“THIS ILL-SHAPED MONSTER”: WRITING THE REPRESENTATION OF THE COMMONS IN PARLIAMENT, 1776-1831

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ABSTRACT

High-profile campaigns to bring about legislative change, by using writing to inform public opinion and by demonstrating that opinion to the House of Commons, generally failed, 1772-1828. Writers were looked to as more responsive effecters of real-world change. They used the figure of the writer as a Member of Parliament to describe what and why (to do what? to whom?) they wrote. By questioning how far Members were elected by and represented the interests of the people, their mandate to legislate, reformers simultaneously opened a critical space in which writers could question their own mandate to write, at a time when it was more possible for women and/or members of lower income groups to live by their pen.

I trace the ways in which the reform debate affected how the writer-as-legislator figure was used by three writers who (a) claimed to apply experimental realistic modes to represent ordinary, private life and (b) subscribed to different reform ideologies. All three pitted a 'rightly'-mandated writer and legislator against a 'wrongly'-mandated writer and legislator, representers of the 'right' against representers of the 'wrong' group's interests in writing and in statutes. William Wordsworth aspired to represent what he abstracted from his subjects' reality, as thinkers and actors in socio-political and -economic contexts. Despite his support for radical reform before 1818, Wordsworth compared such a writer to a Member not elected by the people, who represented his own, party, or electoral supporters' interests. George Crabbe and Maria Edgeworth aspired to represent their subjects' reality and to align themselves with a reformed House of Commons, elected by and representing the interests of a larger subset of the people. These findings dispute Raymond Williams's thesis that the ideal of writing as a representation of subjects' ordinary way of life, their reality, emerged during the mid-nineteenth century.

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DECLARATION

I declare that this thesis is a presentation of original work and I am the sole author. This work has not previously been presented for an award at this, or any other, University. All sources are acknowledged as References.

I will present a paper, entitled 'William Wordsworth and Nature's "ministry | More palpable" in *Lyrical Ballads* (1800) and *The Prelude* (1805)', based on Chapter Three, at the British Association for Romantic Studies Early Career and Postgraduate Researcher Conference 2020.

INTRODUCTION

> I chiefly amused myself with ideas of the change that would be made in the world by the substitution of balloons to ships. I supposed our seaports to become *deserted villages*; and Salisbury-plain, Newmarket-heath, (another canvass for alteration of ideas,) and all downs (but *the* Downs) arising into dock-yards for aërial vessels. [...] In those days Old Sarum will again be a town and have houses in it.
>
> Horace Walpole, letter to Henry Seymour Conway, 15 October 1784[1]

> The [Home Missionary] society it seems has discovered, that there are in this kingdom, 'numerous places, where a short sermon and hurried prayers are all the religious instruction afforded from week to week; that in others, that scanty instruction is only had monthly; in others, quarterly or half yearly, and in others not at all.' But that is not all; they have discovered that there are towns and cities in Great Britain *destitute of the means of salvation*. Perhaps then we may have been hitherto mistaken concerning the site of Old Sarum, and they have found that celebrated city in a state of perfect preservation, fully peopled, and having lost nothing but its religion and its two representatives.
>
> Anonymous, *Quarterly Review*, June 1825[2]

The House of Commons was asked to deliberate how far it was elected by and represented the interests of the Commons in Parliament for the first time in almost a century, only the third time in British history, on 21 March 1776. The bill proposal was quickly thrown out. Surely "the honourable gentleman was not serious?" scoffed First Lord of the Treasury, Frederick North.[3] It would take twenty-six failed

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[1] *The Letters of Horace Walpole, Fourth Earl of Oxford*, ed. by Paget Toynbee, 16 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1903-1905), XIII: *1783-1787* (1905), pp. 199-200.

[2] 'An Abstract of the Annual Reports and Correspondence of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge and the Missionary Register, 1813-1824', Quarterly Review, June 1825, 32.63, pp. 1-42 (pp. 24-25).

[3] *Parliamentary Register; or, History of the Proceedings and Debates of the House of Commons* (London: For J. Almon, 1774-80; John Debrett, 1780-1804; John Stockdale, 1804-12), III (1776), p. 442. The official record of House of Commons' debates and committees comprised Clerks of the Commons' contemporaneous notes and all 'sessional' or 'command papers' throughout this period. We inherit only the outlines of daily business and reprinted papers published as the *Votes and*

attempts, until 22 September 1831, for another parliamentary reform bill to command a majority (and eight more months, one more bill, to convince the House of Lords). The question was fiercely debated within- and out-of-doors throughout the intervening period. However, my aim, here, is not to study how contemporaries constructed different reform ideologies, it is to understand why traces of that debate turned up elsewhere. Why, for example, Walpole and the *Quarterly* reviewer of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge's *Annual Report Abstract* both make use of Old Sarum, Britain's only uninhabited parliamentary constituency, to poke fun at a truth-claim: that gas balloons can/have replaced ships, that some British towns and cities receive no religious instruction.

Jürgen Habermas's *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* (1962, trans. 1989) influentially postulated that seventeenth-century "taxes and duties and, generally, official interventions into the privatized household" spelled the end of "representative public[ity]", in which the monarch, aristocracy, and churchmen used symbols (insignia, dress, demeanour, and rhetoric) to exhibit their status "not for but 'before' the people".[4] They "provoked" a public of private people to engage in rational-critical debate - in letters and in person, but, after the Licensing Act (1685)

Proceedings (and Appendix), *Journals of the House of Commons*, *Reports from Committees of the House of Commons*, and three thematic indices. Proceedings were otherwise recorded informally by Members and reporters for publication in pamphlets, journals, and serial compilations; see H. Hale Bellot and others, 'General Collections of Reports of Parliamentary Debates for the Period since 1660', *Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research*, 10.30 (1933), 171-77. In what follows, I reference proceedings using (a) the *Parliamentary Register* (1774-1812), respectively published by John Almon (1775-80), John Debrett (1780-96, 1796-1804), and John Stockdale (1804-12), and, precursor to the current Official Report (est. 1909), *The Parliamentary Debates from the Year 1803 to the Present Time* (from 1829, *Hansard's Parliamentary Debates*), published by Thomas Curson Hansard (1812-20, 1820-30, 1830-91) or (b) the most detailed journal account extant, unless otherwise stated.

[4] Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*, trans. by Thomas Burger and Frederick Lawrence (Cambridge: Polity; Cambridge: Massachusetts Institute of Technology Press, 1989), pp. 5, 8, 24.

lapsed, principally in print - about the decisions of, from 1688, the King-in-Parliament (p. 24). Historians now tend to date this shift either from the English Civil War (1642-51) or Exclusion Crisis (1679-81), coinciding with two earlier breaks in the Tudor press control system: when the Court of Star Chamber was abolished in 1641 and, thirty-eight years later, parliament failed to renew the Licensing Act (1665). Peter Lake and Steve Pincus have even identified another, "post-Reformation public sphere" or "series of exchanges […] between elements within the regime and their allies, clients, and connections".[5] For our period, we need adjust Habermas's model in two ways only: not only rational-critical debate, but any "exchange […] that allows discourse (and critique) to go on" should qualify;[6] as should the full range of 'published' - in its original sense of "to make public" – writing: print media, together with circulated manuscripts, dramatic performances, artwork, sermons, disputations, parliamentary and judicial proceedings, executions, even rumours.[7]

Habermas went on to argue that parties not in government first tried to inform this newly critical public between 1713 and 1742 using the *British Merchant* (1713-14), *Craftsman* (1726-52) and *Gentleman's Magazine* (1731-1922), institutionalising the press as a "fourth estate"; extra-parliamentary associations started to develop and follow this example after 1768 (p. 60). They both aimed to mobilise demonstrations of critical public opinion capable of influencing parliamentary decision-making. Nevertheless, even if petitions and instructions

[5] Peter Lake and Steve Pincus, 'Rethinking the Public Sphere in Early Modern England', *Journal of British Studies*, 45.2 (2006), 270-92 (pp. 273, 275).
[6] Jon Mee, 'Policing Enthusiasm in the Romantic Period: Literary Periodicals and the "Rational" Public Sphere', in Benchimol, Alex, and Willy Maley, eds., *Spheres of Influence: Intellectual and Cultural Publics from Shakespeare to Habermas* (Peter Lang: International Verlag der Wissenschaften, 2007), pp. 175-95 (p. 176).
[7] 'Publish, v.', in *Oxford English Dictionary Online* <https://www.oed.com> [accessed 17 May 2019]

"forced [Robert] Walpole and his parliamentary majority to [two] concessions", 1733-39 - to (a) give up attempts to levy excise on tobacco and wine and (b) go to war against Spain - such demonstrations were, generally, ineffective before the Ochakov Crisis (1791); monarchs merely "made use" of public Addresses in 1701, 1710, and 1784 to dissolve Parliament, similar Addresses went unheeded between 1768 and 1771 (pp. 64-65).[8] By 1800, the critical public had "evolved into [parliament's] officially designated discussion partner" (p. 66).

The critical public demonstrated its opinion to Members of Parliament, individually or collectively, as legislators. In the 1708-09 and 1772-73 parliamentary sessions studied by Joanna Innes and Julian Hoppit, of all - bar legal appeal and contested election - petitions received by Parliament, most could be "positively linked to a specific piece of legislation".[9] Hoppit has also shown that forty-eight issues elicited at least five petitions in these and seven other sample sessions, 1660-1800; Parliament received a total number of 759 petitions, of which just fifty-eight (8%) were addressed to the House of Lords.[10] Only the right to petition was legalised by (ironically) the 1661 act "against Tumults and Disorders upon Pretence of preparing or presenting publick Petitions";[11] in William Blackstone's words, no Member of Parliament was legally "bound [...] to consult with, or take the advice, of

[8] Habermas mistakenly used the Septennial Repeal Bill, moved by William Bromley, Burgess for Warwick, on 13 March 1734, as an example; however, this Opposition motion was thrown out by a majority of 247 to 184.
[9] Julian Hoppit and Joanna Innes, 'Introduction', in Hoppit, *Failed Legislation 1660-1800* (London: Hambledon Press, 1997), pp. 1-24 (p. 20).
[10] Julian Hoppit, *Britain's Political Economies: Parliament and Economic Life, 1660-1800* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), p. 153. Philip Loft also considers how many petitions were addressed to each House, but omits "petitions used to introduce private legislation [...] or for the relief of debt or introduction of legal appeals" and small "responsive and initiatory petitions" in 'Petitioning and Petitioners to the Westminster Parliament, 1660-1788', *Parliamentary History*, 38.3 (2019), 342-61 (p. 345).
[11] 'An Act against Tumults and Disorders upon P[re]tence of P[re]paring of P[re]senting Publick Petic[i]ons or Other Addresses to His Majesty or the Parliament', in *Statutes of the Realm*, ed. by John Raithby, 9 vols. ([n. p.]: For the Record Commission, 1810-25), v: *1629-80* (1819), p. 308.

Table 1: Number of Public Petitions to the House of Commons, 1785-1847

Years	Number of Public Petitions
1785-89	880
1801-15	1026
1811-15	4498
1827-31	24,492
1837-41	70,369
1843-47	81,985

Source: Henry Miller, 'Petition! Petition!! Petition!!!: Petitioning and Political Organization in Britain, c. 1800-1850', in *Organizing Democracy: Reflections on the Rise of Political Organizations in the Nineteenth Century*, ed. by Henk te Velde and Maartje Janse (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), pp. 43-61, Table 3.1 ('Number of Public Petitions to House of Commons, 1785-1847', p. 46).

his constituents upon any particular point, unless he himself th[ought] it proper or prudent to do so".[12] Paul Kelly has proven that constituent instructions caused nine Members to oppose a bill to levy stamp duty on exchange, promissory notes, and, most contentiously, receipts on 11 and 12 June 1783;[13] but William Baker, Burgess for Hertford, did "not hesitate to vote for it" when he received similar instructions.[14] When Nathaniel Newnham, Citizen for London, moved to repeal the act on 4 December 1783 and 18 June 1784, eight Members acted on and three rejected their constituents' instructions.[15] Hoppit's comprehensive 1997 list of the Commons and Lords bills which failed, 1660-1800, reveals only the coincidence of counter-/petitions and bill failure. Indeed, no other historian has yet systematically studied

[12] William Blackstone, *Commentaries on the Laws of England*, ed. by Wilfrid R. Prest, and others, 4 vols. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), I, 106.
[13] Paul Kelly, 'Constituents' Instructions to Members of Parliament in the Eighteenth Century', in *Party and Management in Parliament, 1660-1784*, ed. by Clyve Jones ([Leicester]: Leicester University Press; New York: St. Martin's Press, 1984), pp. 169-89 (pp. 182-84). Unlike Kelly's, this total includes John Sawbridge, Citizen for London, and excludes the Knights for Surrey: Joseph Mawbey, who considered "every representative […] bound to obey his constituents", but did not claim to have himself received instructions, and Richard Hotham, who only stated that "he had been instructed by his constituents […] to oppose the tax" (*Parliamentary Register*, 2nd ser., X (1783), pp. 151 (11 June 1783), 161 (12 June 1783)).
[14] *Parliamentary Register*, 2nd ser., X (1783), p. 159 (12 June 1783).
[15] Kelly, pp. 183-85. Unlike Kelly's, these totals include: Newnham (for both motions); Sawbridge; Henry Thornton, Burgess for Southwark; Robert Monckton Arundell, Burgess for York; John Holroyd Baker, Burgess for Coventry; George Howard, Burgess for Stamford; and, Burgesses for Westminster, Cecil Wray and Charles James Fox. They exclude Charles Loraine Smith (Burgess for Leicester), whose personal view was in harmony with his instructors'.

Members' papers, speeches, and voting behaviour for the role played by demonstrated public opinion in their decision-making.[16] It is clear, however, from the increase in petitions that the public expected to exert more influence after 1772.

Philip Loft argues that, between 1660 and 1788, campaigners ordinarily petitioned Parliament in response to a pre-existing bill "on, or after, [its] second reading" or to initiate private, economic, local or sector-specific legislation. The "first substantive initiatory petitioning campaigns", which strayed into other, new subject-areas, were - in Loft's words - "critical and disruptive towards the settlement of 1688", occurred after 1772.[17] Although they did not immediately result in an upsurge in the total number of petitions, by 1828-42 that number had risen to the extent that the in-House procedure for handling petitions came under review (see Table 1). Historians mainly attribute this to campaigns' ever-increasing organisation, to the development of centralised, often country-wide networks of local associations, with the experience, funds, and manpower to produce "long sequence[s] of petitions, over successive weeks";[18] but even small- and medium-scale petitioning increased.[19]

Henry Miller has pointed to the Slave Trade Act (1807), Sacramental Test Act (1828), Roman Catholic Relief Act (1829), and Parliamentary Reform Act (1832), and Slavery Abolition Act (1833) as "vindicat[ing] and validat[ing] […]

[16] For single examples, see Peter Jupp, *British Politics on the Eve of Reform: The Duke of Wellington's Administration, 1828-30* (Basingstoke: Macmillan Press; New York: St. Martin's Press, 1998), p. 225; Peter Jupp, *The Governing of Britain, 1688-1848: The Executive, Parliament, and the People* (London: Routledge, 2006), pp. 252-53. For general statements of intent, see Mark Knights, '"The Lowest Degree of Freedom": The Right to Petition Parliament, 1640-1800', in *Pressure and Parliament: From Civil War to Civil Society*, ed. by Richard Huzzey (= *Parliamentary History*, 37.1 (2018)), 18-34 (p. 29).
[17] Loft, pp. 345, 349.
[18] Joanna Innes, 'Legislation and Public Participation 1760-1830', in *The British and their Laws in the Eighteenth Century*, ed. by David Lemmings (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2005), pp. 102-132 (p. 119). See ibid., pp. 119, 121; Miller, p. 47; Richard Huzzey and Henry Miller, 'Petitions, Parliament and Political Culture: Petitioning the House of Commons, 1780-1918', *Past and Present*, 248 (2020), 123-64 (p. 144).
[19] For post-1833, see Huzzey and Miller, pp. 147-48.

petitioning" as a strategy for would-be demonstrators.[20] Yet, until 1806, then 1828-33, the slave trade and slavery abolition, parliamentary reform, and Nonconformist and Catholic emancipation campaigns did not result in legislative change. For example, the Society for the Purpose of Effecting the Abolition of the Slave Trade (act. 1787-1807) submitted 102 petitions in 1788; but, after two enquiries, the first (18 April 1791) motion to introduce an abolition bill was defeated by seventy-five votes. Five hundred and nineteen more petitions in 1792, "the largest number ever submitted to the House [of Commons] on a single subject or in a single session", with as many as four hundred thousand signatories, resulted on 2 and 27 April 1792 in a resolution to gradually abolish the transatlantic slave trade by 1796 only.[21] In fact, the House of Commons rejected five more abolition motions before it passed a bill on 27 June 1804 (that was scuppered, in turn, by the House of Lords). Five parliamentary reform campaigns relied on (albeit not as) large-scale petitioning. Thirty-eight corresponding county and borough associations in England submitted forty-six petitions, signed by over ten thousand people, to support motions to introduce a parliamentary reform bill on 7 May 1783 and 18 April 1785; both were defeated, by 144 and 74 votes, respectively.[22] The Society of the Friends of the People and thirty-two of over one hundred United Corresponding Societies of Great Britain submitted petitions between 2 and 6 May 1793; each was either rejected or tabled.[23] This was also true of the 668 petitions, from 346 towns and cities

[20] Miller, p. 48.
[21] Seymour Drescher, *Capitalism and Antislavery: British Mobilisation in Comparative Perspective* (Basingstoke: Macmillan Press, 1986), p. 80. See John R. Oldfield, *Popular Politics and British Anti-Slavery: The Mobilisation of Public Opinion Against the Slave Trade, 1787-1807* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995), p. 1.
[22] See Ian R. Christie, 'The Yorkshire Association, 1780-4: A Study in Political Organization', *Historical Journal*, 3.2 (1960), 144-61 (pp. 149, 160).
[23] The Sheffield Society for Constitutional Information (24 October 1791-c.1797) petition was rejected for being "[in]sufficiently respectful"; the Norwich Constitutional Society petition rejected because "names were subscribed to a printed copy" in breach of the Standing Orders, *Parliamentary Register*, 2nd ser., XXXV (1793), pp. 345 (2 May 1793), 372 (6 May 1793).

countrywide, organised by Hampden Clubs and Union Societies in January, February, and March 1817; they were signed by, approximately, "a million of persons".[24] On 20 May, the House of Commons nevertheless opposed (by 265 to 77 votes) the appointment of a Select Committee to consider "the State of the Representatives of the people".[25]

The figure of the writer as a Member of Parliament, as an elected representer of the people's interests and, as such, a legislator, took root with the use of published writing to mobilise support for legislative change. Only in the wake of what looked like campaigns' successive failure to influence the legislature, when writers were looked to as more responsive effecters of real-world change than Members of Parliament, did the writer-as-legislator figure seem to offer writers a set of ideas by which to articulate the answers to two questions: what am I writing? and why (to do what, to whom)? What had been implicit in 'Republic' or 'Commonwealth of Letters' and their cognomens now became explicit. However, parliamentary reform began to be debated within- and out-of-doors on two fronts after 1776: (a) who constituted the original House of Commons? which groups elected and which groups' interests were represented by the House of Commons, then and historically? and (b) what alternative should now be constituted, and by whom? By questioning Members' mandate to legislate, reformers opened up a critical space in which writers could question their own mandate to effect real-world change, at a time when increased literacy, opportunities, and earnings meant that more writers could, potentially, be women and/or belong to lower income groups.

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[24] *The Parliamentary Debates from the Year 1803 to the Present Time* (London: Thomas Curson Hansard, 1812-91), XXXV (1817), p. 854 (3 March 1817). For an analysis of the towns and cities from which the petitions originated, see John Cannon, *Parliamentary Reform 1640-1832* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972), p. 171n. Four hundred and sixty-eight petitions were rejected for being printed, forty-three as insulting, see Cannon, p. 170.
[25] *Parliamentary Debates*, XXXVI (1817), p. 729 (20 May 1817).

Literacy increased with the availability and/or quality of primary and secondary education. Lawrence Stone has demonstrated that the proportion of grooms able to sign (rather than mark their names in) parish marriage registers rose from an average of 56 to 67.5% in thirty-two rural parishes, 66.9 to 70.1% in seven towns in England, between *c*. 1757 and 1834.[26] R. S. Schofield, in his study of 274 English parishes, 1754-1840, also found that this proportion rose from an average of just over 60% to 67%; but the number of female signatories jumped from 36% to above 50%.[27] Schofield goes on to note that male literacy fell by 1% across all Bedfordshire parishes; but, even here, "the worst county in England for male illiteracy in 1839", women's ability to sign went up by 5% (p. 447). Signatories increased across members of four occupational categories in Oxfordshire and Gloucestershire, *c*. 1775-1822: for retailers and skilled craftsmen it went up from 87 to 96%; for semi-/unskilled labourers, from 36 to 48%; and, for agricultural workers, from 78 to 94%.[28] In twenty-three (other) English parishes, some types of semi-/unskilled labourer and agriculturalist became less literate - by 6-13% - between 1754 and 1844; gentlemen or professionals and retailers' literacy level dipped or remained constant; for workers in 64.7% of known occupations, literacy went up by

[26] Lawrence Stone, 'Literacy and Education in England 1640-1900', *Past and Present*, 42 (1969), 69-139; averages calculated from Table II ('Adult Male Literacy, *c*. 1757-1834 from Marriage Registers', p. 104).
[27] R. S. Schofield, 'Dimensions of Illiteracy, 1750-1850', *Explorations in Economic History*, 2nd ser., 10.4 (1973), 437-54 (pp. 446, 451).
[28] Here, as elsewhere, I have made use of the six categories into which Frank O'Gorman divides 635 elector occupations in *Voters, Patrons, and Parties: The Unreformed Electorate of Hanoverian England, 1734-1832* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989; repr. 1991), pp. 201, 207-15, 394-99 (Appendix 1): (1) 'gentlemen and professionals' (2) 'merchants and manufacturers', (3) 'retailers', (4) 'skilled craftsmen', (5) 'semi-/unskilled labourers', and (6) 'agriculturalists'. I have equated (a) Stone's 'esquires and gentlemen' and 'clergy and professional men' categories with O'Gorman's 'gentlemen and professionals' category; (b) 'tradesmen and artisans' with 'retailers' and 'skilled artisans'; (c) 'labourers and servants' with 'semi-/unskilled labourers'; and, (d) 'yeomen' and 'husbandmen' with 'agriculturalists'. Stone, Table IV ('Literacy of Bridegrooms Marrying by Licence in the Oxford Archdeaconry and Gloucester Diocese, *c*. 1635-1822', p. 110).

1-21%.[29] There were also more opportunities to write professionally. Writers had been able to publish either by self-financing or by subscription since 1617;[30] but the number of publisher-booksellers, of companies capable of financing publication, increased after 1660-1700, when James Raven estimates that "anywhere between 150 and 250 […] operated".[31] Moreover, the number of daily and bi-/weekly newspapers published in Britain and Ireland was 79 in 1782, 146 in 1790, and as many as 284 in 1821.[32] However, publisher-booksellers for the most part reprinted out-of-copyright books between 1774 and 1814; other writers' payment per sheet therefore decreased (by an average of approximately £1 across all genres before 1800).[33] In 1774 the House of Lords ruled that English publisher-booksellers' copyright to titles was not perpetual but (as per the Copyright Act 1710) limited to fourteen years from the publication date. This period was extended to twenty-eight years or, if longer, the writer's lifetime from 1814; afterwards, writers were in a stronger legal position to demand half-profits agreements of publisher-booksellers.

Most published writing was still 'for' - in William St. Clair's apt phrase - particular "constituencies of readers".[34] Periodicals cost at least 3d. (£2.50 - £3.75

[29] The parish marriage register of Horley in Oxfordshire was studied as part of Stone and Schofield's surveys. I have equated (a) Schofield's 'gentry and professional' and 'officials, etc.' categories with O'Gorman's 'gentlemen and professionals' category; (b) 'retail' and 'food and drink' (both described as "involving commerce and contact with the public") with 'retailers'; (c) 'wood', 'textile', 'metal', 'leather', and 'clothing' with 'skilled craftsmen'; (d) 'labourers and servants', 'armed forces (non-officer)', 'transport', and 'construction and mining' (also described as "heavy manual labour") with 'semi-/unskilled labourers'; and, (e) 'yeomen and farmers', 'estate', and 'husbandmen' with 'agriculturalists'. Table 1 ('Illiteracy by Occupational Group, 1754-1784 [*sic*]', p. 450).
[30] See Sarah L. C. Clapp, 'The Beginnings of Subscription Publication in the Seventeenth Century', *Modern Philology*, 29.2 (1931), 199-224 (p. 205).
[31] James Raven, 'Publishing and Bookselling 1660-1780', in *The Cambridge History of English Literature, 1660-1780*, ed. by John Richetti (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), pp. 13-36 (p. 19). For the distinction between publisher- and retail- booksellers, see ibid., p. 22.
[32] *The Periodical Press of Great Britain and Ireland; or, An Inquiry into the State of the Public Journals* (London: For Hurst, Robinson and Constable, 1824), p. 92.
[33] David Fielding and Shef Rogers, 'Copyright Payments in Eighteenth-Century Britain, 1701-1800', *The Library: The Transactions of the Bibliographical Society*, 18.1 (2017), 3-44 (Figure 5 ('Avg. Payment per Sheet in Pounds by Quarter Century', p. 13)).
[34] William St. Clair, *The Reading Nation in the Romantic Period* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), p. 1.

now) an issue after 1776, which, yearly, this could equate to between 13s. (£130 - £195) or £4 12s. (£920 - £1380).[35] The cheapest (second gallery) theatre tickets were 1s. (£10 - £15).[36] New copyrighted titles continued to be published in short print runs and large quarto and octavo formats. From 1810 to 1830, the cheapest unbound books of verse could cost between 7s. 6d. (£75 - £112.50) and 15s. (£150 - £225) and non-fiction in one volume 12s. (£120 - £180), in two volumes between 21s. (£210 - £315) and 27s. (£270 - £405); three-volume novels retailed unbound at an average of approximately 9s. (£90 - £135) between 1790 and 1800 (rising steadily to a mode of 31s. 6d. (£315 - £472.50) in 1840).[37] These prices would have been prohibitive for all except some gentlemen, professionals, merchants, and manufacturers, who typically earned between 50s. (£500 - £750) and 100s. (£1000 - £1500) per week, when the income of skilled craftsmen could be as low as 6s. (£60 - £90), and rarely exceeded 36s. (£360 - £540), per week in 1810; semi-/unskilled labourers could make between 2s. (£20 - £30) and 18s. 5d. (£184.17 - £276.26) per week.[38] Remaindered book prices "were often not much below the full price".[39] Readers in upper income groups' access to new titles was higher due to commercial circulating libraries, of which there were approximately 1000 in 1801, 1500 by 1821, and an "an upsurge of new reading societies" - subscription libraries and book clubs

[35] See Jeremy Black, *The English Press in the Eighteenth Century* (London: Croom Helm; Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, [1987]; repr. London: Routledge, 2010), pp. 72-74. Here, as elsewhere, I have used Robert D. Hume's formula "to obtain an approximate measure of present-day buying power", 'The Value of Money in Eighteenth-Century England: Incomes, Prices, Buying Power - and Some Problems in Cultural Economics', *Huntington Library Quarterly*, 77.4 (2014), 373-416 (p. 381).
[36] Hume, Table 2 ('Standard Theater Admission Prices, 1600-1792, and their Buying Power Today', p. 383).
[37] St. Clair, Tables 11.1 ('Representative Book Prices, 1810s, 1820s, Retail', p. 194), 11.4 ('Steeply Rising Retail Price of the Three-Volume Novel', p. 203); see Appendix 9, pp. 578-664, for a wide-ranging list of new titles' prices and print run sizes during the Romantic period.
[38] St. Clair, pp. 194-96. St. Clair includes six occupations excluded by O'Gorman: journalists, secretaries, annuitants (categorised as 'gentlemen and professionals'), factory workers, gunners, and all apprentices (both categorised as 'semi-/unskilled labourers').
[39] St. Clair, p. 199.

- nationally.[40] Some reading societies had low entry fees and subscriptions, but costly fines; only in Scotland did membership penetrate further down the income scale. On the other hand, employer- and church-subsidised libraries for urban skilled craftsmen were established across Britain by 1825.[41]

In *The Romantic Ideology: A Critical Investigation* (1983), Jerome McGann influentially asserted that "criticism of Romanticism and its works [was] dominated […] by an uncritical absorption in Romanticism's own self-representations", in the claims that key writers - six male poets - made for what and why (to do what, for whom?) they wrote.[42] Among the most important, were the claims that their poetry was able (a) to answer universal human questions and (b) to perfect its readers (whilst hiding this "palpable design upon" them, in John Keats's memorable phrase); that is, to transcend or to offer transcendence from the contexts in which poetry was written and read.[43] Materialist-historicist critics, from the 1980s to the present, have recovered marginalised texts, by other contemporary writers, about any subject, in prose, drama, or verse, and reconstructed these political, socio-economic, social, psychological, and material contexts. The pull of the writer-as-legislator figure after 1772 interestingly complicates two arms of this discussion. The first: many critics, including McGann, have theorised that, in Nicholas Roe's words, "Romantic poems enact dramas of idealisation" in which such contexts are "variously 'displaced', 'repressed', 'erased', 'obscured' or 'denied' by the imagination", wilfully or

[40] St. Clair, pp. 237, 247.
[41] See St. Clair, p. 260.
[42] P. 1, McGann
[43] *The Letters of John Keats*, ed. by Hyder E. Rollins, 2 vols. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1958), I: *1814-1818*, 224 (3 February 1818).

unconsciously.[44] The writer-as-legislator figure was predicated upon Romantic and other writers wilfully and clearly displacing the political mechanism for critically examining their socio-economic reality, the House of Commons, onto a conceptual plane. The second: other critics argue that writers constructed and struggled to address, control, or replace new - in Jon Klancher's seminal account, the "newly self-conscious middle class", the "mass", the "polemical radical", and the "special institutional" - reading audiences from the 1790s.[45] The writer-as-legislator figure involves acknowledging three distinct parts in the writing process: not only the writer and his reader/s, but also his subject/s.

The use of this figure in theatrical prologues and epilogues after 1750, in Oliver Goldsmith's *Enquiry into the Present State of Polite Learning in Europe* (1759), and by Percy Bysshe Shelley in *A Philosophical View of Reform* (1819) and *A Defence of Poetry* (1821) has not gone unnoticed by critics;[46] but they do not identify these examples as part of a more general trend.[47] Shelley's famous assertion, "Poets are the unacknowledged legislators of the World", is often read as evidence that, in the months following the Peterloo Massacre - what James Chandler calls the "moment of severest crisis for the reform movement" - he believed poetry should effect real-world change either by directly intervening in the reform debate or by

[44] Nicholas Roe, *The Politics of Nature: Wordsworth and Some Contemporaries* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1992), p. 6. See, for example, Marjorie Levinson, *Wordsworth's Great Period Poems: Four Essays* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986); Alan Liu, *Wordsworth: The Sense of History* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1989); David Simpson, *Wordworth's Historical Imagination: The Poetry of Displacement* (New York: Methuen, 1987).
[45] Jon P. Klancher, *The Making of English Reading Audiences, 1790-1832* (London: University of Wisconsin Press, 1987), p. 4. See, for example, Andrew Franta, *Romanticism and the Rise of the Mass Public* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007); Paul Keen, *The Crisis of Literature in the 1790s: Print Culture and the Public Sphere* (Cambridge: University of Cambridge Press, 1999).
[46] See, for example, Leo Hughes, *The Drama's Patrons: A Study of the Eighteenth-Century London Audience* (London: University of Texas, 1971), pp. 4-5; Alfred Lutz, 'Goldsmith on Burke and Gray', *Papers on Language and Literature*, 34.3 (1998), 225-49 (p. 238).
[47] Lutz does suggest that Goldsmith "anticipate[d] 'the unacknowledged legislators of the world' Shelley was to postulate […] half a century later" in a footnote, p. 238n.

rendering it intelligible for future readers.[48] That the same reform debate had destabilised "[a]cknowledged legislators[']" mandate to legislate has so far been overlooked. Only Betsy Bolton and Georgina Green have made inroads into this rich field of study.

In *Women, Nationalism and the Romantic Stage: Theatre and Politics in Britain, 1780-1800* (2001), Bolton draws attention to late-eighteenth-century comparisons between the effects of theatrical performance and of the actions of Members of Parliament (who instantiate what is variously referred to as the "nation", "government", "state", or "politics" more generally).[49] She hints that it was the parliamentary reform debate - "the Wilkite agitation of the 1760s, an increasing insistence on universal male suffrage, [and] the upheavals associated with the French revolution" - which opened up an opposition between two types of theatre: deceptive spectacle, reliant upon "scenery, costumes, music, lighting, and other stage effects", and "untheatrical or novelistic", but sincere, sentimental drama (pp. 11, 24, 25). This opposition was used to explore which social groups' - delimited according to the different ticket prices charged for box, pit, and gallery seats - interests should be represented by playwrights and "canny entrepreneur[ial]" managers: all, "uniting [the different groups] freely into one nation", or just one, "pull[ing] the nation apart"

[48] 'A Defence of Poetry', *Shelley's Poetry and Prose*, ed. by Donald H. Reiman and Neil Fraistat, 2nd. edn. (London: W. W. Norton, 2002), pp. 509-35 (p. 535); James Chandler, *England in 1819: The Politics of Literary Culture and the Case of Romantic Historicism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), pp. 187-88. The version of Shelley's line included in *A Philosophical View of Reform* (1819) notes that both "poets and philosophers are the unacknowledged legislators of the world", Percy Bysshe Shelley, *A Philosophical View of Reform*, ed. by T. W. Rolleston (London: Humphrey Milford, Oxford University Press, 1920), p. 30. For examples of this reading, see Roger Sales, *English Literature in History 1780–1830: Pastoral and Politics* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1983), p. 196; Susan J. Wolfson, 'Popular Songs and Ballads: Writing the "Unwritten Story" in 1819', in *The Oxford Handbook of Percy Bysshe Shelley*, ed. by Michael O'Neill, Anthony Howe, and Madeleine Callaghan (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), pp. 341-59.

[49] Betsy Bolton, *Women, Nationalism and the Romantic Stage: Theatre and Politics in Britain, 1780-1800*, Cambridge Studies in Romanticism, 46 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), pp. 12, 19.

(pp. 12, 16). However, Bolton takes as her focus the portrayal of "public women" - high-profile political activists (election canvassers, writers) and/or the lovers of powerful men, including Members of Parliament - in dramatic romance and sentimental farce (p. 5).

For example, public women turn up in dramatic romances as female protagonists or political leaders who (a) misbehave, using or in relation to 'bad' national spectacle, and (b) are "discipline[d] and subordinate[d]", which abjects "the negative associations of spectacle […] from the [on-stage] nation", who, at first, represent, then are forced to surrender, their own interests (p. 63). Bolton roots this logic in three different eighteenth-century romance traditions. On the one hand: modern stage and French prose romances. Stage romances were adaptations of chapbooks, performed at street fairs or on small, popular stages; they were ridiculed for heroes who could hail from medieval verse romances (St. George of England, Bevis of Southampton, Guy of Warwick) or folk tales (Jack the Giant-Killer, Tom Hickathrift) and spectacularly relocate or transform with just "the drop of a painted backcloth, or an announced change of scene" (p. 52). Prose romances "trivializ[ed]" their historical heroes by dispatching them on - in Philip Stanhope, Earl of Chesterfield's phrase - "silly love adventures" and accorded women "a certain social dominance" (pp. 56, 57).[50] On the other: revivalist reinterpretations of medieval verse romances retrofitted England with an "epic past" and "destiny" to chime ideologically with recent history, a nationalist project made "interest[ing] and admira[ble]" by imaginative spectacle, and relegated women's higher status to "a more general legacy of chivalric society, linked to [their] vulnerability in times of

[50] *Letters Written by the Late Right Honourable Philip Dormer Stanhope, Earl of Chesterfield, to his son, Philip Stanhope, Esq.; Late Envoy Extraordinary at the Court of Dresden*, 2 vols. (London: For J. Dodsley, 1774), I, p. 130.

war, and usually contrasted with the poor treatment women received in Roman days, or in 'Mahometan countries'" (pp. 59, 60, 61). In George Colman's "exemplary" *Blue-Beard; or, Female Curiosity* (1798), for example, the Turkish Pasha, Abomelique, processes to meet his bride next to "an enormous piece of animated scenery", symbolic of his "absolute and arbitrary power" (pp. 63, 70). Fatima, that bride, is aligned with such 'bad' national spectacle when she ignores her husband-to-be's instructions not to enter a Blue Chamber, symbolic of sexual experience; as soon as Fatima inserts the key, the audience is confronted with elaborate stage effects: the "*Door instantly sinks, with a tremendous crash*" to reveal an "*interior apartment*" through which she can see "*a sepulchral building*" filled with "*ghastly and supernatural forms* […] *some in motion, some fix'd*".[51] When Abomelique threatens to kill Fatima, to punish her for (sexual) curiosity, he abjects any negative associations from the - crucially, off-stage - spectacle of her rescuers, Selim and his regiment's arrival.[52]

In her more recent study, *The Majesty of the People: Popular Sovereignty and the Role of the Writer in the 1790s* (2014), Georgina Green confirms that the writer-as-legislator figure was not, in Bolton's phrase, a "specifically theatrical analogy" (p. 12). For Green, a sub-debate within the larger question of parliamentary reform opened the critical space in which to question writers' mandate to effect real-world change: the relationship between constituted governments' claim (a) to either embody or only represent the constituent power that framed them (what all men want or reason) and (b) to act justly or according to God's will. She limits her field of enquiry to constructions of alternative democratic institutions and to five writers,

[51] George Colman II, *Blue-Beard; or, Female Curiosity* (London: For Cadell and Davies, 1798), p. 17.
[52] Bolton, p. 70.

who, unlike many of Bolton's case studies, all use the realistic mode, and champion the constituent power of all men during the 1790s.

Green argues, first, that Thomas Paine and Helen Maria Williams identified competing claims for their blueprint with various "authorial strateg[ies]" to represent the people in that sub-debate.[53] For Green, Paine suggests that the people can never be instantiated in Part First of *Rights of Man* (1791-92); for example, he holds Edmund Burke to account for using "the 'mob'" as a metonym for "a whole people" and for insisting upon "the rights of the *living*" over "the manuscript assumed authority of the dead", when daily births and deaths mean that 'the people' is an ever-changing category.[54] Paine therefore advocated a representative democracy, in which decisions were to be made by a majority, not an unanimity, of votes, that only imperfectly and provisionally represented the people. According to 'Answer to Four Questions on the Legislative and Executive Powers' (1792), he was, however, sceptical about whether this could be achieved in an absolute democracy, in which all "the powers of government spring from the same source": if there is no "possibility of two hostile governmental forces in opposition[,] […] there looms up before us one single edifice in which all is united and harmonious".[55] As Green remarks, "the word 'looms' here surely betrays a sense of the menacing aspects of such unity", of claiming to perfectly embody the people (p. 73). Paine spoke (via a translator) as Deputy of Pas-de-Calais to the National Convention on 19 January 1793. He argued that its Deputies did not represent - and therefore oppressed - those

[53] Georgina Green, *The Majesty of the People: Popular Sovereignty and the Role of the Writer in the 1790s* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), p. 11.
[54] *Rights of Man*, in *The Complete Writings of Thomas Paine*, ed. by Philip S. Foner, 2 vols. (New York: Citadel Press, 1945), I, 244-344, 347-458 (I. 252, 266, 267). References given after quotations in the text are to this edition.
[55] 'Answer to Four Questions on the Legislative and Executive Powers', *Thomas Paine*, ed. by Foner, II, 521-34 (p. 524).

"distanced by time, like posterity, or by space, like the Americans" when it voted unjustly to execute Louis XVI on 18 January; instead, each Deputy should have consulted these 'others'' viewpoints.[56] Paine's aim, for Green, was to counter a drive in 1790s France to define the people "in increasingly limited ways[,] as a particular class, with particular features, speaking a single language", and the Jacobin idea of the (so defined) people's will as therefore "transparent and absolute" and perfectly embodyable by the National Convention - or, in the case of Maximilien Robespierre's 1792 claim to be the "peuple [lui]-même" (people [him]self), even one man.[57] In *Dissertation on First Principles of Government* (1795), Paine suggested that this could only be side-stepped by "divid[ing] the representation by lots into two parts, and let[ting] them revise and correct each other".[58] In Part First of *Rights of Man*, Paine stated both that "where [a constitution] cannot be produced in visible form there is none" and that "the constitution of a country is not the act of its government, but of the people constituting a government", without producing a visible historical record of an original assembly of the people (I. 278). As Paine went on to clarify in Part Second, in Britain the word 'constitution' does not straightforwardly refer to a physical document; the "idea of [a constitution's] existence [is] so generally established" because governors assigned this word to a body of laws which imposed "restrictions on [their] assumed power" and "divide[d] powers, profits and privileges" between them (granting only "the right of petitioning") (II. 382, 383). Green argues that Paine wanted to "empower his [readers] to resist this imposition by showing that it can be resisted simply by

[56] Green, p. 87.
[57] Green, p. 83; 'Séance du 27 Avril, 1792', in *Oeuvres Completes de Maximilien Robespierre*, ed. by Albert Mathiez and others, 10 vols. (Paris: Leroux, 1910-67), VIII: *Discours III (Octobre 1791-Septembre 1792)*, ed. by M. Bouloiseau, G. Lefebvre, and A. Soboul (1953), pp. 303-22 (p. 311).
[58] *Dissertation on First Principles of Government*, in *Thomas Paine*, ed. by Foner, II, 570-88 (p. 585).

treating language in a different way - not as a binding contract, but as an ongoing and provisional representation" (p. 77). His readers could just use 'constituting moment' to signify, and therefore generally establish it as, the act of an original assembly of the people. According to Green, Paine pursued a different authorial strategy in his January 1793 speech: he used the fact that he addressed the National Convention via a translator to "dramatiz[e] the presence of an 'other'" and, with it, justice in the National Convention (p. 86). He states a wish to "petition" the National Convention as though an outsider, "in the name of all my American brothers". He also claims to speak the anational "language […] of liberty *and* humanity"; that is, to speak of an individual's liberty only insofar as it is limited by others' rights.[59]

Green then moves on to examine the authorial strategies used more generally by William Godwin, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, and William Wordsworth to construct an ideal readership, that an alternative democratic institution - or, in Godwin's case an un-constituted anarchic collective - could (safely) claim to embody. However, she only explores Wordsworth's as an authorial strategy to represent the people.

For Green, Wordsworth's 'A Letter to the Bishop of Llandaff' (1793) argued that war against Britain gave rise to a state of emergency in France, a temporary "state of exception" from constituted law and morality, which cordoned off the revolutionary government's claim to embody the people's constituent power from the violence necessary to guarantee the Sans-culottes' animal survival.[60] Wordsworth could not detach what (somehow) came after from representative democracy. In his model republic, the people enact laws in person (and can, presumably also in person,

[59] I have quoted from Green's translation of the speech as recorded in *Le Moniteur Universel*, 23 January 1793, pp. 85, 86.
[60] Green, p. 175.

re-assume constituent power during moments of crisis), but all bills are proposed and deliberated by representatives. Green also draws attention to Wordsworth's figuration of Michel - Père - Gérard as the French counterpart to a Swiss "herdsman with the staff in one hand and book in the other", who attended cantonal assemblies in person.[61] Gérard represents the people, as innately moral, but only as Breton deputy to the Estates General in 1789. However, that Wordsworth likens the people in both states to an animal - "just released from its stall" and, later, "return[ed] to itself" - suggests to Green his fear that the people "might be driven only by […] selfish, animal wants".[62] She turns, next, to Wordsworth's bleak recasting of a Swiss herdsman as "a hunger-bitten Girl" leading a heifer in Book IX of *The Prelude* (1805). The reader is forced to question the speaker and Beaupuis's belief that "a spirit was abroad" capable of transitioning the French people, similarly struggling to survive, into a constituted government that could morally embody the source of its own sovereignty.[63] In Book X Wordsworth also started to differentiate the people's virtues from their morally anomic revolutionary government. In *Concerning the Convention of Cintra* (1809), Green continues, Wordsworth argued that Spain and Portugal also entered "state[s] of exception" when they rose up against Napoleon (1808-14). This revolutionary government could morally claim to embody its people's constituent power for two reasons: the peninsular people (a) did not indiscriminately abolish, but built on existing civil institutions, constituting forms

[61] 'A Letter to the Bishop of Llandaff', in *The Prose Works of William Wordsworth*, ed. by W. J. B. Owen and Jane Worthington Smyser, 3 vols. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1794), I, 31-49 (p. 39).
[62] 'Llandaff', p. 38; Green, p. 179.
[63] *The Prelude* (1805), in *William Wordsworth: The Prelude; or, Growth of a Poet's Mind*, ed. by Ernest de Selincourt and Helen Darbishire, rev. 2nd. edn. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1959), pp. 2-506 (IX. 511, 520). All references to *The Prelude* are to the 1805 draft unless otherwise noted.

that retained their organic, and did not take on an arbitrary, character; and, (b) fought to defend their way of life from invaders, not merely to survive.

Green argues that Wordsworth developed the 'lyrical ballad' form, positioned on the boundary between "poetry and prose, oral and written language, popular and polite culture, collective and individual production", also "procedurally similar to a concept of representative government" as a deferral of embodiment, to separate and distil conceptual value from his subjects' animal nature.[64] After *Cintra*, this intermediary (somehow) became unnecessary (despite Wordsworth's other, similar experiments with form in his later poetry). Only this (however) distilled value could construct what Wordsworth, building on Coleridge's 1808 distinction between "*the Public*" and "*the People*" as readers of *The White Doe of Rylstone* (1815), called "the People, philosophically characterised", as distinct from "that small though loud portion of the community, ever governed by factitious influence, which, under the name of the PUBLIC, passes itself, upon the unthinking, for the PEOPLE" in his 'Essay, Supplementary to the Preface' of *Poems* (1815).[65]

Green concludes that this reading of Wordsworth suggests the need to revise Raymond Williams's path-breaking account of the different ways in which 'culture' has been understood in *Culture and Society, 1780-1950* (1958). For Williams, the Romantic poets' concept of 'culture' developed in response to, to offset, the effects of "a series of important technical changes" that "transform[ed] […] methods of production", "the American and French Revolutions, and a crucial phase of the struggle, at home, for what we would now call democratic representation" upon

[64] Green, pp. 12, 180.
[65] *The Collected Letters of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, ed. by Earl Leslie Griggs, 6 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1956-71; repr. Oxford University Press, 2000), III: *1807-1814* (1959), 112 (21 May 1808); 'Essay, Supplementary to the Preface', in *Prose Works*, ed. by Owen and Worthington Smyser, III, 62-84 (p. 84).

social relations.[66] He argued that they were wrong, however, to confine it to "the act of poetry, or of art in general", to make a canon of published writing (a) "the court of appeal" from socio-political and -economic reality, "in which real [human] values [are] determined", and (b) "a practicable mode of access to [an] ideal of human perfection".[67] Williams preferred to think of culture according to a pattern of usage dating from the mid nineteenth century: as "a whole way of life, material, intellectual and spiritual" of one group or humans at a particular time, their ordinary reality, as thinkers and actors in socio-political and -economic contexts.[68] Green suggests that there is a need to collapse Williams's distinction: that because Wordsworth "chose to associate 'culture' with the 'People'" at all, his efforts to represent only the values that he could distil from his subjects' reality were also efforts to straightforwardly represent that reality (p. 205).

Unlike Bolton and Green, in what follows, I focus on the larger parliamentary reform debate: the tension between constructions of the then House of Commons and alternative democratic institutions, 1776-1831. I trace the nature and extent of its effect upon how the writer-as-legislator figure was used by George Crabbe, William Wordsworth, and Maria Edgeworth. In so doing, I systematically build on Bolton and Green's research by limiting my field of enquiry to writers who (a) together occupied a range of positions on the reform ideology spectrum and (b) claimed to apply experimental realistic modes to represent ordinary, private life.

The thesis is divided into two parts. In 'Part 1', I consider the ways in which the distribution and boundaries of town, city, and county constituencies and four

[66] Raymond Williams, *Culture and Society, 1780-1950* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1958), p. xiv.
[67] *Culture and Society*, pp. 37, 46-47.
[68] *Culture and Society*, p. xiv. See Raymond Williams, *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society*, rev. edn. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), p. 52.

categories of voting qualification limited who could be an elector, and how far their votes were controlled by landlords, employers, and/or bribery. I also explore the extent to which control exerted by supporting electoral-interests and/or parliamentary parties affected how Members of Parliament voted in the unreformed House of Commons. I then point to trends in the proposals by which radical and moderate parliamentary reformers sought to change this system of representation. I go on, in 'Part 2', to explore how each writer engaged with tensions between which groups' interests Members represented and specific reform proposal trends in their comparisons between different 'types' of writer and of Member.

In his 'Preface' to *Tales* (1812), Crabbe wrote: "[I] describe, as faithfully as I c[an], men, manners, and things", "borrow[ing] no aid whatever from the imagination" or - used in Robert Grant's *Quarterly* review of *The Borough* (1810) to mean the "colour[ing]" or "refraction" of reality - "an atmosphere".[69] He makes a case for such unatmospheric descriptions of how the rural poor lived and worked to replace pastoral poetry in Book I of *The Village* (1783). The speaker, Crabbe's lyric persona, turns to the behaviour of semi-/unskilled labourers in a borough constituency as a model for this new mode: to save or to make money they smuggle, wreck, and - most importantly - as freeman electors, they accept electoral bribes from outside parliamentary candidates, who, after election, will not represent their socio-economic interests in the House of Commons. When the speaker, as an outside, wealthier observer, describes his poor subjects as deserving objects of reader sympathy, those subjects will likewise receive public or private charity. However, that this constituency's electorate comprised only labourers, due to coastal erosion

[69] *Tales*, in *George Crabbe: The Complete Poetical Works*, ed. by Norma Dalrymple-Champneys and Arthur Pollard, 3 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988), II, 3-289 (PREFACE. 7, 9); [Robert Grant], '*The Borough*', *Quarterly Review*, November 1810, pp. 281-312 (p. 293).

and depopulation, suggests a second example for realistic writing: labourers exploiting their majority-share by freely nominating, electing, and instructing Members of Parliament, leading not to a quick-financial-fix, but long-term improvement to their living and working conditions. (Just as, Crabbe hoped, equally populated borough constituencies and manhood suffrage would enable labourers to exploit their majority-share of the population). Crabbe implicitly reproves his speaker for 'speaking over' poor subjects better qualified to describe their own life experience, for self-interestedly intervening to prevent class relations from really changing.

However, after 1798, Crabbe tried to qualify himself by developing a(n equally unatmospheric) verse form by which to narrate incidents from the lives of the rural and urban poor. In the wake of the revolution in France, Crabbe was more anxious to guide poor subjects' free speech, to safeguard radical parliamentary reform efforts from revolutionary violence. In *The Borough* (1810), "a residing burgess" describes other residents of a "large sea-port" borough in twenty-four miscellaneous epistles to "the inhabitant of a village in the centre of the kingdom".[70] In Letter V ('Elections'), electors do not agree to sell, only to lend their votes to parliamentary candidates; in exchange, they expect the Burgess, his "more than Partner", (a) to make interest payments to increase their socio-economic and -political status and (b) to hear and, in his epistles, to write about stories from their lives (V. 74). Ellen Orford's son rapes his half-sister and both children die within lines of the overseers and magistrates, including the Burgess, deciding to stop her outdoor poor relief in Letter XX ('Ellen Orford'). At the beginning of this letter, the

[70] *The Borough*, in *George Crabbe*, ed. by Dalrymple-Champneys and Pollard, I, 341-598 (PREFACE. 344). References given after quotations in the text are to this edition.

Burgess criticised Charlotte Smith for overloading *Celestina* (1791) with sad incidents; as soon as the heroine discovered "the fond Lover is the Brother too", Smith eroded the Burgess's sympathy and disposed him to stop reading (XX. 106). The Burgess will only (just) financially support a non-elector and incorporate their life history into an epistle if it engages him. Crabbe uses the Burgess's different relationships with non-/electors to describe his own practice. Narratives that represent abject poverty prompt acts of public or private charity, preserving the socio-economic gap between his subjects and readers. This gap is smaller and prompts no action when Crabbe narrates incidents from the lives of subjects he classed "between the humble and the great".[71] Letter V ('Elections') also includes an anecdote about the borough Mayor's lucrative career as a moneylender; but his original, an "honest Fisherman", remained "a stranger to the method of increasing money by the loan of it" (PREFACE. 350). Like the Burgess, Crabbe paid interest to his subject: he changed the world-view of his readers and, therefore, acted on behalf of the Fisherman's long-term socio-economic interests. In *Tales* (1812), Crabbe used the verse narrative he perfected in 1809 to represent incidents from the lives of, to sponsor, low-to-middle class subjects only. He parallels readers' critical election of John, who tells truths about "common subjects" by way of "satiric song[s]", with voters' by-election of the "good young Lord" Darner to be their Member of Parliament in 'The Patron' (V. 84, 86, 104). Darner turns out to be a "good" representative; John, on the other hand, tries to secure patronage, to buy the lifestyle of a bestselling romancer, by representing Darner's and not his poor(er) readers' long-term socio-economic interests. Crabbe saw something of John's sleaze in his

[71] George Crabbe II, 'Life of the Rev. George Crabbe, LL.B.', in *The Poetical Works of the Rev. George Crabbe*, ed. by George Crabbe II, 8 vols. (London: John Murray, 1834), I, 1-322 (p. 198).

own desire to write only what the reading public wanted to read, to give up/on his abjectly poor subjects.

