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THE FICTIONAL REPRESENTATION  
OF THE NAPOLEONIC WARS  
IN SELECTED NINETEENTH-CENTURY  
AUTHORS

Thesis presented for the  
degree of M.A. in the  
University of Durham

by

Jeffrey Mayhew B.A. (Dunelm)

August, 1973

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## ABSTRACT OF THESIS

### THE FICTIONAL REPRESENTATION OF THE NAPOLEONIC WARS IN SELECTED NINETEENTH-CENTURY AUTHORS

Presented for the degree of M.A. in the University of Durham  
by Jeffrey Mayhew, B.A. (Dunelm).

An introduction delineates the scope of the thesis and summarises its findings in a comparative survey of the texts utilised in the study. Five chapters cover five selected authors who are represented by one or two of their works. The first chapter considers Erckmann-Chatrian's Waterloo with particular attention to its form as a first person account and as a work specifically imbued with anti-war sentiments. Firstly the political climate prior to the Waterloo campaigns as described in Waterloo is analysed and then the description of the actual campaigns. The second chapter traces the development of Stendhal's political ideas and of his attitude towards Napoleon, largely through his non-fictional writing. It then examines the Napoleonic legend and the mal du siècle as portrayed in Le Rouge et le Noir and the Italian campaigns and Waterloo as described in La Chartreuse de Parme. Chapter three considers Balzac's political ideas and his attitude towards Napoleon and then presents an analysis of Le Colonel Chabert, including a close study of the battle of Eylau, and a survey of the Napoleonic element in Le Médecin de campagne. The fourth chapter traces Hardy's interest in history and the genesis and development of the ideas which resulted in The Trumpet-Major and The Dynasts. The first is considered in its entirety and the second for its presentation of the battle of Waterloo. Lastly chapter five examines Tolstoy's interest in the period and in particular his ideas on history as expressed in the Epilogue to War and Peace. An examination of Tolstoy's presentation of the battle of Borodino concludes the chapter.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I owe a debt of gratitude to my supervisor, Louis Allen, to my wife, and to my parents.

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## INTRODUCTION

This study does not seek to prove or demonstrate any preconceptions, literary or historical, nor does it seek to examine in a general way the whole scope of the historical novel, a task which has been admirably undertaken, both on the widest front and, more specifically, for English Literature.<sup>(1)</sup> Here a particular area of history, that period, the Napoleonic Wars, which is arguably the most significant in the development of the historical novel, is considered through its presentation in various works of fiction throughout the nineteenth century. Thus we are not exclusively preoccupied with the historical novel as such; the classical definition of the form would certainly exclude much of the fiction considered here. A central purpose is a close examination of the technique of battle description and this forms an important part of each chapter and concerns five of the eight works used. Closely allied to this is the discussion of the problem of presenting history in fiction and the degree of success achieved by the various authors. However it was soon found to be of great interest and importance to be able to ascertain, to some degree, the extent and nature of each author's interest in the Napoleonic period and the Wars and to see how this is reflected in their literary works. This occasioned consideration of the Wars as a whole and also required some mention of the Napoleonic legend. To this end Le Rouge et le Noir, Le Médecin de campagne and The Trumpet-Major are included, which, whilst they do not contain any extensive battle description, they add a great deal to this more general consideration of each of the chosen authors.

The final choice of works in this selective study places the emphasis on the importance of the period for France but includes the two other major protagonists, England and Russia. However a major consideration was the intrinsic merit of each

work and its use within the context of the study rather than a deliberate selection from these three nationalities. An attempt to encompass to any greater extent the geographical area involved was abandoned by the exclusion of Galdos' Trafalgar and Grabbe's Napoleon oder die hundert Tage for reasons of length and, with the latter, to avoid using another work in translation.

Although there is no one postulation central to this study certain common factors necessarily emerge and are considered both within the chapters and in this introduction which is largely a comparative summary of major aspects brought to light in the subsequent chapters.

The basic, important elements in successful literary fiction are seen to be an awareness of the historical process, an ability to present convincingly a given period of history, and the ability to relate the given historical period both inwardly to the lives of those involved and outwardly to the broad pattern of history. The battle descriptions, whilst involving all these elements, show how a personalised account intensifies the description and provide the major link between the works in their anti-war aspect.

Erckmann-Chatrion demonstrate their historical sensitivity in a detailed, composite picture, albeit from a limited standpoint, of the political background, prior to the Hundred Days, to the resurgence of the Napoleonic Wars. The battles of the Waterloo campaigns are thoroughly and convincingly described and, if lacking in consummate artistry, the novel Waterloo provides an efficient picture of humble citizens caught up in great events of history. The essential interplay between the credible historical background and the lives of the fictional characters is adequately demonstrated and it does not seem to matter that world-historical figures are rarely and briefly glimpsed. In fact too great a dependence on the presence of such characters seems to damage the illusion of reality, as it does, for example in War and Peace.

The Dynasts, which also extensively portrays world-historical characters, is in any case never entirely real, its presentation of the past remains for the most part artificial and wooden. Although some consciousness of world-historical figures is doubtless necessary to historical fiction this should only be in order to enhance the historical background by making it truly historical as opposed to a theatrical backdrop:

When life is seen in the context of history we have a novel; when the novel's characters live in the same world with historical persons, we have a historical novel. (2)

As Lukács points out, (3) the total absence of historical figures, to be successful, entails the ability to vividly portray that period of time which the leading figures would otherwise represent and embody for posterity. Lukács refers specifically to Erckmann-Chatrion when he makes this comment. In Waterloo Erckmann-Chatrion appear fairly successful on this count showing that Avrom Fleishman's foregoing comment over-stresses the importance of the presence of historical figures. The essential is the intensity of the historical nature of the account, the extent to which the characters are shown to be living at a particular period of time. Lukács describes the ideal situation:

Just as the 'world-historical individual' as a central character stands in the way of a concrete historical and human portrayal of actual popular movements, so, as a minor character, he assists the writer in conducting them to their concrete historical summits. (4)

The more serious defect in Waterloo, which, as the one naturalist work, affects none of the other works in this study, is its limited viewpoint. The authors confine their attention to the people and include not only no world-historical figures but no characters outside this narrow, if potentially rich, field. Despite the fact that the major



events of the world intensely affect the mass of the people, and this is particularly so during the Napoleonic Wars, some attention to what Lukács terms 'above' and to 'external' history adds intelligibility and raisonné'être to the lives of those below:

The mistrust for everything that happens 'above' becomes an abstract mistrust, it freezes in this abstraction and impoverishes the historical reality depicted. The consequence of this overnearness to the immediate, concrete life of the people is the shrinking or even disappearance of their highest and most heroic qualities. The abstract contempt for 'external' history gives historical events a grey everyday character, reduces them to a level of simple spontaneity.

(5)

It is above all Balzac who, regardless of his political opinions, portrays the whole range of humanity with insight and sensitivity. Balzac represents, in this study, the ultimate in historical awareness for Stendhal's brilliance does not alter his revisionist, if understandable, nostalgia for the greatest period of bourgeois heroism. Balzac achieves for Restoration France what Zola achieves for the Second Empire but with an even greater degree of skill. Balzac, in Le Colonel Chabert, demonstrates his complete understanding of all his varied characters and his knowledge of the forces which motivate or drive them. He is historically aware as is particularly shown here and yet understanding and sympathetic towards the vanished past, which perhaps constitutes the finest feature of Le Médecin de campagne. Lukács attributes much of this skill to Tolstoy but this is surely through political motivation. It is hoped that the chapter on Tolstoy in this study demonstrates that although Tolstoy was concerned with patriotism and the 'spirit' of the nation this was rather in accordance with his philosophy of history than any significant sympathy with the Russian peoples. The ordinary Russian soldier, is, in fact, rarely encountered and never constitutes a major character. Tolstoy's

criticism of administrators and generals is surely not to give 'the mistrust and hatred of the people a concrete, visible object'.<sup>(6)</sup> It is rather, again, occasioned by his historical concepts.

Despite all Tolstoy's theorizing there is no real appreciation of the mass-movement nature of the Napoleonic Wars, the patriotic zeal of the Imperial troops, the democratic nature of France and its army and the intensely revolutionary spirit prevailing. Both Stendhal and Balzac are fully aware of the spirit of the period, as they are of its eventual decline and loss of élan. Even Erckmann-Chatrion have some conception of mass movement although their novel is preoccupied with anti-war propaganda and is not concerned with this positive side to the conflict. For Russia, of course, the struggle was a simple defence of the country, which explains both Tolstoy's attitude and, similarly, Hardy's. Hardy displays little other than nationalist feeling on the historical plane despite meticulous study and a real interest in history. Napoleon's part in the reinstatement of the old monarchies is recognised in The Dynasts but largely Hardy shares Tolstoy's preoccupations with nationalism in the face of a foreign threat. Hardy's strength is that occasionally, despite his Victorian shackles of plot and his badly dated philosophical ideas, the power and beauty of his portrayal of rural England and its peoples on the brink of Industrial Revolution comes through. In The Trumpet-Major and The Dynasts Hardy has gone back slightly in time and prepared his background thoroughly yet still the highspots of both works are the pages concerned with those same people.

Thus, although historical awareness is a prime factor in the writing of great historical fiction, degrees of success can be achieved even when this is not present. Tolstoy, for example, triumphs through artistic excellence and particular facility in portraying warfare. Some works, such as Waterloo, are strongly motivated by a specific purpose which

lends them a status they would otherwise not enjoy. However although greater historical awareness is not a prerequisite of historical fiction, even if it characterises the best examples of the form, a credible presentation of the period of history in question is vital to the work. This brings in an essential element in historical fiction, the necessity for some adherence to fact. This is a complex problem which has been analysed with great insight by Fleishman:

Granting that historical fiction, like all art, tells some kind of truth, it clearly does not tell it straight. By the same token, history itself does not tell truths that are unambiguous or absolute; even the nature of historical fact is problematic. Yet the value and, almost inevitably, the meaning of a historical novel will stand in some relation to the habitual demand for truth, and it is here that a theory of the genre needs to begin. (7)

As this study demonstrates the essential is an appearance of credibility which becomes more important when the writer is attempting to convey specific ideas. In this field Erckmann-Chatrian are successful but Tolstoy sometimes fails badly. Stendhal is seen to present the Italian Campaigns in such a way that they represent the most glorious period of the Napoleonic Wars fought by a liberating, revolutionary army. This brilliant beginning contrasts with the tawdry end at Waterloo, the two events representing the birth and death of the Empire. Stendhal thus is guided by artistic requirements and the verve of his account and the appeal of the picture he draws does much to make his presentation acceptable to the reader. For Hardy, motivated by his interest in the history of the period, the aim is to present the facts with all possible accuracy. Balzac's main concern is with social consequences and the import of the present and his account is modified to suit the character involved, that is to say the Wars become an integral part of the background to Comédie humaine and are not considered for their own sake.

Stendhal is retrospective in his involvement with the mal du siècle; Balzac looks forward.

Besides historical awareness, both on a wide and more limited front, and the necessity for some semblance of truth in historical accounts, another element necessary for the successful creation of literary fiction is the personalisation of an account. It is not sufficient that events are described with insight and accuracy and are related in a general way to the lives of persons living at the time. The characters in the work must be seen to be people of that period whose lives and personalities are inextricably mingled with the events that take place. The Dynasts is least successful from this aspect whereas this constitutes one of the major strengths of the first person account in Waterloo. The Trumpet-Major, whilst having no pretensions, fares better and, although it has been denied that it is really an historical novel, it remains a delightful miniature. Some form of personal involvement characterises the best of the battle descriptions, those in La Chartreuse de Parme and War and Peace where the myths of order, control and glory are thoroughly exploded. Hardy's attempts in The Dynasts fall far short of these.

The one striking aspect of all the battle description and the only substantial unifying element between all these works is the anti-war element:

From Stendhal's Charterhouse of Parma to Tolstoy's War and Peace, novelists have tried to expose the soft underbelly of historical pretensions about the glory of the first general European war. (8)

Although Stendhal's evinces great enthusiasm for the Italian campaigns Waterloo is shown in a very different light. Here the aimless yet deadly confusion is intensified by the bemused wanderings of Fabrice. In War and Peace it is Pierre who takes on Fabrice's rôle. At Eylau Colonel Chabert's

first person account conveys the full horror of the mass graves and in Waterloo Joseph Bertha tells of the inexorable advance of the gun-carriages over the helpless wounded. The intense, vivid personal experience adds to the force of these accounts which all condemn the act of war. Even in The Dynasts, where this personal element is lacking, one of the strengths of the description of Waterloo is its anti-war content.

In its concern with the social and political repercussions of the Napoleonic Wars, with the reverberations of the Napoleonic Legend and with the details of the battles themselves as seen through the eyes of nineteenth-century writers, this study is essentially an examination of the exploitation of this period - the Napoleonic era - as raw material for literary fiction.

NOTES TO INTRODUCTION

1. G. Lukács, The Historical Novel, Harmondsworth, Penguin Books, 1969.  
A. Fleishman, The English Historical Novel, Baltimore and London, The John Hopkins Press, 1972.
2. A. Fleishman, op. cit., p.4.
3. G. Lukács, The Historical Novel, p.250.
4. Ibid., p.254.
5. Ibid., p.251.
6. Ibid., p.252.
7. A. Fleishman, op. cit., p.4.
8. Ibid., p.198.

## CHAPTER I

### ERCKMANN-CHATRIAN

### WATERLOO

Technically Waterloo is radically different from the other works included in this study. It is not a difference of form that is in question here. On this basis it is The Dynasts, since it cannot be classified as a novel, that is the outstanding exception. The difference is not the medium employed, but a more fundamental aspect of writing; the position the writer has chosen to adopt in relation to his reader. Waterloo is written in the first person, and, particularly in an historical novel, this opens up new possibilities, and limitations, in technique.

It is a temptation, above all with lesser known writers, to stress the limitations of a particular technique and to regard 'successful' areas of the work as examples of the writer triumphing over his self-imposed limitations. No one suggests that Racine was hampered by the restrictions of contemporary dramatic theory. Similarly it seems the only constructive manner in which to approach Waterloo is to consider that Erckmann-Chatrion chose their method of presentation precisely because it would result in a highly distinctive form of novel.

Erckmann-Chatrion present this period of history through the first-person account of a man of the people looking back fifty years to when, as a young man, he took part in the campaigns of 1813 and 1815\*. Joseph Bertha, who remains a private soldier throughout all his campaigning, is only sufficiently elevated to render him more or less articulate. In the mouth of Jean Buche the story would gain an even greater popular flavour but it is unlikely that such a man would be fitted, or motivated, to write such an account.

Erckmann-Chatrion evidently intended to produce an entirely popular account of the Napoleonic Wars. Since the decision to suppress the author-creator and substitute a proletarian story-teller must eliminate all possibility

\*Histoire d'un Conscrit de 1813 and Waterloo respectively.

of Waterloo being purely an artistic reflection of historical realities, the present aim will be to determine possible objectives. The postulation is that Erckmann-Chatrion employed their historical raw material as the substance of a piece of propaganda which, by its nature, lends itself most to the manner in which it is presented.

In the use of the first person Erckmann-Chatrion achieve a degree of intensity of experience and of historical validity otherwise impossible. It should be noted that Histoire d'un Conscrit de 1813 was published in 1864 and Waterloo in 1865 which means that there is no reason why these works should not, of necessity, be the reminiscences of a man in his seventies. This may not, at first sight, appear to be particularly important. However Erckmann-Chatrion were writing for the contemporary audience with definite aims in mind and these aims demanded verisimilitude. Although usually the general reader is willing to accept a great deal in a work of fiction that normally he would automatically dismiss as beyond the realms of possibility, when there is a strong propaganda element involved audience cooperation cannot be so readily assumed and the vehicle that carries the message should present a faultless and feasible appearance to the observer. Emile Erckmann was born in 1822 and Alexander Chatrion in 1826 so their achievement is all the more worthy of recognition, for whatever the artistic value of these works their efficacy as propaganda, itself based on their degree of credibility, cannot be denied.

The use of historical material, both in the manner in which it is employed and the eventual aims in employing it, is an intrinsic part of the use of first person narrative and cannot be separated from it. The driving force in Waterloo is its underlying function as a tract against military aggression. There are also various positive aims, understated and less skilfully handled, which will be examined later.



The fundamental aspect of the use of the first person is the intensification of popular historical experience. This is not confined to the descriptions of military action but is manifest in the events, with their political and social implications for the mass of the people, which lead up to the campaigns of 1815. Naturally a full and valid account of complex events could not be conveyed by a youthful, inexperienced man gifted with no great powers of insight or intellect. One way round this problem would be to endow the old Joseph Bertha with the experience and wisdom of years and allow events to be viewed objectively in retrospect. There are obvious disadvantages in this method. Firstly events would lose their immediacy by being turned from vital, day-to-day occurrences into the dull stuff of an old man's reminiscences. Also too much comment and drawing of inferences would become tedious and badly disrupt the pace of the narrative. Even more important the reader, if not left to judge unprompted the events recounted and if not left to draw the conclusions the writers wish him to draw through the impact of the narrative alone, will become aware of being coerced and the propaganda content will subsequently lose its force. In fact Waterloo is remarkably free from reminiscence. The account is progressive in that each event is shown in the light of Joseph Bertha's attitude at that time, and his character develops with the tale. This is complementary to the technique employed of building up, virtually without comment, a large number of examples of a particular aspect the writers wish to convey, such as the conduct of émigrés, so that when any inferences are drawn it is after the reader has been familiarised with the situation and is in the position of being able to understand and generally sympathise with the opinions eventually expressed. This way the reader does not feel he is being dictated to and is under the impression of having reached many of the writers' conclusions before they are stated and is struck by the reasonableness of any such conclusions. A more general view than naturally available in one man's memories is in fact conveyed by the unedited reporting of the opinions

and reactions of characters around the story-teller. This highly effective method of broadening the scope of the account, especially in the early stages of the book where events are regarded more in their political and social context, will be examined at greater length at a later stage.

