have profound consequences.

The other villagers are further surprised at what they see as another mistake in the rustic's reasoning. The vicar asks: "My dear misguided man, you don't imagine that we should be so inhuman in this Christian country as to burn a fellow-creature alive?" (Hardy 3.5.6.450-51). But the rustic is unfazed:

> Faith, I won't say I didn't! Durnover folk have never had the highest of Christian characters, come to that. And I didn't know but that even a pa'son might backslide to such things in these gory times—I won't say on a Zunday, but on a week-night like this—when we think what a blasphemious rascal he is, and that there's not a more charnel-minded villain towards womenfolk in the whole world (Hardy 3.5.6.451).

Mistaken as these claims seem to others, they are a reminder of the debates over

assassination, depicted earlier in the work, that persisted throughout Napoleon's career, indeed a "gory time" that prompted the consideration of extreme actions (Hardy 2.1.1.146; Semmel 125-132). The rumor of Napoleon's burning has prompted the rustic to think through the relative plausibility of courses of events that seem completely impossible to other characters, and perhaps to the reader as well. Yet his seemingly far-fetched theory is given additional credence just afterward, when a mail carriage arrives with news from abroad, including the announcement that the government has now ordered that "Anybody may take [Napoleon's] life in any way, foul or fair, and no questions asked" (Hardy 3.5.6.451). Thus, if by some turn of events Napoleon had been captured and brought to Casterbridge Jail, burning him at the stake would have been entirely lawful.

In this scene, unlike *Pictures from Italy* or "The Six Napoleons," there is no question as to what the Napoleon effigy truly represents—the text makes explicit and disturbing the violence that is implicit and ironic in other literary destructions of Napoleon's image. Although no one is actually burned alive, the destruction of the effigy is remarkably violent and overdetermined: the mommet is first hung from a gallows, then set on fire, and finally exploded, once flames reach the gunpowder contained in the heart. Destroying Napoleon's body in numerous ways, this scene imagines multiple possibilities for Napoleon's downfall. While the hanging and burning at the stake might suggest a crude form of justice that reestablishes external order, the exploding heart might suggest some sort of internal cause. One suspects that the vicar is correct that the people of Dunnover might not actually burn the real Napoleon alive if somehow given the chance, and that the ritual serves as an outlet for their anxiety at a frightening time. Yet the scene

demonstrates the way that Napoleon's body, understood as a composite of disunified parts vulnerable to different threats, becomes a vector for the consideration of historical contingency.

The multiplicity of historical possibilities located in the body of one man in the burning effigy scene is atypical of *The Dynasts* as a whole, which relies heavily on web metaphors that present historical agency as collaborative and mechanized. The Spirit of the Years explains:

> Thus do the mindless minions of the spell
> In mechanized enchantment sway and show
> A Will that wills above the will of each,
> Yet but the will of all conjunctively;
> A fabric of excitement, web of rage,
> That permeates as one stuff the weltering whole (Hardy 3.1.5.344).

In *The Dynasts,* the course of history is the expression of the Immanent Will, although the Will's exact nature is uncertain and debated. As Keith Wilson has noted, *The Dynasts* uses interchangeably two mutually inconsistent metaphors for the Will: in the first, the Will is a personified prime mover, and thus individual human actors have absolutely no free will; in the second, the Will is an amalgam of innumerable individual wills, and thus the individual has some extremely limited agency to alter their immediate circumstances (K. Wilson, "Problems" 183-184).[111]

[111] Early critics identified Arthur Schopenhauer's *The World as Will and Representation* as a major influence on Hardy, although Hardy himself denied this, and the level of his debt to Schopenhauer has since been questioned (Orel 23-25). Clifford has traced Hardy's borrowings and adaptations of passages from *War and Peace,* including in the excerpt quoted above (Clifford 36). As she notes, Hardy mainly used *War and Peace* as a source of facts, although the pencil markings in his copy of the N. H. Dole translation reflect an interest in Tolstoy's view of human free will within the course of history (Clifford 37, 34).

Regardless, individual free will within the web of the Immanent Will is at best strictly limited in *The Dynasts*, even for leaders like Wellington and Napoleon.[112] A stage direction on the morning of the Battle of Waterloo makes literal the way they are enmeshed in the web: "A transparency . . . pervades the spectacle, and the ubiquitous urging of the Immanent Will becomes visualized. The web connecting all the apparently separate shapes includes Wellington in its tissue with the rest, and shows him, like them, as acting while discovering his intention to act" (Hardy 3.7.7.505). Napoleon, too, is woven into the web, although as Herbert Tucker notes, Napoleon has a "unique affiliation with the Immanent Will, of whose workings he alone throughout the poem becomes repeatedly if fitfully aware" (Tucker 596). Indeed, Napoleon observes and occasionally attempts to resist the workings of the Will, such as when he declares:

> History makes use of me to weave her web
> To her long while aforetime-figured mesh
> And contemplated charactery: no more" (Hardy 3.1.1.330).

Although *The Dynasts* is a literary work and not a treatise on the philosophy of history, it does offer a largely internally consistent and highly deterministic theory of history. Yet the effigy-burning scene, unique within the work for its second-order representation of Napoleon, asks us to consider whether alternatives were possible. *The Dynasts* thus brings full circle several of the developments traced in this chapter. In using a second-order representation of Napoleon, with a composite structure, to prompt optative speculation about "what if," *The Dynasts* retroactively establishes the moment of origin when Napoleon's body began to be understood as a locus of alternative historical possibilities. From a temporal perspective belated by nearly a century, it attempts to

[112] See Jacob Korg for a reading that emphasizes a nearly total lack of individual free will in *The Dynasts*.

recreate the role of Napoleon effigies at an originary moment, but also reads back onto the past the understanding of Napoleon's body, developed in the years since his death, as fragmentary in a way that exposes alternative, never-actualized courses of history.