Crabbe "shows us something which we have all seen, or may see, in real life", Francis Jeffrey, editor of the influential *Edinburgh Review* (1802-1929), wrote approvingly in his April 1808 review of Crabbe's *Poems* (1807); in Wordsworth's poetry, "instead of the men and women of ordinary humanity, we have certain moody and capricious personages, made after the poet's own heart and fancy".[72] For Wordsworth, in his 'Preface' to the second edition of *Lyrical Ballads, with A Few Other Poems* (1798), writers feel emotion while observing subjects acting in ordinary, private life. They afterwards recollect and "modif[y] and direc[t]" that response according to what other, already-processed "past feelings" reveal to be "really important to men"; the response is like a bill debated, examined, and amended according to what popular representatives in a unicameral legislature reveal to be in the national interest.[73] In this way, writers create a "similar" feeling and so grasp what of their subject to represent in writing (p. 148). Wordsworth hints at two different 'types' of writer. On the one hand: poets who only observe subjects in "state[s] of vivid sensation", whose disinterested representatives reveal the "primary laws of our nature": "certain inherent and indestructible qualities" distilled from man's basic nature (not, as Green suggests, by way of the 'lyrical ballad' form, but) when "powers in the great and permanent objects" - Natural forms - "act upon it" (pp. 118, 122, 130). The resulting poetry "enlighten[s]" and improves the "taste[s]", "affections", and "moral relations" of its readers (pp. 126, 158). On the other: storytellers who only observe impassive or deliberately excited subjects, whose self-

[72] [Francis Jeffrey], '*Poems*', *Edinburgh Review*, April 1808, pp. 131-51 (pp. 133-34).
[73] 'Preface' to *Lyrical Ballads* (1800), in *Prose Works*, ed. by Owen and Worthington Smyser, I, 116-65 (p. 126). All references to the 'Preface' are to the 1800 version unless otherwise noted.

serving representatives reveal lesser laws: man's basic, undistilled nature. The resulting narratives are "gross and violent stimulants" (p. 128).

In *The Prelude* (1805), Wordsworth represented his lyric persona (a) as he and (b) what he sees when he recollects, contemplates, and re-creates his emotional response to 'observing', through time, his younger self in "state[s] of vivid sensation". The speaker's feelings dialogued with Nature's in the presence of "beauteous and majestic" Natural forms (I. 636). Ultimately, in young adulthood, he "felt the sentiment of Being" - what Wordsworth described in the 'Preface' to *Lyrical Ballads* (1800) as "inherent and indestructible qualities" - operative in, and capable of connecting, any un/"majestic" Natural form and humans (II. 420). The speaker also shared in "mighty Poets[']" similar visions by reading their poetry (V. 619). He goes on to imply that popular representatives in a republic should also represent the "sentiment of [human] Being", not – as France's National Convention did when it voted to terrorize its citizens - other, more dangerous human qualities. In Book XII, having discovered his poetic vocation, the speaker considers whether, unlike other "mighty Poets[']", his poetry might itself become a "majestic" Natural form for its readers. The speaker then recalls his impulse to leave "Nature's side", to no longer represent the "sentiment of [human] Being", and channel human "darkness" while crossing Salisbury Plain (XII. 297, 327). Nature at once confronted him with a frightening vision of Druids performing a human sacrifice, of poets abusing their power; the speaker, deterred, was conciliated by an alternative vision: of Druids imperfectly inscribing the constellations - Nature's image - onto the plain, of his predecessors trying and failing to wield "a power like one of Nature's" (XII. 312).

The two visions the speaker experienced on Salisbury Plain originally formed part of 'Salisbury Plain' (1793-94). This poem tells the story of a tired and hungry traveller forced to find shelter at Stonehenge. I read this as an allegory of men's transition from a state of 'political superstition', tenanting a political belief-system predicated upon ignorance, to enlightenment, in which state they recognise the need for radical parliamentary reform to restore their original elective rights. A bodiless "voice as from a tomb" and, later, the "human voice" of a "female wanderer" describe (almost) the same scenes to frighten the traveller off-course and to conciliate him to that alternative path: Druids (a) performing a human sacrifice and (b) instructing their congregation in astronomy.[74] Wordsworth thereby figured the counter-revolutionary movement propaganda that warned radical parliamentary reform would result in an unjust, violent republic and praised the current mixture of government forms, and how they are instituted, for guarding men's socio-economic interests. He cautioned that men would remain vulnerable to this argument if radical parliamentary reformers continued to deploy what he later described as "inflammatory addresses to the passions of men" and did not try to engage their reason.[75] A comparison between 'Salisbury Plain' and *The Prelude*'s Book XII reveals that Wordsworth aligned (a) poets representing "the sentiment of [human] Being" with Members of Parliament elected every seven years by a subset of men and controlled by bribery and (b) writers representing human "darkness" with (what, until 1818, Wordsworth wanted for Britain and France) Members elected more frequently and by all men.

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[74] 'Salisbury Plain', in *The Salisbury Plain Poems of William Wordsworth*, ed. by Stephen Gill (London: Cornell University Press; Hassocks: Harvester Press, 1975), pp. 19-38 (ll. 81, 137, 138).
[75] *The Letters of William and Dorothy Wordsworth*, ed. by Ernest de Selincourt, 2nd. edn., rev. by Chester L. Shaver, Mary Moorman, and Alan G. Hill, 8 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1967-1993), I: *The Early Years, 1787-1805*, rev. by Chester L. Shaver (1967), p. 125 ([8] June [1794]).

When she wrote of her lifelong "*habits of composition*" to Matthew Stewart on 6 September 1834, Edgeworth admitted to "alter[ing]" reality "to avoid individual resemblance", to entertain, and, most importantly, to ensure believability. Imagination was then understood as the mind's capacity both to represent past sensory experience and recombine those images to create new, insensible objects; but, for Edgeworth, believability depended upon an imaginative "process of combination, *generalisation*, [and] invention".[76] This entailed, in *Ormond* (1817), "giv[ing] up every fact" except one she had "heard of an oddity, a man, […] like no other, who lived in a remote part of Ireland":

> I was obliged […] to make [King Corny] a man of expedients, of ingenious substitutes, such as any clever Irishman in middle life is used to. […] I was obliged to make him according to the general standard of wit and acuteness, shrewd humour and sarcasm, of that class of *unread* natural geniuses.[77]

If Crabbe represented "as faithfully as [he] could" and Wordsworth represented by way of his own (recollected) emotional response to, Edgeworth represented by way of others' expectations of subjects acting in ordinary private life.

In the first epistolary dialogue of *Letters for Literary Ladies* (1795), between "a Gentleman" and "his Friend", the Friend argues that girls and boys should be

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[76] *The Life and Letters of Maria Edgeworth*, ed. by Augustus J. C. Hare, 2 vols. (London: Edward Arnold, 1894), II, p. 50 (italics mine). See Edmund Burke, *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful*, in *The Writings and Speeches of Edmund Burke*, ed. by Paul Langford and others, 9 vols. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981-2015), I: *The Early Writings*, ed. by T. O. McLoughlin, James T. Boulton, and William B. Todd (1997), pp. 188-320 (pp. 196-209); Henry Home, *Elements of Criticism*, 3 vols. (Edinburgh: For A. Millar, A. Kincaid, and J. Bell, 1762), pp. 375-406; Alexander Gerard, *An Essay on Genius* (London: For W. Strahan, T. Cadell, and William Creech, 1774); John Ogilvie, *Philosophical and Critical Observations on the Nature, Characters, and Various Species of Composition*, 2 vols. (London: For G. Robinson, 1774); Dugald Stewart, *Elements of the Philosophy of the Human Mind* (London: For A. Strahan, T. Cadell, and William Creech, 1792), pp. 475-79 and *Outlines of Moral Philosophy* (Edinburgh: For T. Cadell and William Creech, 1793), pp. 50-51; and, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *Biographia Literaria; or, Biographical Sketches of my Literary Life and Opinions*, in *The Collected Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, ed. by Kathleen Coburn, Bart Keith Winer, and others, Bollingen Series, 75, 16 vols. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1971-2001), VII: *Biographia Literaria*, ed. by James Engell and W. Jackson Bate (1983; repr. 1985), pp. 5-305, 5-250 (pp. 295-305).

[77] Hare, II, p. 60.

taught and, later, choose to use research and reason to hunt down useful truths.[78] Boys must, then, be taught Ancient Greek and Latin and the specialist knowledge necessary to "pursu[e] a profession, […] to shine in parliament, or to rise in public life" as a diplomat (p. 27). When such men write to supplement or as their income, they are forced to write what bookseller-publishers will sell; the Friend likens them to Members of Parliament who "often pursue the *expedient*", what parliamentary parties think electors want, over "*the right*" (p. 27). In so doing, he implies a comparison between Members who only "pursue […] *the right*" and a second type of writer, guided instead by what electors and readers need. In *Essays on Professional Education* (1809), Edgeworth and her father argue that "country gentlemen", possessed of "*independent fortunes*", can "speak their minds freely on every subject, […] without fear or reward", in the House of Commons; elsewhere, Richard Lovell Edgeworth proposed to bolster their influence by increasing the number of city or county constituencies and/or Members and shortening the parliament term. "*Independent fortune*[*s*]" also enabled country gentlemen to "acquir[e] an accurate and extensive knowledge on any subject".[79] However, the Friend argues that even if they do not have specialist knowledge, men's classical education limits their ability to "add to the general fund of useful and entertaining knowledge", in writing and in person (p. 28). Country gentlemen should yield their writerly duties to women of letters, who read "the good authors of antiquity" in translation (p. 26). Both correspondents characterise women of letters in opposition to another type of woman writer: the "female prodig[y]" (p. 1). Female prodigies are women who, as girls,

[78] 'Letter from a Gentleman to his Friend, Upon the Birth of a Daughter and Answer', in *Letters for Literary Ladies*, ed. by Claire Connolly (London: J. M. Dent; Vermont: Charles E. Tuttle, 1993), pp. 1-38 (p. 1).
[79] Richard Lovell Edgeworth [and Maria Edgeworth], *Essays on Professional Education* (London: For J. Johnson, 1809), pp. 247, 276-77.

were only taught how to discover fashionable truths; they also write what bookseller-publishers will sell, though only to show off, not to "earn their bread" (p. 27).

In *Belinda* (1801), Edgeworth considered writers who represent improbable, but possible incidents from ordinary, private life: writers of instructive real-life romances or of writing *à clef,* (hardly) fictionalised accounts of contemporary political and/or sexual scandals. She charts the process by which "fashionable *bel esprit*", Lady Delacour, becomes a female "prodigy".[80] When she has 'transformed', Delacour "relate[s]" her life history to the novel's title character and woman of letters, Belinda Portman, in "the manner" of a sentimental courtship *roman à clef* (p. 69). In Edgeworth's earliest sketch of *Belinda,* Dr. Sane is unable to reform Delacour's health and, with it, her 'bad' behaviour. Edgeworth described Sane as "like […] Doctor [John] Moore", a writer of instructive, probable fiction; Sane's failure is also, therefore, Moore's failure to make the writer of sentimental courtship *romans à clef* into a real-life romancer.[81] When Edgeworth drafted *Belinda,* she was able to fictionalise and incorporate into its plotline a little-known improbable incident from the life of Thomas Day. Edgeworth had, finally, managed to find a middle ground between the *roman à clef* and instructive, probable fiction: the real-life romance. This is why Dr. X—, who replaced Sane in the published novel, is able to influence Portman and her lover, Clarence Hervey, to help Delacour. Edgeworth's new addition took the place of another plotline: Hervey regains Portman's esteem when he "goes into Parliament" and "refuse[s] the most advantageous offers from ministry upon the old fashioned romantic notion of never acting or speaking contrary to his conscience".[82] In the published version, Hervey regains Portman's esteem by

[80] Maria Edgeworth, *Belinda*, ed. by Kathryn J. Kirkpatrick (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999, repr. 2008), pp. 10, 102. References given after quotations in the text are to this edition.
[81] Maria Edgeworth, 'Original Sketch of *Belinda*', in *Belinda,* ed. by Kirkpatrick, pp. 479-83 (p. 481).
[82] 'Original Sketch', p. 483.

resisting the temptation to jilt Rachel, whose reputation is at stake, and marry Portman. Edgeworth briefly registers her fear of writing *à clef* by interchanging Portman, a woman of letters like herself, and Members of Parliament controlling or controlled by bribery and party-organisation.

Crabbe, Wordsworth, and Edgeworth each pitted a 'rightly'-mandated writer and legislator against a 'wrongly'-mandated writer and legislator, representers of the 'right' against representers of the 'wrong' group's interests in writing and in statutes. All three effectively positioned themselves on Williams's scale between writing understood (a) as the representation of what the writer has abstracted from his subjects' reality, as thinkers and actors in socio-political and -economic contexts, and (b) as the straightforward representation of those subjects' reality, their ordinary way of life. Wordsworth did not, as Green argues, seek straightforwardly to represent in poetry the values that he really found in his subjects' reality, nor did he align himself with a legislator elected by and representing the interests of the people (acting justly, according to God's will, or otherwise) in a reformed House of Commons. Instead, he sought to represent distilled human qualities, not derived from his subjects' reality, and aligned himself with a Member not elected by the people and representing his own, party, or electoral supporters' interests. However, Green was nonetheless right to revise Williams's thesis that the ideal of writing as a representation of subjects' reality emerged during the mid-nineteenth century. Crabbe and Edgeworth, from 1783 and 1795, respectively, both aspired to represent their subjects' reality and to align themselves with a reformed House of Commons, elected by and representing the interests of a larger subset of the people.

PART ONE

THE STATE OF THE HOUSE, 1776-1831

In this, first chapter, I consider which groups' interests Members of Parliament represented in the House of Commons between 1776 and 1831. Historians often separate electoral and parliamentary behaviour and apply a dizzying range of methodologies and data analysis tools. I apply one tool-box to my own and others' findings across both fields. I then identify trends in the many proposals - in parliamentary motions, in public petitions to the House of Commons, and in books, pamphlets, and periodical articles - by which contemporary radical and moderate parliamentary reformers sought to change the system of representation.

1.1 Historical Analysis

In Britain, a body of statute and case-laws distributed legislative, judicative, and executive power between the hereditary monarch, hereditary Lords (or an elected subset), and - in the person of elected representatives and empanelled jurors - the Commons.[83]

English constituencies were of five types: thirty-nine county constituencies elected two Knights of the Shire. Seventeen corporate county, 177 borough, and eight cinque port constituencies likewise elected two Citizens, Burgesses, or Barons of the Cinque Port.[84] Finally, two university constituencies elected two Masters of the University. Wales' thirteen county, two corporate county, and eleven borough

[83] Scotland had 154 hereditary Lords from 1707; they elected sixteen representatives to sit in the House of Lords. After 39 and 40 George III c. 67 (1800), 213 of Ireland's hereditary Lords also elected (in this case 28) representative Lords. See A. P. W. Malcomson, 'The Irish Peerage and the Act of Union, 1800-1971', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 10 (2000), 289-327.
[84] There were six exceptions: London elected four Citizens; Weymouth and Melcombe Regis elected four Burgesses; Abingdon, Banbury, Bewdley, and Higham Ferrers each elected one Burgess.

constituencies, and the thirty-three county and fifteen borough constituencies in Scotland, each elected one representative.[85] They - hereafter Members of Parliament - assembled to form the House of Commons.[86]

Members of Parliament could draft statute law independently or as part of two different types of committee: (a) to investigate the need for legislative action or (b) to review the terms of a public petition for statute change; however, conventionally, only two ongoing Commons committees examined the monarch's sessional requests for 'supply' and the 'ways and means' by which to levy these funds. Bills were introduced to either the House of Commons or of Lords and ordered to be printed (first reading), debated (second reading), and committed for clause-by-clause examination and amendment (committee stage); new content was further amended (report stage) and debated (third reading) before undergoing the same process in the other House. The bill was only enacted by the monarch when both Houses of Parliament reached agreement. By 12 and 13 William III, c. 2 (1701), both Houses could pass judgement on and address the monarch to remove - but not otherwise scrutinise - royal judicial appointments held "quamdiu se bene gesserit", *as long as he shall behave himself well*. Commons' representatives could, finally, propose that a committee of inquiry scrutinise the use of royal prerogative - not by

[85] (1) Monmouthshire was formed by 27 Henry VIII, c. 26 (1536) from Gwentian lordships; that only this county was added to the Oxford circuit of the (English) Courts of Assize and excluded from the four circuits of the (Welsh) Court of Great Sessions established under 34 and 35 Henry VIII, c. 26 (1543) has led to historical uncertainty about its nationality. I have therefore included Monmouthshire, which, unusually, elected two Knights of the Shire, and the borough of Monmouth as Welsh constituencies. (2) There were three exceptions: in Scotland three pairs of county constituencies (Buteshire and Caithness, Clackmannanshire and Kinross-shire, Cromartyshire and Nairnshire) alternated their respective rights to return one representative.

[86] To this composition parliament made two changes: (a) 39 and 40 George III c. 67 (1800) extended the British representation to include 66 constituencies in Ireland: 32 county and two county corporate constituencies (each of which elected two representatives) and six county corporate, 25 borough, and one university constituencies (one representative). (b) 1 and 2 George IV c. 47 (1821) disenfranchised the borough constituency of Grampound and re-distributed its two parliamentary seats to the county of Yorkshire (afterwards represented by four Knights of the Shire).

the monarch, who, according to case law, could neither think nor act improperly, but by (way of) his ministers, from whom he received advice, and executing officers - to determine whether (a) to amend or repeal actions or (b) to prosecute impeachment proceedings in the Upper House.[87] Representatives' fulfilment of these three roles was regulated by the Committee of Privileges (and Elections), riven into an ongoing Committee of Privileges and respective Select Committees on Controverted Elections by 10 George III, c. 16 (1770) and 14 George III, c. 15 (1774).

In what follows, I look at the make-up of the four electorates before answering two questions: how far did bribery and proprietary- or employer-control affect electors' freedom of choice in elections? and to what extent did control exerted by supporting electoral-interests and/or party-organisation affect the behaviour of Members of Parliament as they carried out these roles.

The 314 constituencies and their 558 representatives were unevenly distributed across the six comparably sized regions into which I have cleaved Britain for the purposes of this analysis.[88] Table 2 reveals that most - 29 and 26.6%, respectively - of the country's 1181 towns and cities were in South and Central England between *c.* 1662 or 1755 and 1851; though the South could boast more than twice the Centre's number of members.[89] At the other end of the scale, Wales, South

[87] For the monarch not being able to think or act improperly, see Janelle Greenberg, 'Our Grand Maxim of State, "The King can do no wrong"', *History of Political Thought*, 12.2 (1991), 209-28.
[88] The regions are South England (comprising Berkshire, Cornwall, Devon, Dorset, Gloucestershire, Hampshire, Kent, Middlesex, Oxfordshire, Somerset, Surrey, Sussex, and Wiltshire), Central England (Bedfordshire, Buckinghamshire, Cambridgeshire, Cheshire, Derbyshire, Essex, Herefordshire, Hertfordshire, Huntingdonshire, Leicestershire, Norfolk, Northamptonshire, Rutland, Shropshire, Staffordshire, Suffolk, Warwickshire, and Worcestershire), North England (Cumberland, Durham, Lancashire, Lincolnshire, Northumberland, Nottinghamshire, Westmoreland, and Yorkshire), South Scotland (Argyllshire, Ayrshire, Berwickshire, Clackmannanshire, Dumbartonshire, Dumfriesshire, Edinburghshire, Fifeshire, Haddingtonshire, Kinross-shire, Kirkcudbrightshire, Lanarkshire, Linlithgowshire, Peebles-shire, Perthshire, Renfrewshire, Roxburghshire, Selkirkshire, Stirlingshire, and Wigtownshire), North Scotland (Aberdeenshire, Banffshire, Buteshire, Caithness, Cromartyshire, Forfarshire, Inverness-shire, Kincardineshire, Morayshire, Nairnshire, Orkney, Ross-shire, Shetland, and Sutherland), and Wales, which is approximately half the area of the other five regions.
[89] This selection comprises (a) all enfranchised settlements, (b) the named towns and cities identified in the maps of English towns in *c.* 1670 and/or 1841, included in the South West, South East, East

Table 2: Regional Share of Town or City Constituencies and Members

Region	% of towns/cities	% of town/city constituencies	% of town/city membership
South England	29	36.3	53.7
Central England	26.6	16.6	23.9
North England	17.6	10.9	16.1
Wales	9.2	15.6	3
South Scotland	13.8	13.8	2.4
North Scotland	3.7	6.9	1

and North Scotland's share of members was between 17.4 and 32.6% smaller than their share of towns and cities. As Table 3 shows, not all - between just 16.8 and 50% of - towns and cities were represented in each region during the same period. In South, Central, and North England, constituencies were (a mean of) 10.5, 18.7 and 21.7% more likely to be medium-to-large than small towns and cities, to be towns and cities of over 1,600 inhabitants. The reverse was true in North Scotland, where a medium-to-large town or city was 12.7% less likely to be represented. There were

Anglia, Midlands, and Wales 'Area Surveys' of *The Cambridge Urban History of Britain*, ed. by Peter Clark, Martin Daunton, and D. M. Palliser, 3 vols. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000-2001), II: *1540-1840*, ed. by Peter Clark (2000), as inhabited by over 2,500 people, (c) the "largest English towns" (p. 2) included in Rosemary Sweet, *The English Town, 1680-1840: Government, Society and Culture* (Harlow: Longman, 1999), Table 1 ('Urban Population in Thousands, c. 1670-1841', pp. 3-4), and (d) the representative sample of towns and cities studied in Peter Clark and J. Hosking, *Population Estimates of English Small Towns, 1550-1851*, rev. edn. (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1993), Nia Powell, 'Urban Population in Early Modern Wales Revisited', *Wales History Review*, 23.3 (2007), 1-43 (Table (untitled, pp. 32-43)), and Ian D. Whyte, 'The Function and Social Structure of Scottish Burghs of Barony in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries', in A. Mączak and T. C. Smout, eds., *Gründung und Bedeutung Kleinerer Städte im Nördlichen Europa der Frühen Neuzeit* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1991), pp. 11-30 (Appendix 1 ('The Scottish Urban Heirarchy [*sic*], cl 790-1795', pp. 25-30)).

Table 3: Regional Share and Population of Town or City Constituencies, 1662-1851

		Number of towns and cities (those represented)								
		South England			Central England			North England		
	Population	1662-89	1811	1851	1662-89	1811	1851	1662-89	1811	1851
Small	0-199	10 (3)	3 (2)	5 (4)	3	1	1	7	1	1
	200-399	45 (13)	5 (2)	4 (1)	30 (4)	7 (2)	3 (2)	41 (2)	6	4
	400-799	123 (28)	35 (12)	15 (7)	104 (3)	26 (3)	9 (1)	57 (6)	29 (3)	13 (1)
	800-1,599	79 (29)	90 (27)	63 (18)	110 (18)	92 (7)	57 (3)	53 (12)	51 (1)	36 (3)
Medium	1600-3199	25 (13)	118 (29)	129 (31)	35 (9)	103 (11)	104 (9)	20 (8)	44 (8)	43 (3)
	3200-6399	2 (1)	57 (21)	63 (18)	4 (2)	53 (12)	87 (12)	3 (1)	34 (7)	43 (9)
	6400-12,799	2 (2)	23 (15)	35 (17)	9 (9)	16 (8)	25 (10)	2 (2)	26 (8)	28 (6)
	12,800-25,599	2 (2)	6 (2)	13 (10)	1 (1)	12 (9)	7 (5)		9 (3)	19 (5)
Large	25,600-51,199		2 (2)	7 (4)		1 (1)	15 (8)		5 (4)	7 (3)
	51,200-102,399		3 (3)	3 (2)		1	3 (3)		3 (1)	11 (4)
	102,400-204,799		1 (1)	4 (3)						1
	204,800-409,599			1 (1)			1			2 (1)
	Total	288 (91)	343 (116)	342 (116)	296 (46)	312 (53)	312 (53)	183 (31)	208 (35)	208 (35)

		Number of towns and cities (those represented)								
		South Scotland			North Scotland			Wales		
	Population	1755	1811	1851	1755	1811	1851	1662-89	1811	1851
Small	0-199							10 (5)	2 (1)	1
	200-399	2 (1)	1 (1)	1 (1)				27 (12)	13 (5)	6 (3)
	400-799	15 (3)	3 (1)	5 (4)	3 (2)		3 (2)	34 (14)	17 (7)	14 (5)
	800-1599	55 (13)	28 (6)	32 (8)	7 (4)	10 (6)	5 (3)	17 (9)	36 (17)	25 (14)
Medium	1600-3199	56 (14)	72 (18)	68 (12)	24 (10)	16 (5)	21 (5)	6 (5)	27 (14)	32 (11)
	3200-6399	17 (9)	38 (12)	31 (10)	6 (3)	13 (7)	8 (5)	3	7 (2)	18 (10)
	6400-12,799	3 (2)	7 (3)	16 (6)	1 (1)	2 (2)	4 (4)		3 (2)	8 (4)
	12,800-25,599	1 (1)	3 (1)	3 (1)	2 (2)	1 (1)	1 (1)			2 (2)
Large	25,600-51,199	1 (1)		2		1 (1)				1 (1)
	51,200-102,399		1 (1)	1 (1)			2 (2)			1
	102,400-204,799		1 (1)	1 (1)						
	204,800-409,599									
	Total	150 (44)	154 (44)	160 (44)	43 (22)	43 (22)	44 (22)	97 (45)	105 (48)	108 (50)

Sources: Clark and Hosking; Powell, pp. 32-43 (untitled table); Leonard Owen, 'The Population of Wales in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries', *Transactions of the Honourable Society of Cymmrodorion* (1959), 99-113 (p. 112 ('Pembroke' and 'Radnor')); Alexander Webster, *Scottish Population Statistics*, ed. by James Gray Kyd (Edinburgh: T. and A. Constable, 1952); *Abstract of the Answers and Returns Made Pursuant to an Act, passed in the Fifty-first Year of His Majesty George III. Intituled [*sic*], 'An Act for taking an Account of the Population of Great Britain, and of the Increase or Diminution thereof'* (London: For the House of Commons, 1811); *Census of Great Britain, 1851. Population Tables. Numbers of the Inhabitants*, 2 vols. (London: W. Clowes, 1852); Penelope Corfield, 'Urban Development in England and Wales in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries', in *Trade, Government and Economy in Pre-Industrial England*, ed. by D. C. Coleman and A. H. John (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1976), pp. 214-47 (pp. 219n, 220n); John Patten, *English Towns 1500-1700* (Folkestone: Dawson; Hamden: Shoe String Press, 1978), Table 9 ('Estimates for Urban Populations 1650-99', pp. 109-11), pp. 114, 116.

Notes

1. I have only used the parish population in cases where settlement-specific data was unavailable; in these cases, if a settlement straddles two parishes, I have added together the population of both parishes.
2. I have not discounted a datum when the settlement or parish is grouped with another.
3. If any count differentiates an 'old' and 'new' part of the same settlement, I have added together the population of both parts.
4. 1662-89 data for England and Wales is based on a mean of Hearth Tax assessments or, if unavailable, the 1676 Compton Census; I have used the multipliers outlined in 'Introduction', in Clark and Hosking, pp. i-ix (p. v).
5. Where estimates are in the form of a range, I have used the higher datum; if two estimates from the 1662-89 period are available, I have used a mean estimate.

South Scotland

I have used 1755 and 1811 data for Wemyss and Kilbride; but the 1851 Census differentiates East and West Wemyss, Buckhaven, and East Kilbride, each of which I have included as separate settlements.
Melrose Parish contains Melrose and part of Galashiels, the rest of which is in Galashiels Parish; in lieu of settlement-specific data for 1755 and 1811, I have used the Galashiels Parish population for Galashiels and the Melrose Parish population for Melrose.
The 1755 datum for Perth is an estimate.

North Scotland

The 1755 data for Dundee and Aberdeen are estimates.

South England

The 1662-89 data for Bristol, Exeter, Canterbury, Salisbury, and Gloucester are estimates.

Central England

The 1662-89 data for Shrewsbury, Norwich, Colchester, Chester, Ipswich, Great Yarmouth, Worcester, Coventry, King's Lynn, Cambridge, Bury St. Edmunds, Leicester, and Birmingham are estimates.

North England

The 1662-89 data for York, Newcastle upon Tyne, and Manchester are estimates.

Omissions

Represented settlements in Wales: Llanddewi Brefi (no data); Aberystwyth, Usk, Trelleck (no 1662-89 data); Trerhedyn (no 1811 data); Caergwrle, Cnwclas (1851 data only).

Unrepresented settlements in Wales: Merthyr Tydfil, Raglan, Bridgend, Ystrad Meurig, Llanelli, Llanymddyfri (no 1662-89 data).

Unrepresented settlements in North Scotland: Rosemarkie (no 1755 or 1811 data)

Unrepresented settlements in South Scotland: Ecclefechan, Briansford, Charleston/Limekilns (no data); Oban, Newton upon Ayr, Newton Stewart, Pathhead (no 1755 data); Saltcoats, Renton, Camelon, New Lanark (1851 data only)

Represented settlements in North England: Durham, Kingston upon Hull, Lincoln, Nottingham (no 1662-89 data).

Unrepresented settlements in North England: Sutton in Ashfield, South Shields, Stockport, Harrington, Barnard Castle, Bishop Auckland, Chester le Street, Darlington, Gateshead, Hartlepool, Houghton le Spring, Leeds, Monkwearmouth, Staindrop, Stanhope, Stockton-on-Tees, Sunderland, Wolsingham, Tattershall, Blyth, Pateley Bridge (no 1662-89 data).

Represented settlements in Central England: Chipping Wycombe, Great Marlow, Ludgershall, Hereford, Northampton, Stoke upon Trent, Wendover (no 1662-89 data).

Unrepresented settlements in Central England: Stourport-on-Severn (1662-89 data only); High Wycombe, Ivinghoe, Winslow, Thorney, Audlem, Ely, Leamington, Long Itchington, Redditch, Neston (no 1662-89 data); Olney (no 1811 data); Brierley Hill (1811 data only).

Unrepresented settlements in South England: Axbridge, Beckington, Bruton, Castle Cary, Chard, Frome, Glastonbury, Langport, Milverton, Nether Stowey, North Curry, North Petherton, Norton St. Philip, Pensford, Shepton Mallett, Somerton, South Petherton, Stogumber, Watchet, Wellington, Wiveliscombe, Wrington, Yeovil, Mere, Torquay, Newlyn, Mousehole, St. Agnes, Greenwich (no 1662-89 data); Deptford (1811 data only).

Represented settlements in South England: Bath, Bere Alston, Bridgwater, Christchurch, Old Sarum, Oxford, Plymouth, Reading, Ilchester, Milborne Port, Minehead, Newport, Westminster, London, Rochester, Maidstone, Dover, Gatton, Southwark, Portsmouth, Winchester, Bramber, Wells, Heytesbury, Poole (no 1662-89 data).

almost as many constituencies in both size categories in Wales and South Scotland.[90] Nor was this the whole story: towns or cities were rarely coextensive with constituency boundaries (see Figures 1-3). Table 4 relates each region's county constituency and member distribution to its population. Although North Scotland was divided into the most - 23.2% of - county constituencies, this region was least populated (5.3-4.7%) and returned the least (9% of) county members.[91] The majority (29.5%) were returned by the 22% of county constituencies in Central England;[92] this region had a population of 24.7-24%, lower by 7.1-8% than densely inhabited South England, which was divided into 6.1% fewer county constituencies and represented by 8.2% less county members.[93]

There were four different categories of voter qualification. Two were property-based; the first derived from the fact of tenancy: tenants of property with fireplaces sufficient to "pot-wall" or -boil and not in receipt of poor relief or the recipients (including annuitants and rent-chargers) of tenement income charged with

[90] Five changes were made to the incoming town and city constituency distribution by Act of Parliament or Committee of Privileges (and Elections) determination during this period: (a) 11 George III c. 55 (1771) enlarged the borough constituency of New Shoreham to include the rape of Bramber; (b) 22 George III c. 31 (1782) enlarged the borough constituency of Cricklade to include the hundreds of Highworth, Cricklade, Staple, Kingsbridge, and Malmesbury; (c) 44 George III c. 60 (1804) enlarged the borough constituency of Aylesbury to include the hundreds of Risborough, Stone and Aylesbury; (d) 1 and 2 George IV c. 47 (1821) disenfranchised Grampound borough; and (d) 1 George IV c. 74 (1830) enlarged the borough constituency of East Retford to include the hundred of Bassetlaw.

[91] Aberdeenshire, Banffshire, Buteshire, Caithness, Cromartyshire, Forfarshire, Inverness-shire, Kincardineshire, Morayshire, Nairnshire, Orkney and Shetland, Ross-shire, and Sutherland.

[92] Bedfordshire, Buckinghamshire, Cambridgeshire, Cheshire, Derbyshire, Essex, Herefordshire, Hertfordshire, Huntingdonshire, Leicestershire, Norfolk, Northamptonshire, Rutland, Shropshire, Staffordshire, Suffolk, Warwickshire, Worcestershire.

[93] One change was made to the incoming county constituency distribution by Act of Parliament or Committee of Privileges (and Elections) determination during this period: 1 and 2 George IV c. 47 (1821) redistributed Grampound borough's two seats to the county constituency of Yorkshire and changed the proportion of county members in South England (to 19.7%) and North England (to 14.8%).

Figure 1: 'Map of Hull', in *Reports from Commissioners on Proposed Division of Counties and Boundaries of Boroughs*, 4 vols. ([n.p.]: For the House of Commons, 1832), III. The original constituency boundary is marked in green.

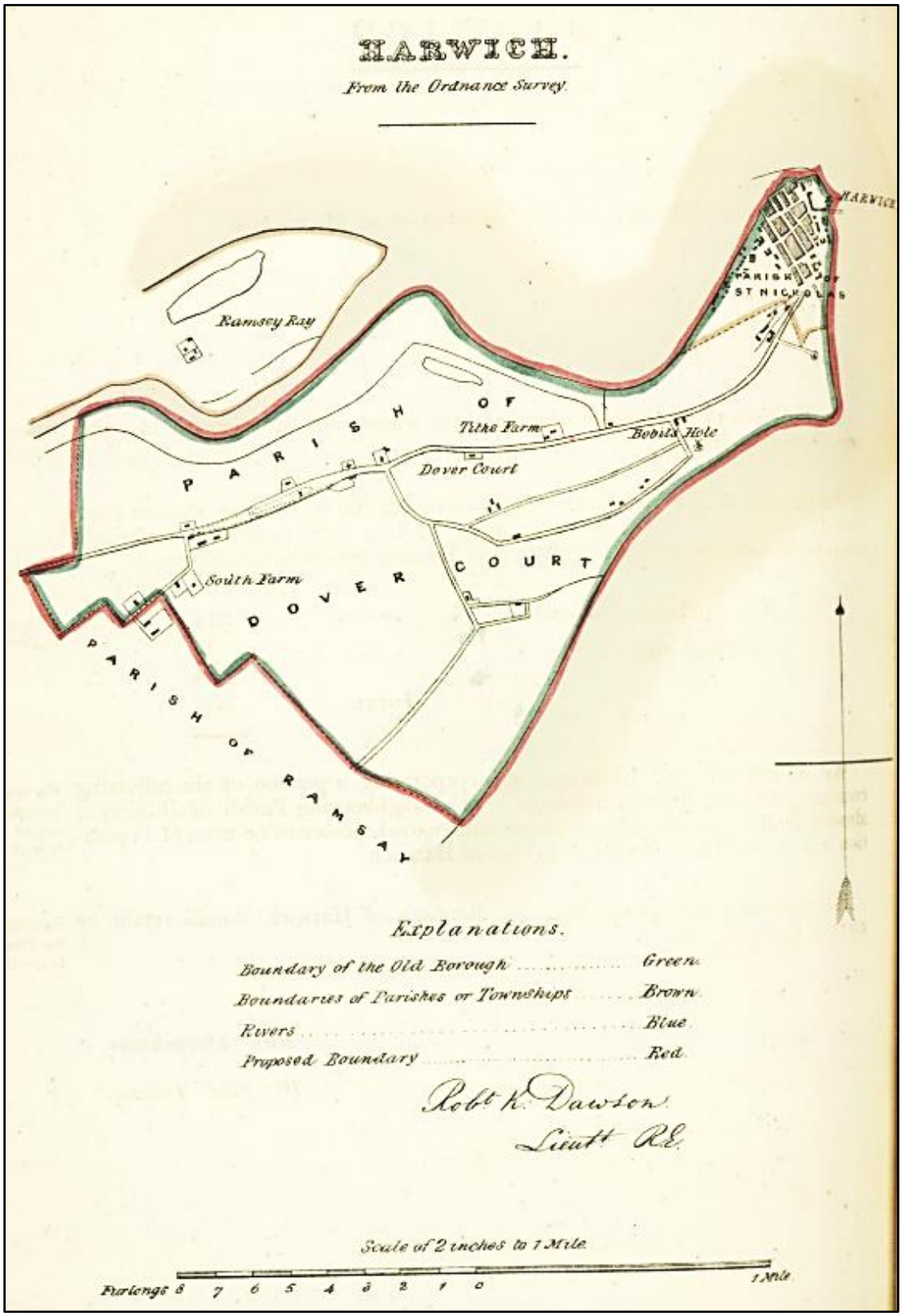

Figure 2: 'Map of Harwich', in *Proposed Division of Counties and Boundaries of Boroughs*, I. The original constituency boundary is marked in green.

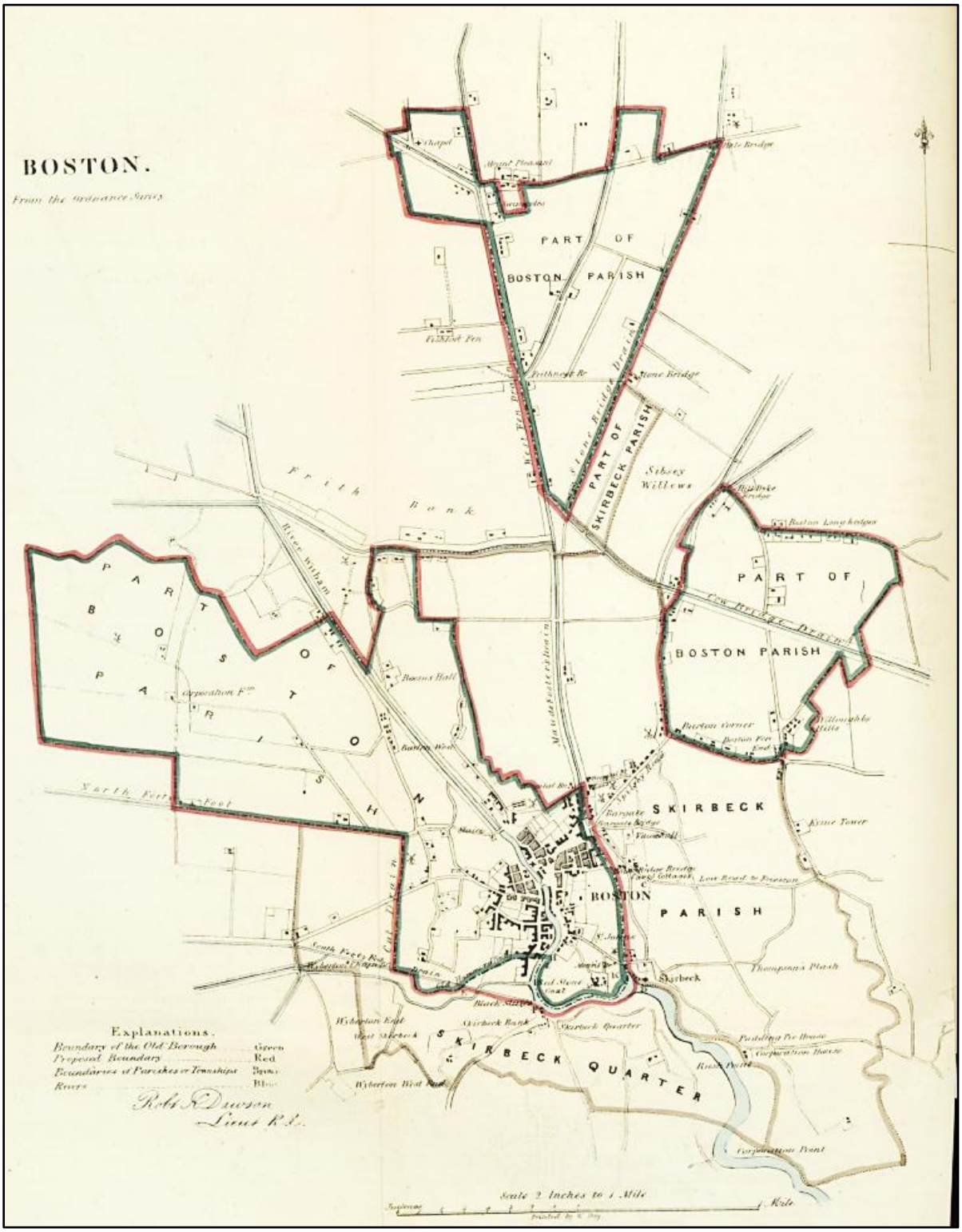

Figure 3: 'Map of Boston', in *Proposed Division of Counties and Boundaries of Boroughs*, III. The original constituency boundary is marked in green.

Table 4: Regional Share and Population of County Constituencies and Members, 1801-21

			% of population	
Region	% of county constituencies	% of county membership	1801	1821
South England	15.9	21.3	31.8	32.0
Central England	22	29.5	24.7	24.0
North England	9.8	13.1	22.6	23.6
Wales	15.9	11.5	5.6	5.6
South Scotland	13.4	15.6	10.0	10.2
North Scotland	23.2	9	5.3	4.7

Sources: *Abstract, Presented to the House of Commons, of the Answers and Returns made to the Population Act of 41st Geo. III* ([London]: For the House of Commons, [1801]); *Abstract of the Answers and Returns Made Pursuant to an Act, passed in the Forty-first Year or His Majesty King George III. Intituled, 'An Act for taking an Account of the Population of Great Britain, and the Increase or Diminution Thereof'*, 2 vols. (London: For the Census Office, 1801-1802); *Comparative Statement of the Population of the Several Counties of Great Britain, in the Years 1801 and 1811* ([London]: For the House of Commons, [1812]); *Comparative Statement of the Population of the Several Counties of Great Britain, in the Years 1801; 1811; and 1821* ([London]: For the House of Commons, [1822]).

Notes: 1801 parish data were not available for 22 of the parishes in the following counties: Argyllshire (3 parishes), Lanarkshire (1), Leicestershire (16), Ross-shire and Cromartyshire (2). This was also true of four parishes in 1821: Argyllshire (1 parish), Hampshire (1), Sussex (1), and Yorkshire (1).

the poor and/or church rate ('scot and lot').[94] This applied in one corporate county and fifty-three borough constituencies, in each of which it yielded between twenty and thirteen thousand electors.[95] Zoe Dyndor, in her case-study of the 1768 general election in one such constituency, Northampton, uses two poll-books and evidence

[94] This franchise had two permutations: resident rate-payers only (Abingdon, Aldborough (Yorkshire), Amersham, Arundel, Bridgwater, Bridport, Chichester, Corfe Castle, Eye, Fowey, Gatton, Great Marlow, Haverfordwest, Huntingdon, Leicester, Leominster, Lewes, Milborne Port, Mitchell, Newark, New Shoreham, New Windsor, Peterborough, Reading, Shaftesbury, Southampton, Southwark, Stamford, Steyning, St. Ives, Stockbridge, Tamworth, Wallingford, Wareham, Westminster, Wootton Bassett); and, householders resident for at least twelve months (Callington, St. Germans). Four changes were made to this incoming franchise by Act of Parliament or Committee of Privileges (and Elections) determination during this period: (a) 11 George III, c. 55 (1771) disenfranchised sixty-eight electors by name and required electors to be resident within the original constituency boundary in New Shoreham; (b) 22 George III, c. 41 (1782) disenfranchised officers within the Customs and Excise and Post Office departments; (c) by 26 George III, c. 100 (1786) electors must have been resident for six calendar months prior to election; and (d) 44 George III, c. 60 (1804) required electors to be resident within the original constituency boundary in Aylesbury.

[95] Two changes were made to which constituencies the householder franchise applied and constituency boundaries by Act of Parliament or Committee of Privileges (and Elections) determination during this period: (a) by *Journals of the House of Commons* (London: For the House of Commons, 1742-), XXXII (1769), pp. 79-80 (29 November 1768), the franchise was vested in Preston's inhabitant householders; and (b) by *Commons Journals*, XXXIX ([1784(?)]) , p. 368 (11 April 1783), the franchise was vested in the inhabitant householders of Pontefract.

prepared for a Committee for Privileges (and Elections) petition to construct the cross-examination of would-be voters and witnesses at the poll. She found that, of the 1139 voters, at least 104 successfully claimed that rooms or out-buildings within one household comprised a "separate tenancy"; Joseph Gamble and Thomas Jennings polled for rooms at the Chequer and Black Lion Inns, John Swindell for Widow Summerfield's warehouse.[96] At least 31 men successfully polled even though their "householder qualification [was] […] in doubt" (pp. 317, 321). John Ives, who had lodged with Mrs. Hammond for six years, "paid rent for the whole house for six or seven weeks" to qualify as the householder; so too did the lodgers of Mrs. Bolton and Widows Miller and Dixon (pp. 318-19). Mrs. Kingston vacated to enfranchise John Browne for two guineas. In six other cases, the voter moved in with existing residents for the duration of the election: Widow Bazely (remunerated in rent), Mrs. Benson, and Mrs. Goodwin took in William Richardson, John Ager, and Robert Black; Mrs. Ager, her lodger's grandson; and, Richard Evans joined Mrs. Manning, her husband, four children, and a Mrs. Films. Anne Westby agreed to "turn […] out" her Compton-Montagu-Dunk-party tenant in favour of a Rodney-Osborn supporter on the condition that he pay "enough rent" (p. 318). Dyndor demonstrates that just four of these 135 voters - Ives and the three other pre-existing lodgers - ordinarily resided in Northampton. Otherwise, we know only that the voters comprised 80% of the total adult male population of Minehead in 1768, 1796, 1802, and 1807, "less than 30[%]" for Lewes in 1802, and, in Reading, "one-quarter

[96] Zoe Dyndor, 'Widows, Wives and Witnesses: Women and their Involvement in the 1768 Northampton Borough Parliamentary Election', *Parliamentary History*, 30.3 (2011), 309-23 (pp. 309, 314-15, 317, 321). Summerfield did "vacate […] her house when she discovered that his vote would not be valid if she continued to live there"; Ann Westby testified that she "took in widow Summerfield, another of Gibson's tenants" (pp. 309, 318).

Table 5: Occupations of the Voters in Seven Householder Constituencies, 1768-1837

		Gentlemen/ professionals (%)	Manufacturers/ merchants (%)	Retailers (%)	Skilled craftsmen (%)	Semi-/unskilled labourers (%)	Agricultural occupations (%)
Abingdon	1802	16	17	29	38	-	-
Cirencester	1768	3.0	8.6	17.0	47.4	22.8	1.2
	1790	5.4	5.2	21.7	39.0	26.7	2.0
	1802	9.0	5.9	19.7	33.3	31.9	0.1
Lewes	1774	21.9	2.7	22.4	40.4	9.3	3.3
	1780	23.5	1.6	19.3	42.8	10.7	2.1
	1790	19.6	5.1	14.9	42.6	14.5	3.4
	1796	18	5.3	14.1	47.3	12.4	2.8
	1802	15.5	3.4	22.4	46.7	10.3	1.6
Minehead	1768	13	8	9	21	12	37
	1796	19	3	7	20	12	39
	1802	18	2	9	20	13	38
Northampton	1768	7.1	3.8	19.4	56.9	11.7	1.1
	1774	6.3	3.9	20.0	56.2	13.0	0.7
	1784	9.4	4.9	20.3	53.4	11.1	0.8
	1790	9.1	5.2	18.5	52.9	13.7	0.6
	1796	8.7	5.0	19.5	55.0	11.3	0.5
	1820	7	6	19	49	16	3
Preston	1807	4	3	16	64*	12	1
	1818	9	1	13	29	46*	2
	1820	6	3	12	25	53*	1
	1830	6	2	12	22	57*	1
	1837	9	4	15	65*	7	0
Reading	1774, 1780	17.3	10.2	28.6	38.4	3.0	2.5

* Includes textile workers

Sources: Phillips, *Electoral Behaviour,* Tables 5.2 ('Occupational Compositions of Liverpool and Reading Electorates (Percentage)', p. 189), 5.6 ('Occupational Compositions of Northampton and Lewes Electorates: 1768-1802 (Percentage)', p. 195); O'Gorman, *Voters, Patrons, Parties,* Tables 4.12 ('Occupational Structure of the Electorate in Six Constituencies, 1768-1831 Individual Years (%)', p. 203), 4.14 ('Occupational Structure of the Electorate in Constituencies of Different Franchisal Types, 1747-1830 (%)', p. 206)), 4.15 ('Structure of the Preston Electorate, 1807-1837 (%)', p. 216). O'Gorman's percentages for Preston during the 1818 and 1820 elections vary between Tables 4.14 and 4.15; I have therefore drawn only from the latter.

Table 6: Occupations of In-/Experienced Voters in two Householder Constituencies, 1796

	Northampton		Lewes	
	Inexperienced	Experienced	Inexperienced	Experienced
Gentlemen/professionals (%)	8.4	9.8	14.3	20.9
Manufacturers/merchants (%)	4.5	5.3	5.6	5.1
Retailers (%)	22.1	18.2	14.3	13.9
Skilled craftsmen (%)	53.7	55.2	50.8	44.9
Semi-/unskilled labourers (%)	11.1	10.8	11.9	12.7
Agricultural occupations (%)	0.3	0.7	3.2	2.5

Sources: Phillips, Table 5.8 ('Electoral Recruitment: Occupations of Experienced and Inexperienced Voters, 1796 (Percentage)', p. 198).

of adult males […] vote[d] in 1826".[97] John A. Phillips and Frank O'Gorman suggest the following figures for across the period in Northampton, Honiton, Cirencester, and Warwick: between 50 and 60%, "over 75%", "over 50%", and 63.9%, respectively.[98] In five out of the seven householder constituencies for which data are available, 1768-1837, most (33.3-56.9% of) voters were skilled craftsmen (see Table 5).[99] Only Minehead, "dependen[t] upon the rural economy", was dominated by 37-38% agricultural workers (accounting for 0-3.3% of the voters elsewhere).[100] 46-47% of Preston's voters hailed from its "increasing" textile labour-force; in

[97] John A. Phillips, *Electoral Behaviour in Unreformed England: Plumpers, Splitters, and Straights* (Guildford: Princeton University Press, 1982), p. 203; O'Gorman, *Voters, Patrons, and Parties*, p. 181. I have assumed, here and elsewhere, that O'Gorman's data refer to voters rather than electors, a distinction he only makes on p. 78 of *Voters, Parties, and Patrons*, of Tables 4.2 ('Size of the English and Welsh Electorates, 1689-1832', p. 179) and 4.3 ('Adjusted Estimate of Size of the English and Welsh Electorates, 1689-1832', p. 179). See O'Gorman, *Voters, Patrons, and Parties*, pp. 181-82.
[98] O'Gorman, *Voters, Patrons, and Parties*, p. 181. See ibid., p. 181; Phillips, *Electoral Behaviour*, p. 202.
[99] I have equated (a) Phillips' 'gentry and professions' and 'other' categories with O'Gorman's 'gentlemen and professionals' category; (b) 'merchants and entrepreneurs' with 'merchants and manufacturers'; (c) 'retailers' with 'retailers'; (d) 'agriculture' with 'agricultural occupations'; (e) 'craft trades/artisans/skilled workmen' with 'skilled craftsmen'; and, 'labouring men' with 'semi-/unskilled labourers'. Phillips adds eleven occupations excluded by O'Gorman: conveyancers, factors, chinamen, glassmen, mongers, hotpressers, hoymen, throwsterers, city employees, dancing masters, and wrights. They also disagree about the categorisation of nineteen occupations: bankers, brokers, jewellers, goldsmiths, watchmakers, tinmen, tailors, tallow chandlers, wool-combers and -sorters, gardeners, and bay-, boot-, card-, pasteboard-, sieve-, starch-, stay-, and store-makers. Phillips, *Electoral Behaviour*, Table 5.1 ('Occupational Compositions of Four Unreformed Borough Electorates: 1761-1802 (Percentage)', p. 182), pp. 180-85, 321-22 (Appendix 2).
[100] O'Gorman, *Voters, Patrons, and Parties*, p. 205.

Cirencester the number of voting semi- or unskilled labourers rose from 22.8 to 31.9%, but this group otherwise contained just 9.3-16% of voters. The proportion of gentleman and professional voters in three constituencies was between 3 and 9.4%; it was highest in Lewes, where it decreased from 21.9-23.5 to 15.5%, Reading (17.3%), and Abingdon (16%), and grew with Minehead's status as a resort town from 13 to 18%. O'Gorman concludes that this occupational structure stayed "surprisingly stable" over time.[101] In Northampton and Lewes the occupations of 1796 voters who did not vote in any preceding election closely resembled those of experienced voters (see Table 6). Phillips compares the occupations of voters and of all male adults in both constituencies. He cross-references Northampton voters in 1774 with the 1777 county militia roll of all men aged 18-45, excepting "poor men with three or more children", "peers, clergymen, articled clerks, apprentices, seamen, and parish constables". Phillips found that there were fewer gentlemen and professionals (by 0.4%), manufacturers (1.8%), and retailers (6%), all groups which could afford to "hire […] substitute[s]" when "selected for […] duty"; there were, however, only 0.1% more craftsmen, and, "swelled" with "hire[d] stand-ins", 8% more semi- or unskilled labourers and agricultural workers. A 1790 "partial census" of Lewes' householders, their occupations, and household-size revealed almost no change to the number of manufacturers and agricultural workers, but 9.2% more gentlemen and professionals and 9.4% more retailers than the voterate. Although the number of craftsmen and labourers was lower by 10.5% and 6.3%, it still accounted for 40.3% of the total.[102] There is one further yard-stick: the mean tenement income charged with the poor rate or land tax. For 202 Lewes voters this was £7 8s. (£1480 -

[101] O'Gorman, *Voters, Patrons, and Parties*, p. 215.
[102] Phillips, *Electoral Behaviour*, pp. 191-92. See ibid., Table 5.4 ('Occupations of Voters and Other Inhabitants in Northampton and Lewes (Percentage)', p. 192).