The efficacy of the first-person narrative and its peculiar ability to intensify historical events is in evidence from the beginning of Waterloo. In the first lines the reader is presented with a subjective comment which places the story-teller in the position of an informed witness whose experiences of this time have made a deep impression on him:

Je n'ai jamais rien vu d'aussi joyeux que le retour de Louis XVIII en 1814. (1)\*

The mechanics of good historical writing are clearly discernable in the episode of the running up of the Bourbon flag. Here an external historical fact is first established, only marginally particularised by the use of the first person. This event is then shown in context as it effected Phalsbourg and its people and then finally the reader can observe the ultimate popular application of what could have remained a mere directive from the powers that be:

Je me rappelle que, le 3 mai, quand l'ordre arriva de monter le drapeau blanc sur l'église, toute la ville en tremblait, à cause des soldats de la garnison, et qu'il fallut donner six louis à Nicolas Passauf, le couvreur, pour accomplir cette action courageuse. (2)

An indication of pacifist aims can be found early on in conjunction with a policy, much exploited during the course of the book, of dissociating the people from military aggression and placing responsibility for all but defensive warfare firmly on the heads of men of power. As will be seen Erckmann-Chatrion generally view the people as manipulated by the leaders and never infer popular compliance in

\* The numbers in brackets refer to the page number in Erckmann-Chatrion, Waterloo, J.Hetzel et Cie., Paris, Vingtième Edition.

acts of aggression. Aggressive attitudes are always taken to be the natural result of putting human beings in a military context; aggression is never the result of popular movement:

...tout le monde était las de vivre comme l'oiseau sur la branche, et de se faire casser les os pour des choses qui ne nous regardaient pas. (2)

Popular disenchantment with warfare is most convincingly expressed through Joseph Bertha's own dismissal of the only element in armed conflict which could possibly be conceived as being of any worth: glory. In such a fashion the ground is carefully prepared for the final, firm stand taken against war:

...je connaissais la gloire, et cela me donnait encore plus l'amour de la paix et l'horreur de la conscription.(3)

Another aspect of the intensification of historical reality is the relating of events, not necessarily of great significance in themselves, to the daily lives of the ordinary people. The effect is to draw the reader's attention to aspects of history of which he would not normally be aware and in allowing the fictional narrative to instruct him in one matter he will be all the more likely to accept its presentation of other, more significant matters. A good example of this situation is the need for Joseph Bertha to obtain permission to marry owing to him being a soldier conscripted in 1813. A minor historical fact becomes here a tangible, personal reality. This episode is productively developed and demonstrates a further highly important aspect of the possibilities provided by first-person narrative. The attitude of the ordinary man to the powers that be is amply illustrated throughout the book but probably nowhere as clearly as here. Joseph Bertha proves himself limited in outlook but quite definitely identifying with the people. The popular view of persons of power is an intrinsic element in the construction of this form of historical fiction. It is

possible to claim that if the viewpoint is entirely popular the narrative becomes bottom-heavy and that lack of any observation of the ruling classes results in an ill-defined target for any criticism and thus ineffectual criticism. However much of the force of the propaganda relies on the hypothesis that the people are the unwilling but powerless pawns in some vague power-game in which the prize is individual self-advancement. Any close observation of the so-called ruling classes, such as can be found in Tolstoy's War and Peace, could well show the parts played by circumstance and chance and the lack of any real control of many great men, greatly impairing Erckmann-Chatrion's effectiveness. Any person of position is always seen entirely from the people's point of view with their characteristic over-simplification and blind belief in the prime importance of their own petty affairs:

"Ah! si ce ministre savait le plaisir qu'il peut nous faire en écrivant deux mots, je suis sûr qu'il écrirait tout de suite. Comme nous le bénirons, Catherine et moi, et la tante Grédel, et tout le monde!" (6)

At this early stage it would be appropriate to mention in passing the aesthetic limitations of this method of presentation. It is obvious that it would in no way lend verisimilitude to Joseph Bertha's account if an ornate literary style were employed. There are only two or three effective images in the entire book. If it were not for the content of the narrative, particularly the description of the campaigns, tedium would almost certainly set in. The most obvious manifestation of this popular style is the adjectival triteness:

...je voyais Catherine d'avance, avec ses bonnes joues roses et ses yeux bleus. (7)

At its worst the style can develop a heavy lyricism possibly less objectionable to the contemporaries of Erckmann-Chatrion:

Dieu du ciel, on n'est jeune qu'une fois! Et la bonne fraicheur du matin, la bonne odeur des églantiers le long des haies;... (9)

In Erckmann-Chatrion's championship of the people and faith in their capacity for peaceful endeavour it is made quite clear that they are the constant factor in life, the creators, the providers, and the preservers. It is the man of power who is disruptive in his relentless self-seeking at the people's expense. It is the common man who must constantly repair the ravages of these men or 'remuer la terre piétinée par la cavalerie.'<sup>(8)</sup> It is the people who have their priorities correctly adjusted:

...on savait qu'un coup de scie ou de rabot vaut mieux qu'un coup de canon;...<sup>(9)</sup>

However the people, though usually portrayed as being in the right, are rarely positive in their actions. Erckmann-Chatrion, as will be seen later, are effective posers of problems but reticent in the suggestion of solutions. On the whole the people are shown to be a flaccid body, a powerless tool in the hands of the ruler. Only in the later scenes is any active objection raised to the lot of the ordinary man. Until then what is more likely to be shown is a lack of conscious involvement; especially on the part of Joseph Bertha, and the cathartic property of grumbling:

Ces paroles nous calmaient un peu, et nous passions le reste de la journée à chanter et à rire! <sup>(11)</sup>

Erckmann-Chatrion are not unaware of the many reasons behind the domination of the vast mass of the people by a generally unpopular minority. The trend after the bourgeois revolution of 1789 was less towards a republican ideal, if that was ever a very real objective, than towards the consolidation of the few gains made and a pervading materialism. In this light the shifts of loyalty and the ideological contortions amply portrayed in Waterloo are more comprehensible. In one of the few examples of retrospective comment Joseph Bertha analyses the volte face which characterised popular opinion:

J'ai pensé bien souvent depuis que c'est ainsi qu'on a toujours les bonnes places sous tous les gouvernements, et malgré cela j'aurais eu honte de crier contre ceux qui ne peuvent plus vous répondre et qu'on a flattés mille fois; j'aurais mieux aimé rester pauvre en travaillant que de devenir riche et considéré par ce moyen. Enfin voilà les hommes! (12-13)

The vast, and natural, conflict of genuine opinion within the body of the people is also demonstrated and will be examined separately.

Despite their opportunism and their internal dissent, the absence of which would be scarcely credible, the overall view of the people is by and large one of positive sympathy. Whilst Joseph Bertha has his blind spots finer feelings can still be recognised in him which reflect the popular attitudes of the time:

"...mais à tout péché miséricorde; qu'ils soient heureux, qu'ils se portent bien, c'est tout le mal qu'on leur souhaite." (16)

It is significant that although such thoughts are expressed an exact description of the manners, attitudes and even the dress of the émigrés referred to here makes it, at the same time, abundantly clear what will happen. In this way the reader approves the people's sentiments and is put in the position of regarding the conduct of the émigrés as nothing short of treachery in the face of such magnanimity.

When the intentions of the émigrés become clearer to him Joseph Bertha's own attitude is subjective and even selfish and it is necessary to present at length more balanced views. To Joseph, and this represents accurately the narrow attitude towards the country's affairs often held by the people, the real evil the émigrés are perpetrating is in swamping the administration with their business to the detriment of his permission. Even his solution to the problem is narrow and reiterates the self-seeking aspect of the popular mentality. There is no consciousness here of the need for popular action:

"Mon Dieu! délivrez-nous des anciens et des nouveaux nobles! Comblez-les de vos bénédictions, mais qu'ils nous laissent tranquilles." (19)

Despite Joseph's limitations he still represents an invaluable direct contact with historical reality and his simple presentation of events and what they meant to him at the time allows a remarkably vivid picture to be painted. An outstanding example is the opening lines of chapter III:

...quand je pense a Napoléon, j'entends le canon de l'arsenal tonner le matin et nos petites vitres grelotter;...Et quand je pense a Louis XVIII, j'entends sonner les cloches; je me figure le père Brainstein et ses deux grands garçons pendus à toutes les cordes de l'église,...(27)

At the same time he persists in isolating himself from any common cause and insists on pursuing only his own ends. However a more positive character, such as M. Goulden, could scarcely be used to report a composite picture of the times and moreover Joseph Bertha's accounts are easier to accept as entirely objective precisely because of his own non-committal attitudes:

Dieu merci! je n'avais rien à me reprocher pour la mort de Louis XVI, je n'avais pas non plus de biens nationaux, et tout ce que je souhaitais, c'était d'obtenir la permission de me marier avec Catherine. (30)

The significance of many of the more sinister aspects of the Restoration escape all but the more politically aware of the people and by the time any kind of historical perspective can be grasped it is too late:

En ce jour, je devais voir des choses qui m'ont fait réfléchir depuis bien souvent: c'étaient les signes de grands malheurs, et personne ne les voyait, personne n'avait le bon sens de comprendre ce que cela signifiait. (46)

Joseph Bertha's own vacillations reflect the mood of the people; the faults of one system highlighting the virtues of another until that system in its turn bears the brunt of

criticism. Two passages are worth comparing from this aspect, firstly:

"Du temps de l'Empereur, on partait pour la Russie ou pour l'Espagne, c'est vrai; mais au moins les ministres ne faisaient pas languir la jeunesse" (56)

Secondly:

"J'aimerais pourtant mieux voir de ma fenêtre les processions que d'aller me battre contre des gens que je ne connais pas! Au moins cette vue ne me coûterait ni bras ni jambe, et si cela m'ennuyait trop, je pourrais aller faire un tour aux Quatre-Vents." (165)

However the reader is not left entirely without any intimation that Joseph Bertha does not eventually realise his narrowness of outlook:

Je ne pensais pas que, pour conserver la paix, ce n'est pas assez d'être content soi-même, mais qu'il faut que les autres le soient aussi. (88)

As the novel progresses the reader becomes more aware of the awakening of Joseph's political and historical consciousness. Eventually, during the campaigns themselves Joseph becomes fully articulate and takes upon himself the entire task of conveying the impressions of the ordinary man caught up in major events. He no longer requires the comments of diverse characters in order to establish political climates or social realities. In the earlier stages of Waterloo however Joseph's primary function is still the establishment of a convincing historical narrative:

J'ai vu depuis d'autres révolutions, mais jamais une agitation pareille, surtout le 8 mars, entre quatre et cinq heures de soir, quand l'ordre arriva de faire partir sans retard le 1<sup>er</sup> et le 2<sup>e</sup> bataillon armés en guerre, pour Lons-le-Saulnier. C'est alors que l'on comprit tout le danger, et que chacun pensa: "Ce n'est pas le duc d'Angoulême ou de Berry qu'il faudrait pour arrêter Bonaparte, c'est toute l'Europe." (128-9)



Much of Erckmann-Chatrion's vindication of the people as aggressors relies on the premise that the persons of power and position are truly in command of affairs:

...il faut être prince, pour que les idées servent à quelque chose et que chaque parole qu'on dit passe pour un miracle. (130)

As well as Joseph Bertha's direct observation, subject as it is to a naturally undisciplined and fluctuating outlook, verbatim reports of other people's comments and the general noting of reactions of various groups, outside the immediate circle of friends and relatives, help to build up a composite picture of daily life within this particular historical context. The earlier part of the book consists of a vast body of gleanings, from brief observations such as:

...tout le monde était content excepté les vieux soldats et les maîtres d'armes. (2)

to the shrewd commentaries of M. Goulden. It is particularly in the first fourteen chapters of Waterloo that these recorded opinions and attitudes are important. Whilst in the latter half of the book Joseph Bertha stands more and more on his own, to the extent of carrying the full burden of the pacifist propaganda, in the opening chapters it is M. Goulden who is the more significant. Erckmann-Chatrion required a character who did not have too highly-developed political sensibilities and powers of analysis in order that the scenes of violence which characterise the descriptions of the battles of Ligny and Waterloo could be directly and strikingly recorded; heightened and intensified by earnest deprecation rather than clouded by tortuous debate and polemic.

The strengths therefore constitute the weaknesses and initially Joseph's naive and single-minded approach has frequently to be qualified from other sources. It must again be pointed out, however, that even here the advantage of Joseph's simplicity is the presentation of this qualifying material untrammelled by superfluous comment. Incidentally,

although generally in the straightforward rôle of chronicler, Joseph is not beyond being struck by some of the things he hears and regretting his limitations:

Malheureusement je n'ai pas l'instruction que cet homme de bien avait, sans cela je me ferais un véritable plaisir de vous raconter ses idées. (172)

In the initial stages, however, any comment is simple to the point of expressing either acquiescence or the mildest disagreement. Remarks such as 'Je trouvais ses raisons bien bonnes' (6) are characteristic. Joseph is easily swayed and can agree with first one opinion and then another, having failed to bring any powers of selection or criticism to bear. During an argument between Tante Grédel and M. Goulden the reader can see this indecision quite clearly, Joseph states "Elle a raison, voilà ce qu'il faut faire." (22) However this is followed by 'ce que venait de dire M. Goulden me paraissait juste.' (24)

Slight character defects are not visible only to the reader. M. Goulden remarks on Joseph's lack of fortitude, "tu manques de caractère" (41) but is probably nearer the mark when he observes:

"Tu parles quelquefois sans réfléchir." (41)

Joseph's limited viewpoint is also noticed:

"Écoutez, moi je ne connais rien à la politique; puisque la permission est venue, eh bien! le reste ne me regarde pas."

Il riait tout haut et s'écriait:

"Ah! bon Joseph! bon Joseph!" (58)

It is only fair to point out, in defense of Joseph's attitudes, that he is the character to be most affected by any resumption of hostilities, as he is well aware:

"Elle\* tient avec le père Goulden, parce qu'ils lisent la gazette ensemble. Cette gazette dit toujours ce qui

\*Catherine

leur plaft le plus; mais cela n'empêche pas que s'il faut reprendre le sac et partir, ce sera terrible,...(148)

However the most important function of the reporting of other characters is the broadening of the scope of the narrative and this will now be examined. The two main characters represented are Melchior Goulden and Tante Grédel. M. Goulden, as he is referred to, is early on established as a character of insight and intelligence. Although at heart a republican he is not dogmatic and prefers compromise and stability to purism and strife. M. Goulden is given the greater grasp of historical perspective and in the first part of Waterloo conveys the most significant opinions:

"...songez qu'en cinq ou six coups d'aile il sera dessus... les oies se sauveront; mais nous autres, nous aurons encore une fois l'Europe sur le dos!" (110)

Tante Grédel is endowed with most of the attributes of a penetrating and perceptive member of the people, yet gifted with little or no political insight. Hence she has the people's generous and all-embracing scorn for all those in power yet is imbued with a cautious conservatism which cleaves, understandably, to peaceful repression rather than bellicose freedom. She is more concerned with practical manifestations than theories, and will not allow fine promises to excuse unfortunate consequences. Her ideas are not as contradictory as they may seem. A healthy disrespect for authority can easily go hand-in-hand with a feeling for what is 'right and proper', and Tante Grédel's lack of sympathy for both Revolution and Empire is largely inspired by the almost continuous warfare.

In the affair of the permission Tante Grédel closely echoes Joseph's reactions:

"Eh bien! ce gueux de ministre n'a pas encore écrit? Il n'écrira donc jamais? Est-ce qu'il nous prend pour des bêtes? L'autre se remuait trop, et celui-ci ne se remue pas assez!" (10)

In her mounting concern over this affair Tante Grédel fulfills a productive function as a 'voice of the people':

"...tous ces ministres ne valent pas mieux les uns que les autres; il faut qu'on choisisse tout ce qu'il y a de plus mauvais, de plus fainéant pour remplir cette place!" (21)

However in her solution to the problem of obtaining the permission she shows herself to be unaware of her popular heritage, and of the political significance of the expiation in which she is to participate, motivated only by her immediate personal desires:

--Hé! mon Dieu! s'écria la mère Grédel, qu'est-ce que cela nous fait? Nous n'irons pas là pour eux, nous irons pour avoir la permission. Je me moqué bien du reste, et Joseph aussi. N'est-ce pas, Joseph?" (23)

She is unaware of earlier sacrifices of the people and of the true nature of their oppressors. Above all she is unaware of how little these oppressors have changed, and of how much these events are the thin end of the wedge. The propagandist exhortations of the clergy are sufficient to present to the reader the true state of affairs:

...le prédicateur dans sa chaire dit qu'il venait défendre la foi, la religion, le droit divin de Louis XVIII,...(34)

Her conception of the ideologies of the Republic is as mistaken as her mis-placed trust in the Restoration:

"...il\*ne pense qu'à sa vieille République, où tout le monde était souverain: les mendiants, les chaudronniers, les savetiers, les juifs et les chrétiens. Ça n'a pas de bon sens." (25)

Tante Grédel's elaborate displeasure is turned to total, and highly unrealistic approbation, when events go her way:

"Ce ministre, vois-tu, Joseph, c'est le meilleur des hommes...S'il était ici, je l'embrasserais et je l'inviterais à la noce; il aurait la place d'honneur avec M. Goulden."(60)

\* M. Goulden

This readiness to apportion praise or blame according to personal circumstances, possibly far beyond the control of any person in power, is a manifestation of the willingness to isolate oneself from the popular cause and seek only one's own ends. Tante Grédel's attitudes, whilst not governed by political insight or consciousness, are always intensely human. Her criticisms of Napoleon are just, but she does not try to see beyond her immediate instinctive judgements to a possible establishment of some better, altogether more satisfactory order, any step towards which is better than retrogression.