Conclusion

Like the marionette performance Dickens sees in Genoa, the effigy of Napoleon that appears in *The Dynasts* is a classic example of the grotesque, inherently drawing attention to the body as an uneasy union of disparate parts.[113] But, like the clothing that Sala ponders at the Louvre, it also operates on a temporality unmoored from the human. Composed of old garments and leftover straw, and then dramatically destroyed years before Napoleon's anticlimactic death on St. Helena, the effigy imagines an alternative timeline. Although the reading of Napoleon's body as composite is most obvious in texts that respond to grotesque objects, it also appears in texts that represent neoclassical, idealized Napoleon effigies that belong to Stewart's aesthetic category of the miniature—objects that reflect Napoleon's visual iconography of clothing and weaponry. The understanding of Napoleon's body as an amalgam of parts is thus an aesthetic feature of Victorian busts and effigies, but it is also a persistent way of looking at them.

This way of reading Napoleon's body allows, in these texts, for imaginative meditation on historical roads not taken, where alternative possibilities are located in the body and its accoutrements. In a strangely literal way, these texts ponder the Napoleon complex—asking whether it is possible that Napoleon's short stature, in and of itself, had some sort of causal role in history. Only these texts consider a wide variety of object-

[113] See Armstrong for a reading of *The Dynasts* as a late example of the grotesque tradition in Victorian poetry (Armstrong, *Poetry* 484-488).

oriented and embodied causes beyond height, seeing a possible historical crux in whether Napoleon had boots as a child, where he was imprisoned, or the shape of his hat. These texts provide a way for nineteenth-century Britons to ask: to what extent is the course of history shaped by the body and its accoutrements over and above the historical actor they contain?

CONCLUSION

Did the Regency that the Victorians invented survive the Victorians? In her 1925 essay, "Harriette Wilson," Virginia Woolf uses Wilson's career to suggest that women live in one of two sharply divided worlds, using a spatial metaphor to sketch the implications of women's sexual and social choices:

> Across the broad continent of a woman's life falls the shadow of a sword. On one side, all is correct, definite, orderly; the paths are strait, the trees regular, the sun shaded; escorted by gentlemen, protected by policemen, wedded and buried by clergymen, she has only to walk demurely from cradle to grave and no one will touch a hair of her head. But on the other side, all is confusion. Nothing follows a regular course. The paths wind between bogs and precipices. The trees roar and rock and fall in ruin (Woolf 179).

Wilson, no surprise, lived on the disordered side and seems to embody its chaotic, unpredictable variety of experience. While women live on one side or the other, men pass freely between them, and the disordered side brings together men from different levels of society: "what strange company is to be met—in what bewildering variety! Stone-masons hobnob with Dukes of the blood royal—Mr. Blore treads on the heels of his Grace the Duke of Argyll. Byron rambles through, the Duke of Wellington marches in with his

orders on him" (Woolf 179).

Woolf's point is not about the past—Wilson's moment is no different from any other. Yet in touching down on the Regency to illustrate this timeless truth, Woolf demonstrates the way that Victorian stereotypes about the Regency persisted into the twentieth century. Like *Vanity Fair* and *The Trumpet-Major*, Woolf's essay represents the Regency as characterized by fleeting encounters with fame. The modest Mr. Blore jostles up again the Duke of Argyll, their contrasting social stations belying their common fate—to be footnoted in the historical record for their association with Wilson. Woolf's reader, too, is put in the position to encounter diverse historical figures, juxtaposed in physical space. Although Woolf's two worlds presumably coexist in all eras, her vision of Wilson as wholly unrepentant in the choice to "live[] her life on the shady side of the sword" highlights the association of sexuality with Wilson's moment in particular (Woolf 185). Regency conversation also survives in Woolf's essay, which imagines "those famous entertaining sisters Wilson sitting at home at their ease, sparring and squabbling and joking about their lovers . . . gossiping profanely and larding their chatter with quotations from Shakespeare and Sterne" (Woolf 184-185). Woolf emphasizes the Regency's association with talk and chatter, even as she observes the literary influences on Wilson's self-conscious, contrived speech.

As Woolf's essay demonstrates, Modernist comments on the Regency and Napoleonic Wars reflect many Victorian stereotypes. Yet by 1925, these texts lost the engagement with questions about historical experience, causality, and contingency that animate *Liber Amoris* and *The Dynasts*. We see the twilight of the genre of eyewitness testimony as late as the 1890s, in Gladstone's comments on Murray II and in De Ros's

"Personal Recollections" of Wellington. By around 1900, however, generational shift meant that the early nineteenth century could no longer be the subject of as many different kinds of texts about the past, or the battleground of competing modes of historical knowledge. New wars in Africa and Europe were pushing the memory of Napoleon further into the background and intervening in debates over philosophies of history. Once the Victorian period itself entered a grey zone between memory and history, the Regency was no longer an immediate predecessor.

In texts like G. K. Chesterton's *The Napoleon of Notting Hill* (1904) and Henry James's *The Sense of the Past* (1917), we see how Victorian tropes about the Regency are slowly evacuated of historiographical significance. Indeed, Chesterton's novel takes place in the future, but is engaged with several different historical eras. Set in 1984 under the rule of a sadistic king with a love of medieval pageantry, the novel presents the Provost of Notting Hill as a kind of Napoleonic figure who resists incursions into his territory, although the text's references to history are complicated and ambiguous. Whereas Chesterton's novel seems to be making an elusive point about historical progress, James's *The Sense of the Past* hollows out the historical specificity of the early nineteenth century even further. Left unfinished upon James's death, the novel focuses on a twentieth-century American man who travels back in time to the early nineteenth century upon stepping across the threshold of his ancestral home in London—a timeless love story follows. James's text suggests the way that furniture and buildings outlive human actors and bear witness to historical changes. When the novel was adapted into a successful play and film, *Berkeley Square*, the theatrical setting further developed the text's suggestion that history inheres in clothing and architecture.