£2220) and, for 354 other tax-payers, £7 12s. (£1520 - £2280) in 1790; for 176 voters and 372 other tax-payers in 1796 Northampton the means were £5 8s. (£1080 - £1620) and £4 14s. (£940 - £1410). Phillips finds these "single-point estimates […] too small to be taken seriously", "especially […] in light of the elite occupational structure of the Lewes […] electorate [*voterate*]".[103]

The second variety of property-based franchise derived from the type of property tenure and qualified between nineteen and over fifteen thousand men as electors wherever it applied. In two corporate county and 119 borough constituencies the franchise was vested in all year-old freehold tenants (including copy- and other - leaseholders for life and beneficiaries) or year-old recipients of freehold income charged with land tax;[104] for one borough and eighty-two county constituencies, the franchise was restricted to freehold incomes above forty shillings *per annum*.[105]

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[103] Phillips, *Electoral Behaviour*, pp. 200, 201. See ibid., Table 5.9 ('Mean Rentals of Voters and All Taxpayers', p. 202).

[104] This franchise had eight permutations: inhabitant freeholders (Haslemere); freeholders who paid 'scot and lot' (Guildford); burgage freeholders only (Appleby, Ashburton, Bere Alston, Bletchingley, Boroughbridge, Castle Rising, Chippenham, Clitheroe, Cockermouth, Downton, East Grinstead, Heytesbury, Horsham, Knaresborough, Midhurst, Newton, Northallerton, Old Sarum, Petersfield, Pontefract, Richmond, Ripon, Thirsk, Westbury, Whitchurch); burgage freeholders who paid 'scot and lot' (Bramber); inhabitant burgage freeholders who paid 'scot and lot' (Newport); estates of inheritance (Ludgershall); leaseholds for three years and copyholds (Cricklade); and, "the Prince's tenants" and burgage freeholders in Lanteglos eligible to serve as portreeve (Fowey). Three changes were made to the incoming franchise by Act of Parliament or Committee of Privileges (and Elections) determination during this period: (a) by *Commons Journal*, XXVII (1755), pp. 292-93 (24 April 1755) freeholders were no longer required to pay rent to the lord of the borough in Haslemere; (b) 22 George III, c. 41 (1782) disenfranchised officers within the Customs and Excise and Post Office departments; and (c) 53 George III, c. 49 (1813) proscribed the 'splitting' of freeholds by devise. Two changes were made to which constituencies this franchise was applied and constituency boundaries by Act of Parliament or Committee of Privileges (and Elections) determination during this period: (a) by *Commons Journal*, XXXIX (1783), p. 368 (11 April 1783) the franchise was vested in the inhabitant householders of Pontefract; and, (b) *Commons Journal*, XLII (1787), p. 727 (7 May 1787) vested the franchise of Saltash in freehold tenants.

[105] This franchise had four permutations: the land-taxed freehold income must correspond to at least (a) a medieval - "old extent" - land-value of forty shillings or (b) four-hundred pound Scots *per annum* (all county constituencies in Scotland except Sutherland) or two-hundred Scots *per annum* (Sutherland); and, recipients of freehold incomes above twenty shillings *per annum* charged with 'scot and lot', two residence conditions (Weobly). Three changes were made to the incoming franchise by Act of Parliament or Committee of Privileges (and Elections) determination during this period: (a) 22 George III, c. 41 (1782) disenfranchised officers within the Customs and Excise and Post Office departments; (b) 53 George III, c. 49 (1813) proscribed the 'splitting' of freeholds by devise; and (c) by 10 George IV, c. 8 (1829) the forty shillings *per annum* threshold was raised to ten pounds *per annum* in Ireland. Four changes were made to which constituencies this franchise was

The percentage of voters who did not ordinarily reside in the county constituencies in which they voted is known only for three counties: they accounted for 10% of Kent's voterate in 1754, 25% of Westmoreland's in 1818, and 13% of Northamptonshire voters in 1831.[106] In Haslemere the voterate in 1761 and 1774 included, respectively, 57.4% and 72.7% of the male heads of households (excluding adult men still under paternal authority) recorded by the Court Leet in 1760, 1761, and 1774; though not all - in 1761, ten and, in 1774, five - voters were listed.[107] Mary Clayton finds that, during the 1754 Haslemere election, sixteen men used a freehold property they owned and ordinarily inhabited, fourteen men used a freehold property they did not own but ordinarily inhabited, and eighty-seven men used a freehold property they neither owned nor ordinarily inhabited to qualify. In 1761, just seven men used a freehold property they owned and ordinarily inhabited to qualify, twelve were only lodgers in the freehold property, and sixty-six men used a freehold property they neither owned nor ordinarily inhabited to qualify.[108] There is scant research into the occupational structure of any freeholder constituency except Lincolnshire. Here, most (45-49% of) voters were agricultural workers in 1818 and 1823; there were equal numbers of gentlemen and professionals (14-16%),

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applied and constituency boundaries by Act of Parliament or Committee of Privileges (and Elections) determination during this period: (a) 11 George III, c. 55 (1771) extended New Shoreham's franchise to include recipients of freehold incomes above forty shillings *per annum* in the rape of Bramber; (b) 22 George III, c. 31 (1782) extended the franchise in Cricklade to include freehold incomes above forty shillings *per annum* in the hundreds of Highworth, Cricklade, Staple, Kingsbridge, and Malmesbury; (c) 44 George III, c. 60 (1804) extended Aylesbury's franchise to include freehold incomes above forty shillings *per annum* in the hundreds of Risborough, Stone and Aylesbury; and, (d) 1 George IV c. 74 (1830) extended the franchise in East Retford to include freehold incomes above forty shillings *per annum* in the hundred of Bassetlaw.

[106] David Stoker, 'Elections and Voting Behaviour: A Study of Elections in Northumberland, Durham, Cumberland and Westmoreland, 1760-1832' (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Manchester, 1980), p. 326; A. Newman, 'Elections in Kent and its Parliamentary Representation, 1715-1754' (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Oxford, 1957), Table H; O'Gorman, *Voters, Patrons, and Parties*, p. 192.

[107] Mary Clayton, 'Voter Choice in a Patronage Borough: Haslemere, 1754-80', *Parliamentary History*, 15.2 (1996), 151-72 (pp. 163, 167).

[108] See Clayton, p. 168.

skilled craftsmen (14-15%), and semi-/unskilled labourers (14%). Just 1% were merchants and manufacturers and between 8 and 9% were retailers.[109] How far this corresponded with the occupational structure of the adult male population of this county is, sadly, unknown.

There were, finally, two corporative franchises. The first applied to the corporations - or, convocation and senate, respectively - of Oxford and Cambridge Universities; each comprised the elected chancellor and high officials, Doctors and Masters of Arts, numbering as many as 2524 men.[110] The second applied to borough or city corporations, made up of (a) capital freemen (including a mayor and aldermen) - or, the common council - co-opted from or by the (b) freemen, adult men admitted to the "freedom" by birth (as the son of a freeman), marriage to a freeman's widow or daughter, apprenticeship to a freeman, freehold, or trade guild membership, or co-option (by gift, redemption, or purchase). In seventeen corporate county, eighty-seven borough, and six cinque port constituencies the franchise was vested in the whole corporation;[111] but, for one cinque port and fourteen borough

[109] O'Gorman, *Voters, Patrons, and Parties*, pp. 205-206.

[110] The university franchise had no permutations, nor were any changes were made to the incoming franchise by Act of Parliament or Committee of Privileges (and Elections) determination during this period. One change was made to which constituencies this franchise was applied and constituency boundaries by Act of Parliament or Committee of Privileges (and Elections) determination during this period: 39 and 40 George III c. 67 (1800) enfranchised the University of Dublin and vested its franchise in its Board, comprising the provost, fellows and foundation scholars.

[111] The corporation franchise had eleven permutations: resident freemen (Bishop's Castle, Denbigh Boroughs, Dunwich, East Retford, Grimsby, Hastings, Higham Ferrers, Malton, Newcastle-under-Lyme, New Radnor (but not in its four contributory boroughs), Stafford); freemen resident for one year preceding the election and not in receipt of poor relief (Chester); freemen resident when admitted (Launceston); freeman members of trade guilds (Wells); year-old freeman members of trade guilds not in receipt of poor relief (London); resident freeman members of trade guilds (Preston); free burgage-freeholders (Newtown, Isle of Wight); freemen who had served seven years' apprenticeship to one trade and not in receipt of poor relief (Coventry); freemen who paid 'scot and lot' (Lichfield); resident freemen who paid 'scot and lot' (Boston, Camelford, Grampound, Rye, Shrewsbury, and Winchelsea); and, freemen who "do all corporate acts" and have received the eucharist (Wilton). Three changes were made to the incoming franchise by Act of Parliament or Committee of Privileges (and Elections) determination during this period: (a) 3 George III, c. 15 (1762) and Acts of Union 1800 prevented freemen admitted by gift, redemption, or purchase within twelve months of an election from voting in that election; (b) 22 George III, c. 41 (1782) disenfranchised officers within the Customs and Excise and Post Office departments; and (c) by 4 George IV, c. 55 (1823) the time-condition in (a) was reduced to six months in Ireland. Two changes were made to which

constituencies, it was restricted to the common council only.[112] Membership of a civic corporation qualified between twelve and seven thousand men as electors.

In twenty of the ninety-two civic corporation constituencies that did not stipulate residence and for which data are available, the proportion of non-resident voters ranged from between 21 and 74% (see Tables 7 and 8). However, just as 71.7% of the 778 non-resident freemen in Durham "lived within seven miles" of the borough in 1831, these percentages do not take into account what, for Peter Clark, is one of the four "recognised attributes of urbanness": "a cultural role and influence extending beyond the immediate locality".[113] Nor do they explain geographic mobility. The rate of migration out of parishes for marriage or employment "reach[ed] 10% a year"; in Cardington, as many as 64% of boys and 57% of girls left "before they were fifteen […] into a nearby parish" or, "for over a quarter[,] […] out of Bedfordshire, mostly to London".[114] O'Gorman concludes that in twenty-two town and city constituencies "between one-quarter and one-third of adult males [ordinarily residing in the town or city] had the vote" during this period.[115] Precise

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constituencies the corporation franchise was applied and constituency boundaries by Act of Parliament or Committee of Privileges (and Elections) determination during this period: (a) *Commons Journals*, XXXII (1768), pp. 79-80 (29 November 1768) vested Preston's franchise in the inhabitant householders; and (b) by *Commons Journals*, XLII (1787), p. 727 (7 May 1787) the franchise of Saltash was vested in freehold tenants.

[112] The common councilman franchise had one permutation: a delegation from four or five burgh corporations (fourteen borough constituencies in Scotland). One change was made to the incoming franchise by Act of Parliament or Committee of Privileges (and Elections) determination during this period: 22 George III, c. 41 (1782) disenfranchised officers within the Customs and Excise and Post Office departments. No changes were made to which constituencies the common-council franchise was applied and constituency boundaries by Act of Parliament or Committee of Privileges (and Elections) determination during this period.

[113] O'Gorman, *Voters, Patrons, and Parties*, p. 192; Peter Clark, 'Introduction', in *Urban History of Britain*, ed. by Clark, Daunton, and Palliser, II: *1240-1840*, ed. by Clark (2000), pp. 1-24 (p. 4).

[114] O'Gorman, *Voters, Patrons, and Parties*, p. 196; W. A. Speight, *Stability and Strife: England, 1714-1760* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1977), p. 67.

[115] O'Gorman, *Voters, Patrons, and Parties*, p. 181. He includes Berwick, Boston, Derby, Great Yarmouth, Grantham, Guildford, Hertford, Ipswich, King's Lynn, Leominster, Lichfield, Ludlow, Maldon, Monmouth, Newcastle-under-Lyme, Okehampton, Rochester, Sandwich, Shrewsbury, Southampton, St. Albans, Sudbury, and Wenlock; Guildford, Lichfield, Okehampton, St. Albans, Southampton, Hertford, and Shrewsbury had multiple franchises. I have excluded Leominster as it had an inhabitant householder franchise.

Table 7: Proportion of Non-Resident Voters in Sixteen Corporation Constituencies, 1747-1831

	Percentage of non-resident electors at general elections (percentage resident in London)														
	1747	1754	1774	1780	1784	1790	1802	1806	1807	1812	1818	1820	1826	1830	1831
Bedford						37 (13)									
Canterbury						38									
Chester	31														
Colchester						60 (18)				66	66	66	66	66	66
Coventry						25 (14)									
Durham															65.7*
Great Yarmouth											53	55		45	(12)
Hedon							70						74		
Ipswich					50										
Lancaster						70 (8)									
Lincoln						55 (13)									
Newcastle-upon-Tyne				50 (9)											
Norwich							31 (10)	28 (9)	21	23	28			28	
Oxford							(12)								
Rochester														63	
York		c. 25	c. 25		c. 25										

Table 8: Proportion of Non-Resident By-Election Voters in Four Corporation Constituencies, 1765-1831

	Percentage of non-resident electors at by-elections (percentage resident in London)				
	1765	1766	1770	1818	1831
Berwick	43				
Colchester				66	66
Dover			30		
Leicester		40			

*47.1% "lived within seven miles" of Durham

Sources: *The State of the Representation of England and Wales* (London: For D. Stuart, [1793]), pp. 11-12 (confirmed by O'Gorman using contemporary poll-books); F. C. Price, 'Parliamentary Elections in York City, 1754-1790' (unpublished master's thesis, University of Manchester, 1958), pp. 256-57; M. A. Speight, 'Politics in the Borough of Colchester, 1812-1847' (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of London, 1969), p. 110; A. R. Childs, 'Politics and Elections in Suffolk Boroughs during the Late Eighteenth Century and Early Nineteenth Century' (unpublished master's thesis, University of Reading, 1973), p. 75; Stoker, p. 326; O'Gorman, *Voters, Patrons, Parties*, pp. 191-93.

data are available for five others: Hull (19.6% in 1801), Morpeth (26% in the "early nineteenth century"), Coventry and Chester ("around 25%" in 1820 and 1826), and Norwich (20.5% in 1830).[116] Table 9 shows the occupational structure of voters in thirteen corporation constituencies during assorted elections between 1786 and 1831. In six, the majority of voters were either skilled craftsmen or retailers; these two groups were indistinguishable in Carlisle (1786) and Ipswich (1820), but elsewhere the number of skilled craftsmen outstripped retailers by between 15 and 19%. Skilled craftsmen shared the majority with retailers and/or semi-/unskilled labourers in six corporate constituencies; however, the number of skilled craftsmen in Wigan's 1830 voterate (40%) was matched by its retailers (20%), gentlemen and professionals (21%). Manufacturers and merchants (1-10%) and/or agricultural workers (1-12%) accounted for the least voters across nine corporation constituencies. In Carlisle (1786), this title went instead to the semi-/unskilled labourers (3%), manufacturers and merchants (5%); in Morpeth (1802), the same groups (1%) and gentlemen and professionals (1%) were in the minority. 25% of Ipswich (1820) and 2% of Grimsby (1826) voters were agricultural workers, manufacturers and merchants, and either semi-/unskilled labourers or gentlemen and professionals.

Table 10 enables us to see how far these patterns were borne out across successive elections in six other corporation constituencies. It reveals that, excepting Chester, when in 1747 they were outnumbered two-to-one and, in 1784, equalled, by semi-/unskilled labourers, most voters were still skilled craftsmen; in Liverpool (1780-1818), the latter comprised 63-69% of the voterate. In Shrewsbury, skilled craftsmen (43.4-53.7%) and retailers (22.2-27.2%) dominated (by 9.4-16.5%) every

[116] O'Gorman, *Voters, Patrons, and Parties*, pp. 180-82. O'Gorman states that 3153 of Norwich's total adult population (15,403) voted in 1830, but wrongly records this number as 20-25% of that total.

Table 9: Occupations of the Voters in Thirteen Corporation Constituencies, 1786-1830

		Gentlemen/ professionals (%)	Manufacturers/ merchants (%)	Retailers (%)	Skilled craftsmen (%)	Semi-/unskilled labourers (%)	Agricultural occupations (%)
Carlisle	1786	13	5	31	31	3	18
Newcastle-under-Lyme	1790	6	1	13	62	16	2
Morpeth	1802	6	5	31	50	2	7
Berwick	1803	11	3	26	41	14	5
Grantham	1820	12	1	15	48	23	1
Ipswich	1820	16	9	31	28	10	6
Oxford	1820	13	2	26	44	12	3
Boston	1826	6	2	18	57	16	1
Grimsby	1826	1	0	17	30	51	1
Lincoln	1826	7	2	14	38	27	12
Canterbury	1830	16	1	23	40	8	12
Rochester	1830	16	3	18	38	23	2
Wigan	1830	21	10	20	40	7	2

Sources: Phillips, *Electoral Behaviour*, Table 5.7 ('Occupational Compositions of Norwich and Maidstone Electorates: 1761-1802 (Percentage)', p. 197); O'Gorman, *Voters, Patrons, Parties*, Tables 4.12, 4.14; Stoker, pp. 391-401.

Table 10: Occupations of the Voters in Six Corporation Constituencies, 1747-1831

		Gentlemen/ professionals (%)	Manufacturers/ merchants (%)	Retailers (%)	Skilled craftsmen (%)	Semi- /unskilled labourers (%)	Agricultural occupations (%)
Chester	1747	17	2	15	21	39	6
	1784	25	2	6	29	34	4
	1812	11.2	4.5	26.2	53.1	3.4	1.6
	1818	9.4	4.7	24.7	56.0	3.6	1.6
	1826	7.9	4.2	26.4	55.2	4.7	1.6
Colchester	1790	8.6	4.0	14.0	46.4	20.6	6.4
	1806	8.7	5.1	12.9	36.6	28.0	8.7
	1807	8.8	4.3	12.4	34.4	31.2	8.9
	1812	9.6	5.7	13.5	34.8	25.7	10.7
	1818	9.9	2.6	15.1	42.8	25.4	4.2
	1820	12.1	5.5	14.9	35.1	26.4	6.0
Great Yarmouth	1754	22	7	11	42	17	1
	1795	14	3	11	41	26	5
	1820	20	6	12	42	12	8
Liverpool	1780	4	4	18	67	6	1
	1784	7	8	16	63	5	1
	1790	7	8	12	66	6	1
	1802	7	8	13	67	4	1
	1818	9	7	9	69	5	1
Maidstone	1761	11.0	4.0	19.1	49.7	10.1	6.0
	1768	16.4	5.4	18.9	49.8	7.1	2.5
	1774	11.1	2.8	21.2	54.0	7.5	3.3
	1780	16.8	4.1	16.4	49.7	11.4	1.6
	1784	13.2	4.4	17.6	54.4	8.5	2.0
	1790	12.8	3.3	17.3	52.9	11.5	2.3
	1796	13.6	2.7	16.1	57.8	7.6	2.2
	1802	12.1	5.0	16.7	55.1	8.3	2.9
Shrewsbury	1806	16.4	4.0	25.8	43.4	7.5	2.9
	1807	14.6	5.5	27.2	43.4	8.3	1.0
	1812	9.2	3.1	22.2	53.7	11.0	0.8
	1814	11.5	3.7	22.4	50.2	11.0	1.2
	1819	12.4	6.4	24.4	45.9	10.0	0.9
	1826	11.2	4.0	25.6	50.5	7.8	0.9
	1830	11.0	6.2	24.2	49.0	9.0	0.6
	1831	9.6	6.9	26.1	50.5	5.9	1.0

Sources: Phillips, *Electoral Behaviour*, Table 5.7; O'Gorman, *Voters, Patrons, Parties*, Tables 4.12, 4.14.

Table 11: Occupations of In-/Experienced Voters in Maidstone, 1796

	Inexperienced	Experienced
Gentlemen/professionals (%)	8.1	7.8
Manufacturers/merchants (%)	4.8	1.7
Retailers (%)	15.1	14.4
Skilled craftsmen (%)	62.4	67.4
Semi-/unskilled labourers (%)	7.5	7.7
Agricultural occupations (%)	2.1	1.1

Source: Phillips, *Electoral Behaviour*, Table 5.8 ('Electoral Recruitment: Occupations of Experienced and Inexperienced Voters, 1796 (Percentage)', p. 198).

Table 12: Occupations of the Voters in Maidstone, 1761-1802

	% of all electors	% of all resident electors	% of all non-resident electors
Gentlemen/professionals (%)	13.4	7.8	14.0
Manufacturers/merchants (%)	4.0	5.4	6.1
Retailers (%)	17.9	23.0	17.7
Skilled craftsmen (%)	52.9	50.9	41.9
Semi-/unskilled labourers (%)	8.9	9.8	13.9
Agricultural occupations (%)	2.9	3.1	6.4

Source: Phillips, *Electoral Behaviour*, Tables 5.1 ('Occupational Compositions of Four Unreformed Borough Electorates: 1761-1802 (Percentage)', p. 182), 5.3 ('Occupations of Resident and Nonresident Voters in Norwich and Maidstone (Percentage of All Voters at All Elections)', p.190).

election between 1806 and 1831. Although, in common with Great Yarmouth's voterate (1754-1829), Chester (1747-1784) had a high proportion of gentlemen and professionals (17-25%), from 1812-1826 this declined to 7.9-11.2% in favour of skilled craftsmen (53.1-56%) and retailers (26.2-24.7%). Maidstone (1761-1802), not unlike Wigan (1830), had the same number of retailer, gentleman and professional voters (12.8-21.2%) in six-out-of-eight elections; whereas the second largest group of Colchester (1790-1820) voters was made up of marine semi-/unskilled labourers (20.6-31.2%).[117] Agricultural workers were in the minority across the board (0.6-10.7%). In Great Yarmouth (1795-1820), Maidstone (1761-

[117] O'Gorman, *Voters, Patrons, and Parties*, p. 204.

Table 13: Mean Rentals of Voters and All Taxpayers in Maidstone, 1780-1796

	Mean rental of voters	No of voting tax-payers	Mean rental of all taxpayers	All tax-payers
1780	£18	227	£15 14s.	589
1784	£20 14s.	229	£17 18s.	559
1790	£20 4s.	199	£17 16s.	642
1796	£19 12s.	188	£17 18s.	612

Source: Phillips, *Electoral Behaviour*, Table 5.9 ('Mean Rentals of Voters and All Taxpayers', p. 202).

1802), Shrewsbury (1806-1814 and 1826), Chester (1747), and Colchester (1818-1820) this group was inseparable from manufacturers and merchants. For the Chester voterate, 1812-26, following, in 1784, an exceptional dip in its proportion of retailers, this also extended to semi-/unskilled labourers (5.8-6.1% + 3.4-4.7%). This was true of gentlemen and professionals in Liverpool (1780) and Colchester (1790-1812) (5-16.4% + 4-9.6%); but Liverpudlian voters were least likely to be agricultural workers (1%) or semi-/unskilled labourers (4-5%) in 1784 and 1802. The occupational structure only changed over time in Chester (1747-1826); in Maidstone, the occupations of 1796 voters who did not vote in any preceding election even closely resembled those of experienced voters (see Table 11). Table 12 adds to this data the occupational structure of every non-/resident Maidstone voter across all elections between 1761 and 1802; from it, we can learn that the resident voterate contained just 9% and 5.3% more resident craftsmen and retailers, and 4.1% and 6.2% fewer agricultural workers, gentlemen and professionals. It is only possible to test how far the voterate's occupational structure corresponded with that of each town or city's adult male population for Chester and Maidstone. J. M. Pigot's *History of the City of Chester* (1815) records that, in 1811, 10.6% of Chester families (397) were "employed in agriculture" and 61.3% (2296) in "handicraft or

manufactures".[118] That agricultural workers accounted for only 1.6% of Chester (1812) voters is not, in O'Gorman's words, "a good fit", but Pigot's number might have included gentlemen and professionals; 57.6% of voters were skilled craftsmen, manufacturers and merchants.[119] In a sample range of 188-229 Maidstone voters, the mean tenement income charged with the poor rate "marginally exceeded the mean for the overall taxpaying populace at four points from 1780 to 1796" (see Table 13); that it reached as high as £20 14s. (£4140 - £6210) persuades Phillips that this voterate did not "share […] the economic conditions of the entire community".[120]

The 'Whig' historiography inherited by the twentieth century constructed those few adult men who did qualify to vote as under control, due to bribery, landlord- and/or employer-pressure, or influence, yet ready, when riled, to vote freely and - in William Thomas Laprade's memorable phrase, "by some occult process" - in line with non-electors' feelings: in 1784, to oust the Fox-North Coalition after its bid to nationalise the East India Company, and in 1831, to guarantee parliamentary reform.[121] However, the publication in 1922 of the un/official Ministry election manager, 1774-84, John Robinson's private memoranda called this freedom into question. Robinson forecast in which constituencies supporting electoral interests would have - and in which they might, if armed with secret service funds, be able to

[118] J. M. Pigot, *History of the City of Chester* (Chester: For T. Poole, 1815), p. 89.
[119] O'Gorman, *Voters, Patrons, and Parties*, p. 216.
[120] Phillips, *Electoral Behaviour*, p. 200.
[121] See, for example, William Lecky, *A History of England in the Eighteenth Century*, 8 vols. (London: Longmans, Green, 1878-90), IV (1882), pp. 308-11; Joseph Grego, *A History of Parliamentary Elections and Electioneering in the Old Days* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1886), ch. 10; William Hunt, *The History of England, From the Accession of George III to the Close of Pitt's First Administration (1760-1801)*, Political History of England, 10 (London: Longmans, Green, 1905), pp. 254, 280; Charles Grant Robertson, *England Under the Hanoverians*, A History of England, 6 (London: Methuen, 1911), pp. 302-05; Arthur D. Innes, *A History of England and the British Empire*, 4 vols. (London: Rivingtons, 1913-15), III (1914), pp. 387-89. William Thomas Laprade, 'Introduction', in *Parliamentary Papers of John Robinson, 1774-1784*, ed. by Laprade (London: For the Royal Historical Society, 1922), pp. v-xx (p. ix).

gain - effective control. The memoranda suggested that contests were infrequent, even in populous town or city and county constituencies, even in 1784; fewer than one in eleven of English or Welsh Knights of the Shire, 1760-1800, "met with even nominal opposition".[122] The *coup de grâce* was dealt by Lewis Namier's *The Structure of Politics at the Accession of George III* (1929), *England in the Age of the American Revolution* (1930), and (co-written with John Brooke) *The History of Parliament: The House of Commons 1754-1790* (1964). Namier routinely limited his focus to patronal influence, which he wrote of as control, over electors.[123] But influence and control are not synonyms. Influence was achieved by, for example, providing employment opportunities, helping causes, co-/funding public buildings (schools, hospitals, bridges, almshouses, halls, assembly rooms), ordering from retailers, and throwing regular dinners or balls for electors and their families in a constituency; unlike in cases of control, electors could, and did, still make up their own minds.

Control was not often effectively exerted. The eighteenth and nineteenth centuries saw a gradual shift away from the granting of freehold leases for (usually three) named lives, to leases for (up to twenty-one) years, to leases for one year or tenancies-at-will.[124] Only year-long or at-will freeholders could be evicted immediately. In spite of this, Eric Richards reports "no sign that the threat of ejection was used to control [the] votes" of year-long tenants in the Trentham properties

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[122] Laprade, p. x

[123] See, for example, Lewis Namier, *The Structure of Politics at the Accession of George III*, 2nd. edn. (London: Macmillan, 1957; repr. 1975), p. 73; Lewis Namier and John Brooke, *The History of Parliament: The House of Commons 1754-1790*, 3 vols. (London: Secker and Warburg, 1964; repr. 1985), I: *Survey, Constituencies, Appendices*, p. 9.

[124] See F. M. L. Thompson, 'Changing Perceptions of Land Tenures in Britain, 1750-1914', in *The Political Economy of British Historical Experience, 1688-1914*, ed. by Donald Winch and Patrick K. O'Brien (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), pp. 119-138; Colin A. M. Duncan, 'Legal Protection for the Soil of England: The Spurious Context of Nineteenth Century "Progress"', *Agricultural History*, 66.2 (1992), 75-94; J. A. Perkins, 'Tenure, Tenant Right, and Agricultural Progress in Lindsey, 1780-1850', *Agricultural History Review*, 23.1 (1975), 1-22.

owned by the first and second Marquesses of Stafford, 1800-60.[125] David Stoker has found just one instance of an elector being evicted for voting in opposition to his landlord's wishes in Cumberland, Durham, Northumberland, and Westmoreland between 1760 and 1832; he also concludes that just one employer threatened his employees with dismissal if they did the same.[126] There were some highly publicised cases - in 1804, William Manners demolished "about one hundred" dwellings and built one workhouse in Ilchester, twenty-five years later Henry Pelham-Clinton, Duke of Newcastle-under-Lyne, issued thirty-seven eviction notices - but these were exceptional.[127]

On the other hand, payments were made on condition that an elector use one or both of his votes to support certain candidate/s in almost every constituency. Parties contracted electors who were local tradesmen and victuallers or specially-employed their relatives and/or friends: they accommodated and served 'treats' - complimentary food and drink - to electors; "play[ed] and s[a]ng the music", "dance[d and] […] juggle[d]"; constructed the hustings, chair in which candidates were lifted and taken around the streets of the constituency or county-town, and "many other pieces of election furniture"; composed, printed, and distributed campaign materials; made and handed out "ribbons, cockades, hats, badges[,] […] flowers", and ceramics; "carr[ied] flags or banners"; "porter[ed]" and couriered.[128] Electors' travel expenses were reimbursed; they were 'treated'; cash, styled 'loans' (but never repaid), also changed hands. There were other, more inventive, ways of

[125] Eric Richards, 'The Social and Electoral Influence of the Trentham Interest, 1800-1860', *Midland History*, 3.2 (1975), 117-48 (p. 142).
[126] Stoker, pp. 239, 247-48.
[127] O'Gorman, *Voters, Patrons, Parties*, p. 237n; T. H. B. Oldfield, *The Representative History of Great Britain and Ireland*, 6 vols. (London: For Baldwin, Cradock, and Joy, 1816), IV, p. 464.
[128] Frank O'Gorman, 'Campaign Rituals and Ceremonies: The Social Meaning of Elections in England 1780-1860', *Past and Present*, 135 (1992), 79-115 (p. 101); O'Gorman, *Voters, Patrons, and Parties*, p. 156.

trying to give people money. Edward Montagu described how Mary Bowes, wife of the candidate for Newcastle-upon-Tyne (1780), "sits all day in the window of a public house, […] from whence she sometimes lets fall some jewels or trinkets, which voters pick up, and then she gives them money for returning them".[129] "Lord Milton's carriage appears to have been so carelessly driven around Yorkshire during the election of 1807 that a large number of people received fairly serious injuries, for which they had to be suitably compensated".[130]

O'Gorman and Clayton have questioned the effectiveness of these practices in the corporate county and borough constituencies of Chester and Haslemere. When Chester was contested in 1784, the Grosvenor party contracted eighty-five tradesmen and victuallers; "of these, 67 voted: 63 for the Grosvenor ticket, 1 split, and only 3 against".[131] The party cross-checked inn-keepers bills of £14,000 against ale- and wine-merchants' receipts and negotiated to pay only £8500;[132] that "21 out of the 23 innkeepers listed in the Poll Book […] and 16 of the 18 wine merchants" still voted for the Grosvenor candidates suggests free agreement with their cast vote.[133] In Haslemere, the Molyneux-Webb and Burrell-Oglethorpe - from 1768 the Burrell-Molyneux and Webb/Beaver - parties paid one (1754), ten (1768), or five (1774) guineas to temporarily convey their freeholds to non-resident ('faggot') electors, who "invariably" cast votes for the owning interest. However, thirty (14.8%) of 203 such electors who turned out "in more than one election after 1754" changed the party for which they 'faggot-voted'.[134] Fourteen Molyneux-Webb supporters, for

[129] Barnard Castle, Bowes Museum Archives, MS JB/10 (letter or note by Edward Montagu, 1777), cited in Wendy Moore, *Wedlock: How Georgian Britain's Worst Husband Met His Match* (London: Phoenix, 2009), p. 171.
[130] O'Gorman, *Voters, Patrons, and Parties*, p. 156.
[131] O'Gorman, *Voters, Patrons, and Parties*, p. 156
[132] Gervas Huxley, *Lady Elizabeth and the Grosvenors: Life in a Whig Family, 1822-39* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1965), pp. 86-87.
[133] O'Gorman, *Voters, Patrons, and Parties*, p. 154n.
[134] Clayton, pp. 168, 171, 169.

example, reacted to Philip Webb's "ruthless" opportunism as a solicitor in nearby Busbridge and, after 1756, to the Treasury, by voting for Burrell-Oglethorpe freeholds in 1761 and, afterwards, those of Burrell-Molyneux.[135]

How, then, did the control exerted by supporting electoral-interests and/or party-organisation affect the behaviour of Members of Parliament? James Sack shows that a mean of 228 or 40.9% of English, Welsh, and Scottish Members of Parliament were supported by - between 90 and 101 - patronal peers at general parliamentary elections between 1802 and 1816; during the following fifteen-year period, the mean fell to 206.6 (37%).[136] Patronal peers paid all, a proportion of, or none of their il/legitimate election expenses when those Members were candidates.[137] The extent to which this support was conditional upon how they afterwards behaved in parliament varied. Richard Temple-Nugent-Brydges-Chandos-Grenville, Duke of Buckingham and Chandos, for example, made Edward Hyde East, his candidate for the 1823 Winchester by-election, swear "allegiance to *me* exclusively";[138] but, a decade later, in April 1831, Temple-Nugent-Brydges-Chandos-Grenville agreed that

> so long as [Edward Sugden, Burgess for St. Mawes,] shall continue to pursue the same line of political conduct he has followed during the last Session of Parliament, he cannot be called upon to vacate his seat, altho' the Duke of B should change his political opinions.[139]

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[135] Clayton, p. 158.
[136] James J. Sack, 'The House of Lords and Parliamentary Patronage in Great Britain, 1802-1832', *Historical Journal*, 23.4 (1980), 913-37 (Table 1 ('Number of Patronal Peers and Cliental M.P.s in England, Scotland and Wales, 1802-1832', p. 919); p. 926).
[137] See Sack, 'Parliamentary Patronage', p. 920; John Golby, 'A Great Electioneer and His Motives: The Fourth Duke of Newcastle', *Historical Journal*, 8.2 (1965), 201-18 (p. 211).
[138] Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire Record Office, Fremantle (Cottesloe) Papers, Temple-Nugent-Brydges-Chandos-Grenville to W. Fremantle, 16 September 1822, 18 February 1823, p. 56, cited in in Sack, 'Parliamentary Patronage', p. 921.
[139] Fremantle (Cottesloe) Papers, Memo of a conversation between Temple-Nugent-Brydges-Chandos-Grenville and Sugden, 22 April 1831, p. 39, cited in Sack, 'Parliamentary Patronage', p. 921.

On 15 February 1830, Thomas Babington Macaulay told Henry Petty-Fitzmaurice, Marquess of Lansdowne, that "he *must* have complete freedom […] on the anti-slavery question" if elected Burgess for Calne in the constituency's 1830 by-election; Petty-Fitzmaurice "acceded […] at once, saying that he was far from expecting universal or servile accord".[140] In practice, as Sack's study of ten issues voted upon (in the same or a comparable context) in the Houses of Lords and Commons and for which division lists are available, 1802-31, shows, the percentage of patronal peers who voted in conflict with the Members they supported rose from 16.4 to 24.4 before the second Parliamentary Reform Bill (1831).[141] 77.6% of them were faced with up to three conflicts; just 6% encountered six or seven.[142] If Members abstaining was also an index of conflict, and not of illness or leave, Sack finds that, of those issues voted upon in the same context, the percentage of cliental Members who abstained when their patronal peer voted was between 4.3 and 27.5%.[143] Many supported Members chose to resign rather than cast an offending vote; others resigned after they had done so. When Hugh Fortescue (Burgess of Buckingham) offered to resign due to a difference of opinion, Temple-Nugent-Brydges-Chandos-Grenville "delayed his reply to allow [him] to give an unhampered vote for [Francis] Burdett's parliamentary reform motion" in May 1817.[144] Of the Members of Parliament who were supported by patronal peers at the 1812 general election, but opposed them in votes on Catholic emancipation motions during 1812-

[140] John Clive, *Macaulay: The Shaping of the Historian* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1987), p. 139.
[141] Sack, 'Parliamentary Patronage', Table 3 ('Percentage of Patronal Peers in Conflict with Cliental M.P.s, 1811-31', p. 927).
[142] Sack, 'Parliamentary Patronage', Table 2 ('Number of Recorded Conflicts between Patronal Peers and Cliental M.P.s, 1811-31', pp. 924-25).
[143] Sack, 'Parliamentary Patronage', Table 5 ('Percentage of Cliental M.P.s not in Support of Voting Patronal Peers', p. 930).
[144] David R. Fisher, 'FORTESCUE, Hugh, Visct. Ebrington (1783-1861), of Castle Hill, nr. Barnstaple, Devon', *The History of Parliament: The House of Commons 1790-1820*, ed. by R. Thorne, 5 vols. (London: Secker and Warburg, 1986), III: *Members A-F*.

13 and 1816-17, 44 and 45%, respectively, were not returned for the same constituency in 1818. For all (un/supported) Members, the percentage was far higher: 60.3%. This figure rose to 64.4% in 1830; however, the rate of return was 72 and 62.5% - higher or only slightly lower - for those Members who were supported by patronal peers at the 1826 general election, but opposed them in votes for the 1828 and 1829 Catholic emancipation motions, respectively. Following the 1831 general election, 67.7% of all (un/supported) Members returned to their seats; the rate of return for supported Members who voted in conflict with their patronal peers during the second Parliamentary Reform Bill (1831) was just 36%.[145] Most patronal peers supported candidates who shared their political opinions. Charles Greville commented that Henry Pelham-Clinton, Duke of Newcastle-under-Lyne, "probably insist[ed] upon [Alexander Grant, Burgess for Aldborough] voting against the [Roman Catholic Relief] bill or going out" in 1829.[146] As John Golby argues, "whether he did so because he was afraid of losing his seat is doubtful. Grant had always opposed concessions to Roman Catholics".[147] In spite of his "severe qualms", Hyde East cast "his sole recorded vote of the session" for the Roman Catholic Relief Bill 1829 during its third reading on 30 March 1829 at Temple-Nugent-Brydges-Chandos-Grenville's behest.[148]

[145] Sack, 'Parliamentary Patronage', pp. 927-29.
[146] Charles Greville, *The Greville Memoirs, 1814-1860*, ed. by Lytton Strachey and Roger Fulford, 8 vols. (London: Macmillan, 1938) I: January 1814 to July 1830, p. 251.
[147] Golby, p. 212n.
[148] Philip Salmon and Howard Spencer, 'EAST, Sir Edward Hyde (1764-1847), of 12 Stratford Place, Mdx.', in *The History of Parliament: The House of Commons 1820-1832*, ed. by D. R. Fisher, 7 vols. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), IV: *Members A-D*; Sack, 'Parliamentary Patronage', p. 921.

1.2 Parliamentary Reform Proposals

The mechanism by which the Commons were represented in Parliament had been tweaked by royal prerogatives, Acts of Parliament, and Committee of Privileges (and Elections) determinations since it was first developed in England between c. 1213 and 1382. However, not until January 1649 - when New Model Army officers petitioned the 'rump' House of Commons, purged of 231 members by Colonel Thomas Pride in December 1648, with an 'Agreement of the People' - were Members of Parliament asked to consider blanket parliamentary reform: of, at least, how many constituencies, their distribution, the number and/or distribution of seats, and the parliamentary term. This question, debated in the following weeks and during March, was referred to a committee of enquiry between 15 May 1649 and 23 October 1650. It had long-since "died a slow, natural death" when Oliver Cromwell dissolved Parliament on 20 April 1653;[149] but on 9 August 1659, in the wake of the Barebones and three Protectorate Parliaments (4 July 1653-22 April 1659), the bill was briefly resuscitated by the re-convened 'rump' House of Commons before, from 16 March 1660, normal service resumed under Charles II. On 26 March 1679 a similar bill was introduced by the first Earl of Shaftesbury, Anthony Ashley Cooper's party; though read two times by 3 April and committed two days later, it

[149] Vernon F. Snow, 'Parliamentary Reapportionment Proposals in the Puritan Revolution', *English Historical Review*, 74. 292 (1959), 409-42 (p. 417).

did not survive the dissolution of Parliament on 27 May.[150] Blanket parliamentary reform did not rear its head again for almost a century.[151]

The Society of Gentlemen Supporters of the Bill of Rights (1769-75) and, after Arthur Lee's appointment as secretary in April 1771, corresponding societies in Norwich, Newcastle, Bristol, and Worcester, formed to support John Wilkes after he was declared "incapable of election after expulsion" on 17 February 1769.[152] They resolved from 11 June 1771 to instruct parliamentary candidates at the 1774 general election to support an unspecified blanket parliamentary reform bill, if elected.[153] On 21 March 1776, Wilkes, then Knight of the Shire for Middlesex, moved (in vain) for leave to bring in a bill (a) to give Members of Parliament to the county corporate of London and to Middlesex, Yorkshire, and other counties "which so greatly abound with inhabitants"; (b) to "lo[p] off" the "mean, and insignificant" borough constituencies; (c) to enfranchise "rich, populous, trading towns", including Birmingham, Manchester, Sheffield, and Leeds; and, what made Wilkes's parliamentary reform proposal 'radical', (d) to give "every man" the vote.[154] This,

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[150] This bill calls for changes to voter qualifications and parliamentary term; but in *Some Observations Concerning the Regulating of Elections for Parliament* ((London: n. pub., 1689) Cooper also proposes: to "depriv[e] […] Towns of less note of th[eir] […] Franchise, and bestow […] it upon others of greater Consideration in the same, or in other Counties, which most want it, as do those of *Cambridge, Bedford, Hartford, Huntingdon*, etc." (p. 11); vest the franchise in either "the whole Populace" or "a select Number, […] chose[n] annually" across all settlement constituencies (pp. 10, 11); that "all the House keepers" should select county constituency electors from "a List of eight or ten" recipients of freehold incomes above the "value […] which 40s. *per annum* bore in th[e] […] time" of 7 Henry VI, c. 7 prepared by Church Wardens in each parish (pp. 12, 15); "seven, nine, or eleven Members[,] or so many as upon a just Dividend, shall be thought expedient to compleat the Number of Members", should be elected by each county constituency from "a List in the same manner, of the names of all the Gentry in the County, who are each worth in Lands and moveables at least 10000 l. all Debts paid, and not under forty years of Age" prepared by the Sheriff (p. 16); and, to repeal 1 Henry V, c. 1, which requires that candidates are "chosen out of such who are resident" in the electing constituency (pp. 13-14).

[151] Three blanket reform proposals did, however, appear in print: *Now is the Time: A Scheme for a Commonwealth* (n.p.; n. pub., [1689]); John Toland, *The Art of Governing by Partys* (London: n. pub., 1701), pp. 75-77 and chs. 4 and 9; and, David Hume, 'Discourse XII. Idea of a perfect Commonwealth', in *Political Discourses* (Edinburgh: R. Fleming, 1752), pp. 281-304.

[152] *Journals of the House of Commons*, 269 vols. (London: For the House of Commons, 1742-), XXXII (1769), pp. 228-29.

[153] Brass Crosby, 'Supporters of the Bill of Rights', *Public Advertiser*, 13 June 1771, p. 1.

[154] *Parliamentary Register*, III (1776), pp. 437, 439.

first, radical reform programme closely resembled the "few dry pages of proposed regulations" John Cartwright included in *Take Your Choice* (1776).[155]

Cartwright called for each county, including the county corporate of London, to be allocated Members of Parliament "in exact proportion to the respective number of males" over the age of eighteen at that time; all towns and cities containing 2924 (or more) electors would be represented by one (or more) of their county's Members of Parliament (p. 62). Almost every subsequent radical reformer argued to replace town, city, and county constituencies. The Westminster Association reform sub-committee's May 1780 "Plan *for taking the* Suffrages *of the* People, *at the* Election *of* Representatives *to serve in* Parliament" (to which Cartwright contributed) included dividing all English and Welsh counties into "district[s] chusing one Representative". Each new constituency would "contain nearly an equal number of males competent to vote in elections" and "comprehend a certain number of parishes"; these numbers were to be reviewed every seven years in case of population change.[156] Charles Lennox, Duke of Richmond, introduced a radical reform bill to the House of Lords on 3 June 1780; it was first read, then, "after debate", thrown out without a division.[157] In its petition of 6 May 1793, the London Corresponding Society (23 January 1792-1799) also "refer[red] the House to the [Plan of Reform] […] laid down Ten Years back by the Duke of Richmond".[158] Lennox sought to establish "districts" - "adjudged to be and be called *Boroughs*" - within each corporate/county; each would comprise approximately one 558th of all

[155] John Cartwright, *Take Your Choice* (London: J. Almon, 1776), p. 61.
[156] T. Brand Hollis, 'Plan *for taking the* Suffrages *of the* People, *at the* Election *of* Representatives *to* Serve *in* Parliament', in *Political Papers*, ed. by Christopher Wyvill, 6 vols. (York: W. Blanchard, [1794-1802]), I ([1794]), pp. 240-43 (p. 240).
[157] *Journals of the House of Lords*, 269 vols. (London: For the House of Lords, 1509-), XXXVI (1780), p. 144.
[158] *Commons Journal*, XLVIII (1793), p. 735 (6 May 1793).

registered “Men of the Age of 21 Years and upwards” (excluding embodied militiamen, naval or military servicemen) and “elect one Member of Parliament”.[159] Francis Burdett proposed to “divid[e] [the country] into 658 election districts, as nearly equal to each other in population as […] they may be”, when he asked that the House of Commons resolve to “establish a comprehensive and consistent plan of reform” on 2 June 1818; each district was “to return one representative and no more”.[160] Burdett’s motion was defeated by 106 to zero.[161]

Cartwright made two additions to Wilkes’s 1776 proposals in *Take Your Choice*. The first, that the House of Commons should be elected on the same day every year, became a feature of every other radical parliamentary motion and print proposal. Cartwright also hoped to adjust the entry requirements for parliamentary candidates. “Place men”, “military men (except the militia)”, “pensioner[s] of the crown”, “person[s] enjoying any eleemosynary stipend at the will of another, (a very near relation excepted)”, priests, and Irish peers should be ineligible (p. 77). He argued that Knights of the Shire should have “a landed estate” with an income valued at £400 *per annum*; London’s Citizens, “a landed estate” with an income valued at £400 *per annum* or “property in the kingdom” valued at £12,000; and, the representatives “for other cities and towns[,] 300£. *per ann*. in land, or 9000£. in other property” (p. 69). Cartwright also entertained the idea of “*involuntary* candidates”, who, if elected, would be “paid two guineas *per diem* during

[159] *An Authentic Copy of the Duke of Richmond’s Bill, for a Parliamentary Reform* (London: For J. Stockdale, 1783), pp. 14, 17, 20, 21. Lennox also summarised his bill in the pamphlet that Mary Thale describes as the London Corresponding Society’s “bible”: *A Letter of His Grace the Duke of Richmond, In Answer to the Queries Proposed by A Committee of Correspondence in Ireland, on the Subject of a Parliamentary 'Reform* (London: For J. Stockdale, 1783), pp. 25-60 (Thomas Hardy, ‘Account of the Origin of the London Corresponding Society (1799) (excerpts)’, in *Selections from the Papers of the London Corresponding Society, 1792-1799*, ed. by Mary Thale (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), pp. 5-10 (p. 5n)).
[160] *Parliamentary Debates*, XXXVIII (1818), p. 1148.
[161] For another example of a new, equal constituency proposal, see George Philips, *The Necessity of a Speedy and Effectual Reform in Parliament* (Manchester: M. Falkner, [1793]), pp. 22-23.

parliamentary attendance, and one shilling a mile travelling expences [*sic*] by their constituents; the same to be raised by a rate for that purpose"; only "practising physicians, surgeons, apothecaries, and attorneys at law; shop-keepers, and sick persons should be exempted" (pp. 72-73). The Westminster Association's 'Plan' similarly barred "hold[ers of] any office or emolument at the will of the Crown, or its servants, or any Lord of Parliament", from standing as parliamentary candidates, but otherwise deemed "every person, competent to give his suffrage as an elector", eligible and, if elected, "entitled to reasonable wages" (p. 243). Lennox fell back on the "landed Qualification as [already] by law directed"; he only suggested that "one Hundred [...] [borough] Inhabitants" be allowed to "declare any other [so qualified] Candidate or Candidates they may think proper".[162] After 1780, changes to candidate qualifications and wages dropped from the radical parliamentary reform agenda.

Mary Wollstonecraft's "hint" in *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792) that "women ought to have [parliamentary] representatives" briefly introduced female suffrage to that agenda.[163] In 1793, George Philips argued "to give every one (excepting only those who are minors and insane) the power of voting", including "women either single, or married".[164] William Hodgson vested the franchise in "male citizens, who shall have attained the age of eighteen years, and who shall not be incapacitated by crime or insanity" in *The Commonwealth of Reason* (1795), but subsequently appealed for subscribers to publish *The Female Citizen; or, A Historical, Political, and Philosophical Enquiry into the Rights of Women, as Members of Society*, "to acknowledge and support the Rights" of women,

[162] *The Duke of Richmond's Bill*, pp. 26, 44.
[163] *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*, in *The Works of Mary Wollstonecraft*, ed. by Janet Todd and Marilyn Butler, 7 vols. (London: Pickering, 1989), v: *A Vindication of the Rights of Men*; *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*; 'Hints', pp. 79-266 (p. 217).
[164] Philips, *Speedy and Effectual Reform*, pp. 12, 12n.

which Arianne Chernock suspects "was destroyed, or […] never actually written".[165]

Obadiah Hulme, to whom we attribute *An Historical Essay on the English Constitution* (1771), put forward the first moderate parliamentary reform proposal; that is, a proposal in which the franchise is conditional upon property and land value and/or size or, relatedly, upon either the payment or rate of assessed taxation (land tax, window tax, 'scot and lot' to the poor and/or church rate). Hulme sought to qualify "every resident inhabitant, that pays his shot [*sic*], and bears his lot", to vote in all pre-existing town and city constituencies.[166] Those constituencies' boundaries would be extended to include "the country, round [about,] […] within a certain sphere" or, in the case of inconsiderable towns, "every parish, within a certain line" (p. 153). Knights of the Shire would be elected "by [all of] the freeholders" (p. 155). For Hulme, in common with many of the radical parliamentary reformers, elections should take place annually, over one day. He also argued for "some of the church-lands, […] crown-lands", or "waste lands, in every county" to be "enclosed, and rented out, to establish a fund" from which Members of Parliament would be paid (p. 160).

Not until 1793 did another moderate reformer argue to revise the franchise in both town or city and county constituencies. Burgess for Appleby, William Pitt's 7 May 1782 motion for a committee of enquiry into the state of the representation was

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[165] William Hodgson, *The Commonwealth of Reason* (London: For Hodgson, 1795), p. 56; William Hodgson, *Proposals, for Publishing by Subscription, A Treatise Called* The Female Citizen; or, A Historical, Political, and Philosophical Enquiry into the Rights of Women, as Members of Society ([London]: [For H. D. Symonds, J. Ridgeway, J. Smith, C. Rickman, and D. Holt], n. d.), p. 1; Arianne Chernock, 'Extending the "Right of Election": Men's Arguments for Women's Political Representation in Late Enlightenment Britain', in *Women, Gender, and Enlightenment*, ed. by Sarah Knott and Barbara Taylor (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), pp. 587-609 (p. 589n).