It is through the words of M. Goulden that firmer lines of thought are laid down. He alone has an overall view of the possibilities of the people, aspirations which never fade, and ideals which are not subject to the influence of momentary personal gratification nor clouded by temporary disappointments and setbacks. He is supremely conscious of the fluctuating nature of men's loyalties:

"Vous prenez donc les gens pour des bêtes, vous croyez qu'ils n'ont pas de mémoire?" (13)

M. Goulden's strength lies not only in clarity of observation but in the ability to deduce possible political, historical and sociological patterns from the behaviour he observes, and here lies his foremost function in Waterloo:

"Et quand, à force de les entendre s'extasier, les rois et les empereurs finissent par se croire des dieux, et qu'il arrive des révolutions, alors des gueux pareils les abandonnent, et recommencent la même comédie sous les autres. De cette façon, ils restent toujours en haut, et les honnêtes gens sont toujours dans la misère!" (14)

M. Goulden, representing as he does the most penetrating aspect of Erckmann-Chatrion's political writing, is the only character to be imbued, to any degree, with a sense of humour and an ironical turn of phrase:

"Rien que de regarder à notre fenêtre, nous pouvons apprendre les belles manières, pour nous en servir quand nous serons ducs ou princes." (17)

The people's cause, to M. Goulden, is always of primary importance. He alone perceives the basic impossibility of the Restoration. He allows for the possible success of a constitutional monarch but can see no end but failure for any attempt to put back the clock. He realises, too, the dreadful result of turning against the Bourbons, who have the allied seal of approval, his fears being amply justified. M. Goulden can see no popular advantage in a return to the ancien régime:

Le peuple a réfléchi depuis vingt-cinq ans, il connaît ses droits, il sait qu'un homme en vaut un autre, et que toutes leurs races nobles sont des plaisanteries: chacun veut garder son champ, chacun veut avoir l'égalité des droits, chacun se défendra jusqu'à la mort." (19)

To an extent, although respected and loved, M. Goulden remains an unknown quantity to those around him, with the possible exception of Catherine. Joseph Bertha himself has no great insight into M. Goulden's character:

Je pensais toujours qu'il changerait d'idée sur la procession de Louis XVI,...(31)

It is significant that only M. Goulden casts doubts on the degree of responsibility of men in positions of power. He is aware of mitigating circumstances and is far more conscious of general human imperfections:

"On ne me fera jamais croire que Louis XVIII sache tout cela... Non! il a vu trop de choses dans sa vie, pour ne pas mieux connaître les hommes." (37)

The first nine chapters of Waterloo constitute a relentless advance towards the point where the return of Napoleon becomes inevitable:

Nous en étions là quand, au commencement du mois de mars, le bruit se répandit comme un coup de vent que l'Empereur venait de débarquer à Cannes. (125)

M. Goulden knows nothing will prevent Napoleon from returning to power:

"Il paraît qu'on a peur des soldats; mais alors comment arrêter Bonaparte? Ce ne sont pas non plus les paysans, auxquels on veut ôter leurs biens, qu'on peut envoyer contre lui, ni les bourgeois, qu'on traite de jacobins." (127)

M. Goulden, who has always been conscious of the inevitability of this chain of events, shows a good understanding of the forces involved in the situation:

"Est-ce qu'on n'aurait pas dit que Bonaparte lui-même soufflait à l'oreille de ces Bourbons toutes les sottises capables de dégoûter le peuple? Dites... ne fallait-il pas s'attendre à ce qui se passe?" (142)

That such situations have to be resolved by violent conflict, rather than be subject to the moderating influences of reason and compromise is equally clear to M. Goulden:

"Mais, comme l'hypocrisie et l'intérêt cachent et obscurcissent tout et fait la nuit en plein jour, il faut malheureusement des coups de tonnerre pareils pour voir clair." (146)

For M. Goulden hope lies with the people but, whilst realistic enough to perceive the flaws in the Empire régime, he is nevertheless prepared to endorse the Napoleonic resurgence as a step in the right direction:

"...au moins il est forcé de conserver quelque chose de notre Révolution..." (143-4)

His positive thinking and fundamental optimism are sustained by a faith in the power of the people for good and the hope that Napoleon also will realise that true strength is the authority vested in a man by the common will of the populace:

"Mais aujourd'hui les choses sont changées, cet homme, auquel on ne peut refuser le génie, a vu ses flagorneurs l'abandonner et le trahir; il a vu que sa vraie racine est dans le peuple, et que ces grands alliances ... ont causé sa perte." (145-6)

If, however, the leaders persist in failing the country the people can always be relied upon, and this is the essence of M. Goulden's thinking, at heart Republican, and a major tenet in the book as a whole:

"C'est égal, la France est toujours un grand et glorieux pays. Si les nouveaux nobles valent juste autant que les anciens, le peuple au moins est ferme."(82)

M. Goulden goes as far as to envisage international popular unity against warmongering rulers. He feels, as did many during the 'liberating' phase of French conquests, that Republican France has much to offer to the oppressed of Europe:

"L'Empereur va nous parler de liberté, soyez en sûrs. S'il veut lancer des proclamations en Allemagne, beaucoup d'Allemands seront avec nous; on leur a promis des libertés pour les faire marcher en masse contre la France, et maintenant les souverains réunis à Vienne se moquent bien de tenir leur promesse: leur coup est fait... ils se partagent les gens comme des troupeaux. Les peuples de bon sens tiendront ensemble; de cette façon, la paix s'établira par force. Les rois seuls ont intérêt à la guerre; les peuples n'ont pas besoin de se conquérir..." (158)

However were war to break out M. Goulden cannot envisage such a war as being one of French aggression but more as a nationalist movement against the repressive designs of the allied leaders:

"La nation veut la paix; mais si les alliés commencent la guerre, malheur à eux! Maintenant on va reparler de la liberté, de l'égalité, de la fraternité. Par ce moyen, toute la France se lèvera.....Le temps des soldats est passé; les armées régulières sont bonnes pour la conquête, mais un peuple qui veut se défendre ne craint pas les meilleurs soldats du monde." (157-8)



When conflict seems inevitable and it is apparent that the troops will be mobilised M. Goulden is still firm in his opinion that the cause is just:

"Et cette fois il ne s'agit plus de prendre le bien des autres, mais de sauver notre propre pays." (190)

The degree of importance of other people in the establishment of the pre-conflict political picture varies from casual indications of general feelings to substantial verbatim reports of characters such as Zébéde and Marie-Anne. Often there is little more than the briefest reference to general popular reaction, as with the early Royalist proclamations, vague in content and mild in tone, and gaining 'approval':

On affichait aussi que le sénat avait eu l'honneur de lui faire un discours magnifique, disant qu'il ne fallait pas s'effrayer de tous nos désordres, qu'il fallait prendre courage, et que les sénateurs l'aideraient à sortir d'embarras. Chacun approuvait ce discours. (15)

Generally speaking Zébéde plays a far more important rôle in the creation of a link between the political first half of the book and the martial second half. However he does contribute a significant substantiation of M. Goulden's denunciation of the leaders and his declaration of faith in the people:

...tout ce grand monde.....abandonnant la capitale à l'ennemi; pendant que les pauvres ouvriers en blouse, - qui n'avaient portant rien eu de l'Empire que d'être forcés de lui donner leurs enfants, - se précipitaient par milliers autour des mairies, en demandant des armes pour défendre l'honneur de la France, et que la vieille garde les repoussait à la baïonnette!... (81)

Zébéde also provides a first-hand account of the humiliations of the imperial army, at the hands not only of its conquerors but of its émigré officers. He is conscious of the army's declining status:

...les curés étaient tout, et que l'épaulette n'était plus rien! (87)

Perhaps the most significant contribution, certainly one of the most stylistically effective, is that of Anna-Marie in Chapter VIII. The reader learns, in a dramatic fashion, that the Restoration is beginning to bite deep. The unaffected innocence of Anna-Marie coupled with her obvious good heart and basically harmless nature render all the more powerful the impact of what she has to say. The reader is not side-tracked into wasting mental effort in disliking the character or trying to find grounds for attacking and criticising her, as one would were these works placed in the mouth of a politically-conscious partisan. The reader is free to absorb the true import of the chatterings of this woman and is as astounded as her hearers. The unbelievably retrogressive attitudes expressed by Anna-Marie show that the part of the Church in the establishment of the Restoration could not be too greatly stressed:

"...M. de Rauzan et le révérend père Tarin veulent qu'on rebâtisse les châteaux, qu'on rende les bois, les prés, les champs aux nobles, et qu'on remette tous les étangs en eau provisoirement, parce que les étangs sont aux révérends pères,..." (105)

There is a nightmarish quality in Anna-Marie's eccentric logic; gleaned from sermons or conversations with the clergy:

"...les moines et les capucins avaient les biens des pauvres, et les jacobins se sont tout partagé entre eux." (106)

Occasional specific events are highlighted to show popular reaction. This is particularly so when such events are of local concern, such as the humiliation of Vandamme:

...toute la ville le connaissait; on ne peut pas se figurer l'indignation des honnêtes gens à cette nouvelle. (116)

The plight of the Empire officer is most effectively demonstrated in the account of Margarot and Falconette:

"Non, colonel, laissez-moi... nous sommes entre nous... un vieux soldat peut nous entendre... On nous affame ... on se conduit vis-à-vis de nous comme des Cosaques ... On est trop lâche pour nous fusiller!" (122)

The reader is prepared for Margarot's later, dramatic declaration of faith in the Emperor. The loyalty of the army as a whole to the Empire is impressively shown in the roll-call in the dark and the rain:

A peine avait-il poussé ce cri, que tout éclatait, on ne s'entendait plus; de toutes les fenêtres, sur la place, dans les rues, partout des cris de: Vive l'Empereur! Vive la France! partaient comme des coups de trompette. Les gens et les soldats s'embrassaient; on aurait dit que tout était sauvé, que nous avions retrouvé tout ce que la France avait perdu en 1814. (155)

The first part of the book draws to a close with the final words of Chapter XIV, which form the culmination of all the political developments of a relatively brief period of time, carefully delineated and brought to life in all their historical immediacy:

Nous étions en route pour Waterloo. (190)

The sixth chapter of Waterloo seems in many ways to act as a link between the two parts of the book despite not physically joining them. In the predominantly political first half it acts above all as a reminder of the continuous martial element inherent in the period, at a time when this appears to have receded with Joseph's non-participation. The chapter falls roughly in the middle of a systematic analysis of the progression of events which lead to inevitable warfare. It helps to avoid historical isolation in continuing the build-up of wave upon wave of conflict which culminates eventually in the battle of Waterloo. The return of Zébébé

with the 6<sup>e</sup> helps to overcome a gap left by Joseph's home-coming from the continuing warfare:

...je reconnus les longues capotes grises que nous avions reçues le 22 octobre 1813 sur les glacis d'Erfurt; elles étaient devenues toutes vertes par la pluie, la neige et les vents. (65)

Nearly the entire Napoleonic era was characterised by violence and aggression. This chapter recognises the change in character of the Wars from the early days of the defence of the Republic. The campaign of quasi-liberation, as for example in Italy, had given way to wars of Imperial expansion. National feeling had in turn arisen in the conquered countries resulting in defensive and repressive measures abroad. The defeat of the French forces after Leipzig saw actual incursions into French soil and the subsequent humiliations of conquest and occupation. All this is dramatically pictured here:

...on voyait ces grandes plaines de Champagne, où les villages fumaient à droite et à gauche; les femmes, les enfants, les vieillards qui s'en allaient par bandes, à demi nus, emportant l'un sa vieille pailasse, l'autre quelques vieux meubles sur une charrette; pendant que la neige descendait du ciel,...(79)

The horrors and discomforts of campaigning are all considered as nothing compared with suffering defeat at the hands of enemy forces advancing into one's own territory. This fore-shadows and emphasises the trauma of the ultimate defeat:

"Ah! de se battre, de souffrir la faim, le froid, la misère, les marches et les contre-marches; ce n'est rien, disait Zébéde; mais d'entendre pleurer et gémir en français des femmes et des enfants au milieu de tous ces décombres, de savoir qu'on ne peut pas les sauver; que plus on tue d'ennemis, plus il en revient; qu'il faut reculer, toujours reculer, malgré les victoires, malgré le courage, malgré tout...voilà ce qui vous déchire le coeur, monsieur Goulden!" (79-80)

As has already been pointed out this chapter also shows the ease with which persons of power can turn their backs on their responsibilities in times of crisis. Ultimately the firm resolve of the people is all that can be relied on. The figure of the Emperor is shown in a questioning light:

Il devait lui passer terriblement d'idées par la tête depuis Marengo, Austerlitz and Wagram. (79)

Although invasion of one's country by enemy forces is considered the paramount evil the conditions suffered by the troops are not summarily dismissed. The reader is given a foretaste of the experiences Joseph will later undergo, and one can view the impending conflict all the more seriously knowing, as one now does, something of the implications of war. The rigours of winter and the ravages of disease serve as allies with death in combat:

...le lieutenant Baubin avait passé la Sarre à la nage, pendant qu'il gelait à pierre fendre,.....Zébéde, le soir, s'était enterré dans le fumier d'une ferme pour se réchauffer;... (78)

...l'hôpital de la Piété répandait la peste, malgré l'hiver, à cause des masses de blessés qu'on ne pouvait pas soigner. (80-81)

Mutability of opinion and the vacillation of people's loyalties are clearly underlined, as elsewhere. They serve to render even more intolerable the conditions of the re-turning forces, already suffering the shame of defeat:

...et partout les processions, les services funèbres avaient excité le peuple contre eux. (76)

This again is another foretaste of the situation in which Joseph will find himself after Waterloo; an indication not only of the realities of war and shifting political climates but of the utterly pointless and thankless nature of all struggles between the masses of people instigated by rulers in their own interest in the face of that of the people.

Erckmann-Chatrion are particularly conscious of this aspect and are fully aware of the implications for his dependents of a common man's mobilisation:

"Joseph, c'est dans la joie que l'on sent le chagrin d'être pauvre; ce n'est pas assez de donner son sang pour la patrie, il faut qu'à cause de cela la misère reste à la maison, et quand on revient il faut qu'on ait ce spectacle!" (77)

The total futility of the campaigns leading to Napoleon's first exile is best realised in the description of the returning Imperial troops forced to pay allegiance in defeat to the reinstated Bourbons:

Ah! ceux qui n'ont pas fait campagne ne sauront jamais ce que c'est de revoir son régiment, d'entendre les mêmes roulements de tambour qu'en face de l'ennemi et de se dire; "Voici tes camarades qui reviennent battus, humiliés, écrasés! les voilà qui penchent la tête avec une autre cocarde." (66)

It is made clear that the impending battle of Waterloo is going to change nothing except to add to the number of lives lost:

Ces changements sont arrivés après Waterloo! ...et notre ancien porte-aigle, Faizart, a balayé quinze ans le pont de la porte d'Allemagne. Ce n'est pas beau...non...la patrie devrait être plus reconnaissante! (66-7)

Although a through indictment of the evils inherent in warfare is left to the latter half of the book there is a particularly poignant passage in this chapter which is in itself amply capable of dispersing the aura of glory or bravado that inevitably shrouds the true nature of armed conflict:

Sur la place, le père Klipfel et cinq ou six autres regardaient aussi le bataillon en ligne. Ils avaient bien reçu les actes de décès, mais c'est égal, ils espéraient que peut-être on avait commis des erreurs, car leurs garçons n'aimaient pas écrire. Ils regardèrent, et ensuite ils partirent pendant le roulement. (69)

The second section of Waterloo will be examined from two main aspects. Firstly as a first person narrative showing how this renders the text more immediate and striking; particularly necessary for the strong element of anti-war propaganda. Included in this will be a necessary examination of the nature of the first person. All events are seen from the point of view of the private soldier, of Joseph Bertha or his comrades or his immediate superiors, the non-commissioned officers. As an introduction to this aspect it is worth drawing attention to a quotation from Histoire d'un conscrit de 1813 which seems to epitomise the position of the common soldier in relation to his commanding officers:

Le capitaine de la compagnie s'appelait Florentin; le lieutenant Bretonville, le commandant du bataillon Geneau, le capitaine adjutant-major Vidal, le colonel du régiment Zapfel, le général de la Brigade Ladoucette, et le général de la division Souhain:- tout soldat doit savoir cela, s'il ne veut pas marcher comme un aveugle.\*

Secondly this section will be examined specifically as a tract against warfare.

The opening chapter of this section, chapter XV, sees the entry of Jean Buche into the narrative. Significant in that he expands Joseph's field of observation into the lowest reaches of society and the simplest attitudes to life as much as M. Goulden provides the balanced, intelligent viewpoint, Jean Buche brings the voice of the lowest echelons of society into the outcry against war. Initially however even the conditions of a marching army are better than those of home for Jean and this invites the thought that men are better kept for purposes of aggression than in trying to live a decent life:

La seule chose qu'il disait quelquefois, c'est que les souliers vous gênent pour la marche et qu'on ne devrait les mettre qu'à la parade.(192-3)

\* Erckmann-Chatrion, Histoire d'un Conscrit de 1813, Jean-Jacques Pauvert, Paris, 1964, p.86.