As the twentieth century continued, the Regency period's old association with sexuality evolved into a link between the Regency and romance, facilitated by the growth of the cult of Jane Austen. Provincial courtship took the place of metropolitan sexual scandal in representations of the Regency. The popular genre of the Regency romance, inaugurated in the 1930s and 1940s by the novels of Georgette Heyer, used the historical setting primarily as a backdrop for the courtship plot. In *Regency Buck* (1935), for example, Beau Brummell even appears, stripped of his caustic wit, offering heroines helpful advice on fashion, allowing them to advance themselves socially (Sales 76). Although Heyer's is certainly a "weak" historicism, the importance of the Regency in the setting and marketing of these novels reveals how this period in particular had become a way to aestheticize historical changes in courtship practices. As a category of romance novel with a historical setting, the Victorian sense of the Regency has proved long lasting.

At the same time that the Regency was recreated as a site of romance for female readers in Heyer's novels, the Napoleonic Wars were rewritten for male readers in the Horatio Hornblower novels of C. S. Forester. Forester's adventure stories about a Royal Navy officer use history as a source of drama, in Harry Shaw's sense. *The Happy Return* (1937), for example, hinges on the kind of differential experiences of time that we see in *Vanity Fair* and *The Trumpet-Major*. Having been out of communication while at sea on a secret mission, Hornblower supports a native uprising against the Spanish in Central America, unaware that Spain has recently become Britain's ally in the struggle against Napoleon. Once brought up to date with the most recent intelligence, Hornblower spends the rest of the novel rectifying this mistake. Although the historical specificity of the

context is limited in the Hornblower novels, it is the legacy of Victorian treatments of the Napoleonic Wars that allows the plot to dramatize the lapse of time in the communication of key information. The history of the Napoleonic Wars thus survives as a place to think about the unfolding of knowledge over time, and about the adventure of being embedded in history.

Napoleon's legacy was remade by the Second World War, but he has continued to be a cipher that cuts across ideological lines (Semmel 239). Napoleon remains a hero of self-made men, including the villainous Henry Potter in Frank Capra's film, *It's a Wonderful Life* (1946). Like Doyle's Dr. Barnicot, Potter displays busts of Napoleon in both his home and office, and in one scene, Napoleon's bust looms over the protagonist George Bailey as he begs Potter for a loan. Napoleon's presence in this film illustrates his ongoing association with counterfactual speculation. The end of the film features an extended sequence that explores what the town would be like without George, complete with wartime implications—if George had never been born, he would not have saved the life of his brother, who would not have saved the lives of a group of American soldiers by shooting down a Nazi plane just before it could drop a bomb. Even before this sequence, however, the film fixates on roads not taken in George's life, and we see his feelings of regret at not being able to get out of Bedford Falls and see the world. The scene in which George begs for the loan as Napoleon's bust sits on a pedestal behind him recalls the earlier moment when George declined Potter's offer of a well-paying job out of a sense of duty to the working-class community he served at the Savings and Loan Corporation. Napoleon thus reappears as a symbol of the counterfactual and of the multiplicity of possible historical roads. Although for George, these roads-not-taken seem personal, they

are not without public consequences—for the people of Bedford Falls and for the war effort.

Does the Regency that the Victorians invented survive for us? In literary scholarship, the Regency period has largely been subsumed into the Romantic period of the late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries, and the term "Regency" has clear limitations a way to denote an era of literary history. First, it is too short. Defined narrowly by the Regency of the future George IV, this brief nine-year window between 1811 and 1820 is difficult to distinguish socially and culturally from what came before and after. Its connections to literary history seem strongest in the case of women's court memoir, a genre whose thematic and formal elements changed markedly as a consequence of the new regime (Culley, "Prying" 148). Even Regency court memoirs like Charlotte Bury's *Diary Illustrative of the Times of George IV* (1838) and Cornelia Knight's *Autobiography* (1861), however, often appeared years after the Regency ended, and few literary lives were neatly encompassed by the Regency's tight boundaries. In studies of those authors whose publishing careers have the fullest temporal overlap with the Regency—Austen, Byron, Keats, and Shelley—the term appears only intermittently, in studies that see their works responding to contemporary court scandals, such as Roger Sales's reading of *Mansfield Park* as a retelling of the Regency Crisis of 1810-1811. Indeed, the major works of Romantic poetry, including those written during the Regency period, famously sublimate their social and political contexts in complicated ways. Even as scholarship has worked to uncover the topicality of Romantic poetry, Regency court politics has been but one of many relevant contexts for the literature of the 1810s.

Because the Regency period was technically so brief and yet has seemed to reflect

a larger social and cultural milieu, some literary scholarship has begun using the term more loosely, with or without a detailed justification. Sales observes that "[a] more general, but nevertheless still acceptable, definition would include the decade immediately before the [Regency] Crisis as well as George IV's reign, which lasted until 1830" (Sales xv). Similarly, the *Keats-Shelley Journal* appears to use the term to indicate the latter half of the Romantic period, ranging from about 1800 through the early 1830s. As Anne Mellor suggests, a shift in mores between the earlier and later parts of the Romantic period—she places it around 1810—may have been especially consequential for women writers (Mellor 43).