[166] [Obadiah Hulme], *An Historical Essay on the English Constitution; or, An Impartial Enquiry into the Elective Power of the People, from the First Establishment of the Saxons in this Kingdom* (London: For Edward and Charles Dilly, 1771), p. 154.

defeated 161 to 141. He went on to propose two unsuccessful moderate parliamentary reform motions, on 7 May 1783 and (as Master for the University of Cambridge and First Lord of the Treasury) on 18 April 1785. In the latter, Pitt argued to extend the county franchise to include recipients of copyhold incomes above forty shillings *per annum*. In his 4 March 1790 motion, Henry Flood, Baron for Seaford, proposed that it should be extended to all "resident householders" if they "pa[y] fifty shillings a year to the revenue in tax".[167] 'Britanniae Amicus' made a case, in *An Essay on Parliament* (1793), for the franchise to be vested in "the number and dimensions of Rooms contained in the Householder's Dwelling-House".[168] In town or city constituencies, electors should own a "larg[e] […] Dwelling-House", if "he paid Taxes or not", or "b[e] the Owner or Occupier of as much Land as would well maintain three or four horses or cows, or hav[e] property sufficient to purchase such a House or Land, though not a House-holder" (p. 36). "In each Village and lonely place" or county constituency, on the other hand, houses need only be "of four Rooms, or the like, of certain dimensions" (p. 37). When the House of Commons denied (Knight of the Shire for Northumberland) Charles Grey leave to introduce a reform bill on 26 May 1797, he had sought (a) to divide each county or, in the case of Yorkshire, each riding into "grand divisions", each electing one representative (increasing the number of Members by 31) and (b) to extend the franchise to include "copyholders and leaseholders […] bound to pay a certain annual rent" over time in each "grand division" and all "householders" elsewhere.[169] Thomas Brand, Knight of the Shire for Hertfordshire, moved on 21 May 1810 for a committee of enquiry into the representation that was defeated 234 to 115. The six-

[167] *Parliamentary Register*, XXVII (1790), p. 203.
[168] Britanniae Amicus, *An Essay on Parliament, and the Causes of Unequal Representation* (London: For J. Johnson, 1793), p. 35.
[169] *Parliamentary Register*, II (1797), p. 581.

point "plan which he had it in contemplation to recommend" included vesting the franchise in resident recipients of freehold and copyhold incomes above forty shillings *per annum* in county constituencies and "all householders paying parochial and other taxes" in town and city constituencies.[170] When Brand just moved to enfranchise recipients of copyhold incomes above forty shilling *per annum* in county constituencies almost two years later, it was part of a strategy to proceed with his plan by stages. On 1 March 1831, John Russell (Burgess for Tavistock) first outlined the Ministry's proposals for the Parliamentary Reform Bill that, after two false starts, received royal assent in June 1832. The outline included revised changes to voting qualifications in town or city and county constituencies: tenants of property or the recipients of tenement incomes above ten pounds *per annum* charged with the poor and/or church rate would be able to vote in all town or city constituencies; in county constituencies, this would apply to any recipients of freehold incomes above forty shillings *per annum*, copyhold incomes above ten pounds *per annum* or, in the case of nineteen- or twenty-one-year leasehold incomes, fifty pounds *per annum*. Russell also pledged to uphold the franchise of existing electors, if resident, during their lifetimes.

In his *Plan of Parliamentary Reform* (1817), written in 1809, Jeremy Bentham recommended that all people - including women and "*Aliens*" who "*pa[y]* […] a certain amount to *certain taxes*" - should be able to vote.[171] He did, however, still propose different constituency types: "*Territorial*" and "*Population* Electoral Districts". The country should be divided into "say, [four hundred]" "nearly equal" one-member territorial districts. Population districts should be "composed of certain

[170] *Parliamentary Debates,* XVII (1810), pp. 125, 128.
[171] Jeremy Bentham, *Plan of Parliamentary Reform* (London: For R. Hunter, 1817), pp. 6, 9.

Towns, the population of which amounts to a certain number of souls or upwards. - Say, merely for illustration, 10,000" - to be reviewed "once every 50 or 25 years"; each would "fil[l] one or more seats, in proportion to its numbers", but the total number of Members must not exceed two hundred (pp. 7, 8). The other moderate parliamentary reformers who suggested a country-wide franchise also argued to replace town, city, and county (or territorial) constituencies. According to the "Principles and Plan of Parliamentary Reform, recommended by the Society of the Friends of the People" on 30 May 1795, "every householder [...] *paying parish taxes*", who "occup[ied] […] a house paying taxes", or "Freeholders and Copyholders, of the yearly value of forty shillings, who might not be householders" should be able to vote. This association also proposed that England be split into "513 divisions", comprising parishes which together contain "the whole number of houses paying taxes [...] divided by the number of persons to be chosen […] viz. 2,400".[172] On 15 June 1809, Burdett rose to propose that the House of Commons consider "the necessity of a Reform in the State of the Representation" during the 1810 session. He outlined - "for discussion, but not for immediate adoption" - a "specific Plan", among other things, to portion "each County […] according to its taxed male Population", to form new single-member constituencies, and to "require" all men "subject to direct Taxation in support of the Poor, the Church, and the State" to vote.[173]

Most moderate parliamentary reformers did not argue, like Hulme, for town and city constituency boundaries to be adjusted, they proposed to disenfranchise and redistribute town and city constituencies. The *Memorial* that ten County

[172] William Smith, 'DECLARATION Of the Principles and Plan Principles and Plan of Parliamentary Reform, recommended by the Society of the Friends of the People', in *Political Papers*, ed. by Wyvill, V ([1802]), pp. xviii-xxiv (pp. xxi, xxii).
[173] *Parliamentary Debates*, XIV (1809), pp. 1041, 1053..

Associations agreed to circulate on 20 March 1781 proposed "a reduction in the representations of boroughs" and to add no "less than one hundred Knights".[174] Pitt, in his 7 May 1783 motion, had sought to distribute one hundred new Members between London and the county constituencies and disenfranchise any constituencies (and electors) convicted of "gross and notorious corruption" by Select Committees on Controverted Elections.[175] In addition to voting qualification changes, in April 1785, Pitt proposed to pay those who "command[ed] an influence in [at least thirty-six] decayed or depopulated borough[s]" to surrender their "rights" to return nominees and to redistribute seventy-two seats to London, county constituencies, and "populous and flourishing towns".[176] Flood's 1790 motion called for one hundred more County seats; he "d[id] not propose" that "an hundred boroughs […] might be limited to the return of one representative instead of two", but "desire[d] that [the House of Commons] w[ould] either propose it, or not object [to] this addition".[177] Two decades later, another of Brand's six points included (a) disenfranchising thirty borough constituencies with "not fifty voters each" and, "in feeling […] and in equity", remunerating their controlling-interests, and (b) redistributing their seats to Sheffield, Manchester, Birmingham, "other populous towns, and the most populous counties".[178] In 1811, the following year, Brand asked for (and was refused) leave to introduce a bill to disenfranchise the "close boroughs" and redistribute their representatives "to the more populous counties".[179] On 5 July 1819, Russell successfully moved that the House of Commons consider disenfranchising the borough constituency of Grampound, when one of its

[174] 'Memorial', in *Political Papers*, ed. by Wyvill, I, pp. 427-36 (p. 433).
[175] *Parliamentary Register*, IX (1783), p. 695.
[176] *Parliamentary Register*, XVIII (1783), pp. 52-53 (18 April 1785).
[177] *Parliamentary Register*, XXVII (1790), p. 205 (4 March 1790).
[178] *Parliamentary Debates*, XVII (1810), pp. 127, 128, 129 (21 May 1810).
[179] *Parliamentary Debates*, XXIII (1812), p. 104 (8 May 1812).

parliamentary candidates, Manasseh Masseh Lopes, was on 18 March 1819 convicted for bribery, and redistributing its representatives to under- and unrepresented "large towns" or counties during the 1819-20 session.[180] He introduced a bill to disenfranchise Grampound and three other offending borough constituencies - Barnstaple, Camelford, and Penryn - on 18 February 1820; it passed, but was first read by the House of Lords just six days before the dissolution of parliament. Russell was not deterred: he was given leave to propose two further bills, to disenfranchise Grampound and to create a two-member borough constituency of Leeds, on 9 May 1820 and 1 February 1821. The first bill disappeared from the Commons' *Journals* after 23 June 1820; the second, entered law as 1 and 2 George IV c. 47 (1821) on 8 June the following year. Russell called, on 9 May 1821, for a Select Committee to consider what "places […] greatly increased in wealth and population" might be enfranchised and to assess whether constituencies "hereafter […] charged with notorious bribery and corruption" should be "disabled" from returning representatives; there was no division.[181] On 25 April 1822, he moved to introduce a bill that would add sixty Knights of the Shire and forty Members "for the great towns and commercial interests of the country" and take away one member from each of "the hundred smallest boroughs", but was defeated by 105 votes.[182] Although Russell proposed, without success, that a Select Committee inquire into electorate sizes and franchise qualifications in city and borough constituencies on 20 February 1823, on 27 April 1826 he rolled out his 25 April 1822 plan for a second time; it too was defeated, this time by 247 to 123. On 20 February 1828, Russell

[180] *Parliamentary Debates,* XL (1819), p. 1516. Lopes was also indicted for bribery at Barnstaple (where he was also a candidate) in 1818; though acquitted at the Devon Assizes in August 1819, he was unseated and on 13 November sentenced to two years' imprisonment and a fine of £10,000 by the Court of King's Bench.
[181] *Parliamentary Debates,* V (1821), p. 622.
[182] *Parliamentary Debates,* VII (1822), p. 78.

introduced a bill, first raised, like Whitbread's, as an amendment in a different debate, to disenfranchise Penryn and redistribute its seats to Manchester; this bill was thrown out, first read, by the House of Lords on 20 June 1828. Leave was refused (by 188 to 140) as late as 23 February 1830 to bring in a bill to create borough constituencies of Manchester, Birmingham, and Leeds. The Ministry's 1831 Parliamentary Reform Bill, finally, sought: to disenfranchise sixty town and city constituencies in England with "less than 2,000 inhabitants", the Anstruther Easter burgh district and six county constituencies in Scotland; to enfranchise "seven large towns" and twenty "other[s]", four "unrepresented" Metropolitan "districts", twenty-nine county "divi[sions]" and the Isle of Wight, one "new district of [Welsh] boroughs" and six borough constituencies in Scotland; to outspread town and city constituencies with "less than 300" electors into "adjoining parishes, and chapelries" in England, "add […] to the [nine] towns in Wales, which already send Members, the neighbouring unrepresented towns", and alter the towns and cities represented in four of Scotland's burgh districts; to revise thirty-seven English and Scottish county constituency boundaries; and, to distribute two members to Edinburgh, Glasgow, "three towns in Ireland which have grown into great importance", and every constituency in England except existing town and city constituencies with "only 4,000 inhabitants", the twenty "other towns", and Isle of Wight, which, like the new Welsh and Scottish constituencies, should return only one representative.[183]

1.3 Conclusion

The make-up of the unreformed electorates was arbitrarily determined by (a) how town and city constituencies were distributed and bounded and (b) how men over the

[183] *Parliamentary Debates*, II (1831), pp. 1047, 1068, 1071, 1072, 1075, 1078, 1075, 1082 (1 March 1831); ibid, II (1831), pp. 47 (9 March 1831).

age of twenty-one qualified as electors in every - town, city, or county - constituency. Medium-to-large towns and cities were more likely to be constituencies than small towns in North and Central England, but there were medium-to-large towns and cities which were not constituencies in every region. Central England was the only region in which the total population and number of county constituencies (roughly) correlated. The different categories of voter qualification further limited who could be an elector: just 50% or more of the adult male population in householder constituencies or, worse, 33.3% or less in civic corporation constituencies. There was a high level of non-residency across all of the constituency types studied: 25-80% (householder), 10-25% (freehold), and 21-74% (civic corporation). Most county constituency voters were agricultural workers; in town or city constituencies, skilled craftsmen dominated the voterate. Although nearly all skilled craftsmen in town or city constituencies were voters, this was not the case for the men who fell into three other occupational groups: gentlemen and professionals, retailers, and semi-/unskilled labourers. These electors were not normally controlled by their landlords and/or proprietors. Bribery, on the other hand, was rife; but electors would often only accept bribes if they freely agreed with their bribers' instructions, other electors accepted bribes and did not vote as instructed.

All radical parliamentary reformers sought to change this system of representation - in parliamentary motions, in public petitions to the House of Commons, and in books, pamphlets, and periodical articles - by reducing the parliamentary term to one year. Early proposals sought, variously, to disenfranchise and redistribute town and city constituencies, to reduce candidate qualifications, and to pay Members. However, arguing to replace town, city, and county constituencies with equal electoral districts became the default after 1776; radical reformers also

stopped questioning who could be a candidate and whether Members should be unpaid. Female suffrage was briefly advocated by mainstream radical reformers during the 1790s. Before 1793, it was less common for moderate parliamentary reformers to suggest revising the franchise in both town or city and county constituencies. In the former, the revised qualification was, typically, any male householder paying assessed taxes; in the latter, it was male free-, copy- and/or leaseholders of properties with annual incomes of forty shillings or less. Three moderate reformers argued for a country-wide franchise, two of whom also argued to replace town, city, and county constituencies. The moderate parliamentary reform agenda had two keystones: reducing the parliamentary term to three years and disenfranchising and redistributing inconsiderable or corrupt town and city constituencies.

In 'Part 2', I explore how Crabbe, Wordsworth, and Edgeworth engaged with the tensions between which groups' interests Members represented and parliamentary reform proposal trends in their comparisons between different 'types' of writer and of Member. Each writer has a slightly different focus. For Crabbe, the tension was between parliamentary candidate behaviour (a) in town and city constituencies where more or less poor male residents were electors due to the chance effects of constituency distribution and (b) in redistributed constituencies in which all men could vote. Wordsworth's Members of Parliament were either elected septennially by a subset of men and controlled by bribery or elected more frequently by all men. Edgeworth, finally, engaged with the tension between town constituency Members of Parliament, who were controlled by bribery or party-organisation, (a) outnumbering uncontrollable city and county Members and (b) being outnumbered by uncontrollable city and county Members.

PART 2

FROM "FAIRY-LAND" TO THE CONSTITUENCY: GEORGE CRABBE'S IRRESPONSIBLE READERS

In his 'Preface' to *Tales* (1812) Crabbe stood up for poetry that "describ[ed], as faithfully as [possible,] […] men, manners and things", not imagined historical or mythological subjects; that is, poetry that "address[ed] […] the plain sense and sober judgment of Readers, rather than […] their fancy and imagination" (PREFACE. 7, 9). For this he (albeit in Geoffrey Chaucer, Alexander Pope, and, in *Absalom and Achitophel* (1681), John Dryden's good company) did not qualify as a poet according to the definition outlined by Theseus in Act V, Scene I of William Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* ([1595-96]). Here,

> the Poet is one who, in the excursions of his fancy between heaven and earth, lights upon a kind of fairy-land in which he places a creation of his own, where he embodies shapes, and gives action and adventure to his ideal offspring (PREFACE. 8).

Writing sets these creatures for the reader: in Theseus's words, it "giues to ayery nothing, | A locall habitation, and a name".[1] Crabbe does not offer an alternative definition, where - in *Quarterly* reviewer Robert Grant's phrase - "poet[s] of reality" go to re-embody real-life examples.[2] However, throughout his writing career he returned, time and again, to one place to describe what he was doing as a writer: the parliamentary constituency.

This chapter will take as its focus two permutations of the same writer-as-legislator figure, used by Crabbe to articulate what, why, and for whom he was writing. In *The Village* (1783), Crabbe compared a candidate bribing poor electors in

[1] *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, in *The Complete Works of William Shakespeare*, ed. by Gary Taylor, John Jowett, Terri Bourus and Gabriel Egan, 2 vols. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), II, 858-922 (I. 5. 16-17).
[2] [Robert Grant], '*The Borough*', *Quarterly Review*, November 1810, pp. 281-312 (p. 282)

a seaside borough constituency depopulated over time due to coastal erosion to himself writing poetry about poor subjects that would encourage readers to give alms. Crabbe would, again, liken himself, and the effect of his poetry upon its subjects, to a Member of Parliament paying (by way of an agent) poor relief to non-electors or bribes to low-to-middle class electors twenty-seven years later in *The Borough* (1810). Here, Crabbe enlarged *The Village*'s figurative constituency into a "considerable" seaside borough, enriched by the "broad River" between it and the "City-mart" and nearby limestone deposits.[3] Importantly, his constituency was also populated, this time, by individuated poor and low-to-middle class characters, each representing how subjects would be affected when re-embodied in poetry.

2.1 *The Village* (1783) and *The News-paper* (1785)

In Book I of *The Village*, Crabbe's speaker decries pastorals for distorting readers' understanding of how the rural poor live and work. Pope's 'Discourse on Pastoral Poetry' (1717) defined a pastoral as "an imitation of the action[s] of […] shepherd[s]" as they are "conceiv'd […] to have been" during the first and "Golden age" of Man.[4] Poets should write shepherds with "some Knowledge in rural affairs", of the guarding, tending, and herding of sheep, but use "illusion" to "concea[l] its miseries"; theirs was to be a life of leisure, available in reality only to the landed gentry and aristocracy.[5] For Crabbe's speaker, the "one chief cause" of this distorted understanding was not Pope, nor his imitators, it was those to whom, mid-century, they gave way: the fledgling writers derided by Charles Churchill in his 1763 satire

[3] *Borough*, PREFACE. 345; I. 36, 72.
[4] 'Discourse on Pastoral Poetry', in *The Twickenham Edition of the Poems of Alexander Pope*, ed. by John Butt, Maynard Mack, and others, 11 vols. (London: Methuen; New Haven: Yale University Press, 1939-67), I: *Pastoral Poetry and 'An Essay on Criticism'*, ed. by E. Audra and Aubrey Williams (1961), pp. 23-33 (pp. 24, 25).
[5] 'Discourse on Pastoral Poetry', pp. 26, 27.

The Prophecy of Famine.[6] Churchill's "stripling raw" imagines his lady-love, the cookmaid, "clad, as […] nymphs were always clad of yore, | In rustic weeds" and himself "turn'd swain, and skill'd in rustic lays | Fast by her side".[7] Crabbe found that, even twenty years later, "the gentle lover [still] t[ook] the rural strain, | A nymph his mistress and himself a swain"; "themes so easy, few forb[ore] to sing".[8] The one chief effect, according to *The Village*'s speaker, was formula poetry capable of offering its subjects nothing but "barren flattery" (I. 58):

> Can poets sooth you, when you pine for bread,
> By winding myrtles round your ruin'd shed?
> Can their light tales your weighty griefs o'erpower,
> Or glad with airy mirth the toilsome hour? (I. 59-62)

Such "light tales" were intended to "sooth" and "glad[den]" only the monied readers of the newspapers and magazines in which they appeared - as confirmed in the survey of periodicals' "various parts" in *The News-paper*.[9]

The speaker's alternative is exemplified in, first, his outline descriptions of "them" - all labourers - scything crops, retiring to "feeble fire[s]" and "homely", "plain" meals, of what any reader who did "go then! and see" would see (I. 142, 170, 177).[10] He also tells anecdotes about two individuated, if still nameless, typical characters: the "youth of slender frame" and a "hoary swain" (I. 156, 182). The Youth labours in spite of "weakness, weariness, and [therefore] shame" (I. 157); the Hoary Swain, "once […] chief in all the rustic trade", "attempts [his] task in vain",

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[6] *The Village*, in *George Crabbe*, ed. by Dalrymple-Champneys and Pollard, I, 157-74 (I. 31n).
[7] *The Prophecy of Famine. A Scots Pastoral*, in *The Poetical Works of Charles Churchill*, ed. by Douglas Grant (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1956), pp. 193-210 (ll. 3, 15-16, 21-22).
[8] *Village*, I. 32, 33n, 36. Crabbe himself submitted similar juvenilia to both - John Wheble and George Robinson's - *Lady's Magazines* and the *Town and Country Magazine* between 1772 and 1773.
[9] *The News-Paper*, in *George Crabbe*, ed. by Dalrymple-Champneys and Pollard, I, 177-96 (l. 285).
[10] Norma Dalrymple-Champneys and Arthur Pollard's otherwise excellent edition of *The Village* mistakenly has "feeble sire" and, for its rhyme-phrase, "drooping fire" (ll. 176-77); when the poem was revised for inclusion in *Poems* (1807), Crabbe's couplet read: "If peace be his - that drooping weary sire, | Or their's, that offspring round their feeble fire" (George Crabbe, *The Village*, in *Poems* (London: For J. Hatchard, 1807), pp. 2-29 (p. 10)).

until, finally - if he is the character variously referred to as the "drooping wretch" or "patient", and, later, the village children's "antient friend" - he is admitted to the dilapidated and mismanaged parish poorhouse (I. 188, 198, 269, 292, 332). Every subject is, in John Barrell's words, "worthy […] of public and private charity": an industrious labourer who "accept[s] that [his] fate is immutable". Crabbe effectively "congratulate[d]" readers, who belonged to "the very classes […] responsible for the repression of the poor", for their "humane concern", their urge to improve the system of indoor poor relief or to contribute alms.[11] In his influential study of English genre and landscape painting, *The Dark Side of the Landscape: The Rural Poor in English Painting, 1730-1840* (1980), Barrell identifies a transition from pastoral to the more realistic georgic genre in long-eighteenth-century representations of the rural poor; according to Joseph Trapp's influential *Lectures on Poetry* (1711, trans. 1742), Virgil's *Georgics* (*c.* 29 BCE) was able to combine descriptions of "the most useful Rules for Husbandry in all its Branches" and "the *Pleasures* of a Country Life", of hard labour and (earned) leisure time.[12] Barrell points to three strategies by which Thomas Gainsborough, George Morland, and John Constable, whose imagery he interprets "in the light of […] eighteenth-century poetry", sanitised the real experiences of their poor subjects for an art-purchasing public wary of class relations changing.[13] For Barrell, like most contemporary reviewers, Crabbe wrote Book I of *The Village* not to parry formula pastoral, but Oliver Goldsmith's portrayal of

[11] John Barrell, *The Dark Side of the Landscape: The Rural Poor in English Painting 1730-1840* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980; repr. 1987), pp. 76, 85, 98. Although Barrell "base[s] [his] discussion of Crabbe exclusively on *The Parish Register*", he notes that "it could as easily have been based on what is generally regarded as [Crabbe's] most humane poem, the first part of *The Village*" (p. 80n).
[12] Joseph Trapp, 'Lecture XV. Of Didactic or Preceptive Poetry', in *Lectures on Poetry* (London: For C. Hitch and C. Davis, 1742; repr. Menston: Scolar Press, 1973), pp. 187-201 (pp. 193, 199).
[13] Barrell, *Dark Side*, p. 23. See ibid., p. 16.

Auburn's "labouring swain" formerly at rest on the village green and in its alehouse, in his popular 1770 pastoral, *The Deserted Village*.[14] In Goldsmith's poem,

> Every rood of ground maintain'd its man;
> For him light labour spread her wholesome store,
> Just gave what life required, but gave no more (ll. 58-60).

Labourers did not pay rent to and receive wages from a landlord; they were, in Barrell's phrase, self-sustaining "freeholders once again". Goldsmith, he continues,

> disengaged the labourer from his 'proper' and 'natural' identity as a labourer, as a man born to toil, and suggested that he could be as free to dispose of his time as other poets agreed only the rich man or the shepherd was free to do (p. 78).

At this stage, Barrell continues, Goldsmith's nostalgia for a past social ideal, of free time and an even land distribution, was not considered a threat by its monied readers. Only after 1793 was Goldsmith's poem appropriated by Thomas Spence and William Cobbett (also John Thelwall and Thomas Wooler) to show labourer readers the after-effects of radical parliamentary reform.[15] Barrell argues that Crabbe was rising to this, new challenge when, twenty-four years later, he transformed Auburn's alehouse into the cottage of an "industrious Swain" in 'The Parish Register'.[16]

If Crabbe did not write Book I of *The Village* to oppose the rural ideal for which Goldsmith's speaker is nostalgic, he was responding to *The Deserted Village* as a critique of luxury, the increased production and consumption of inessential goods, of "the man of wealth and pride" who ousted Auburn's labourers to make

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[14] See Barrell, *Dark Side*, p. 14. For examples of contemporary reviews, see C., '*The Village*', *Scots Magazine* (July 1783), p. 378; '*The Village*', *Town and Country Magazine* (August 1783), p. 436; R., '*The Village*', *English Review; or, Abstract of English and Foreign Literature* (October 1784), p. 249. *The Deserted Village*, in *The Collected Works of Oliver Goldsmith*, ed. by Arthur Friedman, 5 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1966), IV: *'The Vicar of Wakefield', Poems, 'The Mystery Revealed'*, pp. 283-304 (l. 2).

[15] See Matthew Clarke, 'The "luxury of woe": *The Deserted Village* and the Politics of Publication', *European Romantic Review*, 26.2 (2015), 165-83 (p. 179).

[16] 'The Parish Register', in *George Crabbe*, ed. by Dalrymple-Champneys and Pollard, I, 212-80 (I. 31).

"space for his lake, his park's extended bounds | Space for his horses, equipage, and hounds" (ll. 275-77). Pope claimed to derive his understanding of pastoral conventions from Theocritus's *Idylls* (*c*. 283-46 BCE) and the *Eclogues* (*c*. 42-35 BCE) of Virgil, but, like René Rapin and Bernard le Bovier de Fontenelle before him, he judged the relationships that Virgil set up between his rural ideal and socio-political and/or literary context to be "not pastoral in themselves".[17] In Eclogues I and IX, for example, only one character, Tityrus, recently granted Freedom in Rome, is allowed to keep his land and experience that ideal; Meliboeus, Moeris, and Menalcas, among the landholders in Cremona and Mantua dispossessed to reward Augustus's army, are forced to "beg [their] bread in Climes unknown".[18] In his 'Dissertatio de Carmine Pastorali' (1659, trans. 1684), Rapin asserted that

> most of *Virgils* [*sic*] Eclogues are about the Civil war, planting Colonys, the murder of the Emperor, and the like, which in themselves are too great and too lofty for humble *Pastoral* to reach, yet because they are accommodated to the Genius of Shepherds, may be the Subject of an *Eclogue*.[19]

However, in Eclogue IV Virgil's speaker relays epic incidents which, for Rapin, "neither really are, nor are so wrought as to seem the actions of Shepherds": incidents that, here and as per Silenus's song in Eclogue VI, relate to the origin and ages of man, myths, and - importantly - "fighting Kings, and bloody Battels" not dissimilar to "Civil war, planting Colonys, [or] the murder of [an] Emperor".[20] For Fontenelle, writing *Discours sur la Nature de l'Églogue* (1688, trans. 1695), it similarly "d[id] not belong to Shepherds to speak of all sorts of Matters":

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[17] 'Discourse on Pastoral Poetry', p. 25.
[18] 'Virgil's Pastorals', in *The Works of John Dryden*, ed. by Edward Niles Hooker, H. T. Swedenberg II, and others, 20 vols. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1956-2002), V: *Poems. The Works of Virgil in English 1697*, ed. by Vinton A. Dearing and William Frost (1987), 73-136 (I. 85).
[19] *The Idylliums of Theocritus with Rapin's Discourse of Pastorals*, trans. by Thomas Creech (Oxford: L. Lichfield, 1684), p. 26.
[20] Rapin, p. 26; 'Virgil's Pastorals', VI. 4.

> when *Virgil* desir'd to give a pompous Description of the imaginary Return of the Golden Age, […] he should not have excited the Pastoral Muses to leave their natural Strain, and raise their Voices to a pitch which they can never reach; his Business was to have left them, and have address'd himself to some others.[21]

When Crabbe's speaker reproaches pastoralists "charm'd by [Tityrus], or smitten with his views", their offence was ignoring Meliboeus, Moeris, and Menalcas's prospects.[22] He concludes that "from Truth and Nature shall we widely stray, | Where [Popean] Fancy leads, or Virgil led the way"; use of the past tense in the final clause suggests that such poets are not, they only position themselves as, Virgil's successors.[23] The published version of this stanza, written by Samuel Johnson, to whom Crabbe submitted a fair copy of *The Village* between 28 December 1782 and 4 March 1783, ends instead with the following couplet: "From truth and nature shall we widely stray, | Where VIRGIL, not where fancy leads the way?" (I. 19-20). Johnson wrote in the 24 July 1750 (thirty-seventh) issue of the *Rambler* that he derived his "true definition of a pastoral" from "the writings of Virgil".[24] He went on to claim (a) that any (even an epic) poem could be "truly bucolic" if it featured predominantly "rural imagery" and (b) that

> verses in which the speakers, after the slight mention of their flocks, fall to complaints of errors in the church and corruptions in the government, or to lamentations of the death of some illustrious person,

were not pastorals (pp. 196, 196-97). Johnson's revision positions Virgil as still actively "lead[ing] the way" from - or, he provided the model for pastorals blinkered

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[21] Bernard le Bovier de Fontenelle, 'Of Pastorals', trans. by Peter Motteux, in *Monsieur Bossu's Treatise of the Epick Poem*, trans. by W. J. (London: For Thomas Bennet, 1695), pp. 277-95 (pp. 285-86).
[22] I am quoting from the manuscript stanza James Boswell used, alongside the published stanza (I. 15-20), as "an instance" of Johnson "furnish[ing] some lines" to "better" articulate any given "writer's meaning" in *The Life of Samuel Johnson*, 2 vols. (London: Henry Baldwin, 1791), II, 439.
[23] Boswell, II, 439.
[24] 'The Rambler, no. 37 [Pastoral Poetry (2)]', in *Samuel Johnson: The Major Works*, ed. by Donald Greene (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984; repr. 2008), pp. 193-97 (p. 194).

to - “truth and nature”; “fancy”, understood to be rooted in past sensory experience, moves in the opposite direction. Crabbe, on the other hand, was responding to an alternative line of descent from Virgil in vernacular writing: from Edmund Spenser to Philip Sidney, Michael Drayton to Ambrose Phillips, to - writers for whom the rural ideal was “an ironic medium for describing human suffering” - Thomas Warton, attributive author of *Five Pastoral Eclogues* (1745), Charles Churchill, and, most recently, Goldsmith.[25] Crabbe’s aim was to write poetry that would really improve the living and working conditions of the rural poor.

In Book I of *The Village*, the speaker introduces the behaviour of labourers in a seaside borough constituency as a model for what his - one type of - realistic poetry aimed to achieve: “By such examples taught, I paint the cot, | As truth will paint it, and as bards will not” (I. 53-54). They farm crops or - when “Nature’s niggard hand | G[ives] a spare portion to the famish’d land” - fish (I. 131-32). By night, they turn to crime. Smugglers “show the freighted pinnace where to land”, “load the ready steed with guilty haste”, and “fly”; “when detected”, they “foil their foes by cunning[,] […] force”, or “yielding part” (I. 102-07). Wreckers “wait on the shore” to light a “tost [merchant] vessel” onto the rocks and plunder its cargo (I. 115-16). Of particular interest here is the residents’ third after-hours activity: freeman electors’ acceptance of “the yearly dinner, or septennial bribe” (I. 114). Smuggling and wrecking enabled communities to side-step the considerable cost of and/or import tax levied on tea, spirits, coffee, and tobacco; the tax payable on tea ranged, for example, from 65 to 110%, costing between 7s. 6d. and 16s. (£75 - £112.50 and

[25] Helen Cooper, *Pastoral: Mediaeval into Renaissance* (Ipswich: D. S. Brewer; Totowa NJ: Rowman and Littlefield: 1977; repr. 1978), p. 4.

£160 - £240) per pound, before the Commutation Act (1784).[26] The speaker positions electoral bribes as, similarly, bettering the residents' condition.

However, a second example for realistic poetry is suggested by the "greedy waves [that] devour the lessening shore" in this borough constituency (I. 125-26); it had, like Aldeburgh and Dunwich, depopulated over time. Crabbe's son noted that his father "often […] describe[d] a tremendous spring-tide of, I think, the 1st of January, 1779"; "he saw the breakers dash over the roofs" and "curl round the walls" of eleven houses, "crash[ing] all to ruin", in his home-borough of Aldeburgh.[27] Seven-eighths of Dunwich, not ten miles north, had fallen into the sea by 1783. Labourers were, then, the only electors; as such, they could claim a larger share of the House of Commons than labourers in populous borough and county constituencies. As Cartwright (with whose like-minded brother Crabbe started a life-long friendship in 1782) stated disbelievingly in *Take Your Choice*, "the two or three cottagers of […] Dunwich" could "send to parliament as many members as your most opulent cities" (p. 39).[28] Why, then, did they not refuse to allow bribers' socio-economic interests to be represented in the House of Commons in place of their own? Septennial cash-injections achieved only short-term relief for the residents of *The Village*'s borough; they could secure long-term improvements to poor living and working conditions by freely nominating, electing, and instructing Members of Parliament.

[26] Gregory J. Durston, *Fields, Fens, and Felonies: Crime and Justice in Eighteenth-Century East Anglia* (Hook: Waterside Press, 2017), p. 607; Liza Picard, *Dr. Johnson's London: Life in London, 1740-1770* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 2000), p. 296.
[27] 'Life of the Rev. George Crabbe', p. 9.
[28] On Crabbe's friendship with Edmund Cartwright, see 'Life of the Rev. George Crabbe', pp. 135-36 and [Margaret Strickland], *A Memoir of the Life, Writings, and Mechanical Inventions, of Edmund Cartwright* (London: Saunders and Otley, 1843), p. 42.

The speaker's realistic poetry will resemble the *Georgics*, in which Virgil, who was born into "an Illustrious, tho' not *Patrician* Family" and "dy'd Rich", mediated distressing conditions to his reader.[29] But Crabbe implicitly reproves his speaker for writing poetry that, after the labourers' example, 'bribes' its poor subjects by constructing them as deserving objects of reader sympathy and public or private charity. The other possibility, modelled on free election in a depopulated borough, is poetry in which the rural poor themselves describe how they live and work, as did Stephen Duck, author of *The Thresher's Labour* (1730); this, for Crabbe, would result in long-term change to their lives. The speaker objects that

> few amid the rural tribe have time
> To number syllables and play with rhyme;
> Save honest Duck, what son of verse could share
> The poet's rapture and the peasant's care? (I. 25-28).

He is guarding his own socio-economic interests as a writer and member of a higher class. Although Crabbe was "without Employment & without Bread" in 1781, he was the son of a (professional) customs officer, had been educated at two grammar schools, apprenticed, first, to an apothecary (retailer), then - because "there was indeed no other Distinction between the Boy at [his master's] Farm and myself" - a (professional) surgeon, and set up as surgeon-apothecary in Aldeburgh between 1775 and 1779.[30]

Book I was either (a) the original draft of *The Village* Crabbe started before 24 April 1780 and included in the "large quantity of miscellaneous compositions, on a variety

[29] Knightly Chetwood, 'The Life of Pub. Virgilius Maro', in *John Dryden*, ed. by Hooker, Swedenberg II, and others, V, 9-36 (pp. 10, 33). The influence of John Dryden's translation of the works of Virgil (and its paratext) extended into the eighteenth century. However, similar observations can also be found in a more recent biography of Virgil: 'The Life of Virgil', in *The Works of Virgil*, trans. by Christopher Pitt and Joseph Warton, 4 vols. (London: For R. Dodsley, 1753), I, 1-34 (p. 2).
[30] *Selected Letters and Journals of George Crabbe*, ed. by Thomas C. Faulkner and Rhonda L. Blair (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985), p. 9 (26 June [1781]); ibid., p. 3 ([February-March 1781]).

of subjects", that he submitted to Edmund Burke, Burgess for Malton, in February 1781 or (b) the corrections and "considerable portion of it written" under Burke's supervision, when Crabbe stayed at his Beaconsfield estate during July and August.[31] It was most likely to have been written as Crabbe worked on a "little work" entitled 'An Epistle from the Devil', "finished" on 28 April 1780.[32] The Association Movement was started in 1779 to urge only economic reform: in the words of the Yorkshire Association petition, reiterated in the thirty-seven more received by the House of Commons between 8 February and 6 April 1780, "to reduce all exorbitant Emoluments" and "to rescind and abolish all sinecure Places and unmerited Pensions" on the Civil List.[33] Crabbe's Devil extols Statesmen for their "Pensions and Pay", but finds "Seeds of Dissension" in the discrepancy between the English "People's Condition | And […] the contents of each County's Petition", the scale of social inequality (the 'problem') and economic reform (the 'solution').[34] Both 'An Epistle' and Book I of *The Village* look forward to redistributed constituencies in which poor male residents could vote.

The influence of Burke, who had drafted five of the seven economic reform bills thrown out by the House of Commons between February and August 1780, is felt in Book II. His *Observations on a Late State of the Nation* (1769) recommended "lessening the number [of electors], to add to the weight and independency of our voters".[35] In *Thoughts on the Present Discontents* (1770), Burke opposed legislating

[31] See Neil Powell, *George Crabbe: An English Life, 1754-1832* (London: Pimlico, 2004), p. 89. 'Life', pp. 95-96.
[32] 'Life of the Rev. George Crabbe', p. 61.
[33] *Commons Journal*, XXXVII (1780), p. 581 (8 February 1780). A second, identical petition from York was also tabled on 10 February.
[34] 'Poetical Epistles', in *George Crabbe*, ed. by Dalrymple-Champneys and Pollard, I, 77-91 (I. 80, 107-08, 110).
[35] Edmund Burke, 'Observations on a Late State of the Nation', in *Edmund Burke*, ed. by Langford, and others, II: *Party, Parliament, and the American War, 1766-1774*, ed. by Paul Langford and William B. Todd (1981), pp. 110-215 (p. 177).

to shorten the duration of parliaments and, as recently as 8 May 1780, spoke for "near an hour and a half" against Citizen for London, John Sawbridge's (tenth) annual motion for leave to introduce such a bill.[36] Burke used the opportunity of another, 17 May 1782 attempt to utter - according to (Burgess for Stafford) Richard Brinsley Sheridan - "a scream of Passion" against "all people who thought of reforming" Parliament in any way.[37] He conceded on 19 February 1783, looking forward to Pitt's first reform bill, that "some Regulations, upon a thorough Investigation of the Subject, might be adopted", but spoke out against Sawbridge's calls for a committee to do just that on 12 March and 16 June 1784.[38] In November 1795, when wheat was in short supply, Burke wrote to discourage Pitt from regulating the economy; in this letter, afterwards published as *Thoughts and Details on Scarcity* (1800), Burke argued that

> compassion [should] be shewn in action, the more the better, according to every man's ability, but let there be no lamentation of [the poor's] condition. It is no relief to their miserable circumstances; it is only an insult to their miserable understandings. It arises from a total want of charity, or a total want of thought. Want of one kind was never relieved by want of any other kind. Patience, labour, sobriety, frugality, and religion, should be recommended to them; all the rest is downright *fraud*.[39]

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[36] 'House of Commons', *London Evening Post*, 9 May 1782, p. 4.
[37] The *Parliamentary Register*, VII (1782), p. 183, included only a summary in six lines of Burke's "upwards of an hour"-long speech; it was otherwise described in 'Parliamentary Intelligence', *Morning Chronicle, and London Advertiser*, 18 May 1782, p. 3. *The Letters of Richard Brinsley Sheridan*, ed. by Cecil Price, 3 vols. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1966), I, 146 (20 May 1782).
[38] See 'House of Commons (Friday, March 12)', *Morning Post*, 13 March 1784, p. 2; from a MS surviving in Burke's papers, 'Speech on Parliamentary Reform (16 June 1784)', in *Edmund Burke*, ed. by Langford, and others, IV: *Party, Parliament, and the Dividing of the Whigs, 1780-1794*, ed. by P. J. Marshall, Donald C. Bryant, and William B. Todd (2015), pp. 216-26; the *Parliamentary Register*, XV (1784), pp. 207-08 (p. 208), records that Burke's 16 June speech was cut short by "the indecent and disorderly conduct of a part of the House". 'House of Commons (Wednesday, February 19)', *Public Advertiser*, 20 February 1783, p. 6.
[39] Edmund Burke, 'Thoughts and Details on Scarcity 1795', in *Edmund Burke*, ed. by Langford, and others, IX: *I: The Revolutionary War, 1794-1797; II: Ireland*, ed. by R. B. McDowell and William B. Todd (1991), pp. 120-45 (p. 121).

He urges private or public charity - "compassion […] in action" - in response to labourers' "lamenta[ble]" or "miserable circumstances", not long-term change to their "lamenta[ble]" or "miserable circumstances". Book II of *The Village* comprises, first, a log of villagers' off-duty "joys" - not labouring, "of the sermon talk[ing]", courting - and "vices" - drunkenly hitting their "teeming mate[s]" or "friend[s]", poaching, having extra-marital sex (II. 13, 29, 32, 34, 67). Crabbe straightforwardly undermines Book I's objections to the living and working conditions of the rural poor by presenting his poor subjects as innately idle and therefore immoral when not being industrious and therefore virtuous.

A similar anxiety about writers' bias, including his own, haunts Crabbe's 1785 *exposé* of the role played by newspapers in parliamentary elections. Poets, *The News-paper*'s speaker claims, can either choose to engage with "general themes" or "the subject of the day"; "if general themes [they] choose, | Neglect awaits the song, and chills the Muse", but topical verse was every day losing more and more readers to another realistic form: the newspaper (ll. 13-14). The number of copies in circulation had increased from 7.4 to 14.2 million between 1753 and 1780.[40] *The News-paper* is a decoy title, for the speaker to lure unsuspecting periodical readers, then make his case for topical verse, just as Ulysses' wooden gift horse enabled the "gallant Greeks", hidden inside, to infiltrate enemy territory and rout "the[ir] Trojan foe" (l. 44).

The speaker first looks at both media during a general election. Crabbe noted that "the greatest part of this Poem was written immediately after the dissolution of

[40] C. H. Timperley, *A Dictionary of Printers and Printing* (London: H. Johnson, Fraser, Symington, Curry, and Bancks, 1839), p. 806.

the late parliament" on 24 March 1784; *The News-paper* was published just weeks after the Select Committee on Controverted Elections resolved its final petition.[41] Then, topical verse is sung "unheard" because "party pens [wage] a wordy war" in newspapers (ll. 3, 7). Poets who do enlist risk permanently alienating the "st[u]ng" parties: "party-poets are like wasps, who dart | Death to themselves, and to their foes but smart" (ll. 9, 11-12). Only newspapers, therefore, determine which parties will best represent electors' socio-economic interest during future parliamentary debates on any given topic. But, for this speaker, electors' socio-economic interest and, with it, their choice of candidate is predetermined by their choice of reading material.

The speaker claims that newspapers are unreliable. Some editors "to every side and party go"; "champions for the rights that prop the crown", "sturdy patriots, sworn to pull them down", and "neutral powers | […] willing to be bought", are bankrolled by the ministry and opposition parties (ll. 119, 115-17). Statesmen who "lie low" receive less help than "rising powers" (l. 126n); however, at the "earl[iest] […] prospect of disgrace", most newspapers "fly", even if "golden fetters" secure others' loyalty (ll. 133, 136n). The speaker believes that every party (and therefore newspaper) promotes the socio-economic interest of upper-income groups only: the "Rector, Doctor, […] Attorney", and "neighbouring Squire", who meet in "Brooks' and St. Albin's [*sic*]" taverns in London, or "the whig-farmer and […] tory-swain", for whom "stares the Red Ram, and swings the RODNEY'S Head" (ll. 155, 163, 174-76). These groups do not share the socio-economic interests of the villager, whose rented "little hut" just qualifies him as a "freehold[er]" (ll. 178, 181). His "yearly forty shillings" "buy[s]" his suffrage; he "sell[s]" (by casting) his vote in return for the ear of "mightier men" (ll. 179-80, 190n). Into that ear this elector

[41] *News-paper*, l. 1n.

> delights the weekly News to con,
> And mingle comments as he blunders on;
> To swallow all their varying authors teach,
> To spell a title, and confound a speech (ll. 183-86).

Party-newspapers actively construct his socio-economic interests; they, "like the public inn, provide […] a treat, | Where each promiscuous guest sits down to eat" (ll. 233-34). Just as parties paid inns to serve complimentary food and drink to any elector who pledged his vote, party-newspapers, freely available in Tory or Whig coffee-houses and taverns, delivered news-content to readers.[42] Poorer electors believed that during election time they freely chose the parties that would best represent their socio-economic interest during future parliamentary debates, but this choice has always already been made for them; they have been bribed by newspapers in the metaphorical election of their world-view.

The speaker recommends his poetry as a reliable, non-partisan alternative to newspapers, enabling electors to make up their own minds in the same metaphorical election. However, Crabbe hints that his speaker's poetry disregards the socio-economic interests of a third group, of non-electors: the "rustic band" who debate with the village freeholder. These labourers

> partake [that freeholder's] manly spirit, and delight
> To praise or blame, to judge of wrong or right;
> Measures to mend, and ministers to make,
> Till all go madding for their country's sake (l. 192n).

Newspaper reading also constructs this group's opinions. The speaker describes what they discuss as a series of logical, self-contained pairs - praise/blame, judge of wrong/right, building to mend/make - which give way, threateningly, to patriotic

[42] I have been unable to find evidence that political parties directly subsidised coffee-house or tavern newspaper subscriptions during this period; but the cost of subscriptions to coffee house men, given their indirect contribution to papers' advertising revenue, became the subject of a pamphlet war c. 1728, see Richard Dale, *The First Crash: Lessons from the South Sea Bubble* (Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2004), ch. 1.

"mad[ness]". He, unlike Crabbe, is reluctant to better inform and enfranchise non-electors. Crabbe again leaves room for, but does not himself realise a type of poetry capable of enabling all groups to freely elect their world-view.

The News-paper, unlike *The Village,* "had not the advantage of […] criticism from [Crabbe's] friends" prior to its publication; why, then, did Crabbe make "a few alterations and additions" to the poem before reprinting it in his own 1807 collection, *Poems*?[43] He erases any hint of radicalism. The six lines describing the "rustic band" were removed and the socio-economic gap between the "mightier men" and village freeholder was narrowed considerably: the freeholder no longer "owes", he "owns the little hut that makes him free".[44] Crabbe was sympathetic towards radical parliamentary reform throughout his life. On 10 August 1831, he told his son that "neither [his] Hopes or Fears [we]re very strong" because he could not judge "the Effects of it" - the second 1831 parliamentary reform bill, then in committee - for "the lower Class of our Brethren".[45] Crabbe was also shocked by the revolution in France, which he described as one of "treason, murder, impiety, blasphemy, all that debases the soul and brutifies the man" in an 1815 draft of his unpublished "work of Criticism and [...] of Controversy".[46] From 1798, Crabbe was more anxious to guide his poor subjects' free speech, to safeguard radical parliamentary reform efforts from revolutionary violence. He therefore started to develop a narrative verse form capable of representing, and bringing about long-term improvements for, poor subjects.

[43] 'Preface' to *Poems*, in *George Crabbe*, ed. by Dalrymple-Champneys and Pollard, I, 200-209 (pp. 200, 203).
[44] *News-paper*, l. 178n.
[45] *Letters and Journals*, p. 376.
[46] *Letters and Journals*, p. 182n ([25] June 1815).

2.2 "What Interest Money brings" in *The Borough* (1810) and *Tales* (1812)

The Borough's epigraph, "paulo maiora canamus", is a phrase from the lines that begin Virgil's Eclogue IV:

> Sicilian Muse begin a loftier strain!
> Though lowly Shrubs and Trees that shade the Plain,
> Delight not all; if thither I repair,
> My Song shall make 'em worth a Consul's care.[47]

Their speaker will continue to sing the stuff of pastoral, but through an epic register; he prophesizes that a boy-child, born during the Consulship of Virgil's patron, Gaius Asinius Pollio, will "rule mankind" in its Golden Age. Then, "the labouring Hind his Oxen shall disjoyn, | No Plow shall hurt the Glebe, no Pruning-hook the Vine", grain and grapes will grow even if labourers do not cultivate the land with ox-drawn ploughs or prune vines with hooks (ll. 50-51). Eclogue IV was written to celebrate the birth of Siloninus, Pollio's son, after the defeat of Dalmatian seaport, Salonae, after which he was named.[48] This eclogue had previously been translated to celebrate the birth of patrons' children; Dryden, as Poet Laureate, translated it to mark the birth of Princess - later Queen - Anne's first child.[49] *The Borough* was dedicated to the fifth Duke of Rutland, John Manners, whose wife was then pregnant with their sixth child (of ten). But by 1780 dedications to a member of the royal family or the House of Lords - once a way to thank patrons for full-time financial support or, more typically, to secure one-off payments of between £10 and £30 - had "become merely a graceful and expected introduction to a work".[50] What an *Eclectic* reviewer termed

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[47] 'The Fourth Eclogue. Pollio', in *John Dryden*, ed. by Hooker, Swedenberg, and others, II: *Poems 1681-1684*, ed. by Swedenberg and Vinton A. Dearing (1972), 165-67 (ll. 1-4).
[48] The *puer* in Eclogue IV has been variously interpreted as: Siloninus; a son of either (a) Mark Antony and Octavia or (b) Octavian (later Emperor Augustus) and Scribonia, both of whom married in 40 BC; Octavian; Marcellus; or, a figure - for Jesus, according to most eighteenth-century readers.
[49] Earl Miner, 'Dryden's Messianic Eclogue', *Review of English Studies*, 11.43 (1960), 299-302.
[50] Paul J. Korshin, 'Types of Eighteenth-Century Literary Patronage', *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 7.4 (1974), 453-73 (p. 467); A. S. Collins, *Authorship in the Days of Johnson: Being a Study of the Relation between the Author, Patron, Publisher and Public, 1726-1780* (London: Robert Holden, 1927), p. 183.

Crabbe's "servile", "cringing", even "unmanly tone in the Dedication" to *The Borough* can be explained by Manners's initial reluctance to grant permission; "I obtained leave indeed, but I almost repented the Attempt from the Coolness of the Reply", the poet later confided to Walter Scott.[51] Dedications were also "thought likely to expand […] sales"; for Edward Clodd, writing in 1865, dedications represented Crabbe's "only chance of obtaining a call for edition after edition of a poem".[52] Well-selected dedicatees could certainly ensure favourable reviews; one *Critical* reviewer considered Elizabeth Helme's inscription to Princess Sophia of Gloucester "sufficient indication" that *The Pilgrim of the Cross* (1805) contained "principles […] recommendatory of virtue".[53] It is therefore safe to assume that the Consul, in this case, is Crabbe, not Manners. Significantly, in his 'Preface', Crabbe compared "children in the nursery" to "manuscripts in the study":

> they are fondled as our endearing companions; their faults are corrected with the lenity of partial love, and their good parts are exaggerated by the strength of parental imagination; nor is it easy even for the more cool and reasonable among parents, thus circumstanced, to decide upon the comparative merits of their offspring, whether they be children of the bed or issue of the brain (PREFACE. 343).

He positions the following poem, named for another - fictional, British - "large sea-port", as itself capable of bringing about a Golden Age for the labouring poor (PREFACE. 344).

Crabbe started to develop a realistic verse form by which to narrate incidents in the ordinary, private lives of - above all, poor - individuals, and those incidents' psychological effects, as early as 1798.[54] He wrote character sketches, anecdotes,

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[51] '*The Borough*', *Eclectic Review*, June 1810, p. 547; *Letters and Journals*, p. 114 (29 June 1813).
[52] Korshin, pp. 467-68; Edward Clodd, *George Crabbe: A Biography* (Aldeburgh: Joseph Buck, 1865), pp. 28-29.
[53] '*The Pilgrim of the Cross; or, The Chronicles of Christabelle de Mowbray*', *Critical Review*, Monthly Catalogue, February 1806, p. 215.
[54] See Neil Powell, *George Crabbe: An English Life, 1754-1832* (London: Pimlico, 2004), p. 149.

and life histories, published in *Poems* and *The Borough*, until, in 1809, Crabbe perfected what he later defined in the 'Preface' to *Tales* as

> if not an Epic Poem, strictly so denominated, […] such [a] composition as would possess a regular succession of events, and a catastrophe to which every incident should be subservient, and which every character, in a greater or less degree, should conspire to accomplish (PREFACE. 5).

Frank Whitehead argues that John Langhorne included "two narrative episodes" - representing Marian and Villaria, eager to be "Maids […] no more" and therefore "to prove their [fortunes] true", and an expectant mother denied poor relief by a "sly, pilfering, cruel Overseer"[55] - in *The Country Justice* (1774-77).[56] He also calls attention to a third: the brief story of "craz'd" Kate, who "fell in love | With one who left her, went to sea and died", in William Cowper's *The Task* (1785).[57] However, before Robert Southey published his *Botany Bay Eclogues* (1794), life-histories of transported convicts, it was conventional for realistic poets only to describe the poor, as unindividuated objects. This was no less true of Crabbe's earlier poetry; take, for example, his anecdotes of two nameless types, the Youth and Hoary Swain, in Book I of *The Village*. Although, in his eldest son and biographer's words, Crabbe had been "busily engaged in composition" since writing *The News-paper*, he only started to correspond with the publisher, John Hatchard, in 1799.[58] Crabbe aimed to hit two birds with his new poetic stone: (a) to change the minds of a bigger pool of readers about, and therefore to really change, the conditions in which the poor lived and worked, and (b) to turn a profit. "I write, I mean publish, not for Reputation but

[55] John Langhorne, *The Country Justice*, 3 vols. (London: For T. Becket, 1774-77), I (1774), pp. 22, 23; ibid., II (1775), p. 12.
[56] Frank Whitehead, *George Crabbe: A Reappraisal* (London: Associated University Presses, 1995), pp. 36-37.
[57] *The Task*, in *The Poems of William Cowper*, ed. by John D. Baird and Charles Ryskamp, 3 vols. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980-1995), II: 1782-85 (1995), pp. 113-263 (I. 537-38, 556). See Whitehead, p. 30.
[58] 'Life of the Rev. George Crabbe', p. 134.

profit", he "confess[ed]" to Scott on 5 March 1813; "had I not been somewhat straitened in sending my [two] young Men to [*verso*] Cambridge" - in 1803 and 1807 - "I had been a quiet Reader all my Days".[59] In what follows, I argue that in *The Borough* Crabbe made use of a frame narrative to reflect critically on the ways in which his realistic narratives affected subjects from a range of social groups' socio-economic interests differently.