This passive acceptance is later to become positive contentment:

L'existence des soldats, la bonne gamelle, le bon pain, la ration régulière, les bons habits chauds, les chemises bien solides en grosse toile, tout cela lui paraissait admirable. Jamais il ne s'était figuré qu'on pouvait vivre aussi bien; et la seule idée qui le tourmentait, c'était de faire savoir à ses deux frères, Gaspard et Jacob, sa belle position, pour les décider à s'engager aussitôt qu'ils auraient l'âge. (207-8)

From time to time Erckmann-Chatrian employ the first person narrative with great skill and effectiveness. Sometimes this is achieved by an illusion of recollection:

Le mot d'ordre était: "Jemmapes et Fleurus!" Cela me revient d'un coup...Comme pourtant les choses dorment dans notre esprit durant des années! ce mot d'ordre ne m'était pas revenu depuis 1815. (210)

Chapter XVII opens with a general account of the topography of the area the night before Ligny. The first person is effective in this context. Overall descriptions, however, although helping to build up a composite picture of a pre-battle situation, are not as historically convincing as more personalised details which appear to necessitate personal participation rather than author research:

...arrivaient des femmes, des hommes, des enfants avec des cruches de bière vineuse, du pain et de l'eau-de-vie très forte, qu'ils nous vendaient moyennant quelques sous. Buche et moi nous cassâmes une croûte en regardant ces choses, et même en riant avec les filles, qui sont blondes et très-jolies dans ce pays. (218-19)

The technique of contrived recollection is applied with effect at a further point when making a thumbnail sketch of sergeant Rabot. Here the common soldier describes the superior with whom he is in direct contact:

Rien qu'en parlant de lui je l'entends nous dire tranquillement: "La bataille est gagnée! Par file à droite, en avant, marche!" (270)



In the early part of the second half a generally cordial reception is given to French troops; an aspect to which the ordinary soldier would be highly sensitive:

Je me rappelle.....qu'ils levaient les mains d'un air joyeux et criaient:

"Les Français!... Les Français!..." (215)

Joseph's own reactions to his circumstances are authentically charted in their very fluctuations and contradictions. Generally realistic he is prone to the selfishness and excesses of any man in such a situation. This abandonment of basic moral principles in times of war will be examined as an integral part of the anti-war element. His reflections are sometimes very unedifying:

Quel malheur d'être pauvre, et de ne pas pouvoir s'acheter un homme qui marche et qui reçoive des coups de fusil pour nous! (201)

Bearing in mind that Joseph is not a raw recruit (their reactions are another aspect of Jean Buche's rôle in this section) he is able to approach warfare with realism and experience:

Je voyais aussi que l'extermination approchait;...(201)

He refrains from using his knowledge to enlighten Jean Buche prematurely and in his reaction to Zébedé's enthusiasm he reiterates his own lack of personal involvement:

Et j'étais forcé de lui répondre:

"Oh oui, la noce va recommencer!"

Comme si j'avais été content de risquer ma vie et de laisser Catherine veuve avant l'âge pour des choses qui ne me regardaient pas. (202)

Joseph's constant realism in the face of the horrors of warfare avoids the situation which might have occurred had someone of Zébedé's nature been the narrator; that of over glorifying warfare and falsifying the degree of danger involved:

On aurait cru que ces Prussiens et ces Anglais n'allaient pas se défendre, et que nous ne risquions pas d'attraper des boulets et de la mitraille, comme à Lutzen, à Gross-Beren, à Leipzig et partout. (209)

The reader is aware of Joseph's opinion of the value of 'la gloire' from the very outset of Waterloo:

...moi, je connaissais la gloire, et cela me donnait encore plus l'amour de la paix et l'horreur de la conscription. (3)

It is not then surprising that he should take an embittered view of reputation gained in combat, his objections to being in a famed regiment being coldly realistic:

Je vis aussitôt que notre malheureux bataillon allait toujours être en avant-garde, comme en 1813. C'est triste pour un régiment d'avoir de la réputation; les hommes changent, mais le numéro reste. Le 6<sup>e</sup> léger avait un bien beau numéro, et je savais ce que cela coûte d'avoir un si beau numéro! (222)

Considering his attitude towards 'la gloire', which again serves to strip the realities of war of romantic notions, Joseph's reference to the tardy arrival of the fourth battalion is a final irony on glory in combat:

...puisque notre quatrième bataillon, qui devait nous rejoindre au Châtelet, n'arriva que le lendemain de la bataille, lorsque nous étions presque tous exterminés dans ce gueux de Ligny et qu'ils ne nous restait plus seulement quatre cents hommes; au lieu que, s'il avait été là, nous aurions donné ensemble, et qu'il aurait eu sa part de gloire. (226-7)

Although it is not necessarily valid to infer a criticism of conditions from every description of the state of the troops, since these things were relative to such as Jean Buche and since ideas on comforts can change, occasionally comment is evidently intended to be critical and enforce the idea of the general unpleasantness of warfare in and out of action. Chapter XVII records the last proper distribution of the campaign. The provender is mentioned later

when the raw recruits are seen to be unable to muster better, to the jeers of the seasoned troops. When eventually nothing is to be had off the land those with this poor fare are envied in their turn. To the private soldiers commons were the focal point of existence:

Avant de partir, chaque homme avait reçu sa miche de trois livres et deux livres de riz; c'est ainsi que la campagne s'ouvrit pour nous. (223)

The opening of Chapter XVIII shows Joseph Bertha meditating on the outcome of the forthcoming battle of Ligny. Despite his attempts to look at events optimistically in the light of his past fortunes he is unable to deny the possibilities his own realism indicates. These reflections, common to most soldiers, add to the sense of impending danger and death:

"Tu t'es sauvé de Lutzen, de Leipzig et de Hanau; pourquoi ne te réchapperais-tu pas encore d'ici?"

Mais ces espérances que je me donnais ne m'empêchaient pas de reconnaître que ce serait terrible. (229)

It is interesting to note that, despite perhaps somewhat half-hearted attempts, usually through the conversation of M. Goulden, to establish a common bond between all peoples in their desire for peace and freedom basic, unreasoned hostility to the foreigner and an uncomplicated aggressive view of the enemy still persists. This may well be to attain verisimilitude in the characterisation of Joseph Bertha. However it is even more likely, and this will be examined in greater depth at a later stage, that Erckmann-Chatrion purposely seek to avoid any enobling of conflict and suppress any philanthropic tendencies of individuals. It is the conflict and the bringing about of that conflict which is condemned. The subsequent brutalities of the soldiers are considered as the natural consequences of strife which in themselves cannot be condemned. An example of the unrelieved critical attitude towards enemy troops, or one at least

which implies criticism, is embodied in the tiresome, if in character, comments on the various forms of diane and réveil. (229-30)

The morning brings an interesting discussion on the forthcoming hostilities between various non-commissioned officers. Joseph is a party to this, the friendship between them not being affected by difference in rank. Here the first person narrative is expanded in scope by direct reporting of others. A dramatic picture is also constructed of a group of raw recruits being more or less brutally enlightened to the rigours of warfare:

"...mais nous autres, c'est de la mitraille que nous attrapons, parce que nous sommes plus près. On s'avance l'arme au bras, au pas accéléré, en bon ordre, et l'on finit toujours au pas de course, à cause de la mitraille qui vous cause des impatiences. Je vous en préviens, conscrits, pour que vous ne soyez pas étonnés." (232)

No warning can even approximate reality, however, and Joseph, from his examination of the day's events in retrospect, is able to philosophise on this:

Si l'on savait tout dans des affaires pareilles, on n'oserait jamais commencer, parce qu'on n'aurait pas l'espoir de venir à bout d'une entreprise si dangereuse;...(235)

The higher commanders are, of necessity, viewed entirely from the ranks. Whilst this may result in a certain one-sidedness and a reliance on retrospect and even hearsay to chart all details of actions it at the same time results in an immediate and sometimes striking view of events and personalities. Where an historian would research a meeting of chiefs of staff and find his motivating factors in the despatching of messengers and the movement of troops, here aides de camp are fleeting figures on the horizon, commanders are seen, when seen at all, in a very different light, and troop movements are seen close to with the variations in terrain, the myriad small details of advance and retreat

and the individual deaths and casualties seen in all their significance for the common soldier. There are many instances of the ranks' attitudes towards commanding officers, that towards le général Gérard is one of the most sympathetic:

...on trouve beaucoup de paysans chez nous qui lui ressemblent, ce ne sont pas les plus bêtes. (236)

Confidence in the Emperor is generally high, even towards the end:

"...si l'Empereur était avec nous, la bataille serait gagnée depuis longtemps;..." (237)

The soldiers' rôle in a meeting of commanders is succinctly drawn, and with it the sheer distance between high command and the troops themselves:

L'Empereur arrivait à cheval avec un petit état-major; de loin on ne reconnaissait que sa capote grise et son chapeau... (il) resta dans ce village, plus d'une heure, pendant que nous rôtiissions dans les blés. (238)

The results of the deliberations are viewed from afar:

...des files d'officiers d'ordonnance partirent, les reins pliés, le nez entre les oreilles de leurs chevaux; deux s'arrêtèrent auprès du général comte Gérard, un resta, l'autre repartit. (238)

It is immediately before the battle of Ligny that Joseph Bertha reflects at some length upon the person of the Emperor. He blames most of the present situation upon him because of his political errors. The conflict to him is the result of mismanagement to a degree where 'il ne lui restait plus que son armée'.<sup>(240)</sup> The readiness of the old soldiers to 'vaincre ou mourir',<sup>(240)</sup> exacerbated the situation, but Joseph cannot comply:

...pour ma part, j'âmais beaucoup plus Catherine que l'Empereur.  
(240)

The opening of hostilities leads to much apprehension on the part of Jean Buche:

Je connaissais cela, mais Buche devint tout pâle; il ne disait rien et me regardait d'un air étonné. (241)

Serious ideas are provoked in both Joseph Bertha and Jean Buche, each according to his character. Joseph tries to find consolation in the thought that the possible leaving behind of a child might in some way continue his existence, but with little real success:

Je me dis que je ne serais pas tout à fait mort. Mais j'aurais bien voulu pourtant vivre, et je voyais que ce serait terrible. (242)

Buche is another ordinary soldier before battle and, unable to find the consolation which Joseph to an extent has, he turns to the final comfort of religion. His request, in its gravity and humility, is in fine contrast with the careless sacrifice of countless lives instigated by orders from above:

"...et que tu la\* pendes dans la chapelle, en souvenir de Jean Buche, mort dans la croyance du Père, du Fils et du Saint-Esprit." (243)

The battle commences with the realisation, on the part of Joseph, of his own powerlessness to protect himself in the coming conflict. His awareness of the puny nature of man caught up in such circumstances serves to highlight what appears to be the lack of such an awareness in those trying to shape the destiny of mankind through violence. His appeal is to God as, ultimately, is the appeal of the work as a whole:

"Voici notre tour. Maintenant, que Dieu veille sur nous; car ce n'est pas nous autres malheureux, qui pouvons nous

\* a pendant cross

sauver dans des massacres pareils!" (243)

The heat of the battle brings with it the awareness of the incompetence of the command and, indeed, the virtual impossibility of any real direction of the disordered chaos which is a battlefield. Joseph Bertha is aware of the abnormality of the situation. His instincts of self-preservation enable him to behave in a manner he would not have thought possible:

Moi je sautais par-dessus les palissades, où jamais de la vie, dans un autre moment, je n'aurais eu l'amour-propre de croire que je pouvais sauter, principalement avec le sac et la giberne sur le dos;...(247)

The change in mentality of the troops is also recorded and will be examined later.

The ordinary soldier, represented by Joseph Bertha, is well aware of the shortcomings of his commanders. The lack of unity, the impossibility of imparting coherent orders, or indeed of making any clear-cut tactical move under the battle conditions, is evident to Joseph:

Les officiers s'indignaient contre nous, comme s'ils n'avaient pas suivi le mouvement de retraite; beaucoup criaient: "Qu'on fasse avancer les cançons!" D'autres voulaient reformer les rangs, et c'est à peine si l'on s'entendait, au milieu de ce grand bourdonnement de la canonnade, dont l'air tremblait comme pendant un orage. (247)

The senselessness of it all and the blind stubbornness of the commanders is very clear to someone who is taking the greater proportion of the risks:

...c'est contraire au bon sens de s'obstiner dans une entreprise pareille!  
J'étais indigné contre nos généraux, j'en étais même dégoûté. (248)

Erckmann-Chatrion seem sometimes to credit the common

soldier with over-much insight into military tactics especially considering the difficulty in even seeing anything clearly. Joseph Bertha's analysis of the situation during the battle seems highly redolent of knowledge gained after the battle.

Cette fois, il s'agissait de passer le ruisseau, de rejeter les Prussiens de Ligny, de remonter la côte derrière, et de couper leur armée en deux; alors la bataille serait gagnée! Chacun comprenait cela, mais avec la masse de troupes qu'ils tenaient en réserve, ce n'était pas une petite affaire. (254)

That such a close analysis of the situation was not really possible is born out by lines coming very soon after: '...on ne voyait que les cinq ou six hommes devant soi.' (254) However generally the battle narrative is convincing and effective.

Up to this point in the battle the emotional tenor is naturally violent. Erckmann-Chatrion have the psychological insight to recognise a possible highest point and subsequent fall in the scale of emotions:

Dans cette extrémité j'étais devenu calme, je me résignais à mon malheur, en pensant; "Tâche de conserver ta vie!" (260)

It can be mentioned at this point that another technical strength of Erckmann-Chatrion is their approach to presenting material necessary to the text which was unavailable to the narrator at the time. Their subtlety in this field compensates for the occasional what appears to be over-generous amount of perception with which the troops are sometimes endowed. The fact that gaps in the narrative are filled with knowledge gained afterwards is simple enough:

Tout le monde sait aujourd'hui qu'entre sept et huit heures du soir, à la nuit tombante, l'Empereur.....avait ordonné tout de suite la vieille garde de nous soutenir. (267)

In such an example, as with the direct reporting of others' speech, the simplicity of approach provides effective and convincing narrative. However elsewhere the technique is



developed to produce highly effective results. In the description of Hougoumont, towards the end of Waterloo, Joseph states:

Cette ferme, d'où j'étais, on ne la voyait pas, mais elle devait être encore plus solide...(294)

The description ends:

Ces choses, je ne les ai pas vues de mes propres yeux, mais quelques anciens m'ont raconté plus tard l'attaque de cette ferme, appelée Hougoumont. (294)

This admitted recourse to others for information, and particularly to others best qualified to give such information, in itself heightens the validity of the content and Joseph's explanation, for such recourse is an especially skilful technical device:

Il faut tout expliquer, quand on parle d'une bataille pareille; mais les choses qu'on a vues soi-même sont le principal; on peut dire: "Je les ai vues! et les autres, je les ai seulement apprises par d'honnêtes gens incapables de tromper ni de mentir." (294)

As has already been postulated it is of paramount importance to make the narrative, vehicle for the propaganda, acceptable in every way to the reader. Indeed lengthy indulging in the technique of reporting at second hand, either at the time or from a later date, is carefully avoided. A swift summary of movements, commands and everything that would under normal circumstances escape most of the ranks, being able to see nothing in its entirety, is completed and at one stage deliberately abandoned in order to return to the meat of 'genuine experience':

C'est tout ce que j'ai compris, car lorsqu'ils se mettent à parler du mouvement des onze colonnes, de la distance des déploiements, et qu'ils nomment tous les généraux les uns après les autres, il me semble entendre parler de choses que je n'ai pas vues. J'aime donc mieux vous raconter simplement ce que je me rappelle moi-même. (296-7)

Scattered descriptive phrases and passages used to build up an impression of the battle when under way are always well handled. The obscurity and the turmoil of Ligny as the day draws to a close are tersely captured:

...on ne distinguait pour ainsi dire que les cuirasses blanches qui traversaient les lignes des uhlands...(269)

Brief flashes of clarity permit grim pictures to start from the darkness:

Et les blés foulés, la pluie qu'e rayait le ciel, car un orage venait d'éclater, les blessés sous les pieds des chevaux, tout sortait de la nuit un quart de seconde. (269)

The victory of Ligny was not pursued. This contributed to the defeat at Waterloo and, according to Joseph Bertha, was commented on at the time. However as usual general opinion still firmly supported Napoleon:

Mais on ne les écoutait pas; l'Empereur savait bien ce qu'il faisait. (277)

The time between the battles of Ligny and Waterloo finds the emotions of both Joseph Bertha and Jean Buche running at a very low ebb. Jean is no longer impressed by his new status as a member of Napoleon's army:

"C'est égal, une douzaine de grosses pommes de terre cuites sous la cendre, comme au Harberg, me réjouissaient joliment la vue. On ne mange pas tous les jours de la viande chez nous, mais on a des pommes de terre!" (283)

Joseph's depression is more spiritual than Jean's but the reality of their respective feelings is none the less impressive:

La tristesse d'être là m'accablait; s'il n'avait fallu que me souhaiter la mort pour être débarrassé de tout, depuis longtemps je ne serais plus de ce monde. (284)

Reaction of individuals at their own levels to conditions and events of war serve to bring fully home the descriptions of the conflict. Often the grim realities of war are caught not so much in factual description of the horrific aspects of a battle, effective though these are, but in the unadorned comments of Joseph which are all the more striking for their being understated:

...on n'avait qu'à marcher dans la boue et l'on était sûr de ne pas se tromper. (284)

Yet another example of the manipulation of the first person narrative shows the skill of Erckmann-Chatrion in this medium. Here no attempt is made to fill in detail, the very ignorance being used to support the verisimilitude of the passage. In the hands of the historian or the impersonal writer the point would doubtless be researched:

A notre gauche, et derrière la droite des Anglais, se voyaient aussi d'autres petits villages dont je n'ai jamais su le nom. (291)

The question of whether the troops sang or not before Waterloo occupies Joseph for some time and is used to bring out further details of the conditions suffered by the troops:

Quand on a marché toute la nuit sans recevoir de ration, quand on a couché dans l'eau, avec défense d'allumer des feux et qu'on va recevoir de la mitraille, cela vous ôte l'envie de chanter;...(297)

From such relatively superficial detail this theme is used to establish the important historical perspective of the changing nature of the Napoleonic Wars:

Le père Goulden me disait bien que, dans son temps, les soldats chantaient; mais c'est qu'ils étaient partis volontairement, et non par force. Ils se battaient pour garder leurs champs et les Droits de l'homme, qu'ils aimaient mieux que les yeux de leur tête, et ce n'était pas la même chose que de se faire éreinter pour savoir si l'on aurait d'anciens nobles ou de nouveaux. (298)

As the battle of Waterloo progresses effective use of the first person narrative continues to give glimpses of higher command as seen from the ranks. This can sometimes be almost touching in its demonstration of the vast distance between commander and commanded:

...je crois bien l'avoir vu,\* mais je n'en suis pas sûr;...(300)

The reader is left in no doubt that this is usually what transpires:

Voilà comment on le voyait presque toujours, à moins d'être de la garde. (300)

One of the last impressions of a commander presented at any length is that of Ney. Again here the view from the ranks is peculiarly impressive:

...et l'on aurait cru qu'il nous voyait tous, chacun se figurait que c'était lui qu'il regardait. (311)

At this stage much of the communication between narrator and reader is quite direct; early polemic without the backing of substantial evidence could well sour, by now there is a great deal of evidence of conditions, of the inadequacy of command and of the horrific nature of warfare for comment to be more frequently employed:

"Ney est avec nous...les autres sont perdus!  
Voilà pourtant la bêtise du genre humain puisque tant de gens restaient en route. (312)

It has been noticed that the nature of the narrator has precluded the use of highly elaborate language. All the more noticeable is the striking image employed at a point in the battle of Waterloo; its very rarity adding to its impressiveness, the reader being made to feel that the scene must have particularly struck the narrator:

\*Napoleon

L'intérieur de cette vieille bâtisse, pleine de paille, de greniers à foin, les écuries recouvertes de chaume, ressemblait à l'un de ces nids pleins de sang où les éperviers ont passé. (314)

The gradual slipping away of all chances of victory and the gradual realisation of the inevitability of defeat are seen at their most dramatic through the eyes of the participating soldier. So, too, is the humiliation of retreat and return through country yet once more hostile. The bitter inevitability of this and the inherent irony of the situation is all the more striking because the reader has already experienced the futility of war through his encounter with Zébéde and the story of his return.