Elsewhere, rather than distinguish late from early Romanticism, the term Regency has been used to illuminate the complicated temporalities of Romantic-period publishing careers. For example, J. Andrew Hubbell demonstrates how Shelley's *Laon and Cyntha* (1817) relies on a rhetoric of youth and age in its engagement with Wordsworth's *Excursion* (1815), setting up a "diachronic narrative of first and second generations" of Romanticism, when in fact Shelley and Wordsworth were contemporaries whose "synchronous Regency productions" respond to similar problems and issues (Hubbell 197). As Hubbell's work reflects, the brevity of the Regency period, rather than indicating its unimportance, allows it to complicate our narratives of literary history.

A second limitation to the Regency as a period term is that it has seemed regressive to organize cultural and literary history around the lives of monarchs. As invented by the Victorians, and perhaps inherently as a concept, the Regency period highlights the experiences of a circle of social elites at the expense of everyone else. The choices to periodize in terms of dynastic succession, to emphasize fashionable clothing,

and to imagine counterfactual scenarios for Napoleon's movements, are also choices not to represent the Luddite riots, the horrors of the Waterloo battlefield, the Peterloo massacre, or for that matter, the expansionism of the East India Company and the persistence of slavery in Caribbean.

Yet the concept of the Regency throws into relief the contrast between the way scholars theorize the Romantic period as defined by an intellectual movement, but the Victorian period as bounded by the life of a monarch. From a vantage point that tries to survey the nineteenth century as a whole, using the Regency as a period designation is arguably only to apply to the 1810s the same logic that delimits the Victorian period. While the Regency has seemed to privilege certain texts and experiences over others, Romanticism has also been an exclusionary category—whereas the term "Victorian" presumably applies equally to all British texts produced during Victoria's reign, "Romantic" highlights those that share particular formal and ideological features. As Nicholas Halmi has demonstrated, formative definitions of Romanticism as a field are characterized by a persistent tension between purely formal and purely historical criteria (Halmi 365). Although the Regency might seem like a purely historical definition of a literary field, its varied scholarly uses reveal a similar tension, one that animates this dissertation as well. In that context, scholars might rethink the uses and limitations of the Regency as one alternative organizing principle for the study of early-nineteenth-century literature.

Outside of literary scholarship, by contrast, the term "Regency" thrives and retains many of the features imbued by the Victorians. The term has currency in architectural history, as reflected in Jane Rendell's *The Pursuit of Pleasure: Gender,*

Space, and Architecture in Regency London (2002). In discussions of interior and garden design, "Regency" is often a variant of "Georgian." Widely used by collectors, the term Regency is now as much as ever associated with particular aesthetic features in physical objects. This is also evident in representations of the Regency in television and film. Sales observes the way that screen adaptations of Austen's novels engage in a conspicuous "display of period objects," like furnishings and silverware (Sales 18). The Victorian vision of Regency scheming, furthermore, lives on in the BBC sitcom *Blackadder the Third*, which features the adventures and misfortunes of Edmund Blackadder, Esquire, the butler to the fickle and idiotic Prince Regent.

As these popular and scholarly examples indicate, Victorian texts about the Regency period and the Napoleonic Wars raise questions about historical knowledge that continue to inform the way we encounter, study, and represent history. My dissertation's recursive interest in the past thinking about an earlier past recontextualizes our own scholarly project, breaking down the barrier between the historicist scholar and the Victorian subject. Understanding how Victorians theorized their past can bring new insights into the development of the historicisms that we practice as scholars, as well as the status of the nineteenth century past in our present day.

FIGURES

Figure 1

Vignette depicting Lady and Gentleman

Vanity Fair, page 64

Figure 2

Ackermann's hieroglyphic portrait of Napoleon (1813)

Figure 3

The Osmington White Horse (c. 1808)

Figure 4

Head-piece

Chapter XXXV, “Widow and Mother”

Vanity Fair, page 351

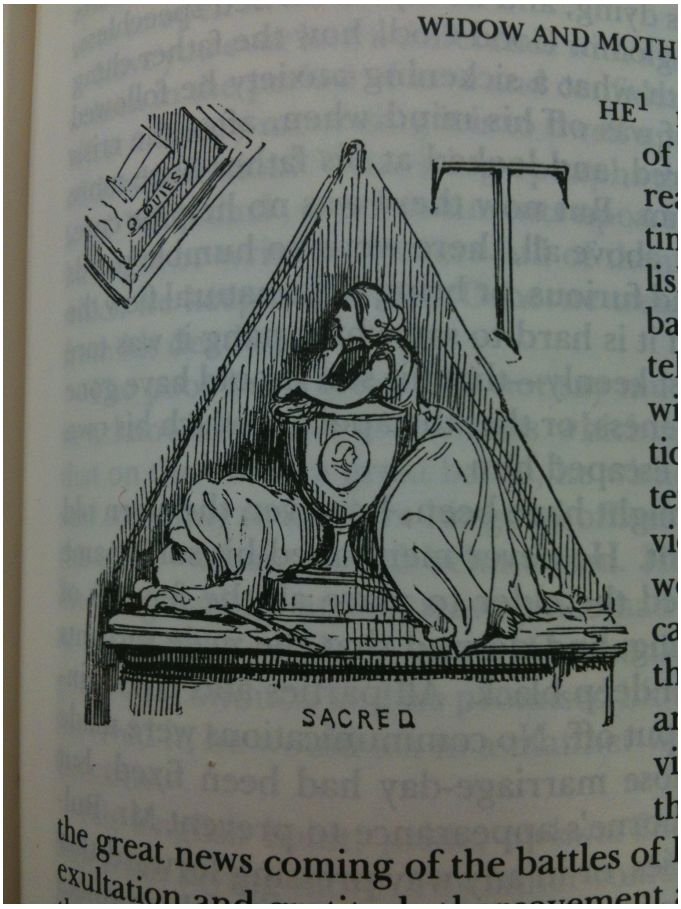


Figure 5

Head-piece

Chapter XLVIII, “In Which the Reader is Introduced to the Very Best of Company”