In his 'Preface', Crabbe explained why *Tales*' twenty-one short stories were not "connected by [any] […] associating circumstance" (PREFACE. 6). He determined not to emulate Geoffrey Chaucer's *The Canterbury Tales* ([1387-1400]), in which stories are regaled by pilgrims travelling together to and from the Shrine of St. Thomas Becket at Canterbury Cathedral. Crabbe could not devise a pretext for his speakers to mix socially (nor, really, could Chaucer, whose "devout and delicate *Prioress*" would never have entered into a "colloquial and travelling intimacy" with the "drunken *Miller*") (PREFACE. 97-99, 101). Crabbe also rejected the example of Giovanni Boccaccio's *Decameron* ([1348-53]); in this case, stories are told by ten Florentines quarantined from the Black Death in Fiesole villas. Boccaccio did not assign his speakers "any marked or peculiar characters"; such a strategy, though "perfectly easy", "could be of no service" to Crabbe (PREFACE. 106, 110-11). As Gavin Edwards put it recently, "Crabbe believe[d] that readers need[ed] to be convinced that *this* kind of person would tell *this* kind of story to *that* kind of person".[60]

[59] *Letters and Journals*, pp. 105-106.
[60] Gavin Edwards, 'Putting Stories Together', in *George Crabbe Special Issue: Crabbe's* Tales, ed. by Edwards and Michael Rossington (=*Romanticism*, 20.2 (2014)), pp. 185-94 (p. 185).

The Borough's 'Preface' claims that what follows is a collection of twenty-four letters describing a "large sea-port" borough, penned by "a residing burgess" or capital freeman - one of the "Bench of wealthy, weighty Men, | Who rule our Borough, who enforce our Laws" (XVIII. 34-35) - to "the inhabitant of a village in the centre of the kingdom" (PREFACE. 344). In the main text, however, the Burgess repeats and responds to just five direct instructions or questions from his correspondent: "describe the Borough" (I. 1); "Sects in Religion?" (IV. 1); "but you[r parliamentary candidate] succeeded?" (V. 107); "how rose the [hospital] Building?" (XVII. 54); and, "our Poor, how feed we?" (XVIII. 5). In Letter I, the Burgess directly contrasts the urban with his correspondent's rural scenery, work and leisure activities in and along "our broad River" with agricultural labour and "Village-pleasures" (I. 112, 336). Otherwise, readers only learn, from Letter X, that his correspondent - revealed to be a farmer - envies the borough's "*Book-club*" and of his (for the Burgess misplaced) support for inter-parish poorhouses built under the terms of the Relief of the Poor (or 'Gilbert's') Act 1782 in Letter XVIII (X. 7). Crabbe only inconsistently reminds readers that his speaker is collecting information for and tailoring his narrative to a specific or "kind of" person.

Nor does it seem to matter who is narrating each letter; personal acquaintance with the Burgess is just an excuse to introduce unrelated material or another speaker. The Burgess only twice indicates that he has any personal relationship with the individual people he represents in anecdotes or life histories: he recalls Neddy, the "Advertising Empirick", from school in Letter VII (VII. 7); and, in Letter XI the Burgess reveals that his one-time attendant, "mine own *James*", now innkeeper at 'The Green Man', originally refused to marry his pregnant lover (XI. 229). The Burgess's outline descriptions of places, people, and incidents are, again, rarely

linked to him personally; he points out his (and half the common council's) first teacher in Letter XVIII and, in the penultimate letter, recounts visiting "a well-known Face", another "Friend", in prison (XVIII. 114, 119). Moreover, the *Monthly* reviewer found it "remarkable that, in the immense number of [Crabbe's] characters, no two are represented as bearing any relation to or influencing the feelings of each other"; nor are anecdote or life-history settings familiar from elsewhere in *The Borough*.[61]

Crabbe, it seems, only turned to a large seaport, not a frame narrative predicated upon any one social or professional grouping, because it could literally accommodate, and the Burgess access, almost any place, person, or incident. It could, of course, also put up other works for which Crabbe had no purpose in mind. From his 'Preface' readers learn that the life history of Sir Denys Brand, told in Letter XIII, "has been so many years prepared for the public" and the character sketch of Eusebius and life history of Isaac, Letter XVII's Hospital Governors, "were written many years since" (PREFACE. 353). The first collected edition of Crabbe's *Poetical Works* (1834) noted that the anecdote of a "veteran Dame" actress was "written, in 1799, soon after Mr. Crabbe had seen a rehearsal at the 'Theatre Royal', Aldborough [*sic*]".[62] Critics have, certainly, just trawled *The Borough* for (a) intermittent motifs, like "the means by which the poor appropriate waste or common resources", epitaphs, and, most recently, traumatic loss, social and ecological, or (b) scattered evidence of Crabbe's influences, such as Thomas Malthus and Humphry Repton's respective "theor[ies] […] of boundaries".[63]

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[61] [Thomas Denman], '*The Borough*', *Monthly Review; or, Literary Journal*, April 1810, p. 408.
[62] *Borough*, XII. 97; *The Borough*, in *George Crabbe*, ed. by George Crabbe II, III, 3-311 (XII. p. 208n).
[63] Matthew Ingleby, '"Fences … form'd of Wreck": George Crabbe's *The Borough* and the Resources of the Poor', in *Crabbe's* Tales, ed. by Edwards and Rossington, pp. 140-50 (p. 146); Andrew Lacey, 'The Epitaphic Poetry of Crabbe and Wordsworth', in *Crabbe's* Tales, ed. by Edwards and

However, this miscellany is tacked together by two of the Burgess's roles as a capital freeman: he is both a "Frien[d]", "Associat[e]", then "more than Partne[r]" to one of the borough constituency's parliamentary candidates and, implicitly, a magistrate (V. 27, 73, 74). General elections took place septennially and few by-elections had taken place in freeman constituencies since 1776. But there were, typically, annual and irregular elections to various corporate offices, of, for example, mayor and/or bailiff, alderman, capital freeman, and chamberlain; even Maidstone, where "municipal elections occurred somewhat less frequently", held at least twelve between 1774 and 1802.[64] Parliamentary candidates therefore relied on municipal parties' networks of influence. In Letter XXII, the Burgess refers to (unusually) "the Burghers all" as judging whether Peter Grimes had his "Prentice drown'd"; generally, magistrates were recruited from the capital freemen who had/then held high office (mayor, alderman) (XXII. 154, 156).[65] This same magistracy would also have supervised the overseers' decisions to grant poor relief to Jachin (XIX. 268), Ellen Orford (XX. 255), Abel Keene, and his "pious Sister" (XXI. 86, 138, 171-76). Both roles explain, at least, why *this* speaker would have access to and relay *these* characters' stories.

The Burgess reproaches his constituency's freeman electors for selling their votes to parliamentary candidates in exchange for transport and accommodation -

Rossington, pp. 151-61; Clare A. Simmons, 'Crabbe's *The Borough*: Environment, Loss, and the Place of the Past', in *Wordsworth and the Green Romantics: Affect and Ecology in the Nineteenth Century*, ed. by Lisa Ottum and Seth T. Reno (Lebanon: University of New Hampshire Press, 2016); Colin Winborn, 'George Crabbe, Thomas Malthus, and the "Bounds of Necessity"', *Romanticism*, 8.1 (2002), 75-89 (p. 75); Colin Winborn, *The Literary Economy of George Crabbe and Jane Austen* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004).

[64] See Phillips, *Electoral Behaviour*, p. 104.

[65] See Clive Emsley, 'The English Magistracy 1700-1850', *International Association for the History of Crime and Criminal Justice Bulletin*, 15 (1992), 28-38 (p. 30). In Aldeburgh, for example, the two bailiffs (or mayors) acted as magistrates when in and for one year after leaving office, *Appendix to the First Report of the Commissioners Appointed to Inquire into the Municipal Corporations in England and Wales*, 4 vols. (London: For the House of Commons, 1835), IV: Eastern and North-Western Circuits, p. 2085.

> Inns, Horses, Chaises [-] Dinners, Balls, and Notes;
> What fill'd their Purses, and what drench'd their Throats;
> The private Pension, and indulgent Lease,

even "little Place[s]" for close relatives (V. 30, 109-11). The poll is a "Market" at which candidates "Bid" (V. 96). However, one "pious" exemplar

> desir'd the Lord
> To teach him where 'to drop his little word;
> To *lend* his Vote, where it would profit [the borough] best'

and, on the lookout for "'promotion'", inquired "'where to sell | His precious *Charge*'", his interest rate, not his vote (V. 99-102, 105-06; italics mine). The electors believe that they only lend (by casting) their votes in exchange for regular interest payments, to advance their socio-economic status and, with it, their political interest. They have not been, in the Burgess's phrase, "brib'd, bought and bound", have not sold their right to be heard or to instruct at election time, but really are "Honour[able]", "staunch, and have a Soul sincere" (V. 87-89). The way in which electors claim this right is significant: they compel the Burgess to hear stories about their own lives and community. The party faithful who obtain entry to the Burgess's home include drunken "wretch[es]", who "prate [his] Wife and Daughter from the room", and "Proser[s]" with "Tales of three hours' length", others

> tel[l] in friendly way
> What the Opponents in their anger say;
> All that through life has vex'd [him], all Abuse

before adding "(as appendage) what [his] Friends have done" (V. 31-32, 39-40, 43-45, 48). The Burgess might "scorn their manners" and "their words mistrust", but, as "more than Partne[r]" to the candidate, he "must hear them, and they know [he] must" (V. 25-26). The electors dictate what the Burgess has to "describe [in] the Borough" for his correspondent (I. 1). In Letter XX, which contains Orford's life history, Crabbe revisits this idea.

Orford herself describes, first, the abuse she endured at the hands of her stepfather. She was later abandoned, with child, by her "rich Lover" and "expell'd from Home" to reside in "an Hovel's gloom", "barely fed", with her sister (XX. 164, 181-83). She gave birth to a beautiful "Idiot-Maid" (XX. 217). Orford subsequently married "the sober Master of a decent Trade" who "o'erlook'd [her] Errors" and bore him five sons; but he, taught to "revil[e] | [Her] former Conduct" by extreme Calvinist preachers, hanged himself (XX. 222-23, 245-46). Orford was "once more" awarded outdoor poor relief by the borough's overseers and magistrates, including the Burgess, and all of her children, except her daughter and "one unhealthy Boy", were apprenticed (XX. 254, 258). Three of Orford's sons died; the reader is told that one, a writer, "beguil'd" by the "Worst of the Bad", was ultimately executed and another, "a Seaman in an Hoy", "drown'd" (XX. 273-74, 303). Her "unhealthy Boy" raped his half-sister; she later died in childbirth and was not long survived by her attacker. Orford's outdoor poor relief, also known as "Parish-Aid[, was then] withdrawn" (XX. 320). "In [her] School [the speaker] a blest Subsistence found" until she "lost [her] Sight" (XX. 321, 330).

The Burgess began this letter by haranguing against "Books" for "show[ing] so little of how we truly live": life presents "more of grievous, base and dreadful things, | Than Novelists relate or Poet sings" (XX. 15, 16, 23-24). Gothic novel heroines always emerge from their hardships only unharmed, "before one Charm be wither'd from the Face", with "Fame, Wealth, and Lover, […] for Life secur'd" (XX. 77, 115). The Burgess singles out Charlotte Smith's *Celestina* for a different reason: for "disclos[ing] | […] only Woes on Woes" for "Four ample Volumes" (XX. 109-10). Crabbe's footnote, here, is worth quoting in full:

> The language of the writer is often animated, and is, I believe correct; the characters well drawn, and the manner described

> from real life; but the perpetual occurrence of sad events, the protracted list of teasing and perplexing mischances, joined with much waspish invective, unallayed by pleasantry or sprightliness, and these continued through many hundred pages, render publications intended for amusement and executed with ability, heavy and displeasing: You find your favourite persons happy in the end, but they have teazed you so much with their perplexities by the way, that you were frequently disposed to quit them in their distresses (XX. 112n).

Writers who put characters through too many hardships run the risk of eroding readers' sympathy, even of "dispos[ing]" them to stop reading. The Burgess describes as chief among Celestina's too many "Woes" - as his final straw - the discovery (later proven to be "some vile Plot") that George Willoughby, her "fond Lover[,] is the Brother too" (XX. 106, 112). Orford's life history culminates when her "unhealthy Boy" rapes his half-sister; this results in the Burgess, other common councilmen, and overseers, 'readers' of Orford's "Woes", losing interest and withholding her outdoor poor relief. In Letter V, Crabbe suggested that the Burgess had (a) to pay electors' interest rates, to improve their socio-economic status, and (b) to hear and, in these letters, to write about electors' stories. Here, Crabbe figures an alternative: that the Burgess can choose to pay outdoor poor relief, to enable any poor non-elector's subsistence only, and to incorporate their life history into his description of the borough, if he is engaged by it.

Crabbe also used this alternative to describe his own practice when "represent[ing] […] Poor-houses and Prisons", the life histories of Jachin, Orford, Keene, and Grimes ("the poor of the borough") and anecdotes about three prison inmates told in Letters XIX to XXIII - all individuals who, according to Francis Jeffrey, belonged to a "depraved, abject, diseased, and neglected [subset of the]

poor".[66] When he refers to this series in his 'Preface', Crabbe differentiated two potential effects of witnessing real human distress: "a stimulus to [acts of] benevolence" or a "very serious or lasting" change in world-view (PREFACE. 355). His writing should excite a "mingled pity and abhorrence", only capable of stimulating readers to donate a subsistence to his poor subjects. These mixed feelings are "not unpleasant" because they present no threat to readers' interests; indeed, they "connect us, *without degradation,* even to the most miserable and guilty of our fellow men", without closing the socio-economic gap between 'us' and 'them' (PREFACE. 356; italics mine).

What, then, of Crabbe's low-to-middle class characters? In Letter V, the Burgess goes on to relay an anecdote about a fisherman, Daniel, who saved up "Twelve Score Pounds at least" (£48,000-72,000 now), which he kept "Safe in his Trunk" (V. 142, 144). When Daniel could not sleep for fear that he "may be robb'd", he followed a friend's advice to lend his savings at a rate of annual interest in exchange for "Mortgage on [his debtor's] House or Lands" (V. 150, 152). He lent more money and, later, found "other means" "to multiply a Pound", to the extent that his "weight and consequence" and, with it, his political interest grew (V. 164, 173-74):

> Though blind so long to Interest, all allow
> That no Man better understands it now:
> Him in our Body-Corporate we chose,
> And once among us, he above us rose;
> Stepping from post to post, he reach'd the Chair,
> And there he now reposes – that's the Mayor (V. 175-80).

Crabbe's 'Preface' points to this anecdote's basis in "fact":

> [I]t may appear to many almost incredible, that, in this country, and but few years since, a close and successful man

[66] *Borough*, PREFACE. 355; XIX. title; [Francis Jeffrey], '*The Borough*', *Edinburgh Review*, April 1810, pp. 30-55 (pp. 38-39).

> should be a stranger to the method of increasing money by the loan of it. The minister of the place where the honest Fisherman resided, has related to me the apprehension and suspicion he witnessed: With trembling hand and dubious look, the careful man received and surveyed the bond given to him; and after a sigh or two of lingering-mistrust, he placed it in the coffer whence he had just before taken his cash; for which, and for whose increase, he now indulged a belief, that it was indeed both promise and security (PREFACE. 350).

The "honest Fisherman", unlike Daniel, failed to recognise the difference between a debtor's bond (an agreement to hand over his house or lands should he default) and collateral (that house or lands), nor, like Daniel's, did his pounds "multiply". Like the Burgess, Crabbe "hear[d]" of (albeit via another minister) and represented an incident in the Fisherman's life; the discrepancy between his and Daniel's status suggests that, in so doing, Crabbe also paid interest to (or bribed) the Fisherman: he brought about "very serious or lasting" change in his readers' world-view and, therefore, acted on behalf of his subject's long-term socio-economic interests.

Crabbe would later observe in his common-place book that *The Borough* focused upon individuals classed "between the humble and the great"; but, as his son rightly remarked, this observation "appl[ies] perhaps with still more propriety to [his father's] succeeding poems".[67] *Tales,* in the words of an anonymous *Critical* reviewer, steered clear of "the 'depraved, abject, diseased, and neglected poor'"; its short stories represented "a less abject view of society, that of our yeomanry, our mechanics, little tradesmen, and inferior gentry".[68] In his 'Preface' to *Tales,* Crabbe argues that poets should

> lift [their readers'] mind[s] from the painful realities of actual existence, from its every-day concerns, and its perpetually-occurring vexations, and to give [them] repose by substituting objects in their place which [they] may contemplate with some degree of interest and satisfaction.

[67] 'Life of the Rev. George Crabbe', p. 198.
[68] '*Tales*', *Critical Review* (December 1812), pp. 561-79 (p. 575).

Realistic poetry could represent any such "painful realities […] provided they be not (which is hardly to be supposed) the very concerns and distresses of [its] Reader[s]"; those two would still "excite and interest [their] feelings as the imaginary exploits, adventures, and perils of romance" (PREFACE. 10). Crabbe had switched his attention from what was suffered in "Poor-houses and Prisons" to the more moderate "concerns", "vexations", and "distresses" of socio-economically securer subjects, with whom his readers - however separated, syntactically and substantially, by the parenthesis - could better relate.

Tales' fifth short story, 'The Patron', takes as its focus John, a poet both of "common subjects" and of romances (V. 84, 90). John writes truth-telling "satiric song[s]" - "a rival burgess his bold Muse attack'd, | And whipp'd severely for a well-known fact" - and poetry which, like his childhood reading, tells of

> Robbers at land and pirates on the main;
> Enchanters foil'd, spells broken, giants slain;
> Legends of love, with tales of halls and bowers (V. 19-21).

In the latter case, Crabbe's speaker gradually displaces details of what John writes with details of what motivates him to write. John first "snatch'd a pen, and wrote as he perus'd", adapting characters after his own imagination; unlike Artabanes, in Roger Boyle's *Parthenissa* (1651-69), John could make his knight

> Slay half an host, and put the rest to flight;
> […] he could make him ride
> From isle to isle at *Parthenissa*'s side,

he could live vicariously through his hero (V. 28-31). As John grows older, he starts to apply his "fancy" not to love, magic, and banditti, but to fantasies of his inevitable future fame:

> 'then wealth shall I possess,
> And beauty next an ardent lover bless;
> For me the maid shall leave her nobler state,

Happy to raise and share her poet's fate' (V. 67, 69-72).

The following free indirect question is telling: "slaves of the *ring* and *lamp*! what need of you, | When Fancy's self such magic deeds can do?" (V. 81-82). The "slave[s] of all who possess the ring" and "of all who have th[e] lamp in their hands" are the wish-fulfilling genies summoned when Aladdin or his mother rub either object in *Arabian Nights' Entertainments*; here, it is not John's writing but they - the stuff of romance - who fulfil John's wishes.[69]

When one of the Members of Parliament representing John's borough constituency dies, two candidates, a "friend" of Sir Godfrey Ball and Earl Fitzdonnel's son, Lord Frederick Darner, run for his seat in a by-election (V. 101). John's father, "a Borough-Bailiff", freely pledges "his vote and interest" to the "good young Lord" (V. 1, 104). Although the son of a freeman and, having "took his degree, and left" university, probably of the age of majority, John does not appear as a voter: instead "he stung | The foe by verse satiric" (V. 58, 107-108). Ball

held in pay
Electors many for the trying day;
But in such golden chains to bind them all,
Requir'd too much for e'en he (V. 95-98);

John's poem convinces the remaining - majority of - electors to vote for Darner, in line with their own and not Ball's socio-economic interests. John and Darner are freely elected: one, politically; the other, critically.

Darner

rejoice[s] […] such worth to find;
To this the world must be no longer blind;
His glory will descend from sire to son,
The *Burns* of English race, the happier *Chatterton* (V. 116-19).

[69] 'The Story of Aladdin; or, The Wonderful Lamp', in *Arabian Nights' Entertainments*, ed. by Robert L. Mack (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995; repr. 2009), pp. 651-726 (pp. 661, 663).

He resolves to help John qualify for ordination and find a curacy or benefice compatible with satirical writing. In the meantime, and during the period (of at least three months) between his own election and the new parliament's first session, Darner invites John to his "noble seat", at Brandon Hall (v. 127). There, John stops satirising; he just lives in "scene[s] | Of splendour" with "conversation, books, | And Lady Emma's soul-subduing looks", fully immerses himself in fantasies of his future life as a monied, bestselling romancer (v. 140-41, 206-207). To extend his stay, John wilfully ignores "the counsels of his [father's] breast" (v. 220): that he should not try to reform Darner and his other guests; not "strive […] too much for favour" - "thou canst not be a friend; | And favourite be not" (v. 273, 276-77); not "take [his] Patron's maxims for his own" or "dote" "when ladies sing, or in [his] presence play" (v. 340, 341, 344); and, not presume to "wrangl[e]" with his hosts, nor "one opinion start of food or wine" (v. 329, 352). Instead, the Bailiff argues, John should:

> seem at ease,
> And rather pleas'd thyself, than bent to please:
> Upon thy Lord with decent care attend,
> But not too near (v. 273-78)
>
> If question'd, fairly answer, - and that done,
> Shrink back, be silent, and thy Father's son (v. 311-12).
>
> Observe the Prudent; they in silence sit,
> Display no learning and affect no wit;
> They hazard nothing, nothing they assume,
> But know the useful art of *acting dumb* (v. 315-18).

John's aim is now to secure patronage instead of just preferment from Darner: to "ma[k]e [Darner] fam'd [his] whole life long, | And stu[n] [his] ears with gratitude and song" (v. 712-13). However, when Darner "to public views […] must soon attend", must travel to London for the State Opening of Parliament, he sends John away (v. 434). Darner works hard to represent the socio-economic interests of the borough electors in the House of Commons; John, in contrast, rebuffs them

whenever they ask him for satirical truths about Darner's opinions and his family and friends' lifestyle, for

> how Ladies talk'd, or walk'd, or look'd?
> 'What said my Lord of politics? how spent
> He there his time? and was he glad he went?' (v. 507-509).

Darner turns out to be a "good" representative, whereas John tries to secure patronage, to buy the lifestyle of a bestselling romancer, by representing Darner's and not his poor(er) readers' long-term socio-economic interests. Crabbe saw something of John's sleaze in his own desire to write only what the reading public wanted to read, to give up/on his abjectly poor subjects.

2.3 Conclusion

In Book I of *The Village*, Crabbe's lyric persona points to semi-/unskilled labourers' behaviour in a borough constituency as a model for a mode of writing capable of really representing how the rural poor lived and worked: to save or to make money they smuggle, wreck, and, as freeman electors, accept electoral bribes from outside parliamentary candidates, who, once elected, will fail to represent their socio-economic interests in the House of Commons. When the speaker, as an outside and non-labouring observer, describes his poor subjects as deserving objects of reader sympathy, those subjects will likewise receive public or private charity. However, Crabbe implicitly offers up a second model for realistic writing: what if the same and, due to coastal erosion and depopulation, only electors were to freely nominate, elect, and instruct Members of Parliament to secure long-term improvements to their living and working conditions? Crabbe supported radical parliamentary reform; he looked forward to equally populated borough constituencies in which all men could vote, in which labourers could exploit their majority-share of the population. Crabbe implicitly reproves the speaker for describing his poor subjects' reality, a task for

which the subjects themselves would be better qualified, in order to protect his own interests, to prevent class relations from really changing.

Crabbe's reform ideology did not shift in the wake of the revolution in France, but he did become more anxious to guide non-electors, to safeguard radical parliamentary reform efforts from revolutionary violence. After 1798, Crabbe tried to better qualify himself to represent his poor subjects' reality by developing a verse form by which to narrate incidents from their lives. In *The Borough*, the Burgess, a capital freeman, represents the residents of his "large sea-port borough" in twenty-four epistles (PREFACE. 344). In Letter V, electors do not agree to sell, only to lend their votes to parliamentary candidates; in exchange, they expect the Burgess, his associate, (a) to make interest payments to increase their socio-economic and -political status and (b) to hear and, in his epistles, to write about stories from their lives. Crabbe revisits this idea in Letter XX. Here, Orford's "unhealthy Boy" rapes his half-sister and both children die within lines of the overseers and magistrates, including the Burgess, withholding her outdoor poor relief (xx. 258). It is crucial that we read this coincidence in relation to the Burgess's (and Crabbe's footnoted) critique of *Celestina*; by the time that her heroine, after too many unfortunate experiences, discovers that "the fond Lover is [her] Brother too", Smith's readers no longer feel any sympathy for Celestina and want to stop reading.[70] The Burgess will only (just) financially support a non-elector, like Orford, and incorporate their life history into an epistle if it entertains him, as Celestina's "Woes on Woes" failed to (XX. 110). Crabbe uses the Burgess's different relationships with non-/electors to describe his own practice. Narratives that represent abject poverty prompt acts of public or private charity, preserving the socio-economic gap between his subjects

[70] *Borough*, XX. 106.

and readers. This gap is smaller and prompts no action when Crabbe narrates incidents from the lives of low-to-middle class subjects. Letter V also includes an anecdote about the borough Mayor's career as a successful moneylender; but he was based upon a fisherman who remained "a stranger to the method of increasing money by the loan of it" (PREFACE. 350). Like the Burgess, Crabbe paid interest to his subject: he changed the world-view of his readers and, therefore, acted on behalf of (in this case) the Fisherman's long-term socio-economic interests. Two years later, in *Tales*, Crabbe used the verse narrative he perfected in 1809 to represent incidents from the lives of, to subsidize, low-to-middle class subjects only. Crabbe aligns readers' critical election of John, a writer of truth-telling "satiric song[s]", with voters' by-election of Lord Darner in 'The Patron' (v. 86). Whereas Darner represents his voters' long-term socio-economic interests in the House of Commons, John tries to secure patronage, to buy the lifestyle of a bestselling romancer, by representing Darner's and not his poor(er) readers' interests. Crabbe recognised something of John's sleaze in his own desire to write only what would entertain his readers, to write out / off abjectly poor subjects.

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH: "FREE, ENFRANCHIS'D AND AT LARGE"

On 29 September 1808, reeling from reviewers' criticism of his 1807 collection, Wordsworth described "nineteen out of 20 of Crabbe's Pictures [as] […] mere matter of fact; with which the Muses have just about as much to do as they have with a Collection of medical reports, or of Law cases".[1] He argued in the 'Preface' to revised editions of *Lyrical Ballads* that writers instead represent by way of their own (recollected and contemplated) emotional response to the "matter of fact". Here, Wordsworth also deployed the first of two different writer-as-legislator figures to articulate what, why, and for whom he was writing: he compared the feelings that are recollected and contemplated to bills that pass through a democratic legislature. In *The Prelude* (1805), Wordsworth adapted lines from 'Salisbury Plain' (1793-94), the first draft of the poem he published in 1842 as 'Guilt and Sorrow; or, Incidents upon Salisbury Plain', to subtextually align himself as a poet "by Nature's side" with Members of Parliament elected every seven years by a subset of men and controlled by bribery (XII. 297).

3.1 Re-reading the Salisbury Plain Poems (1793-1842)

In July 1793 Wordsworth accompanied William Calvert on a tour across the West of England; but, as Dorothy Wordsworth wrote to Jane Pollard on 30 August, it was

> put a stop to by an accident which might have had fatal consequences. Calvert's horse was not much accustomed to draw in a whiskey (the carriage in which they travelled) and he began to caper one day in a most terrible manner, dragged them and their vehicle into a Ditch and broke it to shivers. Happily neither Mr C. nor William were the worse but they

[1] *Letters*, II: The Middle Years I, 1806-1811, rev. by Mary Moorman (1969), p. 268 (29 September 1808).

> were sufficiently cautious not to venture again in the same way; Mr C. mounted his Horse and rode into the North and William's firm Friends, a pair of stout legs, supported him from Salisbury, through South into North Wales, where he is now quietly sitting down [at Robert Jones' family-home] in the Vale of Clwyd.[2]

"I passed a couple of days rambling about Salisbury Plain", Wordsworth told John Kenyon, forty-five years later; "overcome with heat and fatigue I took my Siesta among the Pillars of Stonehenge". The experience "prompted [him] to write a Poem of some length".[3] That poem, 'Salisbury Plain', fair-copied between early April and 23 May 1794, will be the focus of this section.[4]

The 'Advertisement' rooted 'Guilt and Sorrow' in the school-friends' month-long stop on the Isle of Wight, "in view of the fleet" as it "prepar[ed] for sea off Portsmouth at the commencement of the [French Revolutionary] war". There, Wordsworth became convinced that, like "the American war", this struggle would "be of long continuance, and productive of distress and misery beyond all possible calculation". He further reflected upon "calamities, principally those consequent upon war, to which, more than other classes of men, the poor are subject" as he crossed Salisbury Plain.[5] The poem is positioned as a humanitarian reaction to war, but, more particularly, as a study of related human suffering.

'Salisbury Plain', like all earlier drafts, has therefore been considered an anti-war protest poem; its focus, the story of a homeless "female wanderer", whose husband and three children fell victim to a war of "the western world", told in stanzas 26-36 and 40-44 (ll. 138, 306). For Mary Jacobus, this is "the most impressive protest poem of its time" because Wordsworth did not exploit the

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[2] *Letters*, I, 109.
[3] *Letters*, VI: *The Later Years III, 1835-1839*, rev. by Alan G. Hill (1982), p. 616 ([Summer 1838]).
[4] *Letters*, VI: *The Later Years III, 1835-1839*, rev. by Alan G. Hill (1982), p. 616 ([Summer 1838]).
[5] 'Guilt and Sorrow; or, Incidents upon Salisbury Plain', in *Salisbury Plain Poems*, ed. by Gill, pp. 214-83 (ADVERTISEMENT. 215-17). References given after quotations in the text are to this edition.

grieving war-widow as a "symbol of oppression", a trope Philip Shaw describes as "pervasive […] in war poetry of the 1790s", instead he identified with his subject's actual experience.[6] Jacobus and (more briefly) Kenneth Johnston argue that the Female Wanderer's story is evidence that Wordsworth was beginning to look critically at conventional literary depictions of suffering.[7] In *An Evening Walk* (1793) the "Female Beggar['s]" pain is "grotesquely exaggerated" after Erasmus Darwin's sensational account of the fungus Tremella freezing in *The Botanic Garden* (1789-91);[8] the pathetic death of the "chamois-chaser" in *Descriptive Sketches* (1793) emulates the exposed farmer in James Thomson's *Winter* (1726).[9] However, in the Female Wanderer's story and the description of "a maid who fell a prey to the Lord C[lifford]" in 'The Borderers' (1795-97), an adaptation of Robert Blair's *The Grave* (1743), Wordsworth started to engage with the psychological distress that characterises his mature "poetry of suffering", epitomised, for Jacobus, by 'The Ruined Cottage' (1797) and 'The Thorn' (1798).[10]

Nicholas Roe attributes this poetic development to another: a shift towards "sympathetic emotional identification with social victims" as "effective protest" in the writings of radical thinkers during the 1790s.[11] But direct political statements do not give place to, in the case of Thomas Cooper's *Reply to Mr. Burke's Invective*

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[6] Mary Jacobus, *Tradition and Experiment in Wordsworth's* Lyrical Ballads *(1798)* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1976), pp. 144, 148; Philip Shaw, 'Introduction', in *Romantic Wars: Studies in Culture and Conflict, 1793-1822*, ed. by Philip Shaw (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2000), pp. 1-12 (p. 2).
[7] See Jacobus, ch. 6 and Kenneth R. Johnston, *The Hidden Wordsworth: Poet Lover Rebel Spy* (London: W. W. Norton, 1998), p. 348.
[8] *An Evening Walk* (1793), in *The Poetical Works of William Wordsworth*, ed. by Ernest de Selincourt and Helen Darbishire, 2nd. edn., 5 vols. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1952-59), I: *Poems Written in Youth, Poems Referring to the Period of Childhood* (1952), 4-38 (ARGUMENT, p. 4); Jacobus, p. 136.
[9] *Descriptive Sketches* (1793), in *Poetical Works*, ed. by de Selincourt and Darbishire, I, 42-90 (l. 369).
[10] 'The Borderers. A Tragedy', in *Poetical Works*, ed. by de Selincourt and Darbishire, I, 128-225 (I. 3. 381n); Jacobus, p. 142.
[11] Nicholas Roe, *Wordsworth and Coleridge: The Radical Years* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988), pp. 129, 131.

Against Mr. Cooper and Mr. Watt (September 1792), "elegiac sympathy with the abandoned family" of men pressed into military service, they make 'Salisbury Plain' an effective form of political protest.[12] Wordsworth's speaker declaims against poor working and living conditions and exhorts readers against government actions in the poem's opening and concluding stanzas; for many critics, these stanzas (1-4 and 48-61) mainly or only relate to and - importantly - *politicise* the Female Wanderer's history. For Stephen Gill, this commentary is "illustrate[d]" by the entire fictional narrative; stanzas 1-4 relate to the "traveller['s]" journey, stanzas 48-61, on the other hand, "match in every detail" his encounter with the Female Wanderer (to a fault): "There is no justice and oppression rules; the poor are brutalised but not helped; war waged by ambitious tyrants destroys the already pauperised nations - these are Wordsworth's accusations and the female vagrant's story justifies them".[13] Roe himself asserts that "Wordsworth's concluding stanzas draw out the political and social implications of the woman's tale" (p. 127); the Female Wanderer's "thoughts stimulate the narrator's historical reflections on Stonehenge", writes Kenneth Johnston;[14] and, more recently, Quentin Bailey has concluded that "the Female Wanderer's tale works less to establish her as an individual character than to expose the brutality of war and the failure of the state to support its victims" because it "is framed by the [speaker's] observations and judgements".[15]

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[12] Roe, *Radical Years*, p. 130.
[13] 'Salisbury Plain', l. 38; Stephen Gill, 'Wordsworth's Breeches Pocket: Attitudes to the Didactic Poet', *Essays in Criticism*, 19.4 (1969), 385-401 (pp. 397-98). Gill later applied excerpts from stanzas 1-4 or 48-61 to the same parts of the fictional narrative in *Wordsworth's Revisitings* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), p. 191; however, Gill seems to suggest that both declamations applied only to the Female Wanderer's story in '"Adventures on Salisbury Plain" and Wordsworth's Poetry of Protest 1795-97', *Studies in Romanticism*, 11.1 (1972), 48-65 (pp. 48-49) and 'Introduction', in *Salisbury Plain Poems*, ed. by Gill, pp. 3-16 (p. 5).
[14] Johnston, *Hidden Wordsworth*, p. 350.
[15] Quentin Bailey, 'The Salisbury Plain Poems (1793-1842)', in *The Oxford Handbook of William Wordsworth*, ed. by Richard Gravil and Daniel Robinson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), pp. 135-151 (p. 138). Bailey's earlier work, *Wordsworth's Vagrants: Police, Prisons, and Poetry in the 1790s* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2011), does not explicitly link the Female Wanderer's story and

Johnston has pointed to the development of two competing impulses in Wordsworth's writing from 1794: (a) toward "agitation for [parliamentary] reform" in Britain and (b) toward "empirical psychology or quietism", Wordsworth began "to identify personally with human suffering […] in ways that led to no necessary action and that disarm almost all attempts at ideological explanation" as he revised 'Salisbury Plain'.[16] This competition is already legible in the first draft of 'Salisbury Plain'. The Female Wanderer's story, in itself only impressive as an anti-war protest poem because Wordsworth opted to represent the psychological distress of a war-widow, reflects the poet's quietist interest in human suffering. There is a need to de-synonymise this, Wordsworth's main poetic achievement in 'Salisbury Plain', from the remaining - in fact, 72.6% of the - stanzas. The Female Wanderer's story, after all, was not only later excerpted and, with nine additional stanzas, published as 'The Female Vagrant' in the *Lyrical Ballads,* it also had a different composition history to the rest of the poem. Wordsworth claimed that "much of the 'Female Vagrant's' story" pre-dated 'Salisbury Plain' by "at least two years" in the note to 'Guilt and Sorrow' that he dictated to Isabella Fenwick in 1843; a later Fenwick note reverts to 1793-94 as "the correct date".[17] Gill convincingly argues that Wordsworth had at least "remembered the sequence of composition correctly"; either the poet mistook these sixteen stanzas for the "blank-verse description of a vagrant family" he penned into DC MS. 7 during 1788 or "these descriptive passages were worked into something like 'The Female Vagrant' before 1793 in a lost manuscript and this was incorporated into the larger poem".[18] We could even speculate that Wordsworth

political commentary, but argues that 'Salisbury Plain' "centred on the figure of the Female Wanderer" (pp. 57-58).
[16] Johnston, *Hidden Wordsworth,* p. 408.
[17] 'Guilt and Sorrow; or, Incidents Upon Salisbury Plain', in *Poetical Works*, ed. by de Selincourt and Darbishire, I, 94-127 (ADVERTISEMENT. 94n).
[18] 'Introduction', p. 7.

imported this, pre-existing, poem to fulfil a specific role within 'Salisbury Plain'. He certainly considered "invent[ing] a new story for the woman" to slot into his next draft, 'Adventures on Salisbury Plain' (1795-1800), after 'The Female Vagrant' was published; "the poem is finished all but her tale" Wordsworth wrote to Coleridge on 27 February [1799].[19] Only when we look beyond the Female Wanderer's story does 'Salisbury Plain's' direct engagement with the parliamentary reform debate come into focus.

Critics construct Wordsworth's parliamentary reform ideology, 1791-94, from three pieces of hard evidence. The first, his acquaintance with Samuel Nicholson, who often invited Wordsworth to attend Joseph Fawcett's lectures at the Old Jewry and to "dine with him on Sundays", while he lodged at Cheapside between January and May 1791; through Nicholson, Roe speculates, Wordsworth met Joseph Johnson, who later published *Descriptive Sketches* (1793) and *An Evening Walk* (1793).[20] Both men (and Fawcett)[21] subscribed to the Society for Constitutional Information (April 1780-95), founded by the Westminster Association, to print and disseminate to "every village and hamlet", even "the humble dwelling of the cottager", free information about (male) non-electors' "lost Rights" - all Anglo-Saxon men "freely-chos[e] […] a full and equal REPRESENTATION" to co-govern with their monarch and aristocrats - and the need for radical parliamentary reform.[22]

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[19] *Letters*, I, 256.
[20] Fenwick note to *The Excursion* (1814), in *Poetical Works*, ed. by de Selincourt and Darbishire, V: The Excursion, The Recluse (1959), 373-76 (p. 375); Roe, *Radical Years*, p. 27.
[21] See Johnston, *Hidden Wordsworth*, p. 242.
[22] Nicholson subscribed to the Society for Constitutional Information from at least 1785; we know only that Johnson's "subscriptions were in arrears in 1793", but Roe finds "an undated list headed 'Penny Post' contain[ing] […] both names" sufficient evidence that the two men "coincided as members or associates of the [society] […] sometime in the 1780s", Roe, *Radical Years*, pp. 27-28. 'The First Address to the Public from the Society for Constitutional Information', in *Political Papers*, ed. by Wyvill, II ([1794]), pp. 465-70 (pp. 465, 467, 469).

The next piece is Wordsworth's 'A Letter to the Bishop of Llandaff'; that is, his reply, written in March or April 1793, to the appendix of Richard Watson, the Bishop of Llandaff's April 1785 sermon on Proverbs 22. 2, first published on 25 January 1793, just four days after Louis XVI was executed.[23] Watson had previously called for non-violent "labours to remove such rotten parts of the glorious fabric of civil and religious freedom" and "temperate Reform" in Britain.[24] His appendix, according to Wordsworth's 'Letter', sought instead to "exclude [the British people] […] for ever from" the "science of government" and "draw off their attention […] from their governors" by, variously, "lull[ing]", "tranquillizing", or "fatal[ly] delu[ding]" them into believing that they already enjoyed "as great a portion of liberty and equality as is consistent with civil society". Whereas, in reality, "the king *and* lords *and* commons […] have constitutionally the right of enacting whatever laws they please, in defiance of the petitions or remonstrances of the nation" (pp. 47, 48). Wordsworth wanted to ensure that Watson did not shake his readers' commitment to finding "proper modes of redress" for the "grievances which harass this nation": reform, to secure "pure and universal representation" (pp. 32, 41). However, Wordsworth had started to support republicanism in France through his involvement with the Girondin Société des Amis de la Constitution in Blois (1791-92) - one of 439 affiliated to Paris' Club des Jacobins (1789-95) nationwide[25] - between 3 February and 3-9 September 1792.[26] In the 'Letter', he looked forward,

[23] W. J. B. Owen and Jane Worthington Smyser suggest this writing-window on the basis of "topical allusions in the 'Letter'" in 'Introduction: General', in *Prose Works*, ed. by Owen and Worthington Smyser, I, 19-25 (pp. 20-21).
[24] Richard Watson, *A Charge Delivered to the Clergy of the Diocese of Landaff* [sic], *June, 1791* (London: For Thomas Evans, J. and J. Merrill, J. Fletcher, Prince and Cooke, and W. McKenzie, 1792), p. 5n.
[25] Michael L. Kenney, 'The Foundation of the Jacobin Clubs and the Development of the Jacobin Club Network, 1789-1791', *Journal of Modern History*, 51.4 (1979), 701-33 (pp. 723-31, Appendix A).
[26] George McLean Harper, *William Wordsworth: His Life, Works, and Influence*, 2 vols. (London: John Murray, 1916), I, 168. Wordsworth was probably one of the "two Englishmen" "proposed […]

after the inevitable "war" between democracy and monarchy in post-reform Britain, to the constitution of a "republic legitimately constructed" (pp. 36, 41). The latter would consist of "a representative assembly", elected for "short […] duration[s]" by all men, to propose and deliberate bills (somehow) enacted by direct democracy; a non-deliberative cabinet - "a mere hand or instrument" - would execute laws not "admit[ting] of open discussion" or "delay" (pp. 37, 40).

The series of letters, May-November 1794, in which Wordsworth and his university friend William Mathews hatched a plan to co-found a monthly journal called the 'Philanthropist' - possibly the penny weekly of that name, "by a society of gentlemen", published between 16 March 1795 and 25 January 1796 - contains the final piece of evidence.[27] It was conceived in response to *An Enquiry Concerning Political Justice* (1793), in which William Godwin urged individuals, thrice referred to as "philanthropist[s]", to rationally judge their moral duty to others within society - what, if adopted by the community, would ensure political justice - by (a) "reading and reflecti[ng]" privately, before (b) engaging in "candid and unreserved conversation to compare their ideas, to suggest their doubts, to remove their difficulties", and (c) "go[ing] forth into the world" to share their findings.[28] Such rational task forces would be able, in David O'Shaughnessy's words, to "gradually widen […] participation in the production of truth as society generate[d] more leisure time for reading and reflection".[29] Godwin asked that they "carefully distinguish

for membership" (but not admitted) on 3 February, Blois, Bibliothèque Abbé-Grégoire, MS 677 (Procès Verbaux des Sociétés Populaires, 1791-1792), fol. 115, cited in Roe, *Radical Years*, p. 49; see also George McLean Harper, 'Wordsworth at Blois', *Nation*, 96.2493 (1913), pp. 354-55 (p. 354) and Johnston, *Hidden Wordsworth*, pp. 300-01.

[27] See Kenneth R. Johnston, 'Philanthropy or Treason? Wordsworth as "Active Partisan"', *Studies in Romanticism*, 25 (1986), 371-409; Roe, *Radical Years*, pp. 276-79.

[28] William Godwin, *An Enquiry Concerning Political Justice*, ed. by Mark Philp (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), IV. 112, 118-19; ibid., VIII. 462.

[29] David O'Shaughnessy, '*Caleb Williams* and the Philomaths: Recalibrating Political Justice for the Nineteenth Century', *Nineteenth-Century Literature*, 66.4 (2012), 423-80 (p. 435).

between informing the people and inflaming them" to violently enforce change ahead of time (IV. 113); the latter "shall infallibly give birth to deformity and abortion", to failure and/or the "barbarous, cruel and blood-thirsty […] triumph of a mob" (IV. 116-17). Wordsworth, writing to Mathews on [8] June, tasked their 'Philanthropist' with disseminating the "rules of political justice", as revealed by "long and severe meditation", to "young men" - gentlemen and professionals - studying "at the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge" and "the dissenters" - 59.4% of whom were skilled craftsmen, at least 17.4% semi-/unskilled labourers, 1800-37.[30] If adopted, they would give rise to "oeconomy in the administration of the public purse", "a gradual and constant reform of […] abuses", and, ultimately, a British republic. Wordsworth also warned that the journal should not print "inflammatory addresses to the[ir] passions", which might revolutionize readers already struggling under the oppressive counter-revolutionary "foreign and domestic polic[ies]" of "men in power": "the destruction of those institutions which I condemn [would] […] hasten […] on too rapidly".[31]

Wordsworth also appealed to Godwin's inform/inflame distinction in 'Salisbury Plain'; he applied it to a Spenserian allegory of the people's transition from a state of 'political superstition' - tenanting a political belief-system predicated upon ignorance, the "fatal delusion" prescribed by Watson - to enlightenment - in

[30] *Letters*, I, 126. A. D. Gilbert, *Religion and Society in Industrial England: Church, Chapel and Social Change 1740-1914* (London: Longman, 1976), pp. 60-61, 63 (Table 3.1). Gilbert sampled Methodist, Congregationalist, and Particular Baptist congregations; they were otherwise found to contain gentlemen and professionals (less than 8.5%), merchants and manufacturers (2.2%), retailers (7.1%), and farmers (5.3%). I have equated (a) Gilbert's "other occupations" category, into which he files "the *professions* (school-teachers, lawyers, doctors, etc.), *fishermen*, and *seamen*", with O'Gorman's 'gentlemen and professionals' category; (b) 'merchants and manufacturers' with 'merchants and manufacturers'; (c) 'shopkeepers' with 'retailers'; (d) 'artisans' with 'skilled craftsmen'; and, 'labourers' and 'colliers, miners, etc.' with 'semi-/unskilled labourers'. I have not accounted for the fact that Gilbert, unlike O'Gorman, includes agricultural with all other semi-/unskilled labourers, except by retaining his separate freeholding and tenant 'farmers' category.
[31] *Letters*, I, 124, 125.

which state the people recognise the need for radical parliamentary reform. Wordsworth imagined this process as a "journey" "the multitude walk[ed] in darkness" in his letter to Mathews of [8] June 1794.[32] In this, earlier poem, he represented the same "multitude" as a traveller, "by thirst and hunger pressed", walking a more specific route (l. 42). The Traveller seeks overnight shelter upon "Sarum's plain" before a storm; unable to find a cottage or even a hovel, he is forced to make his "bed" within Stonehenge (ll. 38, 87).

Wordsworth substituted Salisbury for "Sarum's plain" not, I would suggest, for archaic resonance, nor to approximate a common provincialism, but to reference the borough constituency of Old Sarum, located at the plateau's border (l. 38).[33] Old Sarum was enfranchised in 1295. It had been an important civilian, diocesan, and military settlement until 1194, when its cathedral was relocated to the site of modern-day Salisbury; from 1246 Old Sarum was regularly exempted from direct taxation payments on grounds of fiscal poverty.[34] Of the borough's eleven vote-conferring burgage plots, only "numbered" "Bound-Stones" remained in 1793; the Old Castle Inn, next to the borough boundary, was the only occupied building. Visiting during the summer of 1797, Wordsworth's friend, the radical orator, John Thelwall, described "half a cartload of stones, in two separate heaps, where the castle once stood, and the old spreading oak under which the representatives of these stones are chosen and returned to parliament, [as] […] all that remains".[35] Between 1761

[32] *Letters*, I, 125.
[33] Examples of this substitution can be found in James Woodforde, *The Diary of a Country Parson*, ed. by John Beresford, 5 vols. (London: Oxford University Press, 1924-1931); *The John Marsh Journals: The Life and Times of a Gentleman Composer (1752-1828)*, ed. by Brian Robins, Sociology and Social History of Music, 9, 2 vols. (Hillsdale: Pendragon, [1998-2013]).
[34] See 'Old Salisbury: The Borough', in *The Victoria History of the County of Wiltshire*, ed. by Ralph Bernard Pugh and others, 18 vols. (Oxford: Oxford University Press; London: Boydell and Brewer, 1953-2011), VI: *The Boroughs of Wilton and Salisbury, and the Hundred of Underditch*, ed. by Elizabeth Crittall (1962), pp. 62-63.
[35] John Thelwall, 'A Pedestrian Excursion through Several Parts of England and Wales, During the Summer of 1797', *Monthly Magazine*, 1 April 1800, p. 33.

and 1793, Thomas Pitt, Baron Camelford, the freeholder of ten burgage plots, leased seven or more to his friends for life to ensure the election of his nominees, from 1783 supporters of his cousin, William Pitt's administration.[36] Old Sarum, like Gatton and Midhurst, was a radical symbol of the extreme inequalities in constituency-distribution that then and originally resulted in only the interests of Members and/or their nominators, not of the people, being represented in the House of Commons. The definition of "REPRESENTATION" in *Pearson's Political Dictionary* (1792) makes ironic reference to its status: "A *free* and *unbiased* choice of two persons to represent the people in Parliament, elected on the *nomination* of some *great man,* on the stump of a tree at old Sarum, and other places, where there are no constituents".[37] "Old Sarum, though scarcely the vestige of a town remains, send[s] as many members as the city of London, that mart of industry and wealth", wrote Joseph Gerrald in 1793.[38] Philips regretted that Old Sarum, where there is not "a single house standing, or a single person living to be represented", "send[s] […] as many members to parliament as the whole city of London, which, at the lowest computation, contains eight hundred thousand inhabitants".[39] Should "two paltry huts at Old Sarum claim the right to send two members to the House of Commons, while a town consisting of 60,000 inhabitants, and others of the half and the third of that number can send none, tho' their population and commerce contribute largely to the revenue[?]" asked Niel Douglas.[40]

[36] Chippenham, Wiltshire and Swindon History Centre, Church Commissioners Collection, Chapter Estate 14/1-2 (map of the burgage lands in Old Sarum, 1793).
[37] Joseph Pearson, *Pearson's Political Dictionary* (London: For J. S. Jordan, 1792), p. 48.
[38] Joseph Gerrald, *A Convention the Only Means of Saving Us from Ruin* (London: For D. I. Eaton, 1793), p. 102.
[39] Philips, *Speedy and Effectual Reform*, p. 23.
[40] Niel Douglas, *Thoughts on Modern Politics* (London: Button, 1793), p. 116.

Salisbury Plain was also identified as the original location of the Anglo-Saxon Mycelgemot. Radical reform thinkers' understanding of Anglo-Saxon democracy, of what should, now, be reformed literally or in spirit, shifted during the 1790s.

In the 1770s, it was believed that the Commons was first constituted as part of the Witenagemot ('meeting of wise men'). In *An Historical Essay on the English Constitution*, Hulme maintained that every inhabitant householder "liable to pay his shot and bear his lot" annually elected a "chief officer" to represent his rural tithing or borough in the state Witenagemot; the seven Anglo-Saxon Witenagemots also chose one of their Heptarchs as "generalissimo over the whole body" and appointed "a certain number of deputies from each state" to form his "great council" (pp. 4, 19, 22). When Alfred formalised this union, replacing seven with one Witenagemot, he replaced the "numerous", but "thinly inhabited" rural tithings with shire constituencies, which, like boroughs, then elected two representatives, and constructed "a separate branch of the wittena-gemot" - the original House of Lords - from members of the generalissimo's "great council" (pp. 22, 25). In *Take Your Choice*, Cartwright argued that all men, who were "by nature equal", annually elected representatives to the Witenagemot (pp. 2, 15, 81).[41]

There was, however, one dissenter. In his *Letters on Political Liberty* (1782), David Williams introduced another annual assembly, "of the Freeholders", the "Mycel-gemot, or Folkmote", which subjected the King and his nobles - or, Witenagemot - to scrutiny.[42] The Anglo-Saxon government, "shattered" by Danish invasions, was "restored and improved by the immortal Alfred": under him the

[41] Cartwright did not, as Barrell suggests in *Imagining the King's Death: Figurative Treason, Fantasies of Regicide, 1793-1796* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), "trea[t] the micklegemote as a convention in which all freemen personally participated" in *Take Your Choice* (p. 14).
[42] David Williams, *Letters on Political Liberty* (London: For T. Evans, 1782), p. 16.

Mycelgemot "began to act by deputations" (pp. 17, 57). Williams repeated this thesis in *Lectures on Political Principles* (1789) and, except for extending the Mycelgemot's membership to "all the Freemen in the Nation", including that tenurial grey area between freeholder and bondsman, the first edition of *Lessons to a Young Prince* (1790).[43] However, the *Lessons*' second edition, published in 1791, added two important details: since Alfred's reign the Mycelgemot "ever met annually on Salisbury plain" and "the members at a signal could have produced the nation [there] in arms", this was "the firm basis of its constitutional influence" over the King and Witenagemot.[44] Damian Walford Davies suggests that Wordsworth was made aware of Williams by Henri Grégoire, Constitutional Bishop of Blois; the two writers also had at least two mutual acquaintances: John Oswald and Jacques Pierre Brissot. Walford Davies speculates that they might even have been introduced (by Brissot) in Paris during early December 1792.[45] Notwithstanding, Williams's argument was widely disseminated by way of Joseph Gerrald and Henry Redhead Yorke, leading members of the London Corresponding Society and Sheffield's Society for Constitutional Information. Gerrald cited "the Letters of that truly enlightened man David Williams" in his *A Convention the Only Means of Saving us from Ruin* (1793), but paraphrased the *Lessons* (1791) when he argued that

> the Saxons convened, every year, all of the free men of the kingdom who composed an assembly called Mycel-gemot, Folk-mote, or Convention. It was their business and duty to *revise* the conduct of the king and wittenagemot or parliament. In the golden days of Alfred, a patriot king, if ever there was one, they met on Salisbury plain (pp. 88, 90).

[43] David Williams, *Lectures on Political Principles* (London: John Bell, 1789), p. 181 (no change); Williams, *Lessons to a Young Prince* (London: For H. D. Simmons, 1790), Plate 1 (which also adds "Bishops, &c." to the Witenagemot's membership).
[44] David Williams, *Lessons to a Young Prince*, 2nd. edn. (London: For H. D. Simmons, 1791), pp. 84, 89-90.
[45] Damian Walford Davies, *Presences that Disturb: Models of Romantic Identity in the Literature and Culture of the 1790s* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2002), pp. 28-31.