The idea of possible failure is introduced quietly:

...l'idée me vint pour la première fois que nous n'étions pas sûrs de gagner la bataille. (321)

Successive cavalry charges result in growing unease, the disturbing evidence being viewed from the ranks:

...mais quand les trompettes sonnaient le ralliement, quand les escadrons pêle-mêle revenaient au galop, - poursuivis par la mitraille, - se reformer au bout du plateau, on voyait toujours les grandes lignes rouges, immobiles dans la fumée comme des murs. (324)

Defeat, with the failure of the Guard, brings with it one of the most ironic reflections from Joseph:

Tout le monde croyait que l'Empereur était mort avec la vieille garde:- cela paraissait tout naturel. (336)

Before making a survey of Waterloo as a whole, the final, and most important, aspect to be examined is the anti-war element in the second section of the book.

Firstly there is the senseless antagonism and brutality engendered in man in conflict. Secondly there is the selfish disregard of one's fellows' sufferings in the fight for

personal survival. Thirdly, perhaps the most spectacular element, is the violence and horror which in itself acts as a forceful argument against war. Finally the fruitlessness and futility of the whole campaign serves to underline the impact of the preceding three points.

A suitable introduction to the first point to be examined is an observation of Joseph's early on in the book:

Quelquefois les gens perdent la tête, même ceux qui n'aiment que la paix;... (156-7)

This, in a way, is the essence of this aspect which could be termed 'battle fury'. The significance of the words 'perdent la tête' is in Erckmann-Chatrion's attitude towards the barbarity of warfare as a whole. It must be emphasised that the soldier in action is not specifically condemned for his excesses and the changes in his mental make-up. These regretted but intrinsic aspects of conflict are seen entirely as the logical outcome of aggression and it is the instigation of this aggression itself, together with its instigators, which is roundly condemned. Although care is taken by the authors to correctly apportion blame the actual horror of man's violence is in no way diminished.

One of the earliest references to this 'battle frenzy' includes a direct statement to the effect that the incitement of such feelings was the work of the commanders, in this case the Emperor himself. Here, before the battle of Ligny, the troops have heard the Emperor's proclamation read to them by their general:

On ne se figurera jamais les cris qui s'élevèrent alors; c'était un spectacle qui vous grandissait l'âme; on aurait dit que l'Empereur nous avait soufflé son esprit des batailles, et nous ne demandions plus qu'à tout massacrer. (204-5)

All sections of the army were encouraged to view the forthcoming battles with enthusiasm:

Notre courage était donc beaucoup augmenté par ces-  
paroles fortes et justes. Les anciens disaient en riant:  
"Cette fois, nous n'allons pas languir...à la première  
marche, nous tombons sur les Prussiens!"

Et les conscrits, qui n'avaient pas encore entendu  
ronfler les boulets, se réjouissaient plus que les autres. (206)

Once in a warlike environment the proximity of death and  
danger and the brutalising discomforts of the bad conditions  
inevitably render men aggressive and single-minded in their  
attempts at self-preservation:

Nous ne pouvons pas éviter notre sort; si je dois en réchapper,  
j'en réchapperai; si je dois laisser ici ma peau, tout ce  
que je ferais pour la sauver, ou rien, ce serait la même  
chose. Mais il faut en exterminer le plus possible des autres;  
de cette façon, nous augmentons les chances pour nous." (200)

An example of a sustained and augmented piece of belli-  
cosity is occasioned by the desertion of Bourmont and others  
to the enemy. Since Erckmann-Chatrion do not always display  
complete objectivity and on occasion do so only grudgingly  
it is sometimes difficult to ascertain whether certain par-  
ticularly martial and jingoistic passages are not indulged  
in for their own sake rather than for serious pacifist pur-  
poses. However it seems safe to assume that much of the  
slanting of the narrative is a natural result of the first  
person presentation with all its natural vagaries. Often  
the requirements of verisimilitude rule out a direct and  
single-minded approach to the propaganda element.

The news of the desertion results in reactions ranging  
from wrath to near hysteria. The brutality of the situation  
and the mindless nature of the reactions is emphasised: '...l'on  
se mit à crier tous ensemble comme des loups.' "En avant!...  
en avant!...A l'ennemi!...Pas de quartier!" (214) Confusion  
and hysteria make the troops vacillate in their choice of  
a course of action and a suitable target for their anger:

Les uns disaient qu'il fallait exterminer tous les officiers  
de Louis XVIII, les autres qu'on voulait nous livrer tous  
en masse; et même plusieurs criaient que les maréchaux tra-  
hissaient, qu'ils devaient passer au conseil de guerre pour  
être fusillés et d'autres choses semblables. (214)

Eventually this hysteria is channelled into hopes of an immediate attack on the enemy before they had any chance of profiting from the betrayal.<sup>(214)</sup> The troops reach the point where the prospect of battle is pleasurable to them.

Mais ce qui changea notre colère en joie, c'est lorsque, vers dix heures, nous entendîmes tout à coup le canon gronder à gauche, à cinq ou six lieues, de l'autre côté de la Sambre. C'est alors que les hommes levèrent leurs shakos à la pointe de leurs baïonnettes, et qu'ils se mirent à crier:

"En avant! Vive l'Empereur!" (214-15)

In time of war men's opinions are shown to be clear-cut and their reactions simple and predictable. Joseph only needs reports at second hand of the overbearing nature of the Prussians to react with savagery:

Ces vanteries des Prussiens me révoltaient; je pris leur race en horreur, et je pensai:

"Ce sont pourtant des gueux pareils qui vous aigrissent le sang!" (222)

On hearing of further boasts of conquering France and enjoying the fruits of their victories Joseph feels justified in hardening his attitudes entirely:

"Joseph, maintenant c'est trop fort... tu n'auras plus de pitié... C'est l'extermination de l'extermination!" (222)

- This attitude is amusing in its simplicity but chilling in its implications.

During the battle of Ligny the cause of this 'battle fury' is again imputed, here not unjustly, to higher command. However it has been seen that the lower ranks and the troops themselves are capable of being so inflamed, and sometimes with little prompting. It is the actual phenomenon, though, in its repulsiveness, which is the effective anti-war element:

Ils\*allongeaient leurs sabres, et l'on aurait dit que

\* the generals Vichery, Schoeffer and Gérard.



nous n'avions qu'à monter. Ce sont ces êtres obstinés qui poussent les autres à l'extermination, parce que leur fureur gagne tout le monde. (249)

There is ample evidence that Joseph is personally affected by this frenzy:

En voyant cela, je ne sais quelle rage me prit, et je me mis à crier:

"En avant!... Pas de quartier!..." (251)

Joseph himself acknowledges that this madness could approach a state of hysteria but that once out of the battle he is horrified by his own actions and unable to fully understand them. In this way both the compulsion and the abnormality of the emotion is emphasised:

...mais le plaisir de la vengeance était plus fort que le mal. - Quand je pense à cela, les cheveux m'en dressent sur la tête. (252)

The result of this madness is to kill or be killed:

...l'obstination de ces gens avait causé leur ruine. (262)

A lull in hostilities between the battles of Ligny and Waterloo sees the beginning of a mounting, positive attack on warfare and the establishment of moral principles.

Joseph Bertha, here acting more than elsewhere as a mouth-piece for Erckmann-Chatrion, seems confused at first in his reasoning. He previously admits to a lack of choice in the matter of fighting:

Celui qui ferait seulement la mine de résister serait fusillé tout de suite. (274-5)

However he then appears to condemn, in a general fashion, all those who go to war. Yet this is his (and Erckmann-Chatrion's) idealising. He wishes people could resist coercion but finally realises the utter impossibility of this:

Mais tout cela ne sert à rien; les mauvais coeurs sont incorrigibles, et les bons font leur devoir. (280)

The only resource appears to be in one's attitude of mind which to Erckmann-Chatrian can be a vindication:

...ils y vont par force; ils n'ont pas de reproches à se faire: ils défendent leur vie, et le sang répandu ne retombe pas sur eux. (281)

If put into historical perspective this attitude is justifiable. The fury previously frequently described is now condemned out of hand:

C'est avec cette pensée et ce cri qu'ils étaient arrivés d'un seul coup devant Dieu...C'était lui qui les attendait. Il pouvait leur dire:

"Me voilà... Tu veux tuer tes frères?... tu ne veux pas de quartier? On n'en fera point!" (281)

All condemnation of warfare is from a religious viewpoint and not from a rationalist one. Chapter XIX ends with a definitive comment:

La guerre! ... ceux qui veulent la guerre, ceux qui rendent les hommes semblables à des animaux féroces doivent avoir un compte terrible à régler là-haut!...(281)

The second aspect of the anti-war element in Waterloo is the demonstration of the abandonment of normal standards of comradeship. This is an extension of the first aspect examined above, showing how the natural instincts of self-preservation set men not only against their enemy but each other. At first little emphasis is laid on this phenomenon and in the heat of the battle any unawareness of one's fellows' fate is not unexpected:

On ne voyait plus rien, on n'entendait plus rien,.... ceux qui tombaient, on n'y faisait pas attention,... (249)

Soon however this element is elaborated. Again the barbarity of the act is not in itself condemned since without the

situation, here, for example, entailing risk of capture, none of this would have ensued:

...sans regarder les camarades, hachés par les éclaboussures de la bombe, et dont plusieurs nous criaient d'une voix déchirante de les emporter.

Mais voilà les hommes: la peur d'être pris les rend barbares! (261)

Once the situation no longer exists natural human reactions reassert themselves:

Longtemps après, ces choses abominables nous reviennent. On donnerait tout pour avoir eu du coeur, de l'humanité; mais il est trop tard. (261)

The content of these descriptions becomes more horrifying and negative abandonment of comrades turns to positive injury done to them. Conflict is seen rendering men utterly heedless of even the most desperate plight of their fellows:

Nous avançons sur des tas de morts: tout était mou sous nos pieds. On ne regardait pas si l'on marchait sur la figure d'un blessé, sur sa poitrine ou sur ses membres; on avançait. (262)

The most striking example of this aspect stands out mainly because it does not concern massive injuries, large numbers and the violence of pitched battle. Also the result of this callous disregard is subsequently revealed again in the same clear, dispassionate fashion. Unhurried by the heat of battle or retreat, troops choose to ignore a wounded soldier:

...vers le milieu se trouvait un cuirassier à cheval qui nous tournait le dos; il avait un coup de sabre dans le ventre et s'était retiré là; le cheval s'appuyait au mur pour l'empêcher de tomber. Comme nous défilions il nous appela:

"Camarades!"

Personne ne tourna seulement la tête. (271)

Some time later the man is seen again:

Le cuirassier était alors à terre, le cheval attendait toujours. (273)

The terse economical style renders the incident the more pathetic. The mute loyalty of the animal compares favourably with the 'brutality' of the men.

That indifference can sometimes be a method of keeping up one's courage is undeniable. This can sometimes even entail feigning such indifference. Here again it is the circumstances which are to blame in bringing such things about:

"Allons, dit le sergent, voici la chambrée, que chacun s'arrange; les camarades de lit ne nous donneront pas de coups de pied." (271)

Another justification of indifference is the eventual atrophied state of a soldier's sensibilities after a surfeit of horror and bloodshed. Yet once again it is the state of war which is the cause and the instigators the blamed:

Du sang! toujours du sang! La direction des boulets et de la mitraille était marquée en traînées rouges sur les pentes, comme on voit chez nous, à la fonte des neiges, le passage des torrents dans le sable. Eh bien! voulez-vous savoir la vérité? Cela ne me touchait presque plus. (274)

The third aspect of the anti-war content, the description of the horrors of war, is that which makes the most direct impression. Again much of the power of these descriptions is gained from the skilfully created illusion that the narrator has, at first hand, witnessed the events and scenes which occur:

Very often the least specific passages are the most striking. Reflections of Joseph the night before Ligny provide the reader with a realistic and sinister preview of the battle soon to take place:

C'était le jour de la terrible bataille de Ligny. La moitié de ceux qui dormaient là devaient laisser leurs os dans ces

villages que nous voyions, et dans ces grandes plaines si riche en grains de toutes sortes; ils devaient aider à faire pousser les blés, les orges et les avoines pendant les siècles des siècles. (227)

Often the horror of war is depicted by brief descriptions acting, as it were, as constant reminders of the realities of the situation:

Ceux qui, par malheur, avaient déjà dépassé le chemin creux tombaient les uns sur les autres en tas dans la fumée. (245)

The recruit soon becomes a killer:

Je vis Buche revenir en allongeant le pas; sa baïonnette était rouge de sang; il vint se placer près de moi sans rien dire, en rechargeant. (247)

The nature of violence is best demonstrated when in juxtaposition with the non-violent. Contrast heightens the effect of quite simple statements:

La vieille église sonnait cinq heures; nous avons alors exterminé tous les Prussiens de ce côté du ruisseau,...(253)

As the battle of Ligny progresses details become more and more macabre:

...un grand nombre étaient assis le dos au mur:.....ils s'étaient accroupis contre un mur, où la perte de leur sang les avait fait mourir. (264)

The reader, when confronted with these descriptions, is made well aware of the inhumanity of all such conflict:

...trois hommes, la face contre terre et les mains en avant, étaient couchés dans le sentier qui menait à cet endroit; ils avaient aussi voulu boire, et les Prussiens les avaient tués. (265)

The cessation of hostilities after the victory of Ligny brings with it one of the most striking descriptions of the horrors of warfare. This time the occasion is not one of violent

conflict but more a low point in human beings' relationships with each other. The situation is once more dependent on the instigation of hostilities and is not seen as an evil in itself:

Moi, je m'étais approché de la fenêtre, et je voyais tout le long de la ruelle, des maraudeurs en train de fouiller les blessés et les morts. Ils allaient doucement de l'un à l'autre, la pluie tombait par torrents:- c'était quelque chose d'horrible. (272)

The removal of the wounded and the daylight survey of the field after Ligny brings with it the most horrifying accounts of carnage. There is nothing in the description of the battle of Waterloo which matches this climax in the presentation of the case against warfare. This is technically sound in a French writer since Ligny was a victory and if the bulk of the anti-war propaganda is presented as valid despite success it is all the more effective:

...les morts, dans bien des endroits, s'élevaient jusqu'à deux et trois pieds. Le sang coulait au-dessous comme des ruisseaux. Dans toute la grande rue, où les pièces avaient passé, c'était de la boue rouge: de la boue de chair et d'os écrasés. (279)

It is at this point that it is made quite plain that these descriptions are specifically aimed at all those who, in their ignorance, wish to leave their homes and sober employment and go to war:

Il faut bien qu'on dise cela pour éclairer la jeunesse.  
(279)

The climax of the appeal is the most striking piece of writing in the book. In many ways it also forms the climax of the work:

Ils doivent se figurer ce que les malheureux qui n'ont pas rempli leurs devoirs pensent, lorsqu'ils sont là couchés dans une rue, ou sur la grande route avec un membre de moins, et qu'ils entendent arriver ces pièces de canon qui pèsent douze à quinze milles et leurs gros chevaux bien ferrés qui sautent en hennissant.