Vanity Fair, page 473

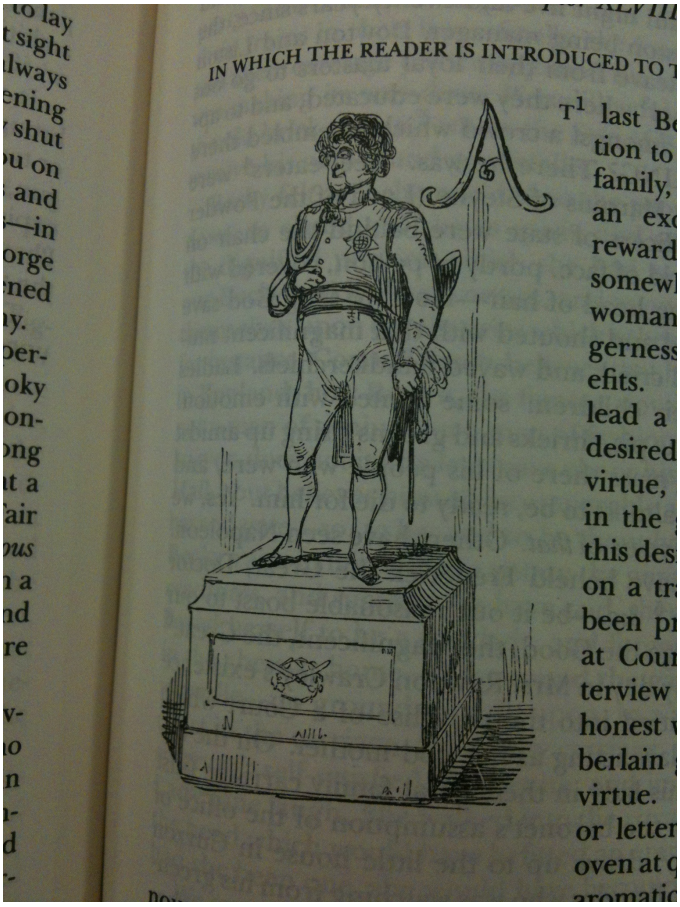
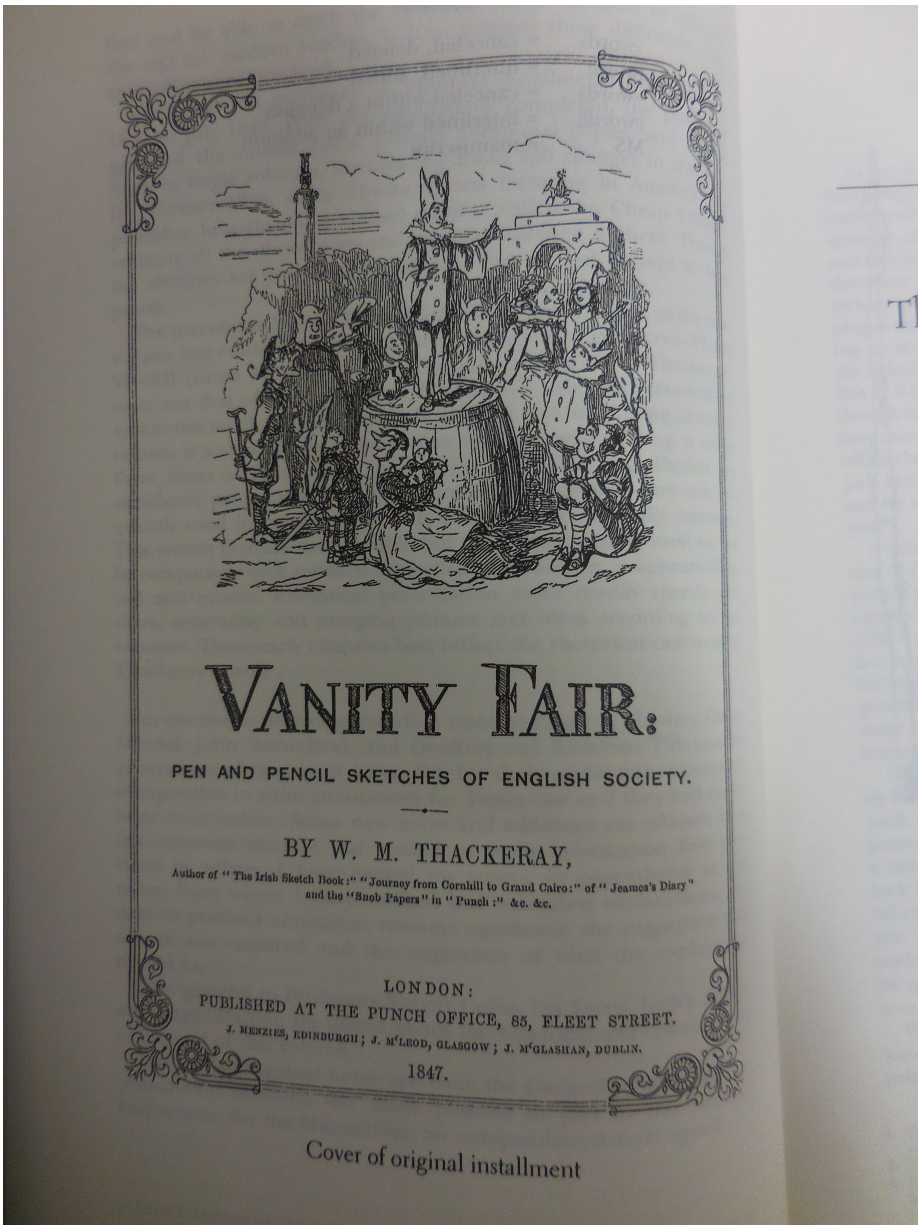