Yorke was found guilty of committing conspiracy in his speech from Sheffield's Castle Hill on 7 April 1794; according to prosecution witness William George Frith, he had asserted that Alfred's Mycelgemot - of "the nation itself" or "the people" - had assembled upon Salisbury Plain "armed for the [constitutional] redress of grievances".[46] Yorke's subsequent 'An Address to the British Nation' described

> the Myclegemote of Alfred [as], in *effect*, the nation. It was open to every freeman who had any complaints to make against the government; and its members could assemble the nation, *in arms*, at a signal, on Salisbury Plain.[47]

It is notable that both Gerrald and Yorke adjusted Williams' original by omission: neither acknowledged that, under Alfred, the Mycelgemot became an assembly of elected representatives, nor that, for Williams, no part of the Witenagemot was democratic. Thomas Oldfield's influential three-volume *An Entire and Complete History, Political and Personal, of the Boroughs of Great Britain* (1792) advanced a different line of thought about the Mycelgemot. Here, the Commons comprised not only the freeholders, but (filling in Williams's grey area) those granted (a) usufruct of (folc)land "as a reward for tilling th[eir] […] fields" or (boc)land "for life […] upon service", both in exchange for an annual 'farm' payment, and (b) (boc)land "for perpetuity". Oldfield speculated that merchandise would also have enfranchised tradesmen and merchants had "commerce […] then created the variety of other property it has since the chartering of boroughs". This body did not

> enable [their representatives] to sit for any limited time, so as to preclude themselves from transacting their own concerns in public council whenever they thought proper, or found it convenient. The members of the Wittenage-mote [*sic*] were

[46] George Ramsay, *The Trial of Henry Yorke* ([n. p.]: Henry Redhead Yorke, [1795]), pp. 54, 67. The writer of *Proceedings of the Public Meeting, Held at Sheffield, in the Open Air, on the Seventh of April, 1794* ([Sheffield]: For the Sheffield Constitutional Society, 1794) only summarises this section of Yorke's speech: he "entered into a complete detail of the ancient Constitution as established by Alfred" (p. 12).
[47] 'An Address to the British Nation', in *Proceedings of the Public Meeting*, pp. 27-44 (p. 40).

> only their temporary substitutes, sent to attend whenever they chose, or found it necessary to be absent.[48]

The Commons could either assemble in person (as the Mycelgemot) or by representative (as the Witenagemot).

Oldfield concluded his volumes with the 27 May 1780 *Report* in which the Westminster Association's Sub-Committee for Parliamentary Reform, but principally John Jebb, contended "*that the restoration of the Commons' House of Parliament to freedom and independency, by interposition of the great collective body of the nation, is essentially necessary to our existence as a free people*".[49] For Gerrald, similarly, "a reform in parliament, and a general redress of grievances" could only be effected by "the interposition of the great body of the people themselves, electing deputies in whom they can confide, and imparting instructions which they must injoin to be executed".[50] Yorke went on to argue that, if all men have virtue, self-respect, love of their country, and an ethic of reciprocity - if there is a "revolution of sentiment" - "then, the commanding voice of the whole people shall *recommend* the Five Hundred and Fifty-eight Gentlemen in St. Stephen's Chapel, go about their business".[51] Jebb, in his 1779 *An Address to the Freeholders of Middlesex,* advocated an extension to the network of corresponding county associations that James Burgh had proposed in *Political Disquisitions* (1774-75).[52] Jebb's associations, unlike Burgh's, could

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[48] Thomas Oldfield, *An Entire and Complete History, Political and Personal of the Boroughs of Great Britain*, 3 vols. (London: For G. Riley, 1792), I, 16, 53, 55, 64. See ibid., I, 57.
[49] 'Report of the Sub-Committee of Westminster, Appointed April 12, 1780', in Oldfield, III, 50-68 (Scotland) (p. 54). For Jebb's role in writing this section of the report, see John Disney, 'Memoirs of the Life of the Author', in *The Works Theological, Medical, Political, and Miscellaneous, of John Jebb, M. D., F. R. S*, 3 vols. (London: For T. Cadell, J. Johnson, J. Stockdale, and J. and J. Merrill, 1788), I, 1-247 (p. 152).
[50] Gerrald, pp. 85, 93.
[51] *Proceedings of the Public Meeting*, p. 18.
[52] James Burgh, *Political Disquisitions; or, An Enquiry into Public Errors, Defects, and Abuses*, 3 vols. (London: For Edward and Charles Dilly, 1774-75), III (1775), pp. 428-29, 434.

"possibly" include "those Persons, who at present have no voice" in elections.[53] They would also depute "standing Committees" (sized in proportion to each county's "property", "number of inhabitants", and the "consequence of [its] great commercial cities" and "manufacturing Towns") to assemble and "to confer upon a proper form of remonstrance" to the House of Commons (p. 12). If ignored, such deputies should "in solemn council declare, that the present House of Commons was dissolved" and - with the assent of the King and Lords, secured by "witholding [*sic*] […] supplies" - enact parliamentary reform laws (pp. 15, 16).[54] Jebb sought an ersatz House of Commons elected by all men to deliberate parliamentary reform separately from and then to instruct Members of Parliament. Oldfield looked to the role of the direct democratic Mycelgemot in Anglo-Saxon government as a legal precedent for such an assembly, to differentiate it from revolutionary action. For Gerrald and Yorke, who wrote after France constituted the revolutionary National Convention and the publication of Paine's *Letter Addressed to the Addressers on the Late Proclamation* (October 1792), this differentiation was more urgent. Paine recommended the formation of "a thousand"-strong "national convention", elected in equally-populated

[53] [John Jebb], *An Address to the Freeholders of Middlesex, Assembled at Free Masons Tavern, in Great Queen Street, Upon Monday the 20th of December 1779* (London: For J. Dixwell, T. Cadell, J. Almon, and J. Bew, [1779]), p. 14n. In *Crito; or, Essays on Various Subjects*, Burgh identified "the least support of government", "for instance, pay[ment of] […] window-tax", as a precondition to suffrage (2 vols. (London: Dodsley, Becket and de Hondt, White, Payne, and Cooke, 1766-67), II (1767), 37). In *Political Disquisitions*, he "s[aw] no argument against" enfranchising the "poor and dependent" on alms, due to all men's "unalienable property" and indirect tax contribution, but Burgh's "GRAND ASSOCIATION FOR RESTORING THE CONSTITUTION" was to comprise "people of property" only (I (1775), pp. 37, 38; ibid. III (1775), pp. 428-29).

[54] Hulme's *An Historical Essay* similarly urged its readers "to enter into [corresponding] legal associations", in "every market-town" and "every parish", but - not, as Parssinen suggests, to "bring pressure to bear upon" or to make "demands" of the House of Commons during parliamentary term time (p. 506) - only to organise people to withhold their votes and/or interest from "any known placeman, pensioner, or contractor whatever" and candidates who refuse to pledge themselves to move and support three reform bills (pp. 161, 162).

constituencies by all adult men, to ascertain "the will of the nation" as regards parliamentary reform but also (now and "every twenty-one years") all statutes.[55]

The idea of Stonehenge as the site of Germanic direct democratic assemblies, like the Mycelgemot, derives from Walter Charleton's *Chorea Gigantum; or, The Most Famous Antiquity of Great Britain, Vulgarly called Stone-heng* (1663). Charleton postulated that Stonehenge was not the remains of a Roman temple, as Inigo Jones argued in 1655; it had been erected during the Danish occupation of Anglo-Saxon Wessex, 876-78, as an "open Senate-House" in which noblemen and commoners would meet to form a "great Council", "to nominate", "elect", and "inaugurat[e]" a ruler or "consult" and "vote about matters of State".[56] In his *Britannia Antiqua Illustrata; or, The Antiquities of Ancient Britain* (1676) Aylett Sammes argued that Stonehenge had been raised by Phoenician settlers to worship Hercules, a cult into which they drew the indigenous Celtic peoples, including the Druids. However, it was more properly John Aubrey's 'Monumenta Britannica' (1665-93) which introduced the theory that would grip the eighteenth-century popular imagination: Stonehenge originated as one of the "Templa Druidum".[57] That it had been built to accommodate Germanic direct democratic assemblies, briefly reasserted in Johann Georg
Keyssler's *Antiquitates Selectae Septentrionales et Celticae* ('Selected Northern and Celtic Antiquities', 1720), nevertheless regained currency after *An Enquiry into the History of Scotland* (1789) by John Pinkerton. He argued that "Stonehenge was

[55] *Letter Addressed to the Addressers on the Late Proclamation*, in *Thomas Paine*, ed. by Foner, II, 470-511 (pp. 499, 507, 509).
[56] Walter Charleton, *Chorea Gigantum; or, The Most Famous Antiquity of Great Britain, Vulgarly called Stone-heng* (London: For Henry Herringman, 1663), pp. 47, 48.
[57] John Aubrey, *Proposals for Printing* Monumenta Britannica (London: [n. pub.], [1690]), p. 1. The *Monumenta Britannica; or, A Miscellany of British Antiquities*, first published, 1980-2, was privately circulated and donated to the Ashmolean Museum in manuscript before Aubrey's death in 1697.

really a barbaric Parliament House" and "Supreme Court", built by the Germano-Scythian Belgae of Northern Gaul in 300 BCE and re-appropriated for (Germano-Scythian) Anglo-Saxon government after the Roman occupation. Although only incidentally "submitted to the reader's candour" over twenty-nine lines, Pinkerton's "opinion" was singled out for attention by reviewers.[58] Wordsworth regularly read the *Critical Review* in 1793 and 1798-99;[59] the journal's July 1790 issue, published just before he departed for Calais with Jones, noted: "Stonehenge [Pinkerton] supposes to be a place of judgment, or meeting, the rude parliament of those times, where every one had a vote; and in which the stones across were for the chief to ascend when he spoke to the people".[60] Many of Pinkerton's claims were controversial, not least his construction of Scottish racial identity. He identified the Scottish Picts, discovered in 71 by the invading Romans, as Scando-Scythian Peukini in *Dissertation on the Origin and Progress of the Scythians or Goths* (1787); for Pinkerton, the aboriginal Celtic Cumri, who built "no monuments", "had no arts, nor inventions, of their own" had been "vanquished and confined" to the Lowlands by racially superior Peukini in 200 BCE.[61] He went on to trace contemporary Highland culture - "the Celtic part of [...] Scotland" - to fifth-century Celtic Gael (the 'Scoti') settlers from Ireland (p. 69). It had become a historiographic orthodoxy that the Picts were aboriginal Celtic Gaels, and Scotland culturally independent from Ireland, but Pinkerton's thesis, supported by James Sibbald, and John Jamieson, offered an alignment with Saxon democracy: "in the woods of Germany every man

[58] John Pinkerton, *An Enquiry into the History of Scotland Preceding the Reign of Malcom* [sic] *III. Or the Year 1056*, 2 vols. (London: John Nichols, 1789), I, 414-15.
[59] Duncan Wu, *Wordsworth's Reading 1770-1799* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), p. 42.
[60] '*An Enquiry into the History of Scotland Preceding the Reign of Malcolm III*', *Critical Review*, July 1790, pp. 11-22 (p. 21).
[61] John Pinkerton, *Dissertation on the Origin and Progress of the Scythians or Goths* (London: John Nichols, 1787), pp. 68, 121, 123.

had a voice in general council".[62] The ensuing 'Scotic' or 'Celtic Controversy' - waged until Walter Scott, leading the enemy advance, dealt Pinkerton's "Gothic system" a "death-blow" in 1829 - ensured ongoing interest in and engagement with Pinkerton's works.[63] Indeed, he re-stated his "opinion" in revised and enlarged editions of both texts, published in 1794 and 1814, and under the 'Belgic' entry in *Modern Geography* (1802), revised for re-publication in four separate editions by 1817. Nineteenth-century antiquarians and travel writers certainly accorded it a place within the pantheon of Stonehenge origin theories; take, for example, *The Beauties of Wiltshire* (1801-5), by John Britton, and Algernon Herbert's *Cyclops Christianus; or, The Supposed Antiquity of Stonehenge* (1849).

Wordsworth's Traveller, then, by crossing Sarum's Plain to reach the shelter of Stonehenge was also trekking between two historic sites that had recently moved to the centre of the parliamentary reform debate: Old Sarum, the only borough constituency enfranchised in poverty due to depopulation, radical symbol of the extreme inequalities in constituency-distribution that made it possible for just Members of Parliament and/or their nominators' interests to be represented in the House of Commons; and, the original location of the direct democratic Anglo-Saxon Mycelgemot, legal precedent for an assembly elected by all men that would be capable of compelling the House of Commons (at least) to reform itself. The Traveller is a male non-elector transitioning from (a) the superstitious belief that he already enjoyed - according to Wordsworth's paraphrase of Watson - "as great a portion of liberty and equality as is consistent with civil society", that the House of

[62] Pinkerton, *Dissertation*, p. 140. See James Sibbald, *Chronicle of Scottish Poetry*, 4 vols. (Edinburgh: For the Author, 1802), IV, pp. i-lxii; John Jamieson, *An Etymological Dictionary of the Scottish Language*, 2 vols. (Edinburgh: For W. Creech, A. Constable, W. Blackwood, Longman, Hurst, Rees, and Orme, T. Cadell and W. Davies, H. D. Symonds, 1808), I, 1-46.
[63] [Walter Scott], '*Annals of the Caledonians, Picts, and Scots; and of Strathclyde, Cumberland, Galloway, and Murray*', *Quarterly Review*, July 1829, pp. 120-62 (p. 152).

Commons now represents his interests, to (b) understanding the need for radical parliamentary reform to restore his original elective rights, his ability to hold his representatives to account.

It is no coincidence that Wordsworth first wanted to entitle his poem "A night on Salisbury plain, were it not so insufferably awkward".[64] Book I of Edmund Spenser's "continued Allegory, or darke conceit" of sixteenth-century religious life, *The Faerie Queene* (1590-1596), tells of George, the Redcrosse Knight, who, with Una and "a Dwarfe", journeys to kill a "Dragon horrible and stearne".[65] All three characters begin Canto I, like Wordsworth's Traveller, "on the plaine"; when "an hideous storme of raine | Did poure", they are "enforst to seeke some couert" in a nearby grove (I. 1, 6, 7). But, as soon as the storm passes, George, Una, and the Dwarf lose sight of "that path, which first was showne" and "wander too and fro in wayes vnknowne" until they encounter "*Errou*[*r*] […] | A monster vile" and her children (I. 10, 13). In this way, Spenser represented an elect protestant (George), supported by Truth (Una) and Reason (the Dwarf), asked to lay bare the untruths of Roman Catholicism (the Dragon); in the grove, he faces one of that religion's many incarnations (Error). The Traveller in 'Salisbury Plain' faces an equivalent "monster vile" on his journey: a bodiless "voice […] from beneath" Sarum's Plain. It warns:

> Oh from that mountain-pile avert thy face
> Whate'er betide at this tremendous hour.
> […]
> Though mixed with flame rush down the crazing shower
> And o'er thy naked bed the thunder roll
> Fly (ll. 82-88, 100).

[64] *Letters*, I, 136 (7 November 1794).
[65] 'A Letter of the Authors to Sir Walter Raleigh', in *The Poetical Works of Edmund Spenser*, ed. by J. C. Smith and Ernest de Selincourt, 3 vols. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1909-10), III: *Spenser's* Faerie Queene: *Part 2, Books IV-VII*, ed. by J. C. Smith (1909), pp. 485-87 (p. 485); *The Faerie Queene*, in *Edmund Spenser*, ed. by Smith and de Selincourt, II: *Spenser's* Faerie Queene*: Part 1, Books I-III*, ed. by J. C. Smith (1909), pp. 2-518 (I. 3, 6).

No matter how desperately he needs shelter, the Traveller must not go to Stonehenge. Just as Error prefigures the Dragon in *The Faerie Queene*, so Wordsworth's Voice - of the counter-revolutionary movement to put off would-be radical parliamentary reformers - prefigures what the non-elector must battle when he achieves radical enlightenment.

Effective collaboration between the Society for Constitutional Information, London Corresponding Society, and their provincial counterparts resulted in the extensive circulation of radical publications, particularly Paine's *Rights of Man*. The rapid growth in their membership - the Sheffield Society for Constitutional Information, for example, had gained two thousand subscribers by 19 March 1792 - alarmed the Ministry.[66] A Royal Proclamation requiring the people "to guard against […] and discourage" and the magistracy to "vigorously" prosecute the "authors and printers […] and all others who shall disperse" "wicked and seditious writings" - indeed, "all proceedings" - that "tend[ed] to excite tumult and disorder" by sowing "disconten[t]" respecting Britain's "laws and happy constitution of government" was published on 21 May 1792.[67] By September, there had been 382 loyal addresses to the King, submitted by electors and Members of Parliament at county and town meetings. However, only limited action was taken until France's National Convention decreed (a) to "grant fraternity and aid to all peoples who wish[ed] to recover their liberty" (19 November) and (b) to "suppres[s] all established authorities" and "privileges", enforce popular "sovereignty[,] […] liberty and equality" and republican government, and "enemy […] anyone who, refusing liberty and equality, or renouncing them, might wish to preserve, recall, or treat with the

[66] See Hardy, p. 7n.
[67] George III, 'Proclamation for the Preventing of Tumultuous Meetings and Seditious Writings, May 21', *New Annual Register*, January 1792, pp, 52-53.

prince and the privileged castes" in occupied territories (15 December).[68] Radical parliamentary reformers started to look capable of forcibly establishing a republic with French military support.

On 20 November, John Reeves founded a London-based Association for Preserving Liberty and Property Against Republicans and Levellers, and, four days later, urged all "good men" to "similar[ly]" associate "in their different neighbourhoods", to protect the constitution "by discovering and bringing to justice not only the authors and printers" of "seditious publications" - be they "newspapers or pamphlets, or the invitations to club meetings" - but "those who keep them in their shops, […] hawk them in the streets for sale", or "who […] are employed in circulating them from house to house in any manner whatever". However, the national network of between 1000 and 1218 Loyal Associations founded before February 1793 also sought to actively "undeceive those poor people who have been misled by the infusion of opinions dangerous to their own welfare, and that of the State" by maximising the appeal of and access to counter-revolutionary propaganda.[69] The popular media used ranged from advertisement space in Treasury-sponsored newspapers, the *Sun* (1792-1876) and *True Briton* (1793-1804), to pamphlets, graphic prints, and public executions of Paine effigies; in every case it sought, in Mark Philp's words, "to anathematise an imagined radical project and to

[68] Edward Royle, *Revolutionary Britannia? Reflections on the Threat of Revolution in Britain, 1789-1848* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000), p. 155; 'The First Propagandist Decree, 19 November, 1792', in *A Documentary Survey of the French Revolution*, ed. by John Hall Stewart (New York: Macmillan, [1951]), p. 381; 'The Second Propagandist Decree, 15 December, 1792', in *Documentary Survey*, ed. by Stewart, pp. 381-83 (pp. 382-83).
[69] J. Moore, 'Association for Preserving Liberty and Property Against Republicans and Levellers. At a Meeting of Gentlemen at the Crown and Anchor Tavern, Nov. 24, 1792. John Reeves, Esq. in the Chair', *The Times*, 26 November 1792, p. 1. For the number of associations, see Robert R. Dozier, *For King, Constitution, and Country: The English Loyalists and the French Revolution* (Lexington: University of Kentucky, [1983]), pp. 61-62

make loyalism the hegemonic performance".[70] The people were, first, made to recognise the threat that radical parliamentary reform presented to the constitution: as Pitt argued in response to the Society of the Friends of the People's May 1793 petition, if the natural right of every man to participate in government is conceded, and the

> principle […] carried to its utmost extent, it goes to subvert the Peerage, and to depose the King, and, in fine, to extinguish every hereditary distinction, and every privileged order, and to establish that system of equalising anarchy announced in the code of French Legislation, and attested in the blood of the massacres at Paris.[71]

Such parliamentary reform was not designed to restore the mixed constitution, but as a stepping-stone towards legally instituting an absolute democracy. The people should, therefore, support appropriate counter-revolutionary action to contain this threat.

Loyal Association commissions juxtaposed radical reformers' perspective upon events in France (its Republic is worthy of emulation) and privileged access to the 'truth' (France is in a state of anarchy); they insisted that the British status quo is always preferable to French anarchy. This strategy, reproduced by Wordsworth's Voice, is perhaps most effectively exemplified by three graphic prints produced by Thomas Rowlandson during the winter of 1792-93. In the first, *The Contrast 1792* (Figure 4), the image of a violent maenad, her thyrsus impaling a human head, is ironically captioned 'French Liberty' and contrasted with stately Britannia, who bears the Magna Carta and scales of justice and oversees the success of British trade.

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[70] Mark Philp, *Reforming Ideas in Britain: Politics and Language in the Shadow of the French Revolution, 1789-1815* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), p. 80. See Arthur Aspinall, *Politics and the Press, c. 1780-1850* (London: Home and Van Thal, 1949), pp. 68-69; Frank O'Gorman, 'The Paine Burnings of 1792-1793', *Past and Present*, 193 (2006), 111-55 (p. 145).
[71] *Speeches of the Right Honourable Wm. Pitt, and the Right Honourable Charles James Fox, on Mr. Grey's Motion for a Reform in Parliament, May 7, 1793* (London: J. Debrett, [1793]), pp. 26-27.

Figure 4: Thomas Rowlandson, *The Contrast 1792, c.* December 1792 print, British Museum

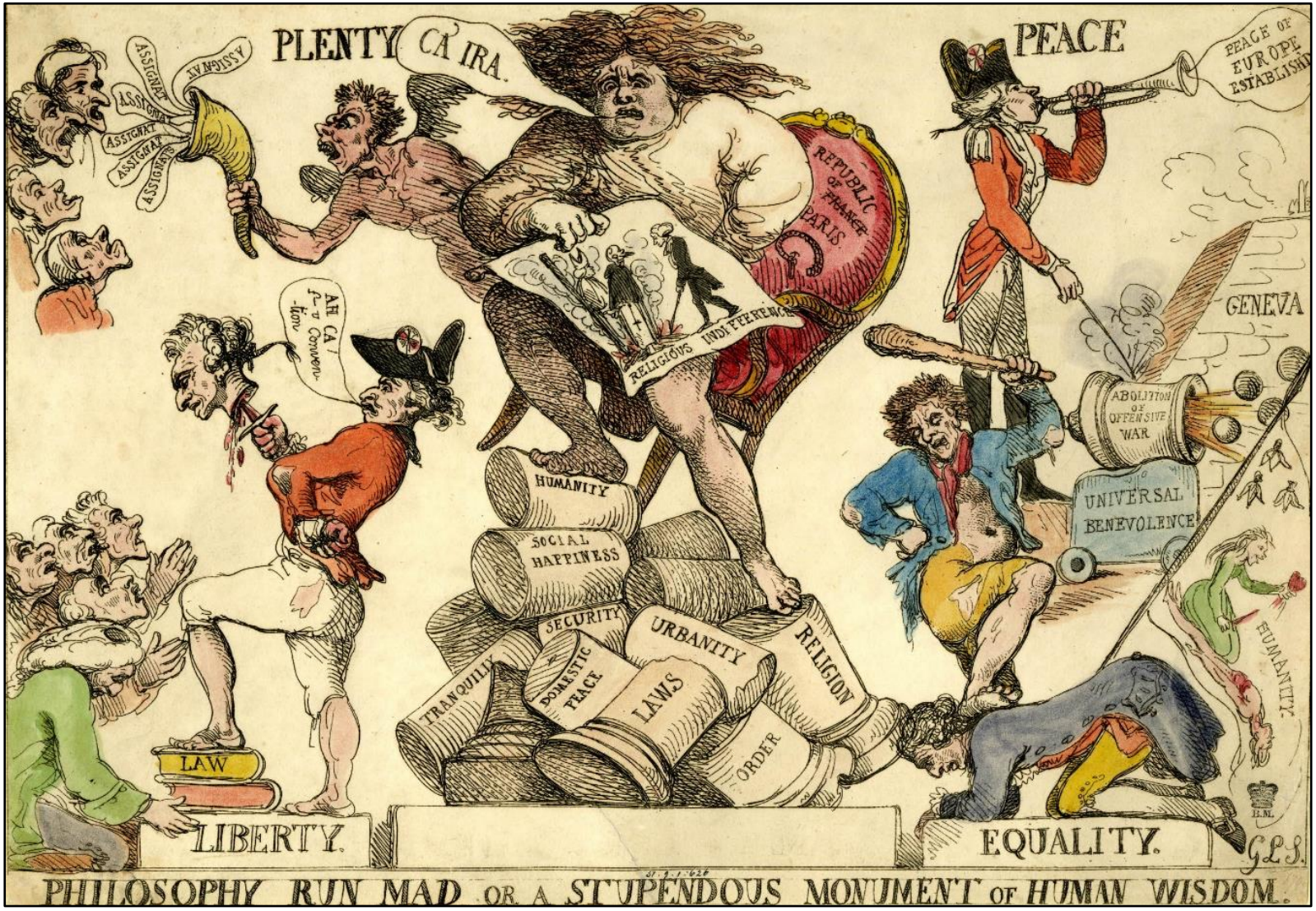

Figure 5: Thomas Rowlandson, *Philosophy Run Mad; or, A Stupendous Monument of Human Wisdom*, *c*. December 1792, print, British Museum

Figure 6: Thomas Rowlandson, *Reform Advised, Reform Begun, Reform Compleat*, 8 January 1793, print, British Museum

Not only does the subtitle of *Philosophy Run Mad* (Figure 5), *A Stupendous Monument of Human Wisdom*, derive from Charles James Fox's description of the French Constitution in 1791, we find other words familiar from French revolutionary discourse - "Liberty" and "Equality" - misapplied to images of violence. The final example, *Reform Advised, Reform Begun, Reform Compleat* (Figure 6), on the other hand, presents the three stages by which John Bull, "fat" and "bless[ing]" the "effects of a good constitution", is tricked into effecting radical parliamentary reforms that, ultimately, leave him legless, stamped upon, and branded.

Wordsworth's Voice, using a similar strategy, goes on to explain why the Traveller should heed its warning: at Stonehenge,

> 'the fiends their prey unwares devour
> Or grinning, on […] endless tortures scowl
> Till very madness seem a mercy to thy soul.
>
> 'For oft at dead of night, when dreadful fire
> Reveals that powerful circle's reddening stones,
> 'Mid priests and spectres grim and idols dire,
> Far heard the great flame utters human moans,
> Then all is hushed: again the desert groans,
> A dismal light its farthest bounds illumes,
> While warrior spectres of gigantic bones,
> Forth-issuing from a thousand rifted tombs,
> Wheel on their fiery steeds amid the infernal glooms' (ll. 88-99).

If he proceeds, the Traveller will be "torture[d]" - sacrificed - and "devour[ed]" by demons; this act will summon the bodies of fallen "warriors" from "a thousand rifted tombs".

The idea that human sacrifice and cannibalism formed part of Druidism had a long history. In Julius Caesar's *Commentarii de Bello Gallico* ('Commentaries on the Gallic War', 58-49 BCE), a propagandist history of Roman imperial expansion, 58-50 BCE, invested in presenting potential acquisitions as worthy of inclusion, but in need of civilising, Druid priests "ma[d]e no scruple to sacrifice Men" while

"presid[ing] in matters of Religion" and administering justice in "consecrated Place[s]":

> some prepare huge Colossus's [*sic*] of […] Twigs, into which they put Men alive, and setting fire to them, those within expire amidst the Flames. They prefer for Victims such as have been convicted of Theft, Robbery, or other Crimes; believing them the most acceptable to the Gods: but when real Criminals are wanting, the innocent are often made to suffer.[72]

To this account, later Roman writings, Strabo's *Geographica* ('Geography', 7 BCE) and *Naturalis Historia* ('Natural History', 77-79), by Pliny the Elder, added charges of cannibalism. Eighteenth-century historiography of the role of Druids within Celtic society invariably engaged with these sources;[73] indeed, Wordsworth would list two under the heading 'Druids' in DC MS. 12, his common-place book, used to draft 'The Borderers' between 1796 and 1797.[74] Aubrey's identification of Stonehenge as the principal "consecrated Place" of the British Druids, popularised in 'A Specimen of the Critical History of the Celtic Religion and Learning' (1726), by John Toland, and William Stukeley's *Stonehenge: A Temple Restor'd to the British Druids* (1740), made this site a focus for imagining Druid religio-political practices during the eighteenth-century.

However, the demons' druidic performance is superimposed onto a legendary backdrop. Stonehenge is significant within 'The Matter of Britain', a legendary history of the period between the Romans' departure from and the Anglo-Saxon

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[72] *The Commentaries of Caesar*, trans. by William Duncan, 2 vols. (London: J. and R. Tonson, S. Draper, and R. and J. Dodsley, 1755), I, VI: 187, 189.
[73] Most recently John Smith, *Galic Antiquities* (London and Edinburgh: For T. Cadell and C. Elliot, 1780); Edward Ledwich, 'A Dissertation on the Religion of the Druids', *Archaeologia*, 7 (1784), 303-22 (p. 310); *A Description of Stonehenge, Abiry, &c. in Wiltshire* (Salisbury [and London]: B. C. Collins and S. Crowder, [1788]); Charles Ashburton, *A New and Complete History of England, From the First Settlement of Brutus ... To the Year 1793* (London: W. and J. Stratford, [1791-94]); Thomas Maurice, *Indian Antiquities*, 7 vols. (London: n. pub. and H. L. Galabin, 1793-1800), VI (1796), 128; Jacob Des Moulins, *Antiqua Restaurata* (London: For the Author, 1794).
[74] 'Salisbury Plain', l. 424n.

Conquest of Britain (driving the Romano-Celts into Wales), influentially codified in Anglo-Norman prose chronicler Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia Regum Britanniae* ('History of the Kings of Britain', c. 1136). Anglo-Saxon mercenaries, under the leadership of Hengist, summoned the Romano-Celtic King, Vortigern, attended by "around four hundred and sixty [of his] barons and earls", to broker peace upon this site; however, Hengist ordered each of his companions to carry "a long knife hidden in his boot" and, "on hearing the signal", to "grab" and "kill" the unarmed Britons.[75] Vortigern ceded "his cities and castles in return for his life" and retreated into Wales; there, he was pursued and killed by Aurelius Ambrosius, the son of Constantinus, from whom Vortigern had usurped the Romano-Celtic throne (VI. 105). Ambrosius then routed the Anglo-Saxons at the Battle of Guoloph before his army was redeployed to move the Giants' Ring - of magic, healing stones, removed "from the farthest shores of Africa" to Killaraus by giants "long ago" - onto Salisbury Plain (VIII. 129). At Ambrosius' coronation, to which he "summon[ed] the clergy and people", Merlin positioned the megaliths around the fallen chiefs' "burial-ground" (VIII. 130).[76] The decisive defeat of Vortigern's Celts was succeeded by a restoration of Romano-Celtic rule under Ambrosius; the raising of Stonehenge symbolically replaced the action known to Welsh historiography as the Anglo-Saxon Brad y Cyllyll Hirion ('Treachery of the Long Knives'). This sequence of events prefigures many other confrontations between the Anglo-Saxons and Romano-Celts during the legendary history. Uther re-establishes authority when the Anglo-Saxons, able to retain the foothold in Britain they had gained by extorting Vortigern, later poison Ambrosius and rebel; Arthur must do the same when Uther is also poisoned

[75] Geoffrey of Monmouth, *The History of the Kings of Britain*, trans. by Neil Wright, ed. by Michael D. Reeve, Arthurian Studies, 69 (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2007), VI. 104.
[76] Monmouth's text variously describes the burying place as inside (VIII. 127) or "beside the monastery which abbot Ambrius founded long ago" (VI. 104).

by Anglo-Saxon insurgents many years later. Its importance is signalled by the fact that Ambrosius, Uther, Arthur - had he not departed from the text "mortally wounded", "hand[ing] […] over Britain's crown to his relative" - and (that relative) Constantinus II were afterwards also buried upon this site (XI. 178). Wordsworth's Voice constructs what seems to be a related sequence in which the Druid ceremony summons the bodies of warriors from "a thousand rifted tombs" upon this site (l. 98). As Vortigern's chiefs symbolically 'rose again' as the Romano-Celts who routed the Anglo-Saxons under Ambrosius, prefiguring subsequent confrontations between foreign aggressors and the feted defenders of ancient Britain, so they now literally rise again from their "tombs" to form a chilling and unnatural military force.

Why, then, does the Voice not represent the 'Treachery' - defining moment of Anglo-Saxon oppression - but a druidic massacre? From the second half of the eighteenth century, two London Welsh societies, of Cymmrodorion ('Aborigines') (1751-87) and of Gwyneddigion ('the Men of Gwynedd') (1770-1843), undertook to preserve Wales' cultural history - including 'The Matter of Britain', but particularly as recorded in 'bardic' writing on the subject of Druidism - and resuscitate its language and Gorseddau ('Assemblies of the Bards'). Edward Williams, only exposed for forging medieval lyrics and epics and inventing bardo-druidic practices after 1896, was a key figure in this movement.[77] Wordsworth would have encountered Williams's claim to be one of only two "legitimate descendants of the so-long-celebrated *Ancient British Bards*", conversant in ancient poetic laws unknown to "modern book-taught poets", in the November 1789 edition of the

[77] Williams later actually dismissed Monmouth's version of events in the *Historia* as a "ridiculously fabulous history", *The Correspondence of Iolo Morganwg*, ed. by Geraint H. Jenkins, Ffion Mair Jones, and David Ceri Jones, 3 vols. (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2007), II: *1797-1809*, p. 636 (9 November 1804).

Gentleman's Magazine.[78] The two men also had at least one common acquaintance during the early 1790s: Joseph Johnson; Damian Walford Davies speculates that Wordsworth and Williams might have met in Johnson's bookshop or home.[79] It was with Williams's "communications and assistance" that William Owen wrote the 'Sketch of British Bardism' that prefaced his translation of *The Heroic Elegies and Other Pieces* (1792) by Llywarç Hen.[80] Here, Williams argued that Bardism was predicated upon: "the doctrine of *Universal Peace*"; "free investigation of all matters contributing to the attainment of truth"; "the perfect equality of its members, and of three branches, whereof it consisted, one with another"; public accountability, all Gorseddau "were held in the open air, on a conspicuous place, whilst the sun was above the horizon"; "every thing not manufactured by art, [being] the common property of all"; and, importantly, a Druid theology "probab[ly]" derived from "the patriarchal religion" (PREFACE. xxv-xxviii, lv). He attributed Bardism's decline to a "stream of [Catholic] idolatry, following the course of the *Roman* arms" (PREFACE. xxxii). Williams advanced "a template - indeed, a constitution - for a utopian republic", pitted against an *ancien régime* characterised, in republican discourse, by 'priest-craft'.[81] Wordsworth was living in London when the third of four highly-publicised modern Gorseddau took place within (not on) a stone circle at Primrose Hill on 21 December 1792. Each included the ceremonial sheathing of a sword and pacifist pledges, encoding opposition to war against revolutionary France, and poetry recitation, in this case David Samwell's regicidal ode (in English) to Rhitta Gawr, "a

[78] J. D. [Iolo Morganwg], 'Letter to the Editor', *Gentleman's Magazine,* November 1789, pp. 976-77 (p. 976); Wu, p. 42.
[79] Damian Walford Davies, '"At Defiance": Iolo, Godwin, Coleridge, Wordsworth', in *A Rattleskull Genius: The Many Faces of Iolo Morganwg*, ed. by Geraint H. Jenkins (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2005; repr. 2009), pp. 147-72 (p. 161).
[80] Llywarç Hen, *The Heroic Elegies and Other Pieces*, trans. and ed. by William Owen (London: For J. Owen and E. Williams, 1792), PREFACE. lxiin.
[81] Davies, *Presences that Disturb*, p. 162.

famous Chief of the Antient Britons, who exterminated so many despots, that he made himself a robe of their beards".[82] In 'Salisbury Plain', however, the Druids do not appear as part of an advanced free bardocracy, but in line with Roman propaganda; the people do not imagine a working republic, but revolutionary outrages. Pre-civilised, pagan ceremonies were also, by this time, a familiar vehicle for engaging with French revolutionary violence. Take, for example, two graphic prints by William Dent, 'Revolution Anniversary; or, Patriotic Incantations' (12 July 1791) and 'View of Modern France; or, The End of a Country Without a Constitution' (31 January 1793), or James Sayers' 'John Bull's Sacrifice to Janus' (17 March 1794) (see Figures 7-9). The counter-revolutionary movement warns the people away from a form of government that will not only fail to redress their grievances, it will put them in danger.

The Traveller is mystified - and therefore "mocked" - by the Voice; he experiences its warning as he would "a hideous dream", ironically differentiable from reality only after its dreamer awakens (l. 101). However, Wordsworth also alludes, here, to Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar* ([1599]): the "*Interim*"

> betweene the acting of a dreadfull thing
> And the first motion […] is
> Like a *Phantasma,* or a hideous Dreame.[83]

Brutus has been "whet […] against Caesar" by Cassius (II. 1. 61). How? He, first, reinforces Brutus's fear that Caesar's nature will change and "Remorse" ultimately "dis-ioyne[s] | […] from Power" should "the People | Choose [him] […] for their King" (II. 2. 18-19; II. 1. 81-82). Cassius also claims - and later plants "writings",

[82] 'Domestic Occurrences', *Gentleman's Magazine*, October 1792, pp. 956-59 (p. 957).
[83] *Julius Caesar*, in *Shakespeare*, ed. by Taylor, Jowett, Bourus, and others, II, 858-922 (I. 5. 16-17), II, 2941-97 (II. 1. 63-65).

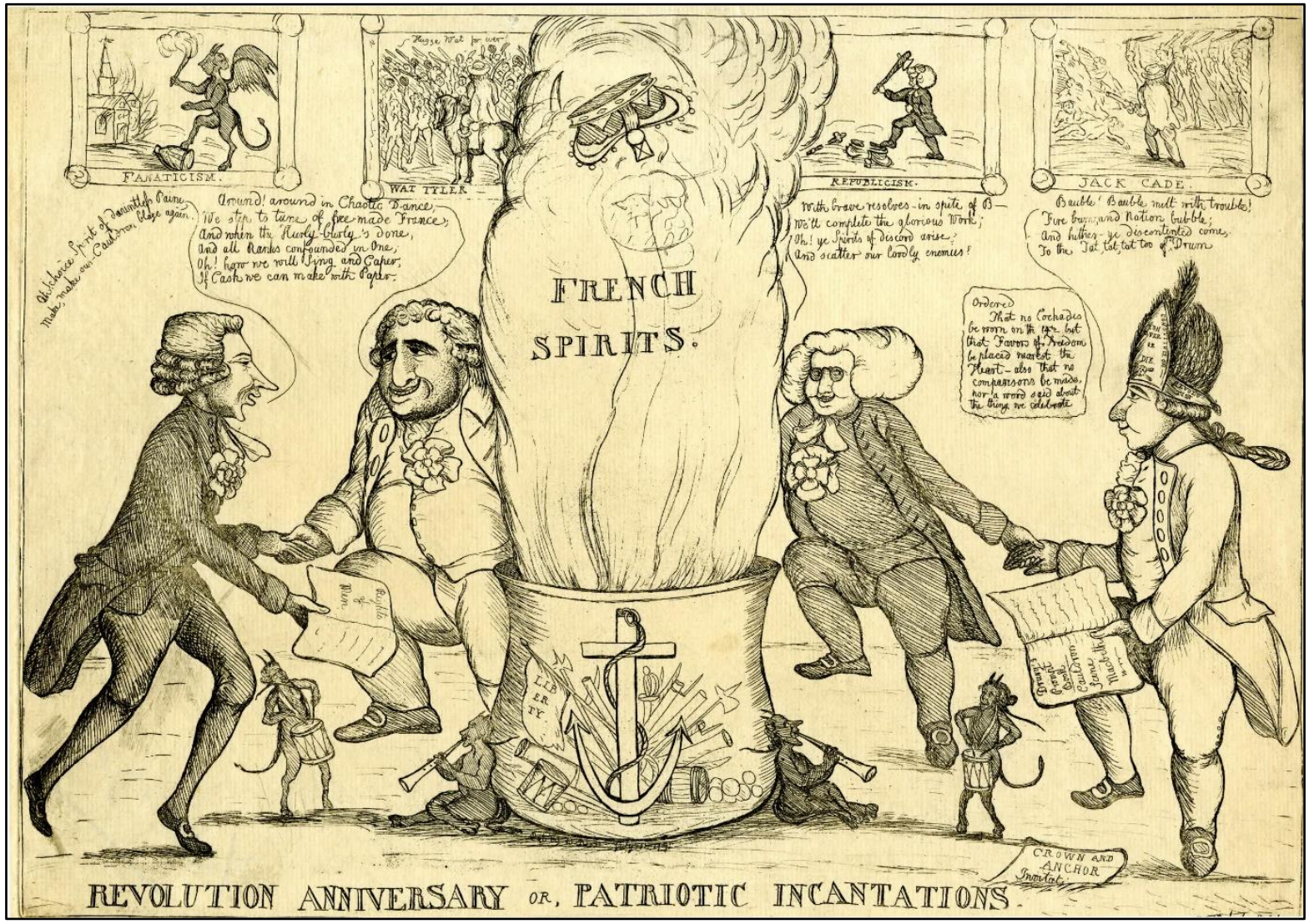

Figure 7: William Dent, *Revolution Anniversary; or, Patriotic Incantations*, 12 July 1791, print, British Museum

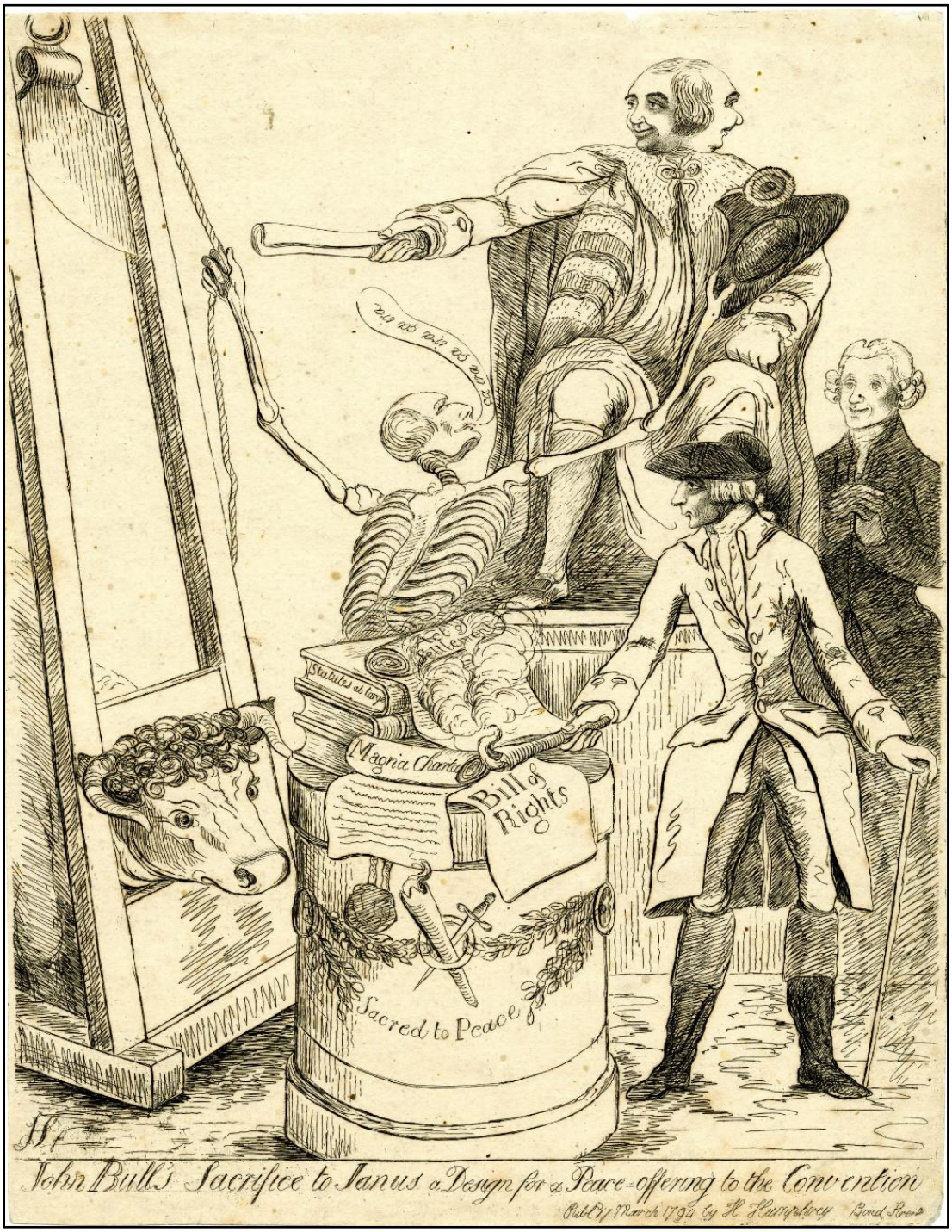

Figure 8: James Sayers, *John Bull's Sacrifice to Janus; A Design for a Peace-Offering to the Convention*, 17 March 1794, print, British Museum

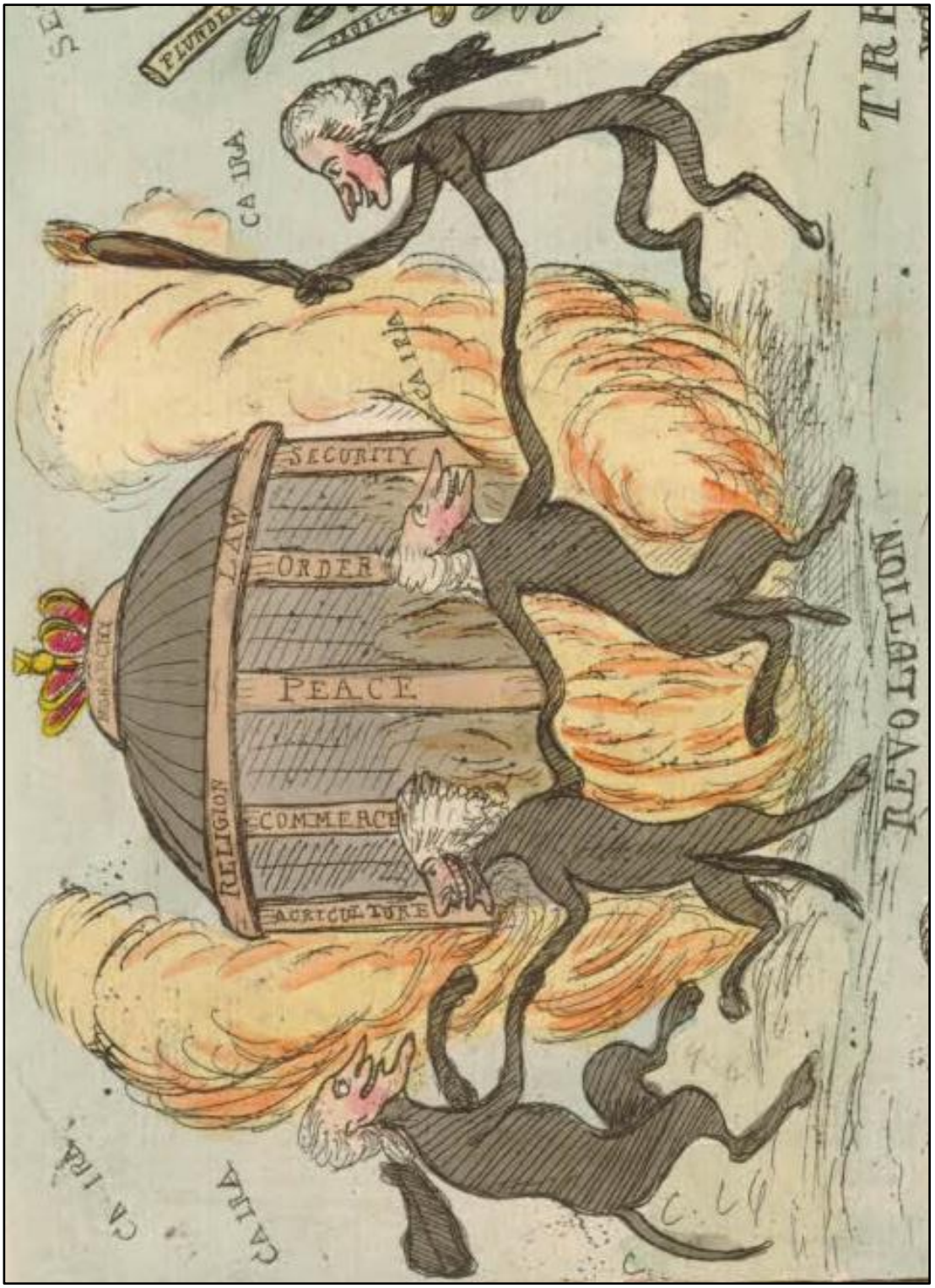

Figure 9: Detail from William Dent, *View of Modern France; or, The End of a Country Without a Constitution*, 31 January 1793, print, British Museum

scrawled "in seuerall Hands […] | As if [by] […] seuerall Citizens", at Brutus's windows to prove - it is to Brutus that "many of the best respect in Rome" look to frustrate Caesar's ambition (I. 2. 305-07, 61). The "dreadfull thing" at which they conspire is Caesar's assassination in the Roman Senate House on the Ides of March.

Julius Caesar became popular, 1688-1751, as a "morally uncomplicated contest between virtuous republicanism and arbitrary power"; it lionised Brutus, identified with a Whig model of democratic liberty, for limiting the monarchical tyranny of Caesar - or, James II.[84] However, it was only produced twenty-three times in Britain from 1751, when leading actor James Quin retired, until John Philip Kemble's Covent Garden revival on 29 February 1812;[85] this was, in part, because of David Garrick's "failure to perform it" and "lack of a sufficient number of actors of suitable calibre to undertake it without him", but, chiefly, because, like Joseph Addison's *Cato* (1713), it was used in America to encode legal resistance to George III in the wake of the Stamp Act Protests, 1765-66.[86] The *Pennsylvania Journal* bill for an American Company production at the Southwark Theatre in Philadelphia on 1 June 1770, for example, heralded "renowned patriot" Brutus's "noble struggles for Liberty" and the "necessity of [Caesar's] […] death, to give Freedom to the Roman People".[87] Wordsworth would, moreover, have encountered the Société des Amis de la Constitution's self-identification as "Brutuses" to the monarchical Caesars of *ancien régime* France and its neighbouring states in Blois; "go and beat down the tyrants, teach them that they are Caesars and you are Brutuses!" was exclaimed twice

[84] Thomas Keymer, 'Shakespeare in the Novel', in *Shakespeare in the Eighteenth Century*, ed. by Fiona Ritchie and Peter Sabor (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), pp. 118-40 (p. 121).
[85] See 'Chronological Handlist of Performances' in John Ripley, Julius Caesar *on Stage in England and America, 1599-1973* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), pp. 287-311.
[86] Ripley, p. 24.
[87] '*Julius Caesar*', *Pennsylvania Journal*, 31 May 1770, no page number, cited in Ripley, p. 100.

to encourage National Guard volunteers at a 5 August 1792 meeting.[88] This was re-invoked as recently as 13 July 1793, when Girondin Charlotte Corday stabbed Jean-Paul Marat, a Montagnard journalist and politician, assured of "repose in the Elysian fields[,] with Brutus", and other "Patriots who know how to die for their country".[89] Julius Caesar's history became a staple intertext of contemporary radical reform rhetoric in Britain; John Barrell, for example, draws attention to patterns of use in *The Jockey Club* (1792) by Charles Pigott, and three works of John Wolcot's *annus mirabilis*: *Liberty's Last Squeak* (1795), *The Convention Bill* (1795), and *The Royal Tour* (1795).[90] Its application to French revolutionary action, registered in Isaac Cruikshank's 'Sedition, Levelling and Plundering' (Figure 10), where "Assassination" precedes "Brutus" on two of the fourteen named volumes stacked behind Joseph Priestley, was made clear by Louis XVI's execution, after which Voltaire's translation of *Julius Caesar*, Acts I, II, and (Scene 1 in) III, *La Mort de César* (1731), was revived. Wordsworth's counter-revolutionary Voice surely confronts the people with a reality in which they have been "whet […] against" the King by manipulative radical reformers; they are moving, then, towards a revolutionary regicide.

In Shakespeare's play, Brutus goes on to further describe the "*Interim*"

> Betweene the acting of a dreadfull thing
> And the first motion, […]
> The *Genius*, and the mortall Instruments
> Are then in councell; and the state of man,
> Like to a little Kingdome, suffers then
> The nature of an Insurrection (II. 1. 66-69).

Contemporary commentators interpreted these lines to mean that in Brutus's mental "councell", "mortall Instruments" - "bodily […] passions, such as, envy, pride,

[88] Bibliothèque Abbé-Grégoire, MS 677, fol. 159, cited in Roe, *Radical Years*, p. 53.
[89] 'Continent of Europe', *European Magazine and London Review*, August 1793, pp. 153-56 (p. 154).
[90] See Barrell, *Imagining the King's Death*, pp. 652-53.

Figure 10: Isaac Cruikshank, *Sedition, Levelling, and Plundering; or, The Pretended Friends of the People in Council*, 15 November 1792, print, British Museum

malice, and ambition", that "prompt […] and push" him to butcher Caesar - vie with his dissuading rational "*Genius*".[91] Meanwhile, the "little Kingdome" that "councell" governs does not "ris[e] […] in arms or open[ly] resist […] authority", but endures "*the nature of* an Insurrection", a suspension of all established authority and the outbreak of physical disorder - Brutus's insomnia (italics mine).[92] In Wordsworth's poem, the counter-revolutionary movement positions the people as Brutus *choosing* to recognise only a disinterested "Sacrifice" to the Republic and act.[93] How far will they follow in Brutus's footsteps? Surely, they will turn off course before deluding themselves into committing regicide?