C'est dans cette minute qu'ils doivent voir les pauvres vieux qui leur tendaient les bras devant la petite maison du village, pendant qu'ils s'éloignaient en s'écriant:  
 "Je pars!... je reviendrai avec la croix et les épaulettes."  
 Oui! oui! s'ils pouvaient pleurer et demander pardon à Dieu, ceux-là, on entendrait leurs cris et leurs plaintes! Mais il n'est plus temps, - les canons et les caissons avec leurs charges d'obus et boulets arrivent, - ils entendent eux-mêmes craquer leurs os d'avance...et tout cela leur passe sur le corps comme dans de la boue. (279-80)

After the battle of Ligny there is less concentration on this manner of presentation. Much of the effective propaganda is contained in the mounting sense of futility and the degradation of defeat. With the reader fully cognizant of the rigours of warfare Erckmann-Chatrion are more frequently able to comment on the morality of instigating or directing conflicts:

Ceux qui veulent se mêler de commander à la guerre devraient toujours avoir de pareils exemples sous les yeux et réfléchir avant de faire de nouvelles inventions; ces inventions coûtent cher à ceux qui sont forcés d'y entrer.(308)

However one of the most terrifying aspects of the slaughter in which war results is the ability of commanders to accept this and continue in their actions:

On aurait cru que la vie des hommes ne coûtait rien.(309)

Although the preponderance of horrific, descriptive material is found in the account of Ligny odd comments and passages continue to add to the accumulation of specifically propagandist details:

Dans un moment pareil, où les cris de ceux qu'on tuait remplissaient encore la cour, cela vous retournait le coeur.  
 (315)

Although it in no way implies any condemnation of the troops forced into such actions, the description of the plight of the army after Waterloo is another aspect of the savage and degrading nature of warfare where men have to find sustenance

garnered from corpses:

Nous regardions de tous les côtés pour voir si les morts n'auraient pas aussi du pain. (340)

Perhaps the underlying force behind all the anti-war writing is the knowledge that this struggle will meet with no success. Worse, it is a failure for the second time and events after Waterloo follow closely the events described by Zébédeé earlier on in the book. As Joseph retreats from Waterloo he passes carts of wounded lying in straw, the traces have been cut and the men abandoned to a slow death:

"Voilà la récolte...voilà nos moissons...voilà ce que nous laisse l'orage!" Ah! j'en ai fait des réflexions pareilles depuis cinquante ans! (338)

The long march home abounds with countless incidents which depict the mental state and physical conditions of the men in retreat. Naturally enough a major aspect is the loss of pride and self-respect. The bloodshed has not even had a justification in its end:

Voilà comment étaient forcés de raisonner des hommes qui trois jours auparavant faisaient trembler le monde!(349)

Both Joseph and Jean Buche find it difficult to attribute defeat to anything other than treachery without loss of pride; However the moral degradation implicit in this ploy is evident to Joseph:

"Sais-tu bien, Jean, que nos mensonges sur les traîtres ne sont pas beaux? Si chacun en raconte autant, finalement nous serons tous des traîtres, et l'Empereur seul sera un honnête homme. C'est honteux pour notre pays, de dire que nous avons tant de traîtres parmi nous... Ce n'est pas vrai!" (352)

Joseph is fully conscious also of the futility of all the bloodshed and suffering of Ligny and Waterloo:



...tant d'efforts, tant de sang répandu n'aboutissaient pour la seconde fois qu'à l'invasion,...(357)

The evidence for such pessimism is overwhelming. The reader is very conscious of events having turned a full circle:

Le 8 juillet, on savait déjà que Louis XVIII allait revenir, et que Mgr Le comte d'Artois ferait son salut. Toutes les voitures, les pataches, les diligences portaient déjà le drapeau blanc; dans tous les villages où nous passions, on chantait des Te Deum; les maires, les adjoints, les conseillers louaient et glorifiaient le Seigneur du retour de Louis le Bien-Aimé. (364)

Joseph and Jean meet with exactly the same treatment that Zébéde encountered:

...ils excitaient même les chiens contre nous...(364-5)

The rapid change in the political climate does not preclude a degree of fanaticism in the populace:

...les gueux nous forçaient de crier: Vive le roi! (365)

Joseph's bitterness in defeat and humiliation leads him to realise more than ever that the political and ideological conflicts do not concern him as much as pursuing his own way of life with 'le bon sens et le bon coeur': (366)

"Qu'est-ce que cela nous fait de crier: Vive Jean-Claude ou: Vive Jean-Nicolas? Tous ces rois, ces empereurs, anciens ou nouveaux, ne donneraient pas un seul de leurs cheveux pour nous sauver la vie,...(365)

Joseph's natural chauvinism allows him to only grudgingly admit to the lack of ground for complaint against enemy occupation:

Combien de choses on aurait à dire sur tous ces faibles de la Russie et de l'Allemagne, si nous n'en avions pas fait dix fois plus dans leur pays! (367)

This concludes an examination of the anti-war content of the novel. It is<sup>in</sup> this aspect that Erckmann-Chatrion's aims lie. Formulating any positive viewpoints and philosophy is a matter scarcely touched upon. However it is safe to say that an honest God-fearing materialism, 'from each according to his capabilities, to each according to his needs', is advocated:

...on ne pensait plus qu'à vivre en paix, à jouir du repos, à tâcher d'acquérir un peu d'aisance et d'élever honnêtement sa famille par le travail et la bonne conduite. (1-2)

Through foolish abandoning of such ideals and the perverse desire for war men forfeit the happiness which could be theirs. God is seen to be the one constant factor:

...si les hommes font les folies, le Seigneur Dieu veille toujours sur ses affaires. (171)

Through the words of M. Goulden many of the aspirations of Waterloo are endowed with a strong Republican flavour:

...il parlait de Dieu, qu'il appelait l'Etre suprême, comme les anciens calendriers de la République; il disait que c'était la raison, la sagesse, la bonté, l'amour, la justice, l'ordre, la vie. (172)

Erckmann-Chatrion do not spend much time analysing the methods which are most conducive to an ideal state of affairs. The parting message of the book advocates the powers of education:

Le peuple commence à comprendre ses droits; il sait que les guerres ne lui rapportent que des augmentations de contributions, et quand il dira: "Au lieu d'envoyer mes fils périr par milliers sous le sabre et le canon, je veux qu'on les instruisse et qu'on en fasse des hommes!" qui est-ce qui oserait vouloir le contraire, puisque aujourd'hui le peuple est maître? (374)

The tone is one of optimism. Erckmann-Chatrion evidently considered much progress to have been made.

However it is not the positive construction of ideologies that is the main aim of Waterloo. As an historical novel Waterloo represents the case against warfare and to this end the historical background is used; both in the construction of the events leading up to the campaigns of 1815 and in the description of the campaigns themselves.

CHAPTER IISTENDHALLE ROUGE ET LE NOIR & LA CHARTREUSE DE PARME

One critic has said of Stendhal:

Petit soldat sous Napoléon, petit journaliste sous la Restauration, petit fonctionnaire de Louis-Phillippe, ce petit homme ardent et vif est toujours arrivé trop tard: il a dû attendre le début du XX<sup>e</sup> siècle pour que sa vie nous soit précieuse. (1)

His lack of great success in the areas of public life in which he was involved was caused partly by his lack of ambition:

Réellement je n'ai jamais été ambitieux, mais en 1811 je me croyais ambitieux. (2)

Stendhal was too discerning to allow himself to subscribe whole-heartedly to any mundane cause or career. The one occupation which was of real significance to him was writing:

Mon idée sur le beau littéraire au fond est la même qu'en 1796, mais chaque six mois elle se perfectionne ou, si l'on veut, elle change un peu.

C'est le travail unique de toute ma vie.

Tout le reste n'a été que gagne-pain, gagne-pain joint à un peu de vanité de le gagner aussi bien qu'un autre;...(3)

One emergent enthusiasm from the writing Stendhal took so seriously was for Napoleon. This enthusiasm was not simple hero-worship but was a complex combination of admiration and penetrating criticism. An examination and analysis of Stendhal's feelings towards Napoleon is indispensable to any study of the Napoleonic element in Stendhal's fictional writing. Stendhal's non-fictional writing, particularly the Vie de Henry Brulard, the Vie de Napoléon and the Mémoires sur Napoléon, provides a clear picture of the nature of Stendhal's enthusiasm.

Stendhal saw in despotism the seeds of its own downfall and this, together with his desire for freedom and enlighten-

ment, led him to support the ideals of the Republic with the youthful Napoleon as its major protagonist. Thus he became progressively disillusioned with Napoleon as a political figure whilst his respect for him as a leader and a man of genius remained relatively undiminished. Whilst intellectually attracted to the Republican cause Stendhal was unable to identify himself in any way with the people whose freedom he desired. Stendhal's political views were objective and impartial, he wanted the best possible government achieved for the people and saw this in terms of a democracy with a bi-cameral legislature. His view of Napoleon however was, although not biased, highly subjective, since he was attracted by the man's greatness in itself. Whilst critical of many aspects of Napoleon's reign Stendhal was always ready to qualify much of his criticism by citing circumstances or necessity. Many of Stendhal's attitudes were founded to a considerable degree upon comparison. It was comparison with values held by a father and an aunt towards whom he displayed the greatest antagonism that Republicanism first appealed to Stendhal. The period of Napoleonic rule was, above all, an improvement upon preceding administrations and gathered a still greater degree of brilliance by comparison with succeeding ones. This is evident in that, if anything, the Vie de Napoléon is more adversely critical than the Mémoires sur Napoléon. A consciousness of the comparative attraction of the Napoleonic era provides a vital aspect of the hero's character in both Le Rouge et le Noir and La Chartreuse de Parme. Stendhal's political outlook has been admirably summarised:

Stendhal a aimé Napoléon; il a méprisé le règne des salons et le règne des fripons; il a aimé les républicains plutôt que la république, et ses préférences ne le portent point à ces majorités crottées auxquelles il faudra faire la cour si l'on veut chercher pouvoir en république. (4)

A primary objective will be to ascertain how a love for the Republic and an appreciation of Napoleon developed. Some writers find these two aspects difficult to reconcile (5)

but the important thing to bear in mind is the objective nature of Stendhal's Republicanism and the subjective nature of his enthusiasm for Napoleon.

Stendhal's reaction against his environment started at a very early age. Having lost a much-loved mother he was left in the care of a morose, royalist father and a vindictive, pious aunt. The love of his grand-father and of his great-aunt served to mitigate the gloom of his surroundings on occasion but Stendhal developed a violent antipathy for all that was royalist, reactionary and religious and the mere approval of his father or his aunt for anything whatsoever guaranteed Stendhal's disapproval and dislike. Even before his mother's death a childhood incident leads him to say:

Je me révoltai, je pouvais avoir quatre ans. De cette époque date mon horreur pour la religion, horreur que ma raison a pu à grand'peine réduire à de justes dimensions, et cela tout nouvellement, il n'y a pas six ans. Presque en même temps prit sa première naissance mon amour filial instinctif, forcé dans ces temps-là, pour la république. (6)

One of Stendhal's earliest significant recollections was the coming of soldiery to Grenoble. If this was not enough in itself to excite the imagination of a young child parental disapproval ensured Stendhal's total admiration:

Je voyais passer les beaux régiments de dragons allant en Italie, toujours quelqu'un était logé à la maison, je les dévorais des yeux, mes parents les exécraient. (7)

Stendhal's interest in the troops was coupled with a dislike of the monarchy for which his family had such a profound respect:

J'aimais tendrement nos régiments que je voyais passer sur la place Grenette de la fenêtre de mon grand-père, je me figurais que le Roi cherchait à les faire battre par les Autrichiens. (On voit que, quoique à peine âgé de dix ans, je n'étais pas fort loin du vrai). (8)

Very soon Stendhal's enthusiasm led him to wish to join the army himself:

...ma grande pensée était celle-ci: Ne ferais-je bien de m'engager? (9)

The formation of a youth army was the basis on one of Stendhal's more daring childhood exploits. In his sending of faked call-up papers to his family he showed not only the desire to frighten them but a real desire to join. Even on mature reflection Stendhal was able to approve the formation of such a body if only because it would counteract the demoralising effect of the priesthood:

On avait formé les bataillons d'Espérance ou l'armée de l'Espérance (chose singulière que j'e ne me rappelle pas même avec certitude le nom d'une chose qui a tant agité mon enfance). Je brûlais d'être de ces bataillons que je voyais défiler. Je vois aujourd'hui que c'était une excellente institution, la seule qui puisse déraciner le prêtreisme en France. Au lieu de jouer à la chapelle l'imagination des enfants pense à la guerre et s'accoutume au danger. D'ailleurs quand la patrie les appelle à vingt ans ils savent l'exercice et, au lieu de frémir devant l'inconnu, ils se rappellent les jeux de leur enfance. (10)

Stendhal did eventually join the army and some of his reactions bear out the attraction that greatness and glory had for him. For Stendhal/if repression sprang from fear/then courage and action were integral aspects of liberty:

Or avez-vous éprouvé, ô lecteur bienveillant, ce que c'est qu'un uniforme dans une armée victorieuse et unique objet de l'attention de la nation comme l'armée de Napoléon! (11)

Throughout the early struggles of the Republic Stendhal supported its cause to the extent that his family opposed it:

...le siège de Lyon agita tout le Midi: j'étais pour Kellermann<sup>et</sup> les républicains, mes parents pour les assiégés et Précy...  
(12)

The initial impact of Napoleon upon the young Stendhal was

such that the appeal of the figure of Napoleon easily overcame any political ideologies Stendhal might have formulated:

...j'étais enchanté que le jeune général Bonaparte se fit roi de France. (13)

The engaging nature of Napoleon and his magnificent military successes not surprisingly outweigh political considerations such as the desirability of individual freedom. When Stendhal expresses his liberal political views he makes it quite clear that his championship of the people's cause is an objective support for what is morally right rather than any subjective sympathy for the people as human beings. To the romantic side of Stendhal's nature the vast mass of the people, and the necessity of having to court them in a democracy, do not appeal at all. It is to this aspect of Stendhal's character that Napoleon appeals. He is all that is new, young, active and successful and Stendhal has to make a conscious effort to condemn his steady decline into reaction. Even so, strong, even dictatorial, government is not condemned; Stendhal at times even considers it necessary. Since the demoralising nature of despotism brings about its own fall so Napoleon the politician is condemned for creating the elements necessary to his own loss of power whilst Napoleon the man is still admired. Stendhal states his attitude towards the people quite openly:

J'abhorre la canaille (pour avoir des communications avec), en même temps que sous le nom de peuple je désire passionnément son bonheur, et que je crois qu'on ne peut le procurer qu'en lui faisant des questions sur un objet important. C'est-à-dire en l'appelant à se nommer des députés. (14)

This theme is repeated later with even greater emphasis:

J'avais et j'ai encore les goûts les plus aristocrates, je ferais tout pour le bonheur du peuple mais j'aimerais mieux, je crois, passer quinze jours de chaque mois en prison que de vivre avec les habitants des boutiques. (15)



Having established some of Stendhal's basic attitudes towards Napoleon and the Republic and charted their development a more detailed examination of Stendhal's assessment of Napoleon and his achievements in the Vie de Napoléon and the Mémoires sur Napoléon can be undertaken. In both cases, although Stendhal had every intention of being an impartial critic/ he sets out to exonerate rather than condemn. This is made clear at the outset of both works but it is particularly interesting to note that in the later work, the Mémoires sur Napoléon, Stendhal's retrospective comments gain force from the unsatisfactory governments of the interceding years:

Mon but est de faire connaître cet homme extraordinaire, que j'aimais de son vivant, que j'estime maintenant de tout le mépris que m'inspire ce qui est venu après lui. (16)

This comparison is also present in the earlier Vie de Napoléon. Here, where the comparison is with the previous government, the aim is to alleviate the blame which Napoleon could incur through his betrayal of the Republic:

Napoléon n'était pas le représentant de son propre gouvernement, mais d'un gouvernement contraire à celui des Bourbons. (17)

One point which is perfectly clear is Stendhal's complete admiration for Napoleon. This admiration increases over the years since succeeding governments compare badly with his brilliance. This brilliance in fact eclipses many of his faults and though not unaware of them Stendhal is always ready to qualify any adverse criticism:

L'amour pour Napoléon est la seule passion qui me soit restée; ce qui ne m'empêche point de voir les défauts de son esprit et les misérables faiblesses qu'on peut lui reprocher. (18)

As will also be seen further on in this section Stendhal had a considerable insight into the workings of history. It is this insight which enables him to present an account of the Italian campaigns almost without adverse comment. At

this time Napoleon was the liberator of France and was now the liberator of Italy. He was an agent for Republicanism both at home and abroad. The courage and youthful enthusiasm Stendhal admired he could find here without limit:

Enfin, en 1797 on pouvait l'aimer avec passion et sans restriction; il n'avait point encore volé la liberté à son pays; rien d'aussi grand n'avait paru depuis des siècles. (19)

That these campaigns could be considered almost entirely as campaigns of liberation Stendhal was never in any doubt:

C'est une grande et belle époque pour l'Europe que ces victoires d'une jeune République sur l'antique despotisme; c'est pour Bonaparte l'époque la plus pure et la plus brillante de sa vie. (20)

In an effort to achieve a balanced narrative Stendhal condemns the pillage that went on unchecked in Italy. However he does not do this without qualification. Of this looting he says:

En cela, Bonaparte fut criminel envers la France. Quant à l'Italie, des pillages cent fois plus révoltants encore n'auraient pas été un prix excessif pour l'immense bienfait de la renaissance de toutes les vertus. (21)

At this juncture nothing can detract from Stendhal's enthusiasm:

Un jeune homme de 26 ans se trouve avoir effacé en une année les Alexandre, les César, les Annibal, les Frédéric. (22)

For Stendhal all the major reproaches stem from Napoleon's actions in the political field and above all from the destruction of the Republic, for here was not only the beginning of Napoleon's downfall but a paving the way for the return of the Bourbons. Whilst freely admitting Napoleon's shortcomings Stendhal is not without some explanation:

Il n'est pas donné a un seul être humain d'avoir à la fois tous les talents, et il était trop sublime comme général pour être bon comme politique et législateur. (23)

Stendhal blames Napoleon's lack of good education, particularly a lack of any knowledge of history, for most of his political ineptitude:

*me* Son éducation, restée extrêmement imparfaite, ne lui permettait point de voir les conséquences historiques des choses. (24)

That Stendhal can make such a judgement says a great deal for his own insight. If added to this shortsightedness are Napoleon's two greatest weaknesses, which according to Stendhal were fear of Jacobinism and an excessive love of personal glory, an explanation can be arrived at for Napoleon's greatest political error, the creation of the conditions which favoured the return of the Bourbons:

On peut dire que dans les mesures qui ont le plus contribué à créer la possibilité du retour des Bourbons, Napoléon a agi purement par instinct militaire, pour se guérir de la peur que lui faisaient les Jacobins.