Figure 6

Paper Cover

Vanity Fair



Cover of original installment

Figure 7

Head-piece

Chapter LVI, “Georgy is Made a Gentleman”

Vanity Fair, page 557

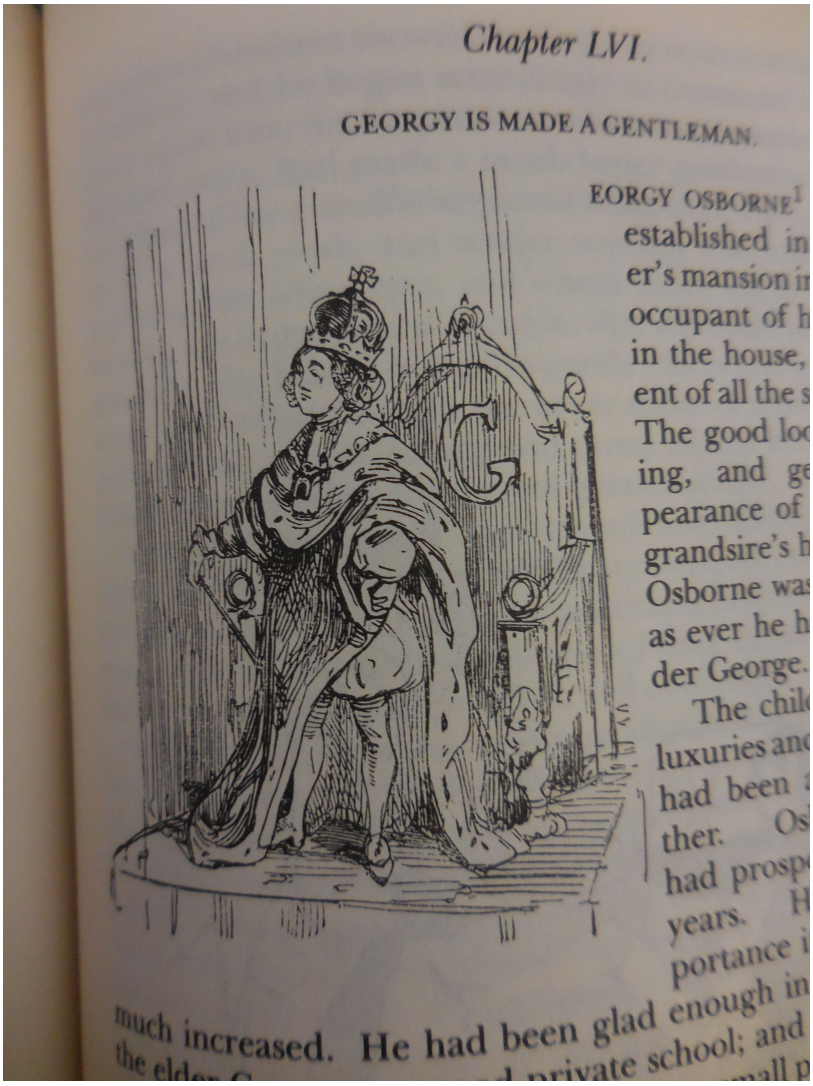


Figure 8

Head-piece

Chapter LXIV, “A Vagabond Chapter”

Vanity Fair, page 637

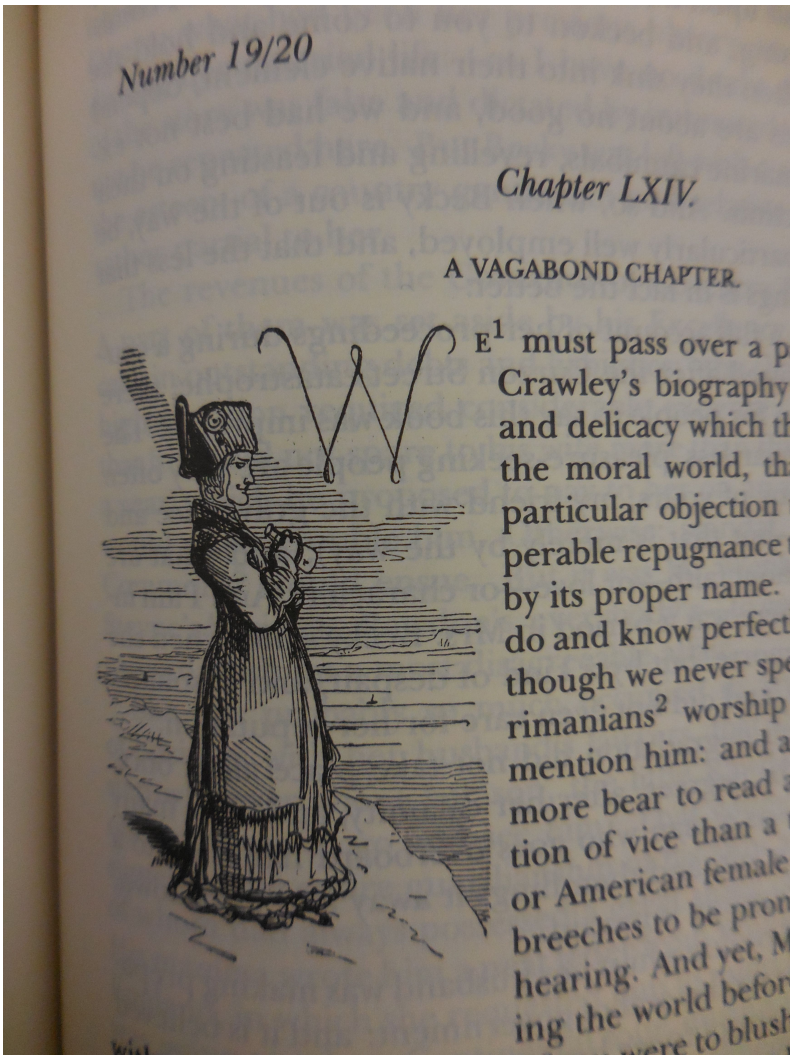


Figure 9

Head-piece

Chapter V, “Dobbin of Ours”