In the fictional narrative, the Traveller believes the Voice's warning. He feels compelled to take "flight unwilled" away from Stonehenge - "he fled" "as if his terror dogged his road" - towards an alternative encounter with the Voice (ll. 119, 127). Earlier, the Traveller had recognised and "hied" to shelter inside the "hoary and naked" walls of Stonehenge (ll. 80, 79); he now looks to the "loose walls" of a ruined, medieval "[ho]spital", built as overnight accommodation for "belated" travellers, for "rest till Morn her eye unclose" (ll. 123, 146, 132). "Entering in, his hair in horror r[i]se[s] | To hear a voice that seemed to mourn in sorrow's throws", a second Voice "as from a tomb" (ll. 134-35, 81). This, however, is "a human voice", belonging to the Female Wanderer, who "at dusk […] hither turned | And found a comfortless half-sheltered bed"; she spoke not to avert the Traveller, but to welcome him inside (ll. 137-39).

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[91] Zachary Grey, *Critical, Historical, and Explanatory Notes on Shakespeare, with Emendations of the Text and Metre*, 2 vols. (London: Zachary Grey, 1754), II, 175.
[92] 'Insurrection, n.', in *Oxford English Dictionary Online* <https://www.oed.com> [accessed 15 April 2015]
[93] *Julius Caesar*, II. 1. 166.

The Female Wanderer goes on to relay an anecdote, the outlook of "a swain who [wandered] far astray" upon Sarum's Plain:

> A night-fire […]
> Reveals the desert and with dismal red
> Clothes the black bodies of encircling crowds.
> It is the sacrificial altar fed
> With living men (ll. 173, 181-85).

She indirectly describes a second performance of druidic human sacrifice and cannibalism at Stonehenge. "Crowd[ed]" "bodies", "red" and "black" like fire and char, physically confine - within the tightening onomatopoeic helix of "encircling" - "living" victims; this congregation, undifferentiated from officiating priests, becomes "the sacrificial altar". However, the penultimate line - not only enjambed, but, three of its iambs gathered into a ruche using "sacrificial altar" adjacent to four monosyllables, visibly shorter - behaves as though end-stopped; the "sacrificial altar" is, therefore, also being "fed" that congregation. This community's act of sacrifice is constructed as something which endangers that community: each individual is potentially another living victim, nobody is immune. Then,

> the dead
> Thrilled in their yawning tombs their helms uprear;
> The sword that slept beneath the warriour's head
> Thunders in fiery air: red arms appear
> Uplifted thro' the gloom and shake the rattling spear (ll. 185-89).

The Druids' act again chillingly re-mobilises the legendary defenders of ancient Britain from the "tombs" of Vortigern's conquered Celts to "thwart […] oft the traveller's way" (l. 176).

The Female Wanderer's "human voice" now imaginatively escorts the Traveller upon an alternative last leg of his journey, towards a version of Stonehenge that will not endanger him. The "swain" next witnessed, "throned on that dread circle's summit gray",

> Long bearded forms with wands uplifted shew
> To vast assemblies, while each breath of night
> Is hushed, the living fires that bright and slow
> Rounding th'aetherial field in order go.
> Then as they trace with awe their various files
> All figured on the mystic plain below,
> Still prelude of sweet sounds the moon beguiles
> And charmed for many a league the hoary desart smiles (ll. 173, 178, 191-98).

These forms' "long beard[s]", "wands", and attention to "th'aetherial field" identify them as Druids. As Toland wrote in 1726, the

> Wand […] which every Druid carry'd in his hand, [w]as one of the badges of his profession[.] […] They all wore short hair, while the rest of the natives had theirs very long: and, on the contrary, they wore long beards, while other people shav'd all theirs but the upper lip.[94]

The importance of astronomy to Druidic religious teaching is, on the other hand, well-documented within the historiography of their role within Celtic society; Caesar, for example, described how the Druids taught "many things relating to the Stars and their Motions, the Magnitude of the World and our Earth, the Nature of Things, and the Power and Prerogatives of the immortal Gods" in his *Commentarii* (VI. 188). The Traveller is encouraged to imagine Druid priests, separated from the assembled people because they stand upon trilithons, officiating at a ceremony in which they instruct a congregation in astronomy. The priests point their "wands" at the stars as they circle "th'aetherial field" to "shew" the assembled people; as those congregants reverentially "trace" (observe the lines of) each constellation, they also physically "trace" (copy) it, literally "figur[ing]" corresponding "figures" (shapes) "on the mystic plain below". That the priests mediate the divine constellations (God or Nature's image) to the congregation is emphasised by this synchronicity. The Traveller is now prepared to return to Sarum's Plain.

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[94] John Toland, 'A Specimen of the Critical History of the Celtic Religion and Learning', in *A Collection of Several Pieces*, 2 vols. (London: J. Peele, 1726), II, 2-183 (p. 21).

The frightened people, driven away from radical enlightenment, now re-encounter the counter-revolutionary movement's warning. Wordsworth once again alludes to *Julius Caesar*. In Act II, Scene II, Caesar is advised not to attend the Senate House on the Ides of March; Calpurnia, his wife, adds force to the priests' reading of an animal sacrifice by describing "most horrid [omens] […] seene by the Watch":

> Graues have yawn'd and yeelded vp their dead;
> Fierce fiery Warriours fight vpon the Clouds
> In Rankes and Squadrons, and right forme of War (II. 2. 16, 18-20).

In the Female Wanderer's ventriloquy, "the dead | Thrilled in their yawning tombs their helms uprear" and "the sword that slept beneath the warriour's head | Thunders in fiery air" (ll. 185-88); these verbal echoes briefly cast their speaker as Calpurnia, who relates omens that foretell Cassius' conspiracy to assassinate Caesar today - or, the radical reformers' conspiracy to commit revolutionary regicide. The people are then presented with a new vision, of the mixed constitution now in place: Edward Williams's Neo-Druids re-embodied as parliamentary representatives, who stand, like the chiefs in Pinkerton's reconstruction of the Mycelgemot, upon the trilithons of Stonehenge. They really mediate between the remaining (in David Williams's thesis) Witenagemot members and the King, who sit "within […] the circle", and "the people without the circle", assembled on the plain below.[95] However, as the "vast assemblies" physical response indicates, their interests correspond with those of the King and Witenagemot. The counter-revolutionary movement claims that radical reformers have misled the people: Britain's government institutions already take after their Anglo-Saxon original. Only after accepting this vision, and the need for things to stay as they are, can the people re-enter a state of political superstition.

[95] *Enquiry*, I, 414.

As “they pursu[e] | Their journey” across Sarum’s Plain, the Female Wanderer relays her own “sad tale” to the Traveller (ll. 350-51): At eighteen, she and her father - bankrupted by “cruel chance and wilful wrong” - were “turned out” of their Keswick cottage (ll. 255, 260). They found shelter with the Female Wanderer’s long-lost lover, later husband, in “a distant town” (l. 280); she goes on to bear this “youth” three children before her father’s death four years later (l. 271). When the family were reduced to hunger and unemployment by the outbreak of war, the Youth enlisted, and they travelled to “the western world” (l. 306). All but the Female Wanderer “perish[ed] in one remorseless year” “by sword | And scourge of fiery fever” and she re-boarded a British ship alone (ll. 320-22). She describes her sea-voyage and arrival into Britain; for three years she has wandered - “homeless”, “want[ing] food”, with “no earthly friend” - “round [her] native coast” and, now, Sarum’s Plain (ll. 386-88, 392). The Female Wanderer teaches the Traveller resignation to - never defiance in the face of - even the most traumatic experiences. He, meanwhile, sees the sun rise and a road that will, they hope, lead to “a smoking cottage”: “For you yon milkmaid bears her brimming load, | For you the board is piled with homely bread” (ll. 410, 417-20). The people, believing that their grievances will shortly be redressed, now not only accept, but “bless” and “to earth incline” in thanks for their “Oppress[ors’]” terms (ll. 436, 438, 440): they receive only a “scanty dole” because what little there is to go around “cannot [be] waste[d]” and must perform - “unrespited” - “inhuman toil” as their God-given lot (ll. 437, 439, 441).

The speaker’s commentary postulates a different reaction to the Voice’s warning: the Traveller “pursue[s] [his] march” towards Stonehenge (l. 541). He soon becomes aware that

> From huge wickers paled with circling fire
> No longer horrid shrieks and dying cries
> To ears of Daemon-Gods a human sacrifice

and, as before, "Treachery her sword no longer dyes | In the cold blood of Truce" at Stonehenge (ll. 425-29, 431). The Voice's grim forecast, of druidic human sacrifice and cannibalism - now directly recalling the "huge Colossus's [*sic*] of […] Twigs" filled with "Men alive" and set alight in Caesar's *Commentarii* - superimposed over the Anglo-Saxon's legendary Treachery of the Long Knives, was inaccurate; Stonehenge, unlike Sarum's Plain, will afford the Traveller shelter. For him, the Female Wanderer's Druid priests imagine themselves to be "like a thousand Gods"; they do not mediate divine constellations to the congregation, only create false idols to enthral: their "wands" direct the "living fires" "round […] th'aetherial field". The priests use "awe" to manipulate "vast assemblies" - "*their* various files" - into physically "trac[ing]" (copying) the made-up "figures" (shapes), just as an ongoing "prelude of sweet sounds" "*beguiles*" the moon (italics mine). This is, however, only a musical "prelude" to another, main theme. The lines "the moon beguiles | And charmed for many a league the hoary desart smiles" also operate independently; the priests thrall causes the moon to beguile and the plain itself to charm others, to draw them in. The Traveller is now able to see that there is no alternative to Stonehenge that can provide him with shelter, only something that will make him think that he is sheltered, while leaving him exposed.

In the first canto of *The Faerie Queene*, George vanquishes the beast, theological Error and her children, Roman Catholic propaganda, described - like her vomit, which was full of "gobbets raw", "bookes and papers" - as "deformed monsters, fowle, and blacke as inke" (I. 20, 22). When Wordsworth's people - "Heroes of Truth" - not frightened by the counter-revolutionary movement's

warning, continue forward towards radical political enlightenment, they "drag" "Foul Error's monster race | […] from their dens", to "start at the light with pain | And die" (ll. 545-47). The people expose inaccurate "still-born glimpses" of their republican future, unable to survive outside of political Error's womb-like dens (l. 432). They start to recognise that the parliamentary representatives are

> *throned* on that dread circle's summit gray
> Of mountains hung in air, their state unfold,
> And like a thousand Gods *mysterious* council hold (ll. 178-80; italics mine).

These would-be kings or gods turn inwards and hold unscrutinised "council[s]" among themselves. Britain's government institutions are in fact a corruption of their Anglo-Saxon original; parliamentary representatives do not mediate between the King-in-Witenagemot and the people, they use wands of office to manipulate the (really excluded) people into thinking that their grievances have been redressed.

The Traveller able to reach and find shelter at Stonehenge recognises that the "smoking cottage" and "piled" "board" are as yet unfulfilled promises. So too can the enlightened people spot political superstition at work: they are "at Oppression's portal *placed*", *kept* "abject, obscure, and brute" by their Oppressors (ll. 436, 440, 442; italics mine). They now know what they must do:

> uptear
> Th'Oppressor's dungeon from its deepest base;
> High o'er the towers of Pride undaunted rear
> Resistless in your might the herculean mace
> Of Reason;
> […]
> pursue your toils, till not a trace
> Be left on earth of Superstition's reign (ll. 541-48).

The people can constitutionally assert their will, themselves wield the ceremonial mace that symbolises the House of Commons' authority, and bring about parliamentary reform.

When Wordsworth described the process of popular political "enlighten[ment]" as a journey "walk[ed] in darkness" in his June 1794 letter to Mathews, he imagined the "inflam[ed] […] passions" or reason by which the Traveller would be moved as two different light-sources: "I would put into each man's hand a lantern to guide him and not have him […] set out upon his journey depending for illumination on abortive flashes of lightning, or the coruscations of transitory meteors" (I, 125). In 'Salisbury Plain's' fictional narrative, the Traveller is urged towards Stonehenge by such a storm; though, in this case, just

> Once did the lightning's pale abortive beam
> Disclose a naked guide-post's double head,
> Sole object where he stood had day its radiance spread,

and "no transient meteor burst upon his sight (ll. 106-08, 114). The "churlish storms relent" while the Female Wanderer recounts her alternative vision of Stonehenge (l. 199). Wordsworth therefore figured how effectively the counter-revolutionary movement would be able to intercept the process of radical enlightenment, dull the people's "passions", and return them to a state of political superstition. He did not fear, with Godwin, that an "inflam[ed]" people would violently enforce change ahead of time, resulting in the new form of government miscarrying or mob rule. By the Traveller escorted to Stonehenge by the light of a "lantern", Wordsworth figured the people capable of applying reason to - and therefore discrediting - the counter-revolutionary movement's warning.

In his 'Preface' to *Poems* (1815), Wordsworth re-stated (without acknowledging) Coleridge's distinction between 'fancy', the mind's capacity to represent and organise past sensory experience, and 'imagination', by which it can perform five actions: "individual image[s]" induce the imagination to remove or add to the

properties of an object, so that it "re-act[s] upon the [reader's] mind"; the imagination "modif[ies]" objects' properties when such images are "conj[oined]"; and, reflective of the "soul['s] […] almost divine powers", the imagination "shapes and *creates*" by fusing distinct objects into one object and "dissolving and separating [this] unity".[96] For Coleridge, the allegorical mode, defined in *The Statesman's Manual* (1816) as "a translation of abstract notions into a picture language", was more appropriate to 'fancy'; the 'imagination' turned to symbols, which "always partake […] of the Reality which [they] […] render […] intelligible".[97] As John Hodgson has argued, that Wordsworth went on to criticise the anthropomorphism characteristic of "Pagan religion" for "bond[ing]" classical writers to a "definite form" and classified allegories such as 'The Oak and the Broom' and 'The Waterfall and the Eglantine' as "Poems of the Fancy" in the following collection suggests he subscribed to the same distinction.[98] Spenser, however, was "a complex, intermediate case" for both poets.[99] In 1818 Coleridge lectured that "the great and prevailing character of Spenser's mind is fancy under the conditions of imagination, as an ever present but not always active power"; when "we are compelled to think of his agents as allegories", this power is inactive.[100] Wordsworth, on the other hand, celebrated Spenser for "creat[ing] persons out of abstractions" - humanising abstract concepts - and, "by a superior effort of genius, […] giv[ing] the universality and permanence of abstractions to his human beings, by means of attributes and emblems

[96] 'Preface' to *Poems* (1815), in *Prose Works*, ed. by Owen and Worthington Smyser, III, 26-39 (pp. 32, 33).
[97] Samuel Taylor Coleridge, 'The Statesman's Manual', in *Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, ed. by Coburn, Winer, and others, VI: *Lay Sermons*, ed. by R. J. White (1972), pp. 1-114 (p. 30).
[98] See John A. Hodgson, 'Poems of the Imagination, Allegories of the Imagination: Wordsworth's Preface of 1815 and the Redundancy of Imaginative Poetry', *Studies in Romanticism*, 27.2 (1988), 273-88 (p. 275). 'Preface' to *Poems* (1815), p. 34.
[99] Hodgson, p. 275.
[100] 'Lecture 3' (1818 Series), in *Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, ed. by Coburn, Winer, and others, V: *Lectures, 1808-1819 (On Literature II)*, ed. by R. A. Foakes (1988), pp. 89-105 (pp. 103, 105).

that belong to the highest moral truths and the purest sensations" - writing humans being dehumanised, abstracted, by a process of metonymic substitution.[101] In the end, 'Salisbury Plain' is Spenserian not because of its many references to the *Faerie Queene*, nor because both poems share a verse form, but because Wordsworth represented a human traveller being dehumanised, abstracted into the People, by his journey across an emblematic landscape.

3.2 Nature's "ministry | more palpable" in *Lyrical Ballads* (1800) and *The Prelude* (1799-1850)

In his 'Preface' to *Lyrical Ballads* (1800), Wordsworth argued that all writers "recollec[t] in tranquillity" their real-time emotional responses to subjects acting in ordinary, private life; they "contemplat[e] [it] till by a species of reaction the tranquillity gradually disappears, and an emotion, similar to that which was before the subject of contemplation, is gradually produced, and does itself actually exist in the mind" (p. 148). It is by way of this, "similar" emotion that writers grasp what of their subject to represent in writing. Earlier, Wordsworth stated that

> influxes of feeling are modified and directed by our thoughts, which are indeed the representatives of all our past feelings; […] by contemplating the relation of these general representatives to each other, we discover what is really important to men.

This imaginative process becomes predictable and, in time, gives way to automatic "habits of mind" (p. 126). Each "influx" of recollected emotion is "modified and directed" by what other, already-contemplated - and therefore only the simulacra or "representatives" of - "past feelings" reveal to be "really important to men"; it is figured as a bill debated, examined, and amended according to what popular representatives in a unicameral legislature reveal to be in the national interest. It is

[101] 'Preface' to *Poems* (1815), p. 35.

the quality of their simulacral "past feelings" or popular representatives that differentiates one 'type' of writer from another.

Poets, who, like Wordsworth, are "possessed of more than usual organic sensibility" - are more than usually, according to the definition of 'sensibility' found in the *Monthly Magazine*, "easily moved, and powerfully affected, by surrounding objects and passing events"[102] - elect only disinterested popular representatives; only such representatives can pass "the primary laws of our [human] nature" (p. 122). In other words, sensitive poets "nourish" or continually add to the simulacra of "feelings connected with important subjects" (p. 126). They understand that these are the feelings produced by observing subjects in "state[s] of vivid sensation" (p. 118). Such simulacra can pinpoint the "certain inherent and indestructible qualities of the [subject's] human mind", distilled from his basic nature when "certain powers in the great and permanent objects" - Natural forms - "act upon it" (p. 130). Wordsworth himself studied only "low and rustic" subjects, in whom the "inherent and indestructible [human] qualities" he identifies are free to develop in their pure, organic form, are "more forcibly communicated", and can "be more accurately contemplated". Rural life, built around "easily comprehended" and "durable" - timeless - agricultural labour, also "germinate[s] from" those "qualities"; moreover, in the countryside men "incorporate […] with the beautiful and permanent forms of [N]ature" (p. 124). All sensitive poets represent the "primary laws" or "inherent and indestructible [human] qualities" by "describ[ing] objects [*subjects*] and utter[ing] sentiments". The "sentiments" - or, "emotional thought[s]"[103] - will be "of such a nature and in such connection with each other" that the reader's "understanding […]

[102] 'Question: Ought Sensibility to be Cherished or Repressed?' *Monthly Magazine*, October 1796, pp. 706-709 (p. 706).
[103] 'Sentiment, n.', in *Oxford English Dictionary Online* <https://www.oed.com> [accessed 15 September 2019]

must necessarily be in some degree enlightened, his taste exalted, […] his affections ameliorated" and "the multiplicity and […] the quality of [his] moral relations" upgraded, that each reader will move closer to an ideal of human perfection (pp. 126, 158).

By contrast, Wordsworth characterises stories about "extraordinary incident[s]", found in newspapers, "frantic [Gothic] novels", adaptations and translations of "sickly and stupid German Tragedies", and "idle and extravagant […] verse[s]", such as Matthew Lewis' *Osric the Lion* (1797), as "gross and violent stimulants" (p. 128).[104] The storytellers elect self-serving popular representatives, passers of lesser laws. They do not recognise the need to "nourish" the simulacra of specific "feelings" and therefore observe only impassive or deliberately excited subjects. As such, their simulacral "past feelings" only pinpoint man's basic, undistilled nature. This, for Wordsworth, related to the will of "men in cities", engaged in "uniform", office-based professional and mercantile work that "torpor[izes]" and "blunt[s]" their "discriminating powers" - or, as though an uncontrollable bodily appetite, what they "crav[e]" and "thirst after" (pp. 128, 130).

In *The Prelude* (1805), Wordsworth's lyric persona recollects, as "a tranquillizing spirit presses […] | On [his] corporeal frame", his real-time emotional responses to 'observing', through time, incidents being experienced by his younger self, as though "some other Being" (II. 27-28, 33). He aims to relate how he developed then (unlike in the shorter drafts of 1799 and 1804) "impaired and restored" his ability to feel humans' "sentiment of Being", what Wordsworth described in the *Lyrical*

[104] See Allardyce Nicoll, *A History of English Drama, 1660-1900*, 6 vols. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1923-59; repr. 1969), III: *Late Eighteenth Century Drama, 1750-1800* (1952; repr. 1969), pp. 56-73 for an account of German influence on tragedy during this period.

Ballads' 'Preface' as "inherent and indestructible [human] qualities" (XI. title; II. 420). In this way, the speaker rediscovers his poetic vocation and his fitness to write

> some philosophic Song
> Of Truth that cherishes our daily life;
> With meditations passionate from deep
> Recesses in man's heart (I. 230-33);

that is, Wordsworth's never-finished *magnum opus*, "*The Recluse or views of Nature, Man, and Society*", to which *The Prelude* was to be, variously, "an appendix", "a sort of portico", even a "tributary".[105]

The speaker "display[s] the means | Whereby the infant" - later, his "creative" - "sensibility" was "in [him] | Augmented and sustain'd" by, at first, his mother's and, in young adulthood, Nature's love (II. 284-87). As a baby, he entered into "mute dialogues with [his] Mother's heart" by way of touch and eye contact; he was therefore more than able, was

> prompt and watchful, eager to combine
> In one appearance, all the elements
> And parts of the same object, else detach'd
> And loth to coalesce,

to organise the sense data that reached him in her arms (II. 247-50, 283). In Books I and II, the speaker traces how his relationship with Nature developed during three life stages: (a) childhood, during which he can remember snaring woodcocks, stealing "the bird | Which was the captive of another's toils", raven eggs, or a "small Skiff", ice skating, fishing, kite flying, or playing "home amusements by the warm peat-fire" (I. 326-27, 380, 535); (b) adolescence, when the speaker explored four islands and the ruins of Furness Abbey and bowled or ate "strawberries and mellow cream" in a beer garden (II. 167); and, (c) young adulthood, by which time he

[105] *Letters*, I, 214 (11 March [1798]), 440 (13 February 1804), 454 (6 March [1804]), 594 (3 June 1805).

walked, “sate | Alone, upon some jutting eminence”, or “st[ood] | Beneath some rock” (II. 326-27, 361-62). As a child, the speaker pursued games in and amongst “beauteous and majestic” Natural forms, not for their sake, but to experience “fits of vulgar joy” (I. 609, 636); he was then unaware that sense data “impress’d | Collateral objects and appearances” (I. 620-21). However, the speaker only enjoyed his “calmer” adolescent activities “when the beauteous forms | Of Nature were collaterally attach’d”, were also - however coincidentally - present (II. 51-52, 167). At length, as he approached his “seventeenth year”, the same Natural forms were “sought | For [their] own sake” (II. 207-208, 405). When the speaker first started school, “beauteous and majestic” Natural forms’ influence caused his “sympathies [to] enlarg[e]” daily and sensed objects - “the common range of visible things” - to “gr[o]w dear” (II. 181, 182-83). In young adulthood, the same influence enabled his feelings to enter into dialogues with Nature’s, audible in the “ghostly language of the ancient earth” or “in distant winds” (II. 328-29); at that time, his mind opened

> to that more exact
> And intimate communion which our hearts
> Maintain with the minuter properties
> Of objects which already are belov’d,

his sympathies extended to the “minuter properties” of those “dear” sensed objects (II. 299-302). Ultimately, the speaker “receiv’d so much” from Nature “that all [his] thoughts | Were steep’d in feeling” (II. 417-18). He therefore “felt the sentiment of Being” operative, at the outset, in each living creature - most of all humans, created to be

> of all visible natures crown, first
> In capability of feeling what
> Was to be felt (VIII. 634-36) -

and, afterwards, in “every [N]atural form, rock, fruit or flower, | Even the loose stones that cover the high-way” also (II. 420; III. 124-25). This enabled the speaker to

observe sympathies, “affinities”, between sensed “objects where no brotherhood exists | To common minds”, to share in Nature’s “visionary power” (II. 330, 403-405).

The speaker also accessed poets’ similar observations by way of “books” (V. title). As a child, the speaker bodily needed - was “desperate” for, “crav[ed]”, “devour[ed]” - the escapist narratives of “the Arabian Tales”, “Romances, Legends”, “fictions” of love, and veterans’ memoirs (V. 484, 511, 512, 521, 523, 564). He read poems representing “what we have seen”, ordinary private life, during adolescence (V. 565); then, the speaker “love[d]” the “words themselves” - or, as he goes on to specify, “words in tuneful order”, metrically arranged (V. 567, 578, 593). He refers to two mutually inclusive categories: “false”, “overwrought”, or “glittering verse” - perhaps rife with the “personifications of abstract ideas”, poetic diction, “fals[e] […] description[s]”, misjudged registers, and “disgust[ing]” expressions that Wordsworth criticised in the *Lyrical Ballads*’ ‘Preface’ (pp. 130, 132) - and the “works | Of mighty Poets” (V. 594, 615, 618-19). The former could be, for every reader, a gateway to

> something loftier, more adorn’d,
> Than is the common aspect, daily garb
> Of human life,

an escape (V. 599-601). But “great Nature exists in” the latter (V. 618):

> Visionary Power
> Attends upon the motions of the winds
> Embodied in the mystery of words.
> There darkness makes abode, and all the host
> Of shadowy things do work their changes there,
> As in a mansion like their proper home:
> Even forms and substances are circumfus’d
> By that transparent veil with light divine;
> And through the turnings intricate of Verse,
> Present themselves as objects recognis’d,
> In flashes, and with a glory scarce their own (V. 619-29).

The "mystery of words" gives form to (its alliterative and syntactic counterpart) the "motions of the winds"; the latter impart Nature's feelings and, ultimately, her "visionary Power" to their reader, as did "distant winds" to the speaker as a young adult. 'Wind' can, moreover, mean a "curved or twisted form", particularly a "sinuous course" or "path or road which turns this way and that"; the phrase, "motions of the winds", spatializes words' "mystery", suggests a physical movement between un-/stressed syllables and/or each line.[106] In this mysterious space, a hellish "host | Of shadowy things" "mak[e] abode" and "work […] changes"; they throw words' "transparent veil" over "even" or sympathetic sensed objects, their outer "forms" and inner "substances", and therefore "circumfus[e]" - "surround […] on all sides", fuse - them with "light divine".[107] These new creations are visible as readers negotiate with the verses. They are "recognis'd" in the sense that the poet has detected the pre-existing sympathy between the component objects; but the poet's recognition is imperfect, the creations only "*present* themselves as [though] objects recognise'd" (italics mine).

The speaker does not directly figure his emotions and simulacral "past feelings" as bills and popular representatives, as Wordsworth did in his 'Preface' to *Lyrical Ballads*; he nevertheless suggests a parallel between the "sentiment of Being" operative in man, and sympathetic to other sensed "objects", with what would be represented by the republican "government of equal rights | And individual worth" being constituted in France (IX. 247-48). He "hail[s such a republic] | As best" because no

> Boy or Man,
> [Had been] vested with attention or respect
> Through claims of wealth or blood

[106] 'Wind, v.', in *Oxford English Dictionary Online* <https://www.oed.com> [accessed 17 July 2019].
[107] 'Circumfuse, v.', in *Oxford English Dictionary Online* <https://www.oed.com> [accessed 18 July 2019].

during his school days and the University of Cambridge held "wealth and titles […] in less esteem | Than talents and successful industry" (IX. 223-25, 234-35, 246-47). The speaker also "add[s] unto this" a second reason: his

> subservience from the first
> To God and Nature's single sovereignty,
> Familiar presences of awful Power
> And fellowship with venerable books,

to Natural forms and the "works | Of mighty Poets", what made him "look with awe | Upon the faculties of Man" (IX.236-39, 244-45).

Man's vestigial faculties had, however, started to gain representation in France's National Convention by 29 October 1792, when the speaker returned to Paris from "a City on the Borders of the Loire" (IX. 39). He recalls hearing "Hawkers" advertise (Deputy of Loiret) Jean-Baptiste Louvet de Couvrai's "*Denunciation of the crimes | Of Maximilian* [sic] *Robespierre*" the following day (X. 86, 87-88). Robespierre (Deputy of Paris) had been elected after inciting his constituents to kill as many as 1500 prisoners between 2 and 5 September 1792; he and others "who ruled | The capital City" led a radical minority faction (X. 110-11). The "indecisi[ve]" Girondin Deputies, "whose aim | Seem'd best", failed to reduce that faction's influence, particularly during the debates about Louis XVI's sentence for treason (X. 113-114). After Britain declared war against France, Robespierre was able to unite the National Convention behind a "work of safety", the purging of enemies at home and away (X. 113-114, 126). France was plunged into the Terror: "friends, enemies, of all parties, ages, ranks, | Head after head, and never heads enough" (X. 335-36). The speaker "felt a kind of sympathy with [this deadly] power" and complicit in its "enormities" against humankind (261, 347, 417). For him, there

> was not, as hitherto,
> A swallowing up of lesser things in great;

But change of them into their opposites (X. 763-65).

He had conceived of licence as "lesser" than, nothing more than a means to, "great" liberty for a representative "government of equal rights | And individual worth"; but the speaker could no longer trust in his understanding of man's "aw[ful]" "faculties" to yield liberty, and not licence. This distrust compounded when, in counter-revolutionary Britain, he experienced his pride in what the French Republic could be as shame: "what had been a pride | Was now a shame" (X. 769-70). France's Deputies went on to betray the revolution after Robespierre's death by "chang[ing] a war of self-defence | For one of conquest", voting to attack Italy, Spain, Holland, and the Rhineland (X. 793-94). The speaker then turned to the philosophy that Godwin advocated in *Political Justice*: he applied his reason, not emotions, to determine man's moral duty within society. Godwin recommended engaging in "candid and unreserved conversation to compare […] ideas, to suggest […] doubts, to remove […] difficulties", in the process of continually breaking down and testing what evidence there is to support each idea;[108] this ultimately caused the speaker to "lo[se] | All feeling of conviction" and "yiel[d] up moral questions in despair" (X. 898-99, 901).

The speaker regains his faith in the "sentiment of Being" when he spends time near "beauteous and majestic" Natural forms and with Dorothy and Coleridge. He also recollects "spots of time", during which

> [He] ha[s] had deepest feeling that the mind
> Is lord and master, and that outward sense
> [Wa]s but the obedient servant of her will,

that he understands his relationship to reality (XI. 271-73). Behind - differentiated from - this feeling there "lurks" a "vivifying Virtue" or "efficacious spirit",

[108] Godwin, IV. 118.

constituted by the act of recollection, which can assert the knowledge of its inaccuracy, like the second self the writer constitutes by his ironic language to "asser[t] the knowledge of […] [his empirical self's] inauthenticity" in Paul de Man's 'The Rhetoric of Temporality' (1969) (XI. 260, 269).[109] The adult recollector always already knows, for example, what the child who stole a "small Skiff" to row assuredly - "like a Man who walks with stately step" or "a Swan" (I. 387, 404) - across Ullswater by night did not: that soon "a huge Cliff" would appear to "uprear […] its head" and, "with measur'd motion, like a living thing, | Str[i]de after" him (I. 380, 406, 408, 411-12). It is this "Virtue" that "nourishe[s] and invisibly repair[s]" the recollector's mind (XI. 265).

In Book XII, having discovered his poetic vocation, the speaker considers whether, unlike other "mighty Poets[']", his poetry might itself become a "majestic" Natural form for its readers. Throughout history, "mighty Poets" have and will "take [their] way among mankind | Wherever Nature leads" (XII. 295-96); each one, "connected in a mighty scheme of truth", able "to perceive | Something unseen before" in his generation (XII. 302, 304-05). But, of course, they only imperfectly recognise the "sentiment of Being", the sympathies between sensed objects, and share in Nature's "visionary power". The speaker hoped that he

> in some sort possess'd
> A privilege, and that a work of mine,
> Proceeding from the depth of untaught things,
> Enduring and creative, might become
> A power like one of Nature's (XII. 308-12).

Here, Wordsworth's speaker hopes that 'The Recluse' might itself become a distilling "beauteous and majestic" Natural form for its readers.

[109] Paul de Man, 'The Rhetoric of Temporality', in *Blindness and Insight: Essays in the Rhetoric of Contemporary Criticism*, 2nd. edn. (London: Methuen, 1983; repr. Abingdon: Routledge, 1996), pp. 187-228 (p. 214).

The speaker confronted the implications of such a privilege in the "three summer days" during which he crossed "the plain of Sarum" by foot (XII. 314, 338). He describes "a reverie" in which he "saw the past, | Saw multitudes of men" from - the armed "single Briton[s]" appearing "here and there" hints - specifically British history (XII. 320-22). This dream, sharpened, in the published draft, to "a vision clear", should be understood as Nature's "visionary power" over time.[110] In response, however, the speaker did not invoke Nature as his muse, he "called upon the darkness", something corrupt, almost demonic – the vestigial human faculties represented by the National Convention – to exercise "a power like one of Nature's" through him (XII. 327); in Thomas Weiskel's memorable phrase, he "perform[ed] the incantation".[111] That he was interrupted, the "midnight darkness [that] seemed to come and take […] | All objects from [his] […] sight" was not "*the* darkness", is, again, made clearer in Wordsworth's final draft (XII. 328-29; italics mine):

> I called on Darkness - but before the word
> Was uttered, midnight darkness seemed to take
> All objects from my sight (XIII. 327-39).

"And lo, again | The desart visible by dismal flames!" (XII. 329-30). Nature then showed him poets abusing power in the form of Druidic human sacrifice:

> the sacrificial Altar, fed
> With living men, how deep the groans, the voice
> Of those in the gigantic wicker thrills
> Throughout the region (XII. 331-34).

When, in Book III, the speaker describes his recognition, as a young adult, that he was "a chosen Son", Naturally endowed with the "holy powers | And faculties" to imagine, he stops short of stating for what chosen and endowed until Book X (III. 82, 83-84). This is not the case in the alternative versions of this description that

[110] *The Prelude* (1850), in *Prelude*, ed. by de Selincourt and Darbishire, pp. 3-507 (XIII. 320).
[111] Thomas Weiskel, 'Wordsworth and the Defile of the Word', *Georgia Review*, 29.1 (1975), 154-80 (p. 167)

Wordsworth also wrote in or before 1805, both of which compare Nature's "Son" to a Druid: "a Bard elect | To celebrate in sympathetic verse" or "with harp and voice"

> Magnanimous exploits, nor unprepared
> If high occasions called, to act or suffer
> As from the invisible shrine within the breast
> Nature might urge, or antient story taught,

to write and sing poetry or, occasionally, to enact or passively channel ("suffer") Nature's visionary power (III. 82n).[112] On Salisbury Plain, the speaker was conciliated by reading "lines, circles, [and] mounts" on "the untilled ground" (XII. 340, 343). "Some divine" - guess - these to be works

> of *infant* science, imitative forms
> By which the Druids covertly express'd
> Their knowledge of the heavens, and imaged forth
> The constellations […] I was gently charm'd,
> Albeit with an antiquarian's dream,
> And saw the bearded Teachers, with white wands
> Uplifted, pointing to the starry sky,
> Alternately, and Plain below, while breath
> Of music seem'd to guide them, and the Waste
> Was cheer'd with stillness and a pleasant sound (XII. 343-53; italics mine).

The Druids' poetry - inscribed on the land - only imperfectly mediated the constellations (God or Nature's image); they were, then, an uninterpretable "mystery of shapes" (XII. 340). Nature confronted the speaker with the frightening consequences of his hubris; he therefore accepts his place "by Nature's side" (XII. 297).

What happens when we look at these alignments - Nature's "visionary power" and what popular representatives should represent, the poet's own unguided poetic vision and the human "darkness" represented by France's Deputies during the Terror - in relation to 'Salisbury Plain'? Much of the stanza describing the speaker's

[112] See James F. Forest, 'The Significance of Milton's "Mantle Blue"', *Milton Quarterly*, 8.2 (1974), 41-48 (pp. 42-43) for a discussion of the differences between a Bard "clad | In vernal green" (alternate version one) and "in cerulean Robes" (alternate version two) (III. 82n).

three-day crossing of Salisbury Plain derives from this original poem, specifically the words of "a swain who [wandered] far astray" upon the plain, recounted, first, by "an old man", then, the Female Wanderer, all of which was excluded from 'Adventures on Salisbury Plain' (ll. 165, 173). There, the Female Wanderer re-confirms the Voice's description of Druidic human sacrifice and cannibalism at Stonehenge:

> A night-fire […]
> Reveals the desert and with dismal red
> Clothes the black bodies of encircling crowds.
> It is the sacrificial altar fed
> With living men (ll. 181-85).

(There is one point of difference: *The Prelude*'s ceremony no longer summons Vortigern's conquered Celts from their tombs). When the Traveller rejects this possibility - and, with it, Stonehenge - he accepts another: Druids are "throned on that dread circle's summit gray" (l. 178).

> Long bearded forms with wands uplifted shew
> To vast assemblies, while each breath of night
> Is hushed, the living fires that bright and slow
> Rounding th'aetherial field in order go.
> Then as they trace with awe their various files
> All figured on the mystic plain below,
> Still prelude of sweet sounds the moon beguiles
> And charmed for many a league the hoary desart smiles (ll. 191-98).

These descriptions had particular roles to play in 'Salisbury Plain's' political allegory: (a) the Druidic sacrifice is the counter-revolutionary movement's warning to the people that a reformed parliament would be a revolutionary republic; the Druids as teachers are (b) the counter-revolutionary movement's vision of the mixed constitution already in place as an Anglo-Saxon ideal, but (c) shot through with signs that that ideal has been corrupted, that Members of Parliament no longer mediate the people's will.

In the corresponding stanza in *The Prelude*, the speaker's invocation of darkness, aligned with what France's Deputies represented during the Terror, align with the people seeking radical enlightenment. The intervening visions of Druidic human sacrifice and teachers, in 'Salisbury Plain' pro-Ministry warnings against a republican revolution, in *The Prelude* align with what popular representatives should represent; they are both accepted as true in this, later text, not as tricks of the counter-revolutionary movement. Wordsworth creatively oriented himself with Members of Parliament elected every seven years by a subset of men and controlled by bribery, not with a radically reformed House of Commons.

3.3 Conclusion

In the *Lyrical Ballads*' 'Preface', Wordsworth argued that all writers recollect emotions that they experience while observing subjects acting in ordinary, private life. During this process, their "past feelings" are reshaped according to what other, already-processed past feelings reveal to be "really important to men"; in their final shape, the past feelings enable the writer to grasp what of their subject to represent in writing (p. 126). Wordsworth compares this process to that by which a bill is enacted by popular representatives in a unicameral legislature. He points to two different 'types' of writer: poets whose already-processed "past feelings" all derive from observing subjects in "state[s] of vivid sensation", whose representatives reveal the "primary laws of our nature", and storytellers who only observe impassive or deliberately excited subjects, whose self-serving representatives reveal lesser laws (pp. 118, 122). Poets represent "inherent and indestructible qualities of the human mind", distilled under the influence of Natural forms; their writing "enlighten[s]" and refines the "taste" and "affections" of its readers (pp. 126, 130). Storytellers

represent man's basic, undistilled nature; the resulting narratives are "gross and violent stimulants" (p. 128).

In *The Prelude*, Wordsworth represented his lyric persona (a) as he and (b) what he sees when he recollects, contemplates, and re-creates his emotional response to 'observing', through time, his younger self in "state[s] of vivid sensation". The speaker's feelings dialogued with Nature's in the presence of "beauteous and majestic" Natural forms (I. 636). Ultimately, in young adulthood, he "felt the sentiment of Being" - what Wordsworth described in the *Lyrical Ballads*' 'Preface' as "inherent and indestructible qualities" - operative in, and capable of connecting, any un/"majestic" Natural form and humans (II. 420). The speaker also shared in "mighty Poets[']" similar visions by reading their poetry (V. 619). He goes on to imply that popular representatives in a republic should also represent the "sentiment of [human] Being". But France's National Convention voted to terrorize its citizens, to represent other, more dangerous human qualities. In Book XII, having discovered his poetic vocation, the speaker considers whether, unlike other "mighty Poets[']", his poetry might itself become a "majestic" Natural form for its readers. The speaker then recalls his impulse to leave "Nature's side", to no longer represent the "sentiment of [human] Being", and channel human "darkness" while crossing Salisbury Plain (XII. 297, 327). Nature at once confronted him with a frightening vision of Druids performing a human sacrifice, of poets abusing their power; the speaker, deterred, was conciliated by an alternative vision: of Druids imperfectly inscribing the constellations - Nature's image - onto the plain, of his predecessors trying and failing to wield "a power like one of Nature's" (XII. 312).

But the two visions the speaker experienced on Salisbury Plain originally formed part of 'Salisbury Plain' (1793-94). This poem tells the story of a tired and

hungry traveller forced to find shelter at Stonehenge. I read this as an allegory of men's transition from a state of 'political superstition', tenanting a political belief-system predicated upon ignorance, to enlightenment, in which state they recognise the need for radical parliamentary reform to restore their original elective rights. A bodiless "voice as from a tomb" and, later, the "human voice" of a "female wanderer" describe (almost) the same scenes to frighten the traveller off-course and to conciliate him to that alternative path: Druids (a) performing a human sacrifice and (b) instructing their congregation in astronomy (ll. 81, 137, 138). Wordsworth thereby figured counter-revolutionary movement propaganda warning that radical parliamentary reform would result in an unjust, violent republic, but the current mixture of government forms, and how they are instituted, guards men's socio-economic interests. He cautioned that men would remain vulnerable to this argument if radical parliamentary reformers continued to deploy "inflammatory addresses to the passions of men" and did not try to engage their reason.[113] A comparison between 'Salisbury Plain' and *The Prelude*'s Book XII reveals that Wordsworth aligned (a) poets representing "the sentiment of [human] Being" with Members of Parliament elected every seven years by a subset of men and controlled by bribery and (b) writers representing human "darkness" with (what, until 1818, Wordsworth wanted for Britain and France) Members elected more frequently and by all men.

[113] *Letters*, I, p. 125 ([8] June [1794]).

WORDS AND MEANS:
MARIA EDGEWORTH AS INDEPENDENT COUNTRY GENTLEMAN

On 26 February 1799, the Irish Parliament's House of Commons granted its Select Committee of "enquir[y] into the State of the Education of the lower Orders of the People, and the Means of improving the same", led by R. L. Edgeworth, leave to introduce a bill that would establish a system of national education in Ireland.[114] The bill was first read on 28 March, then "defer[red] [...] till times of more tranquillity";[115] in Maria Edgeworth's words, "no [financial] assistance has or will be given", due to military defence costs or (more likely) the inclusion of Catholic schools led by church-approved teachers.[116] Joanna Wharton has recently confirmed that the manuscript draft of this bill, found amongst the Edgeworth family papers, was written in Edgeworth's hand (but for a pasted-on addition, in the handwriting of R. L. Edgeworth's fourth wife, Frances Anne).[117] Edgeworth "assist[ed] [her father] in copying his letters of business" "during many years"; did she also co-write the Irish Education Bill (1799)?[118] On 29 September 1798, thinking about publishing a pamphlet to explain why he had been attacked by a mob of ultra-Protestants, R. L. Edgeworth remarked to Daniel Augustus Beaufort that "we, that is to say Maria

[114] *Journals of the House of Commons of the Kingdom of Ireland*, 19 vols. (Dublin: For the House of Commons of Ireland, 1796-1800), XVIII (1799), p. 19 (8 February 1799).
[115] 'House of Commons', *Dublin Evening Post*, 2 April 1799, p. 2.
[116] Dublin, National Library of Ireland, MS 10166/7, Pos. 9027 (224: 2 April 1799), cited in Joanna Wharton, *Material Enlightenment: Women Writers and the Science of the Mind, 1770-1830* (Woodbridge: Boydell and Brewer, 2018), p. 211. See Edward F. Burton, 'Richard Lovell Edgeworth's Education Bill of 1799: A Missing Chapter in the History of Irish Education', *Irish Journal of Education/Iris Eireannach an Oideachais*, 13.1 (1979), 24-33 (pp. 29-30).
[117] Wharton, p. 211.
[118] Richard Lovell Edgeworth and Maria Edgeworth, *Memoirs of Richard Lovell Edgeworth*, 2 vols. (London: For R. Hunter and Baldwin, Cradock, and Joy, 1820; repr. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), II, p. 15. For Edgeworth as her father's copyist, see Aileen Douglas, 'Maria Edgeworth's Writing Classes', *Eighteenth-Century Fiction*, 14.3-4 (2002), 371-90.

(who is always meant by we, when writing is in question) have notes taken […] - which are interesting & which she can make entertaining".[119] For Edgeworth, rationally educated women's domestic role as helpmates to husbands and/or male relatives might extend this far. She used the writer as legislator figure to articulate what, why, and for whom she was writing not because she wanted to do as men did - to vote, to stand as a parliamentary candidate, to be an acknowledged legislator - but to keep her public writing at one remove from these direct forms of political participation.

4.1 *Letters for Literary Ladies* (1795)

In *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*, Wollstonecraft argued that a rational education would enable women to recognise and fulfil their civic duties and, therefore, to be friends with their male relatives or husbands. Their first duty, if married, is to bear, breastfeed, and educate their children. Otherwise, women could work as physicians, midwives, or "business[women] of various kinds" ("regulat[ing] a farm, manag[ing] a shop", for instance) (pp. 218, 219). "Women ought [also] to have [parliamentary] representatives" (p. 217). Mary Hays similarly suggested, in *Appeal to the Men of Great Britain in Behalf of Women* (1998), that rationally educated women should not only be the "helpmates of the other sex" and educate their children, but "physic[ians] and surge[ons]"; "women of the inferior classes might be taylors, hair-dressers", "milliners[,] […] mantua-makers[, even] […] stay-makers".[120] Such women ought not "tak[e] an active part in popular assemblies";

[119] MS 10,166/7, Letter to D. A. Beaufort (29 September 1798), cited in Marilyn Butler, *Maria Edgeworth: A Literary Biography* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1972), pp. 139-40.
[120] [Mary Hays], *Appeal to the Men of Great Britain in Behalf of Women* ([London]: For. J. Johnson and J. Bell, 1798), pp. 127, 196, 200. Hays adds that, though they possess "the necessary talents", "real modesty" (as opposed to "modern delicacy") and "propriety of conduct" should exclude gentlewomen from "the professions of law and divinity" (pp. 194, 196).

they would, however, deserve ("under proper restrictions") "some vote, some right of judgment in […] the laws and opinions by which they are to be governed" (pp. 150, 195).

Edgeworth wrote and in 1799 re-editioned *Letters for Literary Ladies* (1795) to counter Wollstonecraft and Hays's arguments. In the collection's first epistolary dialogue, between "a Gentleman" and "his Friend", the Friend contends that rationally educated women should instead choose to act only in domestic life, and with feminine "reserve and delicacy", so that they avoid bad behaviour; virtue, in women and men, is "necessar[ily] conne[cted]" to their and others' happiness (pp. 1, 22). The Friend expects such women "to instruct themselves, that they may be able to direct and inform" their children and to provide fathers, brothers, and husbands with "conversation suited to their own [intellectual] taste at home" - or, in Harriet Guest's memorable phrase, to "facilitate men's off-duty chat" (pp. 20, 36).[121] The Friend also claims that rationally educated women should study to "add to the general fund of useful and entertaining knowledge", in writing and, one day, in person; he looks forward to a time when male relatives or spouses "invite […] men of wit and science of their acquaintance to their own houses, instead of appointing some place of meeting from which ladies are to be excluded" (pp. 28, 36-37).

The Friend argues that girls should be given two habits from a young age (a) by carefully "read[ing] and compar[ing] various books" - that pertain to the sciences, defined here as botany, chemistry, arithmetic, natural history, moral philosophy, education, and literary criticism - and (b) "by listening to the conversation of persons of sense and experience": the habits of academic enquiry and of using reason to hunt

[121] Harriet Guest, *Small Change: Women, Learning, Patriotism, 1750-1810* (London: University of Chicago Press, 2000), p. 318.

down useful truths (p. 34). As their "power of reasoning […] increase[s]", why they should, in future, choose to apply themselves in this way needs to be explained to them; that is, to afford "a full view of their interests and of ours", of how to behave virtuously (pp. 22, 34). Catharine Macaulay Graham expressed similar views in *Letters on Education* (1790). She specified, however, that girls should, until the ages of ten or twelve, "exercise [their] growing [mental] faculties without the use of books" that do not just "amus[e]" and a wider-ranging curriculum, extending to three other branches of philosophy (logic, experimental, metaphysics), geography, Latin, ancient Greek, French, physics, politics, theology, classical and modern history, astronomy, and - "sources of elegant and innocent amusement" - dancing, music, drawing, and needlework.[122]

However, both Macaulay Graham and Wollstonecraft also recommended co-education. In Macaulay Graham's home school "the same rules of education in all respects are to be observed to the female as well as to the male children", even if they pursue different "sports" after childhood (p. 142). Wollstonecraft advocated a two-tier national system of public day schools, wherein "boys and girls might be educated together" (p. 386); it would comprise schools "open to [students of] all classes", aged between five and nine, followed by a school for either (a) students "intended for domestic employments, or mechanical trades" - in which only girls would also be instructed in "plain-work, mantua-making, millinery, &c." - or (b) "young people of superior abilities, or fortune" (pp. 388, 389). For Edgeworth's Friend, on the other hand, boys should be taught separately because the Latin and Ancient Greek languages and writings "form an indispensable part of a gentleman's education" (p. 26). Young men, he continues, must then "contract their inquiries and

[122] Catharine Macaulay Graham, *Letters on Education* (London: For C. Dilly, 1790), pp. 62, 128.

concentrate their powers" at and after university if they are to "pursu[e] a profession, […] to shine in parliament, or to rise in public life" as a diplomat (p. 27).

The Friend compares the many such men forced to write as or to supplement their income to "statesmen":

> Statesmen lament that they must often pursue the *expedient* even when
> they discern that it is not *the right*; and men of letters who
> earn their bread by their writings, inveigh bitterly against the
> tyranny of booksellers who degrade them to the state of
> 'literary artisans' (p. 27).

He positions statesmen and men living by their pen as seekers, respectively, of ministerial office - government power - and best-sellers, of whatever, according to parliamentary parties and publisher-booksellers, electors and readers call for. Yet, in so doing, the Friend implies a question: would another 'type' of writer be comparable to Members of Parliament who only "pursue […] *the right*"?

Richard de Ritter emphasises that Edgeworth and her father included a fourth career-option in *Essays on Professional Education* (1809): "English country gentlem[a]n" (p. 257). A country gentleman is here defined as a man possessed of "what is called [an] *independent fortun*[*e*]", who can therefore "speak [his] min[d] freely on every subject, private or public, without fear or reward", when acting as "master of a family, a landlord, a magistrate, a grand juror, [or] an elector" and, often, "in parliament" (pp. 247, 256). According to *Essays on Professional Education*, "before they are sent to school" and, afterwards, "during the vacations", a boy intended for such a role

> should not be discouraged from cultivating a taste for
> painting, poetry, or for any of the fine arts or liberal sciences;
> provided his tastes do not lead him into extravagance, and
> provided he possess in theory, and apply in practice, the
> knowledge that is peculiarly requisite [...] to fulfil [his] duties
> with propriety (pp. 254, 255-56).

This knowledge must include "the value and price of land, […] the rents which tenants are able to pay, […] the causes which affect the rise and fall of rents", "the principles of the English law", "all that passes in the British parliament, […] domestic and foreign politics, and some general principles by which he can reason for himself on public affairs" (pp. 257, 258, 259). In "early life", as his peers specialise during and/or after university, the country gentleman should build up a "various and extensive" knowledge of "science and literature", using "reviews and periodical publications" to determine which are the "new books […] of real merit" (p. 276). The Edgeworths sought to "render him a fit and agreeable campanion [*sic*] for men of science and talents in all ranks of life", but, according to De Ritter, only "prior to […] taking up [his] more purposeful and overtly public roles", including legislative duties.[123] However, the Edgeworths go on to argue that the same periodicals and new books, even in later life, also enable country gentlemen to "cultivat[e] any art or science" and "acquir[e] an accurate and extensive knowledge on any subject they may think proper to pursue" (pp. 276-77).

For the Friend, even if they do not "contract their inquiries and concentrate their powers" at and after university, men's classical schooling limits their ability to "add to the general fund of useful and entertaining knowledge", in writing and in person (p. 28). It takes up "many years of childhood and youth", and causes boys to neglect other subjects - the "general cultivation of the understanding" - to "spoil" their English writing style, and to feel a lifelong "disgus[t] with literature". Girls need only read "the good authors of antiquity" in translation (pp. 26, 27). The second 'type' of writer is a woman of letters, not a country gentleman.

[123] *Professional Education*, pp. 275-76; Richard De Ritter, '"Leisure to be Wise": Edgeworthian Education and the Possibilities of Domesticity', *Journal for Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 33.3 (2010), 313-33 (p. 324).