Plus tard, il agit par vanité puérile pour se montrer digne du noble corps des Rois, dans lequel il venait d'entrer. Et, enfin, c'est pour ne pas encourir le reproche d'être un roi faible et cruel, qu'il est tombé dans l'acte de clémence excessive, qui a été la cause immédiate de sa chute. (25)

To Napoleon's credit Stendhal cites, as well as the military and ideological glories of the Italian campaigns, his numerous and impressive victories. As a commander Stendhal can find little fault with Napoleon. Much of Napoleon's success Stendhal ascribes to his extraordinary clarity of mind and grasp of situations. It is these talents, together with a poor taste in ministers, which progressively destroyed Napoleon, forcing him to rely more and more upon his own swift judgements which served him less well in legislation and diplomacy than on the battlefield:

Sa supériorité gisait tout entière dans la faculté de trouver des idées nouvelles, avec une promptitude incroyable, de les juger avec une raison parfaite et de les mettre à exécution avec une force de volonté qui n'eut jamais d'égale. (26)

That Napoleon was largely successful from a military point of view is incontestable. Forestalling any reproaches on the grounds of cruelty or of indifference to the fate of his own soldiers/Stendhal is ready with accounts of Napoleon's concern for his wounded and of his exemplary care for them. If Napoleon is considered harsh in times of war that to Stendhal is understandable if only from a Machiavellian standpoint:

Un général en chef doit faire fusiller trois hommes, pour sauver la vie à quatre; bien plus, il doit faire fusiller quatre ennemis, pour sauver la vie à un seul de ses soldats. (27)

Perhaps Napoleon's greatest military achievement was in some ways academic. Stendhal, as mentioned earlier, shows an awareness of the gradual change in nature of the Wars from liberation to repression. A further example of this insight is in his attributing to Napoleon a realisation of the scope of these Wars. Conscription and mass armies together with increasing nationalism utterly changed the nature of warfare. For Stendhal it is Napoleon's opponents who have not observed this:

Mais on peut dire qu'à cette époque, ces idées de grande guerre; que les campagnes de la Révolution ont fait naître parmi nous, eussent passé pour chimériques, aux yeux des vieux officiers qui dirigeaient les armées de la coalition. (28)

Stendhal allows himself one slight deviation from his single-minded praise of Napoleon as a military tactician. He is unable to establish Napoleon's capabilities in a defensive campaign and is forced to admit to his probable inability to fight like the Russians or Spanish in their avoidance of direct confrontation:

Ni ses jeunes soldats n'étaient faits pour se tirer d'une guerre malheureuse, toutes de rebaites et de chicanes, ni lui n'avait le talent de les diriger. C'est la seule grande partie du génie militaire qui lui ait manqué. Sa campagne en France en 1814 est tout agressive; il a désespéré après Waterloo; après la retraite de Russie, en 1813, il ne fallait quitter la ligne de l'Oder que forcé. (29)

Apart from his military genius Stendhal finds little else in direct praise of Napoleon, particularly after the Italian campaigns. Stendhal mentions the increase in self-respect possible for the individual through an egalitarian system whereby all are eligible for the awards of the Légion d'honneur through merit. Stendhal also sees a case for praise in the creation of a large class of property-owning peasants which he attributes directly to Napoleon:

Aujourd'hui, en 1837, les paysans et le bas peuple de tous les pays civilisés de l'Europe ont à peu près compris que la Révolution française tend à les faire propriétaires, et c'est Napoléon qui leur a donné cette éducation. En 1796, ils étaient tout à fait dans la main des prêtres et des nobles, et fort disposés à s'irriter profondément des vexations et des petites injustices, inséparables de l'état de guerre. (30)

Having examined the development and the nature of Stendhal's admiration for Napoleon, a final aspect to be considered in detail is the fall of Napoleon as viewed by Stendhal. There is no doubt that Stendhal attributed the collapse of the Napoleonic regime to the loss of the Republic and the establishment of a dictatorship. If Napoleon was the military revolutionary par excellence to Stendhal then Danton was the political. To Stendhal the demise of the Republic was an irreparable loss:

La mort de Danton, la chute de Robespierre et de la terrible Commune de Paris, marquèrent cette grande époque. Jusque-là le sentiment républicain s'était accru dans tous les coeurs; après le 9 thermidor il commença à faiblir partout. On peut dire que la République fut blessée au coeur par la mort de Danton. Son agonie dura six ans, jusqu'au 18 brumaire (9 novembre 1799). (31)

Napoleon had insufficient grasp of political events to enable him to ascertain their possible outcome, which, together with the weaknesses mentioned earlier, rendered him totally blind to social and political trends:

En un mot, comme, par un défaut déplorable de son éducation première, l'histoire n'existait pas pour lui,

il ne connut que les faits qu'il avait vus s'accomplir et encore il les voyait à travers sa peur des Jacobins, et son amour, sa faiblesse, pour le faubourg Saint-Germain. (32)

For Stendhal the increasing political despotism corrupted the moral standing of the army and rendered it progressively less efficient. Initially the army of liberation is virtually a spontaneous movement of youthful enthusiasm:

Malgré la misère excessive à laquelle on les laissait en proie, ces jeunes républicains ne respiraient qu'amour de la patrie et des combats. Ils riaient de se voir des habits en lambeaux. Les mandats qu'on donnait aux officiers ne valaient pas dix francs par mois; ils vivaient et marchaient comme le soldat. (33)

Later events do not hold the same magic:

Cependant l'armée, déjà corrompue par le despotisme, ne fit pas aussi bien qu'à Austerlitz. (34)\*

The gradual demoralisation proceeds until final disaster:

Au reste l'esprit de l'armée a varié: faouche, républicaine, héroïque à Marengo, elle devint de plus en plus égoïste et monarchique. A mesure que les uniformes se brodèrent et se chargèrent de croix, ils couvrirent des coeurs moins généreux. (35)

In the final years of the Empire the initial spontaneity and enthusiasm was replaced by a total and slavish desire on the part of Napoleon for the very pomps and splendours the Revolution had swept away. Stendhal finds the revolutionary beginning totally forgotten:

La vaine pompe et le cérémonial d'une cour semblaient lui faire autant de plaisir que s'il fût né prince. Il en vint à ce point de folie d'oublier sa première qualité, celle de fils de la Révolution. (36)

On Napoleon's remarriage, the ultimate step in his thirst for personal glory, Stendhal makes the ironical statement: \*This is in 1809.

Puisqu'il renonçait à être le fils de la Révolution, et qu'il ne voulait plus être qu'un souverain ordinaire, répudiant l'appui de la nation, il fit fort bien de s'assurer celui de la famille la plus illustre de l'Europe. . . Quelle différence pour lui s'il se fût allié à la Russie! (37)

For Stendhal Napoleon was an individual whose genius was thrown into sharper relief against the background of Bourbon rule. He was a brilliant commander but an indifferent politician whose judgement was marred by fear of Jacobinism and an excessive taste for personal glory. As the years of his reign went by his campaigns changed from those of liberation to those of domination. His troops met increasing resistance in the form of nationalism whilst they themselves lost much of their moral force through the increasingly dictatorial nature of the commander and the decreasingly democratic nature of both their army and their country. Napoleon became more and more incapable of taking advice; his ministers gradually being reduced to ciphers. However, although taken as a whole these judgements appear unfavourable, it must be emphasised that Napoleon for Stendhal was above all a man of genius:

C'est un homme doué de talents extraordinaires, et d'une dangereuse ambition, l'être le plus admirable par ses talents qui ait paru depuis César, sur lequel il nous semble l'emporter. Il est plutôt fait pour supporter l'adversité avec fermeté et majesté que pour soutenir la prospérité sans s'en laisser enivrer. (38)

The aspect of Le Rouge et le Noir which is of greatest importance here is the relationship between Julien Sorel and the Napoleon of the Napoleonic legend. Admiration of Napoleon was not an entirely unfamiliar phenomenon; the 1830's saw a proliferation of Napoleonic literature. Many ambitious young men, who lacked both means and connections, looked back to the days of the Republic and Empire with an intense nostalgia, although they themselves had not experienced them. Napoleon's shortcomings as a politician and the eventual despotism both at home and abroad were totally eclipsed by the glory of the period. Stendhal's assessment of the

Italian campaigns could serve as a catch-phrase for the legend:

Ce fut le plus beau moment d'une belle jeunesse. (39)

Contemporaries of Stendhal were aware of these youthful aspirations as can be seen in a letter to Stendhal from A. Levavasseur:

Après avoir donné de vifs éloges aux détails de mœurs, il\* a analysé le caractère de Julien avec beaucoup de vérité, à ce qui m'a semblé, en disant que c'était le type de la jeunesse de notre époque, qui se croit appelé à des destinées de Napoléon et qui agit sous cette influence. (40)

Stendhal, too, was sensible to the growing cult of Napoleon. In a remark addressed to the reader of 1880 he says:

Il faut que vous sachiez que quarante-cinq ans avant vous il était de la mode d'avoir été soldat sous Napoléon. (41)

Le Rouge et le Noir is set in the years leading up to 1830. (42)

A young person of Julien's age, eighteen or nineteen at the outset of the book, would have very little in the way of personal recollections of the Napoleonic era. In all probability these would be limited to a few reminiscences of passing troops. Stendhal, having lived through both the Republic and the Restoration, was capable of portraying the frustrations of talented youth and the obvious appeal of Napoleon to these people. He goes so far as to allow that Julien would have prospered under Napoleon:

Du temps de l'Empereur, Julien eût été un fort honnête homme. (43)

It is dangerous to draw too many parallels between an author and his hero. Nevertheless the initial upbringing of both Stendhal and Julien have certain similarities. Both were therefore isolated and as such impressionable. Stendhal's

\* M. Chasles.



friend and mentor was his grandfather from whom he gained much of the outlook that found its roots in the philosophes. Julien's friend and teacher was less gifted but considerably more committed. A chirurgien-major of the Napoleonic armies, he exerted a considerable influence over the ideas and affections of the youthful Julien. Through him Julien gained not only a limitless enthusiasm for Napoleon but some Republican leanings; the old soldier had never allowed his love for his commander to supersede his respect for the Republic:

Il avait fait toutes les campagnes de Buonaparté en Italie, et même avait, dit-on, signé non pour l'empire dans le temps. (44)

Initially excited by the sight of troops Julien's earliest contacts with the chirurgien-major were as an eager audience for accounts of the battles of the Italian campaigns:

Dès sa première enfance, la vue de certains dragons du 6<sup>e</sup>, aux longs manteaux blancs, et la tête couverte des casques aux longs crins noirs, qui revenaient d'Italie, et que Julien vit attacher leurs chevaux à la fenêtre grillée de la maison de son père, le rendit fou de l'état militaire. Plus tard il écoutait avec transport les récits des batailles du pont de Lodi, d'Arcole, de Rivoli, que lui faisaient le vieux chirurgien-major. Il remarqua les regards enflammés que le vieillard jetait sur sa croix. (45)

Stendhal, too, as has been seen, records the sight of troops as one of his earliest impressive memories. From battle stories the old soldier graduated to giving Julien what instruction he could. This again was dominated by accounts of the Italian campaigns:

Ce chirurgien payait quelquefois au père Sorel la journée de son fils, et lui enseignait le latin et l'histoire, c'est-à-dire, ce qu'il savait de l'histoire, la campagne de 1796 en Italie. En mourant, il lui avait légué sa croix de la Légion d'honneur, les arrérages de sa demi-solde et trente ou quarante volumes, ... (46)

It is not surprising that Julien, deprived of affection by his family, should invest in the chirurgien-major the love

and respect he could not give his father, to such an extent that Stendhal can say that '...Julien avait adoré ce vieux chirurgien-major...' (47) Through the bequest of his books the old soldier prolonged his influence upon Julien. An account of his favourite reading material illustrates this:

C'était\* le seul livre à l'aide duquel son imagination se figurait le monde. Le recueil des bulletins de la grande armée et le Mémorial de Sainte-Hélène complétaient son Coran. (48)

Of these works his particular favourite, and one whose loss affected him more than the bullying of his father, was the Mémorial:

En passant, il regarda tristement le ruisseau où était tombé son livre; c'était celui de tous qu'il affectionnait le plus, le Mémorial de Sainte-Hélène. (49)

The most important single outcome of this upbringing was to imbue Julien with a passionate and violent ambition. However the days of Napoleon were gone and the road to success no longer lay with the army; certainly not without a fortune or a title. Julien soon became aware of the overwhelming power of the priesthood in Restoration France. When, on an impulse, he contemplated flight to avoid a 'menial' position as tutor to the children of M. de Rênal, he rejected the idea as having no future. The only future for him was in the Church:

...là, je m'engage comme soldat, et, s'il le faut, je passe en Suisse. Mais alors plus d'avancement, plus d'ambition pour moi, plus de ce bel état de prêtre qui mène à tout. (50)

Once having made his decision Julien set about assiduously cultivating his new rôle. If the priesthood was the one road to success he would follow it; the enthusiasm for Napoleon, however, was in no way diminished:

\*Rousseau's Confessions

Tout à coup Julien cessa de parler de Napoléon; il annonça le projet de se faire prêtre,...(51)

At that time the priesthood and liberalism were totally incompatible. Julien's choice excluded any outward appearance of respect for either the Republic or Napoleon. He was forced into hypocrisy through necessity. The very passion that Napoleon had inspired in him forced him to deny any such allegiance. As M. de Rênal said:

...ce Sorel étudie la théologie depuis trois ans, avec le projet d'entrer au séminaire; il n'est donc pas libéral, et il est latiniste. (52)

This sudden change of face is comprehensible when viewed in the light of the intensity of Julien's ambition:

Depuis bien des années, Julien ne passait peut-être pas une heure de sa vie sans se dire que Bonaparte, lieutenant obscur et sans fortune, s'était fait le maître du monde avec son épée. (53)

The resulting emulation was without bounds. Julien's model for success was Napoleon. This continued to be so even when he decided to enter the priesthood. Preceding this however, he went to absurd lengths to copy his idol:

...il lui arriva de louer Napoléon avec fureur. Il se lia le bras droit contre la poitrine, prétendit s'être disloqué le bras en remuant un tronc de sapin, et le porta pendant deux mois dans cette position gênante. (54)

It is not surprising that Julien's ambition should take on the same proportions:

Qui eût pu deviner que cette figure de jeune fille, si pâle et si douce, cachait la résolution inébranlable de s'exposer à mille morts plutôt que de ne pas faire fortune! (55)

The realisation that a military career was out of the question diverted all this force into the desire for a career in the Church:

"Aujourd'hui, on voit des prêtres de quarante ans avoir cent mille francs d'appointements, c'est-à-dire trois fois autant que les fameux généraux de division de Napoléon." (56)

The next three major stages in Julien's life see him respectively in the Rênal household, in the seminary and as secretary to the marquis de La Mole. Initially, as a tutor, his ambition had little scope. His sheltered, almost academic youth at the same time both delayed and inspired the genesis of a minor campaign to exercise Julien's desire for action. Stendhal comments ironically:

Certaines choses que Napoléon dit des femmes, plusieurs discussions sur le mérite des romans à la mode sous son règne lui donnèrent alors, pour la première fois, quelques idées que tout autre jeune homme de son âge aurait eues depuis longtemps. (57)

Julien's seduction of Mme de Rênal was run on military lines. Every favour gained was a battle won; a tribute to his own daring and tactical skill. This seduction is closely linked with Julien's admiration for Napoleon:

Il avait fait son devoir, et un devoir héroïque. Rempli de bonheur par ce sentiment, il s'enferma à clef dans sa chambre, et se livra avec un plaisir tout nouveau à la lecture des exploits de son héros. (58)

Whilst his devotion to Napoleon in no way diminished he saw the need to divest himself of any outward testimony to this state of affairs:

Le portrait de Napoléon, se disait-il en hochant la tête, trouvé caché chez un homme qui fait profession d'une telle haine pour l'usurpateur! (59)

Minor triumphs over the detested M. de Rênal fall in the same category for Julien as his successful seduction of Mme de Rênal. His model does not allow him to stop and savour each advance made to his profit; every advantage has to be pursued in military fashion:

A force de songer aux victoires de Napoléon, il avait vu quelque chose de nouveau dans la sienne. Oui, j'ai gagné une bataille, se dit-il, mais il faut en profiter, il faut écraser l'orgueil de ce fier gentilhomme pendant qu'il est en retraite. C'est là Napoléon tout pur. (60)

Even in moments of repose Julien's overwhelming ambition is allowed to rise to the surface and express itself in terms of the career of Napoleon:

L'oeil de Julien suivait machinalement l'oiseau de proie. Ses mouvements tranquilles et puissants le frappaient, il enviait cette force, il enviait cet isolement.

C'était la destinée de Napoléon, serait-ce un jour la sienne? (61)

Given a tempting opportunity to make a moderate fortune in commerce it is admiration for Napoleon that decides Julien against taking it:

Quoi! je perdrais lâchement sept ou huit années! j'arriverais ainsi à vingt-huit; mais, à cet âge, Bonaparte avait fait ses plus grandes choses. (62)

Julien's existence as a tutor in the household of M. de Rênal is characterised by the small incidents which, through lack of greater, Julien relates to his ambitions and to his preoccupation with Napoleon:

Son bonheur n'eut plus de bornes, lorsque, passant près du vieux rempart, le bruit de la petite pièce de canon fit sauter son cheval hors de rang. Par un grand hasard, il ne tomba pas, de ce moment il se sentit un héros. Il était officier d'ordonnance de Napoléon et chargeait une batterie. (63)

Julien's pursuit of success brings him to a seminary in training for the priesthood. He applies himself with a single mind to achieve his ambitions:

Sous Napoléon, j'eusse été sergent; parmi ces futurs curés, je serai grand vicaire. (64)

Despite his complete dedication to this end it is wrong to assume that Julien enjoyed his hypocrisy or was even particularly adept. His whole history is marred by small errors of detail and by misjudgements springing basically from his naivety.