Vanity Fair, page 38

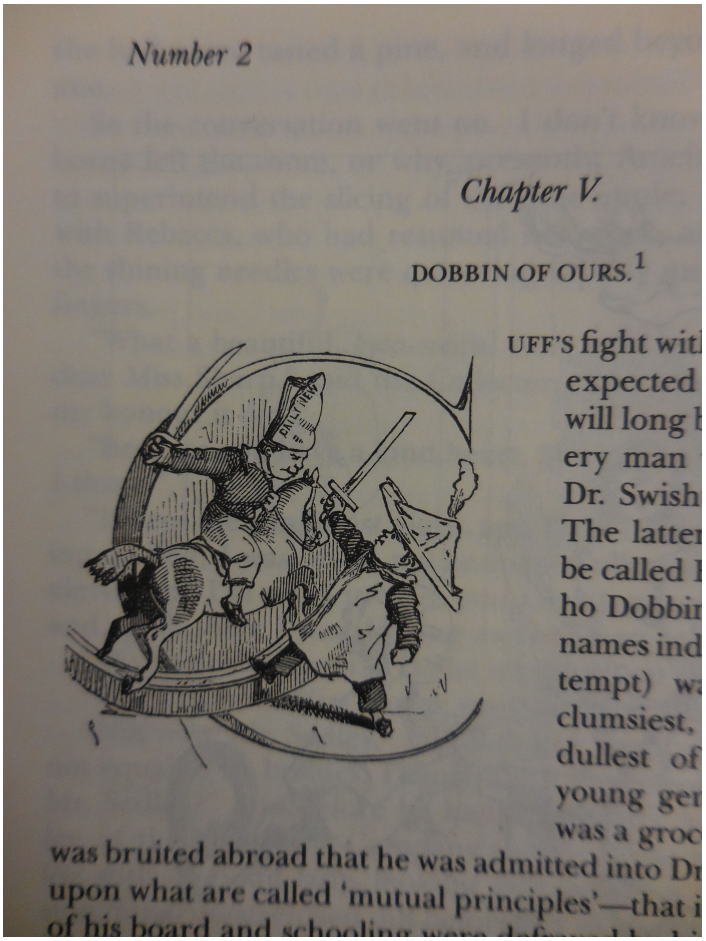


Figure 10

George Hayter (1792-1871), *Wellington Visiting the Effigy of Napoleon* (1852)

Print

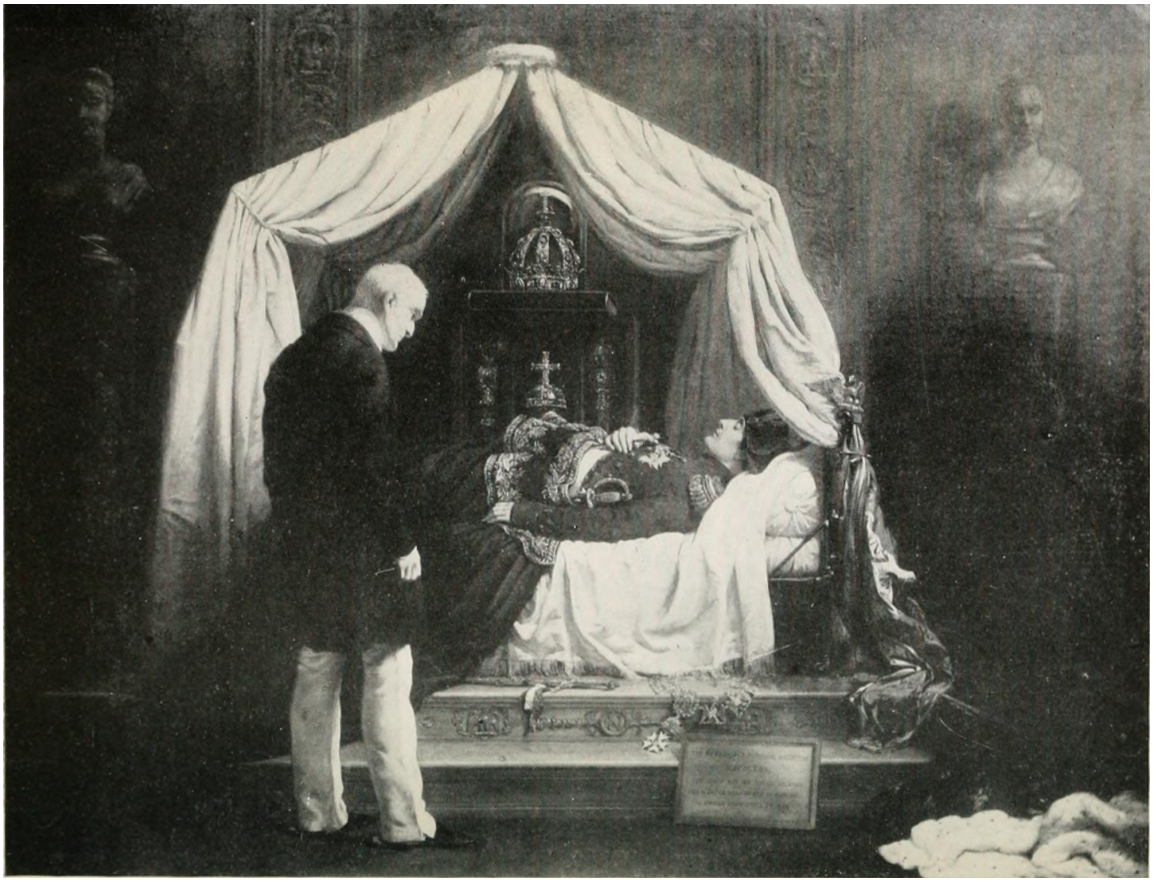


Figure 11

Napoleon I, France 1814-15, Bronze

Wallace Collection, London (S230)