Country gentlemen are, however, the Members of Parliament who only "pursue […] *the right*". In *Essays on Professional Education*, the Edgeworths defined them against Members who "sell [their] vote[s]": "the wretched slaves of party, or the despicable tools of a court" (p. 248). This view was expressed by R. L. Edgeworth as early as his *Address to the Associated Volunteer Corps of the County of Longford* ([June] 1782), which urged the County Longford branch of Ireland's sixty-thousand-strong protestant militia - made up of "gentlemen" freehold tenants, "independen[t]" men of "rank and wealth" - to capitalise on the (relative) success of its campaigns for Irish free trade and legislative and judicative independence from Britain by urging parliamentary reform. He argued that "doubling" the number of (if of forty-shilling value, their) county representatives and "shorten[ing] the period of […] delegation" would effectively "balance the parliamentary weight of […] broughs [*boroughs*]", under the thumb of "families" "sordid[ly] scrambl[ing] for titles and places" and therefore subject to "aristocratic […] influence", and form a "parliament dependent only on its constituents".[124] When R. L. Edgeworth represented County Longford at the Grand National Convention of Volunteer Delegates, held in Dublin between 10 November and 2 December 1783, he went even further: he voted for the franchise to be extended to "*every Protestant* [...] *seised of a freehold within the precincts thereof*" in all but "decayed" settlement constituencies, where it would be vested in "*every freeholder of forty shillings per annum, and upwards*".[125] According to his 1817 "account of [this] the political part of [his] life", R. L. Edgeworth also advocated "cut[ting] off the rotten Irish

[124] *Memoirs*, II, pp. 49, 50-51.
[125] *The History of the Proceedings and Debates of the Volunteer Delegates of Ireland, on the Subject of a Parliamentary Reform* (Dublin: W. Porter, 1784), pp. 50, 50-51. R. L. Edgeworth was a member of the sub-committee formed when the "Convention do also resolve itself into a general committee"; the sub-committee "resolved unanimously" upon these measures, pp. 40, 49.

boroughs, and […] substitut[ing] members chosen from rich and populous places in their stead".[126]

Edgeworth's two correspondents characterise women of letters in opposition to another type of woman writer: the "female prodig[y]" (p. 1). As girls, they developed neither the habit of academic enquiry, nor the habit of using reason to determine useful truths. They only consulted and straightforwardly believed (a) eloquent writers - of scientific works, but "chiefly" romances, and ("furtive[ly] perus[ed]") sentimental courtship novels - or (b) listened to "the clandestine conversation[s] of ignorant waiting maids" (p. 26, 33). Such girls learnt to risk "losing their fortunes or their characters", their (reputations for) sexual innocence, by "coquetting or gaming" (p. 26). Gillian Russell has shown that it was common in eighteenth-century anti-gambling writing to argue that a woman's "only 'real' property […] was her body"; to pay their debts, female gamers might need to resort to prostitution.[127] Budding female prodigies therefore wrongly suppose that "false ideas of life and of the human heart", this different, fashionable value system, will lead to happiness (p. 26). In adulthood, they share their half-learning, in person and in "plays, […] poetry, and romances", only "for the purposes of parade"; they are, in the Gentleman's words, "intoxicat[ed]" by public admiration (pp. 13, 18, 26). Female prodigies, like men who write for, or to supplement, their income, write what bookseller-publishers will sell, but only to show off, not to "earn their bread" (p. 27).

Edgeworth used dialogues between fictional characters in *Letters for Literary Ladies*, not the (however entertaining) academic writing advocated by the Friend.

[126] *Memoirs*, II, p. 65.
[127] Gillian Russell, '"Faro's Daughters": Female Gamesters, Politics, and the Discourse of Finance in 1790s Britain', *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 33.4 (2000), 481-504 (pp. 484-85).

She was searching for an alternative to the sentimental courtship novel that would still make her comparable to a country gentleman Member.

4.2 *Belinda* (1801)

Michael Gamer argues that a now "unrecognized genre" identified, after Charlotte Smith's 1787 translation of François Gayot de Pitaval's *Les Causes Célèbres* (1734-41), as the 'tale' or 'romance of real life' started to develop during the late eighteenth century.[128] It was characterised by representations of improbable, but possible, incidents from ordinary, private
life: "crimes, virtues, humours, plots, agonies, heroical sacrifices, mysteries of the most extraordinary description", Leigh Hunt later wrote in his 'Preface' to *One Hundred Romances of Real Life* (1843).[129] Contemporaries believed that Romance "delude[d] inexperienced minds by inviting them to mistake improbable worlds for reality". For Gamer, the real life, like the gothic, romance genre developed as a more realistic and therefore instructive variant; if, in *The Castle of Otranto* (1764), Walpole "yok[ed] romance to [public] antiquarian history", so real-life romancers yoked it to private, "anecdotal 'facts'" (p. 237).

Gamer goes on to argue that Edgeworth "shape[d] the romance of real life into what would become its conventional form" in her "later tales", in *Popular Tales* (1804) and *Tales of Fashionable Life* (1809-12) (p. 251). In *Castle Rackrent* (1800), Edgeworth represented the fictional Rackrent family's "fabulous downfall" via the edited 1782 memoir of their steward, Thady Quirk (p. 242). *Belinda*, for Gamer, was only Edgeworth's "attempt[t] to find [an] alternative mod[e] of narration" that would

[128] Michael Gamer, 'Maria Edgeworth and the Romance of Real Life', *NOVEL: A Forum on Fiction*, 34.2 (2001), 232-66 (p. 235).
[129] Leigh Hunt, 'Preface', in *One Hundred Romances of Real Life*, ed. by Leigh Hunt (London: Whittaker, 1843), no pages.

be "[in]vulnerable to misreading" (p. 250); *Castle Rackrent* had not been read as a critique of the Rackrent family, it was, in Marilyn Butler's words, "accepted as an up-to-date description of the Irish gentry".[130] I argue that *Belinda,* in which Edgeworth represented an improbable incident from family friend, Thomas Day's life, should also be read as a romance of real life. I also take issue with Gamer's claim that its "overt alliance with romance render[ed] [the real-life romance genre] fundamentally different from the various 'sketches' and scandalous 'narratives' published earlier in the eighteenth century that claim to be 'taken from fact' or 'based in real life'"; that is, from writing *à clef,* narratives published with a key or which inspired readers to devise and to circulate keys that matched its characters and incidents with contemporary people and usually political and/or sexual scandals (p. 237). Critical accounts of this genre tend to jump from the pioneering examples of three turn-of-the-eighteenth-century writers, Aphra Behn, Delarivier Manley, and Eliza Haywood, to 1807-1808, when publisher J. F. Hughes used it to exploit public interest in the Prince and Princess of Wales's separation and private lives; during these years Hughes also developed the 'season' formula, which opened a window onto fashionable life in London or various resorts during one season, from T. S. Surr's *A Winter in London; or, Sketches of Fashion* (1806).[131] Writing *à clef* in fact persisted throughout the intervening period. By 1801, it was common for novelists - in the words of publisher-bookseller, Mr. Index, in Mary Robinson's *The Natural Daughter* (1799) - to

> make a story out of some recent popular event, such as an highly-fashioned elopement, a deserted, distracted husband, and abandoned wife, an ungrateful runaway daughter, or a

[130] Butler, p. 359.
[131] See Peter Garside, 'J. F. Hughes and the Publication of Popular Fiction, 1803-1810', *Library*, 6th ser., 9.3 (September 1987), 240-58; Anne H. Stevens, 'The Season Novel, 1806-1824: A Nineteenth-Century Microgenre', *Victoriographies*, 7.2 (July 2017), 81-100.

> son ruined by sharpers […] or any thing from real life of equal celebrity or notoriety.[132]

For Edgeworth, writing in 1800, Gamer's "fundamenta[l] differen[ce]" was not self-evident. In *Belinda*, she uses a sub-plot in which Dr. X— improves female "prodigy", Lady Delacour's behaviour, to dramatize a writer of *romans à clef* reforming into a real-life romancer (p. 80).

Belinda's readers first encounter Harriet Freke dressed as a "smart-looking young man" and *en route* from "the gallery of the House of Commons": "'I've been […] almost squeezed to death these four hours; but I swore I'd hear Sheridan's speech to night, and I did. Betted fifty guineas I would, with Mrs. Luttridge, and have won'" (pp. 45, 46). Elaine Chalus and Paul Seaward have shown that women could enter the Strangers' Gallery "by special agreement of the Speaker" until 1778, when they were (unofficially) banned.[133] On 2 February 1778, according to the *London Chronicle*, "the duchess of Devonshire, lady Norton, and near 60 other ladies" refused to leave when asked;[134] afterwards, "ladies, many of the highest rank, […] made several very powerful efforts to be again admitted", all of which the Speaker "decline[d]", to make room for prospective parliamentary candidates, interest-groups, or, crucially, electors.[135] In February 1818, Elizabeth Fry won women

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[132] Mary Robinson, *The Natural Daughter*, 2 vols. (London: For T. N. Longman and O. Rees, 1799), I, 37. For an account of writing *à clef*, see Sean Latham, *The Art of Scandal: Modernism, Libel Law, and the Roman à Clef* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), Ch. 2.

[133] Paul Seaward, 'Parliament Observed: The Gallery of the Old House of Commons', in *Revisiting the Polite and Commercial People: Essays in Georgian Politics, Society, and Culture in Honour of Professor Paul Langford*, ed. by Elaine Chalus and Perry Gauci (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019), pp. 59-76 (p. 66). See Seaward, pp. 66-67; Elaine Chalus, *Elite Women in English Political Life c. 1754-1790* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2005), pp. 47-51.

[134] 'House of Commons', *London Chronicle*, 31 January-3 February 1778, p. 8. Chalus notes Charles P. Moritz's report that women were still "not unfrequen[t]" visitors in June and July 1782 as proof that this ban was not "thoroughly […] implemented, at least immediately", *Travels, Chiefly in Foot, Through Several Parts of England, in 1782*, trans. by 'A Lady' (London: For G. G. and J. Robinson, 1795), p. 59.

[135] John Hatsell, *Precedents of Proceedings in the House of Commons*, rev. edn., 4 vols. (London: Luke Hansard, 1818), II, 181n.

permission to listen to Commons debates from the attic ventilator above St. Stephen's Chapel, what Edgeworth later described as "a sentry box of boards the height of a common deal board - old chairs round it for [women] to stand upon" in a letter to her aunt.[136] In *Belinda*, Edgeworth's electors assess parliamentary candidates by the behaviour of their spouses and/or female relatives and friends at election time; she uses this twice to position Delacour, Freke, and Mrs. Luttridge as fashionable women or "prodig[ies]", as vicious or virtuous.

As a girl, Lady Delacour did not carefully read and apply reason to various scientific writings; she consulted sentimental courtship novels, despite her governess's unexplained warning that "novel reading for young ladies is the most dangerous" (p. 72). Her future decisions are therefore predicated upon fashionable values: Delacour chooses to wed (and, as a "rich heiress", restore credit to) a bankrupt gambler "in love with [her] faults"; she tries to "gover[n]" her new husband and chases "elegant amusements"; Lord Delacour "take[s] to hard drinking" and she becomes "intoxicated with" - "a slave to" - "the idle compliments of all [her] acquaintance" (pp. 36, 37, 39, 41, 42). As a result, Delacour's husband could not be her "bosom friend", her infant son and daughter die because she refuses to lie in or "bec[o]me[s] heartily sick" of breast feeding, and Delacour relies on others to nurse and educate Helena, her only surviving child: Delacour "had nothing at home, either in the shape of husband or children, to engage [her] affections" (pp. 38, 42, 43). Freke, on the other hand, only half-read the (to her) ineloquent and boring moral philosophical writings of Adam Smith, John Moore, Jean de La Bruyère, and Anna Laetitia Aikin (later Barbauld); she compares each example to "milk and water! […]

[136] *Maria Edgeworth: Letters from England 1813-1844*, ed. by Christina Colvin (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1971), pp. 369-70 (9 March 1822).

hasty pudding! […] nettle porridge!", cheap, easily-prepared drinks and dishes, which, because they were flavourless or medicinal, were also sick-diet staples (p. 228). Freke describes books as "very well for those who can't think for themselves"; she herself stopped reading "when [she] made up [her] opinions", straightforwardly believed those of eloquent, fashionable writers. Freke recommends (even "nonsens[ical]") conversation instead (p. 227). Moreover, she, unlike Delacour, acts without feminine reserve and delicacy, is careless of her acquaintances' good opinion: her manners are "*harum scarum*" and she cross-dresses and behaves like a man, for example, by going "out shooting with a party of gentlemen" near Brimham Craggs and completing "the manual exercise", "of preparing, aiming, and firing" her gun (p. 43, 250).[137] Freke has therefore been unable to avoid bad behaviour; for example, Delacour hints to Belinda Portman of Freke's recent extramarital affair: "what a piece of work there was, a few years ago, about Harriet Freke, and this cousin of hers […] she went so far, that if it had not been for [Delacour], not a soul would have visited her" (p. 66).

Freke attempts to further alienate Delacour from her husband. When they were first married, she tried to "gover[n]" Lord Delacour, first, by having "always the upper hand in […] disputes, and the last word"; then, she publicly coquetted - though "never in thought or deed" betrayed him - with Colonel Lawless, agreeing to stop only when "treated […] with becoming respect" (pp. 37, 38). Freke encourages Delacour not only to "renew [her public] intimacy with" Lawless, but to divorce her husband on the advice of a "celebrated […] dealer in art magic" and to accept Lawless's advances during their carriage-ride home (pp. 44, 47). When this strategy

[137] Georgina Lock and David Worrall, 'Cross-Dressed Performance at the Theatrical Margins: Hannah Snell, the Manual Exerciser, and the New Wells Spa Theater, 1750', *Huntington Library Quarterly*, 77.1 (2014), 17-36 (p. 18).

backfires, Freke spreads misleading rumours of Delacour's extramarital affair to provoke her husband into fighting an illegal duel with Lawless for her honour (p. 50). Lord Delacour nevertheless escapes unscathed and Lawless's last words acquit wife and (because he asks Lady Lawless not to prosecute) husband. For Delacour, egged on by Freke, this challenge demonstrated Lord Delacour's "want of proper confidence" in her innocence and ability to "ma[k]e [her] story good"; she retaliates by starting a "seven years war" - of "rival routs, rival concerts, rival galas, rival theatres" - with Mrs. Luttridge, the "loudest" of her husband's "partizans" (pp. 50, 53, 62, 63).

When he tried to start an extramarital affair with Delacour, Lawless was due to "g[o] out of town in a few days, to be elected for a borough" (p. 50). There, in a borough constituency where electors were subject to bribery, proprietary- or employer-control, where Lawless could straightforwardly "be elected", he would not lose votes for consorting with a badly-behaved woman of fashion. By concluding that "he had been punished sufficiently on the spot", Delacour realigned his impending election with her rebuff of his advances, but this work is undone by Freke's rumour-mongering (p. 50). Lord Delacour's hated intervention is, in the end, the only way to prevent Lawless from "going out of town".

Delacour's first "rival" action is to use her uncle's "handsome legacy" to campaign for Freke's cousin, against Mr. Luttridge, in a free "contested election in our county" (p. 53). Delacour was "ambitious to have it said […] that [she] was the finest figure that ever appeared upon" - as much an artist's, as a political - "canvass"; she and Freke attempt to win the electors' approval by personifying an aesthetic and moral ideal. On the hustings, they appear "dressed in splendid party uniforms" and distribute "ribands and cockades" from "two enormous panniers […] with a grace

that won all hearts, if not all votes" (pp. 53-54). Luttridge's failure to hand out more election favours, from "panniers twice as large", with the equivalent "grace" inspires Delacour to pen an epigram and caricature entitled "*The Ass and Her Panniers*", "soon in the hands of half —shire", mocking Luttridge's performance (p. 54). For David Francis Taylor, Delacour's offering combines the ass as "an Aesopian emblem of ignorance and docility" favoured by Augustan satirists and as the animal of choice (sometimes equipped with "panniers stuffed with pamphlets or, figuratively, political problems") for zoomorphized statesmen, subject to another's control, in political caricature; Luttridge is "masculinize[d]" and cast as "a powerless fool".[138] However, both in the first and the "corrected and improved" 1802 edition, Edgeworth made use of the spelling 'paniers' when Delacour refers to her "impromptu" seventeen chapters later (p. 54). 'Paniers' was ordinarily a synonym for 'fan', 'oblong' or 'square', and 'pocket hoop' underskirts, all of which were "pair[s] of frames", made of whalebone, cane, steel, or padding, "used to expand the skirt of a woman's dress at the hips" by up to six feet or - in the words of one put-out observer - "one of them kept as much room as four people".[139] Mid-century caricaturists routinely compared back views of wearers and of donkeys carrying saddlebags or baskets.[140] Paniers were worn at court in Britain between at least the 1740s and *c*. 1781, when they were displaced by the 'round' hoop underskirt that, later, Delacour and Portman intend to

[138] David Francis Taylor, 'Edgeworth's *Belinda* and the Gendering of Caricature', *Eighteenth-Century Fiction*, 26.4 (2014), 593-624 (pp. 598-99).
[139] 'Pannier, n.', in *Oxford English Dictionary Online* <httpsz://www.oed.com> [accessed 1 June 2019]; R. W. Cox, *Benenden Letters: London, Country, and Abroad, 1753-1821*, ed. by C. F. Hardy (London: J. M. Dent, 1901), p. 177. See Kimberly Chrisman, 'Unhoop the Fair Sex: The Campaign Against the Hoop Petticoat in Eighteenth-Century', *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 30.1 (1996), 5-23 (pp. 9-10).
[140] F. W. Fairholt, *Costume in England: A History of Dress from the Earliest Period Till the Close of the Eighteenth Century* (London: Chapman and Hall, 1846), pp. 369-70. See also Thomas Wright, *Caricature History of the Georges; or, Annals of the House of Hanover* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1876), p. 252 and Elizabeth Ewing, *Dress and Undress: A History of Women's Underwear* (New York: Drama Book Specialists, 1978), p. 43.

don beneath their birthnight ball dresses; 'The Ass and Her Panniers' was drafted just prior to Clarence Hervey's tour of Italy and France, "before the revolution" in 1789 (p. 363). Kimberly Chrisman argues that the hoop underskirt both hid the natural outline of the female body and, if accidentally or deliberately upset, bared women's ankles, even their legs; it was constructed throughout the century as "a symbol of female sexual autonomy" because "the wearer alone determined whether the hoop acted as a barrier or an invitation".[141] Delacour is "apotheosi[sed]" and "deified by all *true* patriots"; Luttridge, meanwhile, is positioned as an ignorant follower of fashion, using her sexual charms to gain political influence (p. 53). When Georgiana Cavendish, Duchess of Devonshire, led Charles James Fox's canvass for the borough of Westminster during the 1784 general election, caricaturists used a similar strategy (take, for example, Figures 11-15).[142] They represented Cavendish in the process of embracing, kissing, and, sometimes, slipping her hands suggestively into the pockets of butchers - for Amelia Rauser, "stand-in[s] for the [...] symbol of the nation, John Bull" - in exchange for votes.[143] Cavendish was also drawn physically larger than, almost overpowering, each butcher and/or with a longer horsewhip or an axe to hand, both threats to the phallic knives dangling from their girdles; this masculinization hints at her future as a female prodigy.

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[141] Chrisman, pp. 20, 22.

[142] See also Elaine Chalus, 'Kisses for Votes: The Kiss and Corruption in the Eighteenth Century', in *The Kiss in History*, ed. by Karen Harvey (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2005), pp. 122-47; Amelia Rauser, 'The Butcher-Kissing Duchess of Devonshire: Between Caricature and Allegory in 1784', *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 36.1 (2002), 23-46; Judith S. Lewis, '1784 and All That: Aristocratic Women and Electoral Politics' (2001), in *Women, Privilege, and Power: British Politics, 1750 to the Present*, ed. by Amanda Vickery (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001), pp. 89-122; Foreman, Amanda, 'A Politicians Politician: Georgiana Duchess of Devonshire and the Whig Party', in *Gender in Eighteenth-Century England: Roles, Representations and Responsibilities*, ed. by Hannah Barker and Elaine Chalus (London: Longman, 1997), pp. 179-204; Anne Stott, 'Female Patriotism: Georgiana Duchess of Devonshire and the Westminster Election of 1784', *Eighteenth Century Life*, 17 (1993), 60-84; Bolton, pp. 30-38.

[143] Rauser, p. 31.

Figure 11: Samuel Collings, *Female Influence; or, The Devons-e Canvas*, 3 April 1784, print, British Museum

Figure 12: Thomas Rowlandson, *The Two Patriotic Duchess's* [sic] *on their Canvass*, 3 April 1784, print, British Museum

Figure 13: *A Certain Duchess Kissing Old Swelter-in-Grease the Butcher for his Vote*, 12 April 1784, print, British Museum

Figure 14: William Dent, *The Dutchess* [sic] *Canvassing for her Favourite Member*, 13 April 1784, print, British Museum

Figure 15: William Dent, *Her – Carrying a Plumper for Charly*, 30 April 1784, print, British Museum

Luttridge, in response, expresses a "wish […] to be a man, that she might be qualified to take proper notice of [Delacour's] conduct" (p. 54). By persuading Delacour, who "had never fired a pistol", to really challenge Luttridge, Freke invited her to cross the threshold between "fashionable *bel esprit*" and "prodigy" (pp. 10, 54). Delacour appears "in male attire", but still does not straightforwardly answer this call (p. 54). Not only did she prime her waiting-maid to alert peace-officers by "spread[ing] a report of a duel", then illegal, Delacour agrees to delope because an injury had "incapacitate[d]" Luttridge rather than risk killing her second, the significantly named *Honour* O'Grady (pp. 57-58). Delacour is punished, however, for firing: her "pistol was overcharged - when [she] fired, it recoiled a blow on [her] breast" (pp. 57-58). "A crowd of town's people, country people, and hay makers" try to duck the women in the horse-pond for challenging the electors' right to assess women's behaviour and therefore their parliamentary candidate (p. 58). Delacour and Freke are able to escape without dishonour, but only by hiding in a women's milliner's shop (undoing the damage done by their "male attire") while Hervey enlists the crowd's support to drive his pigs ahead of a Frenchman's turkeys (p. 59). Delacour refers to this crowd as "the swinish multitude" (p. 60). This is the phrase that Burke used in his prediction that learning would topple with its patrons and professors, the nobility and clergymen, in *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (1790): "learning will be cast into the mire, and trodden down under the hoofs of a swinish multitude".[144] It is now deployed in support of that other untrustworthy custodian of learning, the female prodigy. However, Freke, Delacour, and Harvey, writer of "a treatise 'upon the Propriety and Necessity of Female Duelling'", who

[144] Edmund Burke, 'Reflections on the Revolution in France', in *Edmund Burke*, ed. by Langford, and others, VIII: *The French Revolution, 1790-1794*, ed. by L. G. Mitchell and William B. Todd (1989), pp. 53-293 (p. 130).

communicate “in French”, are really the revolutionaries (pp. 54, 59). The women’s actions make their candidates unelectable: “the common people” choose and elect their own candidate, “whose wife […] was a properly behaved woman” (p. 60).

Belinda’s title character “had been educated chiefly in the country” to be a woman of letters; there, she was “early […] inspired with a taste for domestic pleasures”, including a “fond[ness] of reading, and disposed to conduct herself with prudence and integrity” (p. 7). Crucially, Portman’s tastes and disposition had “yet to be developed by circumstances”; that is, by listening to Delacour, now a prodigy, narrate her own life history (p. 7). Delacour’s imprudent decision-making and “misery at home” convince Portman to reject the advice of her aunt, Selina Stanhope, and Delacour (p. 41). She chooses (a) to “spen[d] […] hours by [her]self in a library” rather than participate in fashionable life at Ranelagh Gardens, concerts, plays, balls, or *fêtes-champêtres* and (b) not to marry “from interest, or convenience, [n]or from any motives but esteem and love” - or, as she later clarifies, love of her suitor’s “good qualities” (pp. 126, 241, 339). Portman aims, instead, to live as do her mother and Lady Anne Percival, as “the chosen companion of her husband’s understanding, as well as of his heart” - so that he need not “reserve his conversation for friends of his own sex, nor […] seclude himself in the pursuit of any branch of knowledge” - and “educat[or] of their children” (p. 216). However, Portman is also convinced by “the manner in which [Delacour’s life history] was related” (p. 69).

Delacour writes something that fits Albert Rivero’s definition of a sentimental novel, that, “simply put, […] reflect[s], represent[s] and appeal[s] to sensibility”.[145] She constructs her decisions as “nothing more than folly” and their

[145] Albert J. Rivero, ‘Introduction’, in *The Sentimental Novel in the Eighteenth Century*, ed. by Rivero (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019), pp. 1-14 (p. 3).

"tragica[l]" consequences as bad luck, deserving of sympathy (and end-of-life care) from Portman: "if you have a heart, you must feel for me", "it is […] a great relief to open my mind to one who has some feeling" (pp. 33, 35, 57, 65). Like *roman à clef* novelists, Delacour also writes "to put [Portman] in possession of some valuable secrets before [she] leave[s] this world", to talk real-life scandal - even if she stops (just) short of "betraying [Freke's] confidence" (pp. 34, 66). Delacour bills her life history as to, specifically, the sentimental courtship novel what "a battle" is to "a review", the ceremonial display and formal inspection of military troops or the naval fleet: a realistic representation of a fashionable courtship and marriage, with "no love in it, but a great deal of hate" (p. 36). Although Delacour promises not to "ski[p] over the *useful* passages", "that there should be no sins of omission", she omits "epoch[s] in [her] history, in which there [wa]s a dearth of extraordinary events", of possible but improbable incidents (pp. 35, 48, 62). Indeed, her narrative focuses on the series of events that culminate in what was - for a *Monthly* reviewer - "the most *novel* circumstance, a female duel".[146]

Edgeworth introduces a second - different 'type' of - writer in her earliest sketch of *Belinda*, dated 10 May 1800: Dr. Sane is "like the idea that may be found of Doctor [John] Moore from his works" (p. 481). Reviewers praised Moore's three novels, *Zeluco* (1789), *Edward* (1796), and *Mordaunt* (1800), not only for their "utility", "instructi[on]", and "didacticism", but for representing nothing improbable:

> [Moore] adheres throughout [*Zeluco*], with inflexible fidelity[,] to a simple detail of facts, all obviously natural and palpably connected, without having the least affinity or resemblance to one extraordinary circumstance or occurrence.
>
> Those who, in novels, look for […] extraordinary adventures […] are not likely to bestow much commendation on [*Edward*]. It is not distinguished […] by deep involutions of

[146] O. W., '*Belinda*', *Monthly Review; or, Literary Journal,* April 1802, pp. 368-74 (p. 369).

> events, by rapid conversions of fortune, by scenes of complicated distress, and of unexpected deliverance. It employs much of the machinery of ordinary incident.
>
> [*Mordaunt* is] not distinguished by an artful contexture of plot, or by a dramatic fullness of incident.[147]

A physician, Sane treats Delacour's "cancer" - caused when her duelling pistol unexpectedly recoiled, what physically marked her as a prodigy - when her "health […] rapidly declines" (p. 482). On his good advice, Delacour "undergo[es] the dreadful operation of having her breast cut off"; this does not, however, restore her to health, make her capable of developing into a woman of letters, because Delacour still refuses to admit the error of her fashionable ways: she goes on to rack up "tradesmen's" and "gaming debts" chasing "elegant amusements", is "vex[ed]" when "the whisper [of her condition] circulates" among her acquaintance, and indefinitely defers "an interview with her daughter" (p. 482). Instead, Delacour falls into a fever and dies. Edgeworth thereby figures the "idea […] of Doctor Moore" trying and failing to make the female prodigy resemble a woman of letters; that is, to make the writer of sentimental courtship novels *à clef* into a real-life romancer, a writer of something improbable and instructive.

When Edgeworth published *Belinda*, she replaced Sane with "famous" writer, Dr. X—. Mr. St. George "met him" - and, by implication, could have met with his writings - "at a circulating library t'other day"; it was (wrongly) supposed that commercial circulating libraries stocked only novels.[148] When Sir Philip Baddely urges his companions to "get out of [X—'s] way as fast as we can, or he'll

[147] '*Zeluco*', *General Magazine and Impartial Review*, June 1789, pp. 258-63 (pp. 259, 263); Gil…s, '*Zeluco*', *Monthly Review; or, Literary Journal*, June 1789, pp. 511-15 (p. 512); Gil...s, '*Edward*', *Monthly Review; or, Literary Journal*, December 1796, pp. 399-403 (p. 403); '*Edward'*, *Critical Review; or, Annals of Literature*, January 1797, pp. 15-21 (p. 21); '*Mordaunt*', *Critical Review*, March 1800, pp. 264-76 (p. 264).
[148] See St. Clair, pp. 242-44.

have some of us down in black and white", he suggests that X—'s novels also told of probable incidents (p. 93). X— is instrumental in Delacour's behavioural and, therefore, her physical recovery after he diagnoses her "perpetual fever, either of mind or body" (p. 115). X— "unfold[s] [Portman's] powers" and "raise[s] her confidence in herself, without ever descending to flattery", he emboldens Portman to tell Delacour that Helena "would add to [her] happiness at home" (pp. 112, 122). Likewise, X— "rouse[s]" Hervey to "be of […] material utility to [his] fellow-creatures" in public and private life; shortly after, Hervey formulates a plan, on which he and Portman later join forces, "to wean lady Delacour, by degrees, from dissipation, by attaching her to her daughter, and to [pattern mother] lady Anne Percival" (pp. 116, 124). Portman goes on to advise Delacour to "revea[l] to lord Delacour [her] real situation", her terminal "cancer", and prove that she and Hervey were not lovers by "show[ing] him [their] letters" (pp. 268, 282). When Delacour is reconciled with her daughter and husband, achieves a happy domestic life, she finally agrees to dismiss the quack surgeon who treated her in secret and allows X— and the "*skilful* surgeon" he recommends to "*examin[e]* […] into the real state of" her breast (pp. 137, 314). X— then discovers that her original bruise had deteriorated into "a wound hideous and painful" due to her quack surgeon's 'remedies' (p. 312). By the final chapter of the novel, Delacour so closely resembles a real-life romancer that Edgeworth permits her to write *Belinda*'s ending: "'and now, my good friends', continued lady Delacour, 'shall I finish the novel for you?'". Delacour arranges Edgeworth's characters "in proper attitudes for stage effect", imagines a theatrical scene that she can physically step outside of and direct (pp. 477, 478). Why, then, did X— succeed where Sane failed? Edgeworth had succeeded in incorporating an improbable incident from family friend, Thomas Day's life, into *Belinda*'s plotline

between finishing her sketch and submitting the novel for publication after 20 April 1801.

In Edgeworth's sketch, Portman is able to "conquer her incipient passion" for Clarence Hervey when she overhears him describe her as a "female fortune-hunte[r]" and Sane "makes him show off the worst parts of his character", when she realises that "his real views […] [we]re not matrimonial" (p. 482). Sane's later "conversations with [Hervey] during an illness" spur him to "disdain his former associates", "stop short in [his] career of dissipation and appl[y] himself to the cultivation of his talents" by "go[ing] into Parliament" and "distinguish[ing] himself" (p. 483). Hervey rises in Portman's estimation when she "meets with a newspaper with his first speech in it"; she only agrees to marry him when he "refuse[s] the most advantageous offers from ministry upon the old fashioned romantic notion of never acting or speaking contrary to his conscience" (p. 483). Whereas, in the published version of *Belinda*, Portman severs romantic ties with Hervey when she learns, in Chapter XI, that he had "endeavoured to gain her affections" while carrying on "some secret attachment" (p. 150). Portman loses esteem for him when she discovers, three chapters later, that the model for Virginia in a painted scene from Jacques Henri Bernardin de Saint-Pierre's *Paul et Virginie* (1788) is his "mistress" (p. 191). Delacour, like ur-Portman's aunt, considers this loss "nonsens[ical]" (p. 272); as Miss Marriott, Delacour's waiting-maid, later comments, "young men of fortune will, if it be only for fashion's sake, have such things as kept mistresses […] no one, that has lived in the world, thinks any thing of that" (p. 325). Hervey later informs Portman and Delacour that Rachel was not his mistress, she was the object of Hervey's "romantic project of educating a wife for himself", of bringing the "picture of Sophia" to life (p. 362) Sophia is the title

character's ideal partner in *Émile; or, On Education* (1762, trans. 1763) by Jean-Jacques Rousseau. Hervey targeted Rachel because the sixteen-year-old was beautiful, had been "bred […] up in innocence" in the New Forest, "away from all the [fashionable] world", and "possesse[d] natural feeling in an uncommon degree" (pp. 366, 367-68). After the death of her grandmother, Hervey engages Mrs. Ormond to act as Rachel's guardian and "t[akes] a house for [them] at Windsor" (p. 370). There, Rachel is not permitted to "receive nor pay any visits", except from Hervey and a clergyman, and she is taught to draw, to write, and (as Hervey "caution[s] Mrs Ormond against putting *common* novels into her hands") to read romances (pp. 370, 380). When Portman "secure[s] [Hervey's] esteem" and "he could no longer resist her power over his heart", he resists the temptation to abandon Rachel and pursue Portman, notwithstanding Ormond's insistence that Rachel "loves [him] to distraction", has been told "that she would certainly be [his] wife", and her reputation has been "fatally injured" by reports "that she is [his] mistress" (pp. 378, 398, 402).

If Edgeworth had succeeded in writing a romance of real life, she also (however briefly) considered the Ministry's "most advantageous offers" and the prospect of marriage to Portman to be interchangeable, aligned a woman of letters like herself with expedient Members of Parliament in government. She derived "the story of Virginia and Clarence Hervey" in *Belinda* from "Mr. Day's educating Sabrina for his wife".[149] On 17 August and 20 September 1769, Thomas Day apprenticed two girls, Anne Kingstone, twelve, and Dorcas Carr, eleven - in R. L. Edgeworth's name, though without his knowledge - from Foundling Hospitals in Holborn and Shrewsbury. Day intended to educate both after the model of

[149] *Memoirs, I, 249.*

Rousseau's Sophie and, ultimately, to marry one. Day re-apprenticed Carr to a milliner within months, but Kingstone remained under his care. Katharine Iles argues that Day restricted her to the same curriculum Sukey Simmons is taught in his 1784 novel for children, *The History of Sandford and Merton*. Simmons reads "the best authors in our language", and of "the established Laws of Nature, […] the rudiments of Geometry", and "domestic economy"; she is also made to wake early, undergo cold baths, and ride or walk "a dozen miles" daily.[150] Day subjected Kingstone to at least three types of cruel test: he "dropped melted sealing-wax upon her arms" to test her pain threshold, "fired pistols at her petticoats, which she believed to be charged with balls", to strengthen her nerves, and "tried her fidelity in secret-keeping, by telling her of well-invented dangers to himself, in which greater danger would result from it's [*sic*] being discovered that he was aware of them".[151] Day then sent Kingstone to a boarding school, where she was "educated to [his] explicit instructions", until 1774, her seventeenth year.[152] Two years later, Day decided that he and Kingstone should not marry (possibly because she "rejected, forgot, or undervalued" his "restrictions as to her dress")[153] and, instead, granted her an annual allowance of £50 "so long as she shall continue, under [his] protection" or a dowry.[154] Day and Kingstone's history was known among his colleagues in the Lunar Society of Birmingham (*c*.1765-*c*.1800); however, by 1801, it had only been described in print by James Keir, in his 1791 biography, *An Account of the Life and Writings of Thomas Day, Esq.*.

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[150] Thomas Day, *The History of Sandford and Merton*, 3 vols. (London: John Stockdale, 1783-89; repr. Gloucester: Dodo Press, 2008), pp. 170-71.
[151] Anna Seward, *Memoirs of the Life of Dr. Darwin* (London: T. Bensley, 1804), pp. 39-40.
[152] Katharine Iles, 'Constructing the Eighteenth-Century Woman: The Adventurous History of Sabrina Sidney' (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Birmingham, 2012), p. 166.
[153] *Memoirs*, I, 339.
[154] Birmingham, Birmingham City Archives, MS 1651 (Acc 91/108), Thomas Day's Undertaking of Protection for Sabrina Sidney, 25 January 1776, cited in Iles, p. 313.

Of *Belinda*, R. L. Edgeworth commented that

> there are usually some small concurrent circumstances connected with extraordinary facts, which we like and admit as evidences of the truth, but which the rules of composition and taste forbid the introducing into fiction; so that the writer is reduced to the difficulty either of omitting the evidence on which the belief of reality rests, or of introducing what may be contrary to good taste, incongruous, out of proportion to the rest of the story, delaying its progress, or destructive of its unity.

Concurrent details might not fit believably into an improbable incident's new fictional context, but, more than this, they might lay bare that incident's original context. Although Edgeworth worked to make Hervey and Rachel "as unlike the real persons as [she] possibl[y] could", to stay within the parameters of good taste, her alignment between women of letters, real-life romancers, and expedient Members of Parliament in government registers her own fear that she had not achieved it.[155]

4.3 Conclusion

In the exchange between "a Gentleman" and "his Friend" that begins Edgeworth's *Letters for Literary Ladies*, the Friend compares men who must write what (bookseller-publishers) will sell in order to supplement or for their income to Members of Parliament who "often pursue the *expedient*", what parliamentary parties think electors want, over "*the right*" (pp. 1, 27). In so doing, the Friend implies a comparison between a second type of writer and Members who only "pursue […] *the right*", guided instead by what readers and electors need. In *Essays on Professional Education*, Edgeworth and her father praise "country gentlemen", who, possessed of "*independent fortunes*", can "speak their minds freely on every subject, […] without fear or reward", in the House of Commons (p. 247). Elsewhere,

[155] *Memoirs*, I, 349-50.

R. L. Edgeworth argued to increase their influence by, variously, extending the franchise, adjusting the number of settlement or county constituencies and/or Members, and shortening the parliament term. If the Members who only "pursue […] *the right*" are country gentlemen, Edgeworth's second type of writer is a woman of letters. She argues that girls and boys should be taught and, later, choose to use research and reason to hunt down useful truths. Only boys should, then, be schooled in the classical languages and writings and the specialist knowledge necessary to most careers. "*Independent fortune*[*s*]" enabled country gentlemen to "acquir[e] an accurate and extensive knowledge on any subject".[156] However, their classical education still ill-qualified them to contribute to knowledge in non-fiction writing and in person; this was not true of leisured women of letters, who read "the good authors of antiquity" in translation.[157] Both correspondents characterise women of letters in opposition to another type of woman writer: the female prodigy. Such women were only taught how to discover fashionable truths as girls. In adulthood, they also write what will sell, not to supplement or for their income, but to show off: romances and sentimental courtship novels. Edgeworth sought to write alternative fictions, to be comparable to a country gentleman Member in a reformed House of Commons.

In *Belinda*, Edgeworth considered writers who represent improbable, but possible incidents from ordinary, private life: writers of instructive real-life romances or of writing *à clef*, fictionalisations of contemporary political and/or sexual scandals. She presents Delacour as a writer of a sentimental courtship *roman à clef* when she relays her life history, the process by which Freke 'transforms' her

[156] *Professional Education*, pp. 276-77.
[157] 'Letter from a Gentleman to his Friend', p. 26.

from a fashionable woman to a 'badly'-behaved female prodigy, to Portman. Dr. Sane, in Edgeworth's earliest sketch of the novel, is unable to reform Delacour's health and, with it, her 'bad' behaviour. Sane was modelled on Moore, a writer of instructive, probable fiction; Sane's failure is also, therefore, Moore's failure to make the writer of *romans à clef* into a real-life romancer. By the time that *Belinda* went to print, Edgeworth had succeeded in fictionalising and incorporating a possible, improbable incident into its plot: Day's project to educate a foundling girl after the model of Rousseau's Sophie and to make her his wife. Edgeworth had, finally, managed to find a middle ground between the *roman à clef* and instructive, probable fiction: the real-life romance. This is why Dr. X—, who replaced Sane in the published novel, is able (by way of Portman and Hervey) to reform Delacour. But the plotline that Edgeworth's new addition displaced registers her fear of writing *à clef*. In her sketch, Hervey regains Portman's esteem by entering the House of Commons and "refus[ing] the most advantageous offers from ministry upon the old fashioned romantic notion of never acting or speaking contrary to his conscience" (p. 483). Hervey regains the same esteem in *Belinda* by resisting the temptation to jilt Rachel, whom others believe to be his mistress, and marry Portman. Edgeworth problematically interchanges Portman, a woman of letters like herself, and Members of Parliament controlling and controlled by bribery or party-organisation.

CONCLUSION

High-profile campaigns to influence parliamentary decision-making, by using published writing to inform public opinion and by demonstrating that opinion to the House of Commons, generally failed between 1772 and 1828. Writers were looked to as more responsive effecters of real-world change. The writer-as-legislator figure offered them a set of ideas by which to think about and describe their role within society, what and why they wrote. By asking how far the House of Commons was elected by and represented the interests of the people, its mandate to legislate, parliamentary reform debaters simultaneously levered open a critical space in which writers could question their own mandate to write, at a time when it was more possible for women and/or members of lower income groups to live by their pen.

I have traced the nature and extent of the reform debate's effect upon how the writer-as-legislator figure was used by Crabbe, Wordsworth, and Edgeworth, three writers who (a) claimed to apply experimental realistic modes to represent ordinary, private life and (b) subscribed to different reform ideologies.

Crabbe made a case for "real picture[s]" of how the rural poor lived and worked to replace pastoral poetry in Book I of *The Village* (I. 5). Crabbe's own lyric persona turns to the behaviour of semi-/unskilled labourers in a borough constituency as a model for this new mode: to save or to make money they smuggle, wreck, and, as freeman electors, accept electoral bribes from outside parliamentary candidates, who, once elected, will not represent their socio-economic interests in the House of Commons. When the speaker, as an outside, wealthier observer, describes his poor subjects as deserving objects of reader sympathy, those subjects will

likewise receive public or private charity. However, that this constituency's electorate comprised only labourers, due to coastal erosion and depopulation, suggests a second example for realistic writing: labourers exploiting their majority-share by freely nominating, electing, and instructing Members of Parliament, leading not to a quick-financial-fix, but long-term improvement to their living and working conditions. (Just as, Crabbe hoped, equally populated borough constituencies and manhood suffrage would enable labourers to exploit their majority-share of the population). Crabbe implicitly reproves his speaker for 'speaking over' poor subjects better qualified to describe their own life experience, for self-interestedly intervening to prevent class relations from really changing.

After 1798, Crabbe tried to qualify himself by developing a realistic verse form by which to narrate incidents from the lives of the rural and urban poor. In the wake of the French Revolution, Crabbe was more anxious to guide non-electors, to safeguard radical parliamentary reform efforts from revolutionary violence. In *The Borough*, the Burgess, a capital freeman, represents the residents of a considerable borough constituency in twenty-four epistles to "the inhabitant of a village in the centre of the kingdom" (PREFACE. 344). In Letter V, electors do not agree to sell but only to lend their votes to parliamentary candidates; in exchange, they expect the Burgess, his "more than Partner", (a) to make interest payments to increase their socio-economic and -political status and (b) to hear and, in his epistles, to write about stories from their and other residents' lives (V. 74). Orford's son rapes his half-sister and both children die within lines of the overseers and magistrates, including the Burgess, deciding to stop her outdoor poor relief in Letter XX. At the beginning of this letter, the Burgess criticised Smith for overloading *Celestina* with sad incidents; as soon as the heroine discovered "the fond Lover is the Brother too",

Smith eroded the Burgess's sympathy and disposed him to stop reading (XX. 106). The Burgess will only (just) financially support a non-elector and incorporate their life history into an epistle if it entertains him. Crabbe uses the Burgess's different relationships with non-/electors to describe his own practice. Narratives that represent abject poverty prompt acts of public or private charity, preserving the socio-economic gap between his subjects and readers. This gap is smaller and prompts no action when Crabbe narrates incidents from the lives of subjects he classed "between the humble and the great".[158] Letter V also includes an anecdote about the borough Mayor's lucrative career as a moneylender; but his original, an "honest Fisherman", remained "a stranger to the method of increasing money by the loan of it" (PREFACE. 350). Like the Burgess, Crabbe paid interest to his subject: he changed the world-view of his readers and, therefore, acted on behalf of the Fisherman's long-term socio-economic interests. In *Tales,* Crabbe used the verse narrative he perfected in 1809 to represent incidents from the lives of, to sponsor, low-to-middle class subjects only. He parallels readers' critical election of John, who tells truths about "common subjects" by way of "satiric song[s]", with voters' by-election of the "good young Lord" Darner to be their Member of Parliament in 'The Patron' (V. 84, 86, 104). Darner turns out to be a "good" representative, but John tries to secure patronage, to buy the lifestyle of a bestselling romancer, by representing Darner's and not his poor(er) readers' long-term socio-economic interests. Crabbe saw something of John's sleaze in his own desire to write only what the reading public wanted to read, to give up / on his abjectly poor subjects.

For Wordsworth, in his 'Preface' to *Lyrical Ballads*, writers feel emotion while observing subjects acting in ordinary, private life. They afterwards recollect

[158] 'Life of the Rev. George Crabbe', p. 198.

and “modif[y] and direc[t]” that response according to what other, already-processed “past feelings” reveal to be “really important to men”; the response is like a bill debated, examined, and amended according to what popular representatives in a unicameral legislature reveal to be in the national interest (p. 126). In this way, writers create a “similar” feeling and so grasp what of their subject to represent in writing (p. 148). Wordsworth hints at two different ‘types’ of writer. On the one hand: poets who only observe subjects in “state[s] of vivid sensation”, whose disinterested representatives reveal the “primary laws of our nature”: “certain inherent and indestructible qualities” distilled from man’s basic nature when “powers in the great and permanent objects” - Natural forms - “act upon it” (pp. 118, 122, 130). The resulting poetry “enlighten[s]” and improves the “taste[s]”, “affections”, and “moral relations” of its readers (pp. 126, 158). On the other: storytellers who only observe impassive or deliberately excited subjects, whose self-serving representatives reveal lesser laws: man’s basic, undistilled nature. The resulting narratives are “gross and violent stimulants” (p. 128).

In *The Prelude*, Wordsworth represented his lyric persona (a) as he and (b) what he sees when he recollects, contemplates, and re-creates his emotional response to ‘observing’, through time, his younger self in “state[s] of vivid sensation”. The speaker’s feelings dialogued with Nature’s in the presence of “beauteous and majestic” Natural forms (I. 636). Ultimately, in young adulthood, he “felt the sentiment of Being” - what Wordsworth described in the *Lyrical Ballads*’ ‘Preface’ as “inherent and indestructible qualities” - operative in, and capable of connecting, any un/“majestic” Natural form and humans (II. 420). The speaker also shared in “mighty Poets[’]” similar visions by reading their poetry (V. 619). He goes on to imply that popular representatives in a republic should also represent the “sentiment

of [human] Being". France's National Convention voted instead to terrorize its citizens, to represent other, more dangerous human qualities. In Book XII, having discovered his poetic vocation, the speaker considers whether, unlike other "mighty Poets[']", his poetry might itself become a "majestic" Natural form for its readers. The speaker then recalls his impulse to leave "Nature's side", to no longer represent the "sentiment of [human] Being", and channel human "darkness" while crossing Salisbury Plain (XII. 297, 327). Nature at once confronted him with a frightening vision of Druids performing a human sacrifice, of poets abusing their power; the speaker, deterred, was conciliated by an alternative vision: of Druids imperfectly inscribing the constellations - Nature's image - onto the plain, of his predecessors trying and failing to wield "a power like one of Nature's" (XII. 312).

The two visions that the speaker experienced on Salisbury Plain originally formed part of 'Salisbury Plain'. This poem tells the story of a tired and hungry traveller forced to find shelter at Stonehenge. I read this as an allegory of men's transition from a state of 'political superstition', tenanting a political belief-system predicated upon ignorance, to enlightenment, in which state they recognise the need for radical parliamentary reform to restore their original elective rights. A bodiless "voice as from a tomb" and, later, the "human voice" of a "female wanderer" describe (almost) the same scenes to frighten the traveller off-course and to conciliate him to that alternative path: Druids (a) performing a human sacrifice and (b) instructing their congregation in astronomy (ll. 81, 137, 138). Wordsworth thereby figured counter-revolutionary movement propaganda warning that radical parliamentary reform would result in an unjust, violent republic, but the current mixture of government forms, and how they are instituted, guards men's socio-economic interests. He cautioned that men would remain vulnerable to this argument

if radical parliamentary reformers continued to deploy "inflammatory addresses to the passions of men" and did not try to engage their reason.[159] A comparison between 'Salisbury Plain' and *The Prelude*'s Book XII reveals that Wordsworth aligned (a) poets representing "the sentiment of [human] Being" with Members of Parliament elected every seven years by a subset of men and controlled by bribery and (b) writers representing human "darkness" with (what, until 1818, Wordsworth wanted for Britain and France) Members elected more frequently and by all men.

My final study, of Edgeworth, starts to address how far gender, composition-type, and class of subject affected the writer-as-legislator figure. In the first epistolary dialogue of *Letters for Literary Ladies*, between "a Gentleman" and "his Friend", the Friend argues that girls and boys should be taught and, later, choose to use research and reason to hunt down useful truths (p. 1). Boys must, then, be taught Ancient Greek and Latin and the specialist knowledge necessary to "pursu[e] a profession, […] to shine in parliament, or to rise in public life" as a diplomat (p. 27). When such men write to supplement or as their income, they are forced to write what bookseller-publishers will sell; the Friend likens them to Members of Parliament who "often pursue the *expedient*", what parliamentary parties think electors want, over "*the right*" (p. 27). In so doing, he implies a comparison between Members who only "pursue […] *the right*" and a second type of writer, guided instead by what electors and readers need. In *Essays on Professional Education*, Edgeworth and her father argue that "country gentlemen", possessed of "*independent fortunes*", can "speak their minds freely on every subject, […] without fear or reward", in the House of Commons; elsewhere, R. L. Edgeworth proposed to bolster their influence by increasing the number of city or county constituencies and/or Members and

[159] *Letters*, I, p. 125 ([8] June [1794]).

shortening the parliament term. "*Independent fortune*[*s*]" also enabled country gentlemen to "acquir[e] an accurate and extensive knowledge on any subject" (pp. 247, 276-77). However, the Friend argues that even if they do not have specialist knowledge, men's classical education limits their ability to "add to the general fund of useful and entertaining knowledge", in writing and in person (p. 28). Country gentlemen should yield their writerly duties to women of letters, who read "the good authors of antiquity" in translation (p. 26). Both correspondents characterise women of letters in opposition to female prodigies. That is, to women who, as girls, were only taught how to discover fashionable truths, who also write what bookseller-publishers will sell, but only to show off, not to "earn their bread" (p. 27).

In *Belinda*, Edgeworth considered writers who represent improbable, but possible incidents from ordinary, private life: writers of instructive real-life romances or of writing *à clef*, (hardly) fictionalised accounts of contemporary political and/or sexual scandals. She charts the process by which Delacour, a fashionable woman, becomes a female prodigy. When she has 'transformed', Delacour "relate[s]" her life history to Portman, a woman of letters, in "the manner" of a sentimental courtship *roman à clef* (p. 69). In Edgeworth's earliest sketch of *Belinda*, Dr. Sane is unable to reform Delacour's health and, with it, her 'bad' behaviour. Edgeworth described Sane as "like […] Doctor [John] Moore", a writer of instructive, probable fiction; Sane's failure is also, therefore, Moore's failure to make the writer of sentimental courtship *romans à clef* into a real-life romancer (p. 481). However, when Edgeworth drafted *Belinda*, she was able to fictionalise and incorporate into its plotline a little-known improbable incident from Day's life. Edgeworth had, finally, managed to find a middle ground between the *roman à clef* and instructive, probable fiction: the real-life romance. This is why Dr. X—, who

replaced Sane in the published novel, is able (via Portman and Clarence Hervey) to help Delacour. Edgeworth's new addition took the place of another plotline: Hervey regains Portman's esteem when he "goes into Parliament" and "refuse[s] the most advantageous offers from ministry upon the old fashioned romantic notion of never acting or speaking contrary to his conscience" (p. 483). In the published version, Hervey regains Portman's esteem by resisting the temptation to jilt Rachel, whose reputation is at stake, and marry Portman. Edgeworth briefly registers her fear of writing *à clef* by interchanging Portman, a woman of letters like herself, and Members of Parliament controlling and controlled by bribery or party-organisation.

Crabbe, Wordsworth, and Edgeworth each pitted a 'rightly'-mandated writer and legislator against a 'wrongly'-mandated writer and legislator, representers of the 'right' against representers of the 'wrong' group's interests in writing and in statutes. All three effectively positioned themselves on Williams's scale between writing understood (a) as the representation of what the writer has abstracted from his subjects' reality, as thinkers and actors in socio-political and -economic contexts, and (b) as the straightforward representation of those subjects' reality, their ordinary way of life. Wordsworth did not seek straightforwardly to represent in poetry the qualities that he really found in his subjects' reality, nor did he align himself with a legislator elected by and representing the interests of the people (notwithstanding his support for radical reform before 1818). Instead, Wordsworth sought to represent distilled human qualities, not derived from his subjects' reality, and aligned himself with a Member of Parliament not elected by the people and representing his own, party, or electoral supporters' interests. There is a need to revise Williams's thesis that the ideal of writing as a representation of subjects' reality emerged during the mid-nineteenth century. Crabbe and Edgeworth, from 1783 and 1795, respectively,

both aspired to represent their subjects' reality and to align themselves with a reformed House of Commons, elected by and representing the interests of a larger subset of people.

If time and space had permitted, I would have tested this thesis against a greater range of writers, in terms of reform ideology, gender, race, class, and regional or national background within Britain. A future study might explore whether other, later clashes between the House of Commons - and/or, more recently, the European Parliament (1979-2019) and devolved Scottish Parliament, Welsh Parliament, and Northern Ireland Assembly (from 1997-98) - and extra-parliamentary public opinion sparked renewed interest in the writer-as-legislator figure. The House of Commons' mandate to legislate was, of course, also debated after 1832; the franchise was gradually extended and seats redistributed in six more Reform Acts, passed in 1867, 1884, 1885, 1918, 1928 and 1948, but even now there are calls for proportional redistribution and to enfranchise men and women between sixteen and eighteen years of age. Did these debates continue to suggest challenges to writers' mandate to write?

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