Figure 12

Gold breast-pin containing a lock of Napoleon's hair

National Museums Liverpool (Acc. 4.9.73.51; Gatty #692)

Figure 13

Enameled brooch containing a lock of Napoleon's hair

National Museums Liverpool (Acc. 4.9.73.52; Gatty #693)

Figure 14

Enamel on copper for top of box, depicting Napoleon on Elba

National Museums Liverpool (Acc. M212; Gatty #848)

Figure 15

Portraits of Maria Louisa and Napoleon on Cameo

National Museums Liverpool (Acc. 4.9.73.43; Gatty #684)

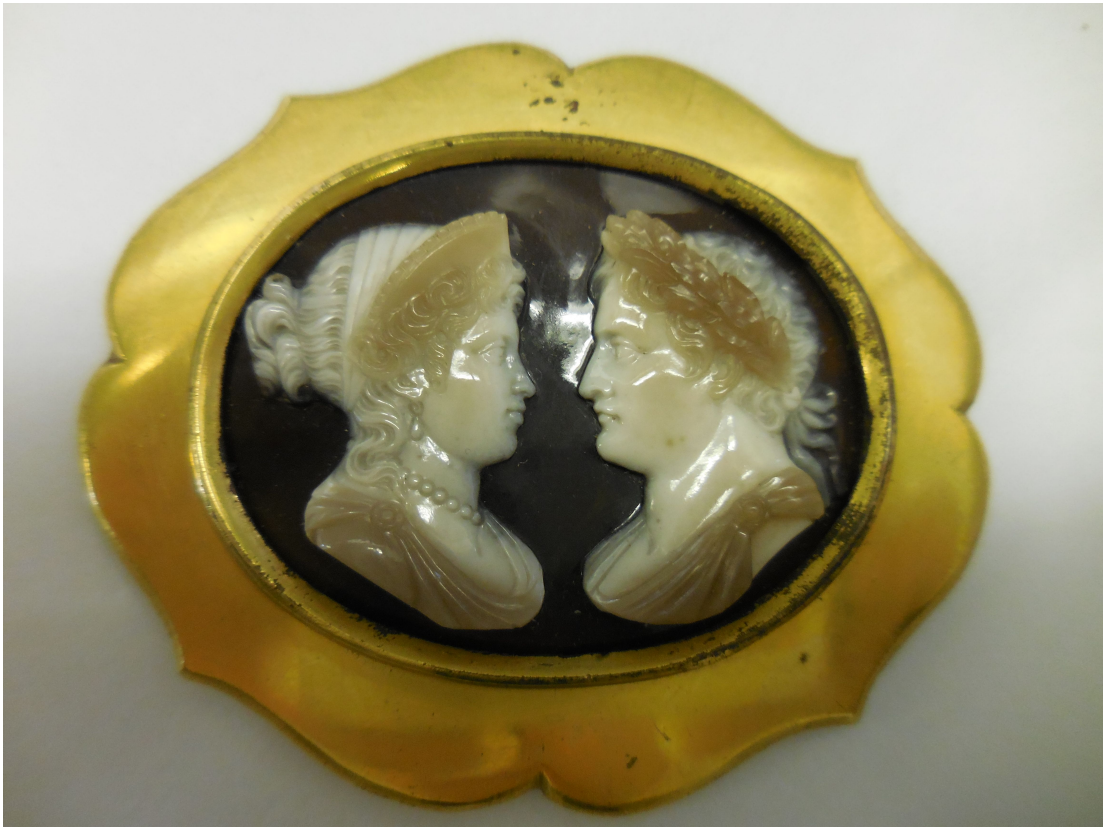


Figure 16

Medal commemorating the Peace of Amiens (front and back)

National Museums Liverpool (Acc.4.9.73.81; Gatty #719)

Figure 17

Gilt-copper seal, with letter “N” (late 1840s)

National Museums Liverpool (Acc. 4.9.73.50; Gatty #691)

Figure 18

Wooden snuff-box

National Museums Liverpool (Acc. M195; Gatty #846)

Figure 19

Portrait ring of Napoleon Bonaparte, enamel

National Museums Liverpool (Acc. 4.9.73.15; Gatty #656)

Figure 20

Ernest Crofts (1847-1911), *Napoleon's Last Grand Attack: Waterloo* (1895)

Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, Montreal (2009.183)

Figure 21

Crofts, *Napoleon's Last Grand Attack: Waterloo*

Detail

Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, Montreal (2009.183)

Figure 22

Antoine-Denis Chaudet (1763-1810), *Napoleon I* (1807-1809)

Victoria and Albert Museum, London

Figure 23

Bertel Thorvalsen (1770-1844), *Apotheosis of Napoleon* (c. 1830)

Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, Montreal (2008.415)

Figure 24

After Antonio Canova (1757-1822), *Napoleon as Mars the Peacemaker* (1802-1806)

Miniature bronze by Francesco Righetti (1749-1819)

Wallace Collection, London (S231)

Figure 25

After Canova, *Napoleon as Mars the Peacemaker*

Snuffbox by Benedetto Pistrucci (1783-1855)

National Museums Liverpool (Acc. 4.9.73.49; Gatty #690)

Figure 26

Jean-Léon Gérôme (1824-1904), *Bonaparte Entrant au Caire* (c. 1897)

Multi-patinated bronze

Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, Montreal (2008.414)

Figure 27

Staffordshire Figurine of Napoleon Bonaparte (c. 1860)

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