Entry into the seminary results in Julien's full realisation of the nature of his commitment and of the anachronism of his real desires:

Il y eut une conscription dont Julien fut exempté en sa qualité de séminariste. Cette circonstance l'émut profondément. Voilà donc passé à jamais l'instant où, vingt ans plus tôt, une vie héroïque eût commencé pour moi! (65)

Julien's move to Paris represented a great step in the advancement of his interests. He was soon, however, to realise the narrowness of this new world and the exact nature of his position in it. The atmosphere of the aristocratic, Restoration La Mole household was stifling in the extreme. Intrinsically Julien was very little better than a servant. This society, in constant fear for its own safety, and heavily influenced by an all-powerful priesthood, makes a very unattractive picture, above all when compared, spiritually, with the France of the Italian campaigns:

Pourvu qu'on ne plaisantât ni de Dieu, ni des prêtres, ni du roi, ni des gens en place, ni des artistes protégés par la cour, ni de tout ce qui est établi; pourvu qu'on ne dît du bien ni de Béranger, ni des journaux de l'opposition, ni de Voltaire, ni de Rousseau, ni de tout ce qui permet un peu de franc-parler; pourvu surtout qu'on ne parlât jamais politique, on pouvait librement parler de tout. (66)

People of Julien's standing were not supposed to trouble their heads over the affairs of their betters:

Comment, habitant l'hôtel d'un grand seigneur, ne savez-vous pas le mot du duc de Castries sur d'Alembert et Rousseau: Cela veut raisonner de tout et n'a pas mille écus de rente. (67)

It is clear at this time that Julien was not basically hypocritical.. He spent some time debating with himself the

morality of public life. Seeing all around him dishonesty and intrigue he tried to ascertain whether such means were ever justified by the end. Even his revolutionary heroes, Napoleon included, were a party to some kind of dishonesty at some time:

Faut-il voler, faut-il se vendre? pensa Julien. Cette question l'arrêta tout court. Il passa le reste de la nuit à lire l'histoire de la Révolution. (68)

Julien was not particularly adept at sustaining a rôle which required constant hypocrisy:

L'hypocrisie, pour être utile, doit se cacher; et Julien, comme on voit, avait fait à Mlle de la Mole une demiconfidence sur son admiration pour Napoléon. (69)

Once again Julien comes to lament the fact that he was born too late:

Moi, pauvre paysan du Jura, se répétait-il sans cesse, moi, condamné à porter toujours ce triste habit noir! Hélas! vingt ans plus tôt, j'aurais porté l'uniforme comme eux! Alors un homme comme moi était tué, ou général à trente-six ans. (70)

It is ironical that at the very moment when a brilliant career appeared to be possible Julien, by an act of folly, threw all his chances away. His brief military experience was probably the greatest moment in his career and one at which his ambition burned the strongest:

Julien était ivre d'ambition et non pas de vanité;...(71)

⊗ It is at the end when some vestiges of the ideology of the Republic come to light in Julien. Throughout almost the entire book Julien's manifestation of his admiration for Napoleon takes the form of ambition. At his trial he condemns himself, considering the nature of his jury, by exposing in some sort his profounder feelings:

Mais quand je serais moins coupable, je vois des hommes qui, sans s'arrêter à ce que ma jeunesse peut mériter de pitié, voudront punir en moi et décourager à jamais cette classe de jeunes gens qui, nés dans une classe inférieure et en quelque sorte opprimés par la pauvreté, ont le bonheur de se procurer une bonne éducation, et l'audace de se mêler à ce que l'orgueil des gens riches appelle la société. (72)

Only once previously does Julien criticise the society into which he is born:

Voilà donc, se disait la conscience de Julien, la sale fortune à laquelle tu parviendras, et tu n'en jouiras qu'à cette condition et en pareille compagnie! (73)

Napoleon's sole legacy to youth was ambition in an era when youth could not be free to pursue it without money or position. From this spring such characters as Julien.

In the Napoleonic era a young man of talent might succeed in many fields despite a lack of personal wealth or social position. The army, above all, could provide matchless opportunities. Julien, as intensely ambitious as any of Napoleon's officers, could find no outlet but the Church for these ambitions. This situation has been ably summarised:

In Le Rouge et le Noir, the action of which takes place in France, Stendhal proclaims his old dislikes through the mouth of an embittered republican, to whom Napoleon is merely the man who has restored all that monarchical nonsense and put the Church back on its pedestal again. But for Julien, the young Frenchman, Napoleon is a god, and the Mémorial 'the only book in the world, the guide of his life, and object of ecstatic admiration'. And yet he wants to be a priest! But the lesson he gets from the book is that one must be accommodating, that with will-power you can achieve anything in life. The world no longer belongs to the man with the sword, courageous and gay, but to the soft-voiced, ruthless dissembler, in his cassock. (74)

The opening pages of La Chartreuse de Parme are in many ways symbolic. They embody two major aspects of the Napoleonic Wars; the Italian campaigns and the battle of Waterloo. Here, then, is both the beginning and the end of an era, an era



which has quickly come and gone yet which has captured the imagination of a generation. Of this generation is Stendhal's hero, Fabrice, and the greater part of La Chartreuse de Parme traces the life of this man during a period when nothing remains of those stirring times but the memory.

Not only did the Italian campaigns represent the beginning of the Napoleonic era; they afforded Stendhal an opportunity to express almost unqualified approval of the man he so greatly admired. Knowing Stendhal's enthusiasm for both the period and the country and considering the large body of non-fictional material he had already produced on the subject, it is not surprising that sooner or later he would embody much of this material in a fictional work. So much so that the necessity for the opening of the book, up to the account of Waterloo, has been called into doubt:

Aussi souhaiterais-je, dans l'intérêt du livre, que l'auteur commençât par sa magnifique esquisse de la bataille de Waterloo, qu'il réduisît tout ce qui la précède à quelque récit fait par Fabrice ou sur Fabrice pendant qu'il gît dans le village de Flandre où il est blessé. (75)

However this study would show that the opening pages are indispensable to the work as a whole. It must be mentioned that any defence of Stendhal against Balzac's criticism is to do Balzac the favour of accepting that his criticism was purely structural. The exuberant, mocking liberalism of these pages could not have found much favour in Balzac's eyes. The rôle of the Italian campaigns and Waterloo has been admirably and acceptably explained by del Litto:

En effet, le roman plonge ses racines dans l'histoire contemporaine. Commencer La Chartreuse de Parme par l'entrée des Français à Milan en 1799 et par la bataille de Waterloo n'a pas été un prétexte pour rédiger les morceaux de bravoure; si l'on y réfléchit, les chapitres où est esquissée en un puissant raccourci l'épopée napoléonienne acquièrent une valeur de repère: ils situent dans un contexte historique précis le roman que l'on va lire. Waterloo veut dire Restauration. Stendhal a repris le thème de Rome, Naples et Florence en 1817: "Après la gloire, la boue". L'Italie qui avait, grâce à Napoléon, entrevu la liberté, est retombée par le fait de la Sainte-Alliance dans l'absolutisme le plus rétrograde. (76)

The historian, Peter Geyl, was aware of this 'valeur de repère', understanding Stendhal's 'posthumous' appreciation of Napoleon and the appeal to Stendhal's essentially enlightenment outlook of French-instigated republican Italy as opposed to the rule of priests and bigotry:

Take the case of Beyle - Stendhal - who had been grumbling about trampled liberty while Napoleon lived and who only now came truly under his spell. The young people in his novels idolize Napoleon. Fabrice in La Chartreuse de Parme is an Italian, and in Stendhal's own view the French conquest of Italy meant an altogether desirable liberation from government by priests and obscurantism, while after Napoleon's fall stupidity, senility and cruelty set the tone once more. (77)

Without the account of the Italian campaigns and of the battle of Waterloo the reader would be ignorant of much vital background to Fabrice's character and the recent political history of the setting. Yet perhaps what appears to be a simpler interpretation is more profound and embraces all the attributes of Stendhal's 'overture'. Maurice Bardèche sees in this part of La Chartreuse de Parme an effort to put the reader in the frame of mind where he can appreciate the novel as Stendhal wished, perceiving the lack of moral fibre in this post-Napoleonic society:

Ces pages fameuses et si belles dans lesquelles Stendhal nous raconte l'occupation française en 1796, la jeunesse de Fabrice, et la bataille de Waterloo, malgré tout ce que Stendhal y a mis de lui-même, et peut-être à cause de cette grâce propre aux confidences, comme on sent qu'elles ont pour fonction, avant tout, de disposer le lecteur! (78)

It is perhaps Lukács however who best summarises all the attributes that render indispensable Stendhal's opening chapters. He points out that for Stendhal the period of achievement for the bourgeoisie, that of the French bourgeois revolution and of Napoleon, is over. It has given way to a resurgence of reaction which does not even permit the existence of Stendhal's heroes. It is for this that Balzac has not taken into account when proposing the editing out of the episode of the Italian campaigns:

Balzac n'a absolument pas remarqué cette pointe idéologique décisive, lorsqu'il a proposé de concentrer et de réduire le roman aux luttes à la cour de Parme. Tout ce que Balzac considéra comme superflu sous l'angle de son propre mode de composition était tout à fait déterminant pour Stendhal. Le début par exemple; la période napoléonienne avec la cour, décrite sous de brillantes couleurs, du vice-roi Eugène de Beauharnais, en tant qu'élément déterminant pour la structure morale et l'évolution de Fabrice. Et en outre, la peinture plastique et satyrique de la famille des Dongo - de riches aristocrates italiens qui se sont abaissés jusqu'à devenir des espions de l'Autriche, l'odieux ennemi - était absolument nécessaire comme contraste. (79)

Much of the nature of Stendhal's attitude towards Napoleon has been discovered already in the examination of Stendhal's non-fictional writing. However before considering Stendhal's description of the Italian campaigns in detail a clear statement must be made of Stendhal's outlook and how this enabled him to view this period with such simple approval. Stendhal's vacillations and contradictions have been observed with penetration and irony. (80) Chuquet realised, as did Geyl, that Stendhal's enthusiasm for Napoleon was very much a matter of chronology:

Quoi qu'il en soit, il n'avait pas aimé le premier consul. Il lui reprochait d'avoir exilé Moreau et assassiné le duc d'Enghien, d'avoir violenté Voleny, d'avoir établi le Concordat et "volé" la liberté. En 1837, il célébrera dans sa Vie de Napoléon le général dont le regard fixe et perçant annonçait le grand homme; en 1804, il juge sa figure plate. (81)

Stendhal's change of heart was highly subjective:

Ce ne fut qu'en 1817, lorsqu'un peu d'éloignement eut grandi les choses, lorsqu'il eut la conviction que les Bourbons ne lui donneraient pas la préfecture rêvée, que Beyle devint bonapartiste. (82)

Stendhal's attitude was therefore both subjective and contradictory. He never came to wholly accept and approve of Napoleon. He was, however, able to glorify one period of Napoleon's rule and that was the campaign of 'liberation' in Italy:

Bref, Napoléon tira le pays du néant, retrempe les caractères, jeta partout le levain de la civilisation; s'il abaissa la France, il releva l'Italie. (83)

There is no reason why Stendhal should be objective or even truthful in his presentation of history. He rather followed the dictates of his personality and the requirements of his art:

Mérimée rapporte qu'en conversation, Beyle, tour à tour frondeur comme Courier et servile comme Las Cases, exprimait ordinairement un avis contraire à celui de son interlocuteur; tantôt il idolâtrait Napoléon, tantôt il le traitait de parvenu ébloui par les oripeaux et dénué de logique. Dans ses écrits comme dans ses entretiens, Stendhal a jugé Napoléon par boutades et selon son humeur. Il lui dédie l'Histoire de la peinture, et en un passage du livre il déclare qu'il le hait, et il le nomme "l'assassin du duc d'Enghien, du libraire Palm, du capitaine Wright"! (84)

The genesis and the sources of La Chartreuse de Parme have been traced. (85) What is of greatest importance, however, is the manner in which La Chartreuse de Parme reflects Stendhal's own ideas on the recent history of Europe and on Napoleon, and in this respect it is more significant than Le Rouge et le Noir. There is, in Stendhal's descriptions of post-Napoleonic society, a sense of loss, and his heroes, although able to feel themselves intellectually superior to their situation and to the people who surround them, are nonetheless unable to achieve anything approaching happiness or fulfillment:

La carrière de Fabrice devient un enseignement. Elle transcrit l'aventure tout entière dans le registre ironique parce qu'il s'agit de faire arriver aux honneurs un candidat qui est une sorte de proscrit moral dans le monde clos de la Sainte-Alliance. Et elle montre aussi que ces triomphes ingénieux sont inutiles puisque le bonheur vrai est ailleurs que dans ces parcours réussis. (86)

Essentially Stendhal points to the moral degeneracy inherent in a repressive and claustrophobic society that cannot be avoided even by exploiting the system to one's own ends. It is not possible to opt out spiritually or intellectually from

a society in which one plays a part, however one may view this part. Thus success is of no advantage to Stendhal's heroes. They have become aliens in their own time and country and continually look back to whatever brief experience they may have had of something better, freer and more inspiring. Bardèche continues:

Ces deux aspects du roman sont liés. Car Stendhal en retrouvant encore une fois un héros qui lui ressemble et qui ressemble à Julien Sorel et à Leuwen, retrouve aussi mais plus nettement, plus impérieusement les voies qu'il connaît maintenant comme les voies du bonheur. Et Fabrice, à chaque moment de sa vie, fera la même découverte que Julien faisait dans sa prison: ce qui comptait c'étaient les soirées de Vergy, et pas autre chose. C'est le secret de la mélancolie de la Chartreuse. On triomphe des pharisiens, mais finalement où est le bonheur de Vergy, où sont les soirs de Grianta? On le voit, en découvrant une de ces significations de la Chartreuse, on découvre nécessairement l'autre. (87)

There is much of Stendhal in his heroes. As perhaps one of the last literary representatives of the enlightenment he could welcome the youthful Bonaparte, condemn the Imperial Napoleon and look back with regret, after the Congress of Vienna, to that period of freedom and vigour which preceded it, if not always in fact, at least by comparison. Stendhal's involvement in La Chartreuse de Parme has been amusingly over-stated, but not entirely without reason:

Stendhal serait le lieutenant Robert - que le lecteur doit presque prendre pour le père de Fabrice; Alexandre Farnèse allait devenir, pour le rêve de Beyle, un enfant aimé. (88)

Stendhal, therefore, in La Chartreuse de Parme is looking back to the one really glorious period of the Napoleonic era and one in which he can invest almost unalloyed approval. In this period his novel is founded, and these passing glories have to shed their light throughout all the succeeding pages. In the Waterloo episode the period is dead. Confusion reigns, not only for artistic but also for ideological reasons; it is the eve of the Congress of Vienna. The Italian campaigns

however are the quintessence of all that is finest in this lost period. Stendhal's task, then, is not to provide the reader with a balanced account of the Italian campaigns. The reader must be made aware of the enthusiasm of the Milanese for the liberating forces; enthusiasm which could inspire a young man to travel across Europe to the aid of his Emperor. An enthusiasm, too, that has to contrast sharply with the years that both preceded and followed the happy years of liberation.

For Stendhal the Italian campaigns were, above all, campaigns of liberation. That liberation may, on the whole have been the result of the campaigns is possible. However Stendhal, motivated by literary requirements, is only too willing to invest the campaigns with greater purity of motive than deeper analysis would permit. The proclamation of the 7 germinal IV is not that of a liberator. Admittedly it was addressed to 38,000 ill-clad and ill-fed soldiers and visions of glory were certainly far more concrete and simple encouragement for such an army than the intangible concepts, difficult to grasp, embodied in the liberation of one set of foreigners from the clutches of another. The fact remains that liberation was not the keystone of the declaration:

Soldats, vous êtes nus, mal nourris; le Gouvernement vous doit beaucoup, il ne peut rien vous donner. Votre patience, le courage que vous montrez au milieu de ces rochers, sont admirables; mais ils ne vous procurent aucune gloire, aucun éclat ne rejaillit sur vous. Je veux vous conduire dans les plus fertiles plaines du monde. De riches provinces, de grandes villes seront en votre pouvoir; vous y trouverez honneur, gloire et richesses. Soldats d'Italie, manquerez-vous de courage ou de constance? (89)

As an historian has said of this proclamation:

Songeait-il à sa propre fortune? Il n'était point tourmenté par la pensée de donner la liberté aux peuples d'Italie.(90)

However although in his non-fictional accounts of the Italian campaigns Stendhal allows himself to criticise certain aspects,

notably pillage, nowhere does he raise doubts on the motivation of Napoleon and his soldiers. For Stendhal Napoleon's aim was the foundation of an Italian Republic:

Il la forme en république, et, par les institutions que ses jeunes mains essaient de lui donner, accomplit en même temps, ce qui était le plus utile à la France et ce qui était le plus utile au bonheur du monde. (91)

In fact Napoleon was in no way decided upon the fate of conquered Italy and was far from rashly creating a Republic without first consulting the Directoire Exécutif:

Si ce peuple demande à s'organiser en république, doit-on le lui accorder? Voilà la question qu'il faut que vous décidiez, et sur laquelle il serait bon que vous manifestassiez vos intentions. Ce pays-ci est beaucoup plus patriote que le Piémont; il est plus près de la liberté. (92)

Again Driault's analysis of the situation appears to be very sound:

Mais il ne fallait point aller trop vite, il ne fallait point imprudemment engager l'avenir; une grande république Italienne, qui prendrait à la France sa force révolutionnaire, pourrait être plus redoutable que les rois. On ne se laissa point emporter par l'enthousiasme de la liberté; on réserva la question. (93)

It cannot be denied that:

Les miracles de bravoure et de génie dont l'Italie fut témoin en quelques mois réveillèrent un peuple endormi;...(94)

However Stendhal certainly exalted rather more than they warranted the impulses that sent Napoleon and his 38,000 into Piedmont.

It is also certain that Stendhal underplayed the resistance of the Italians to Napoleon. His statement purporting to convey the tenor of popular feeling in Italy at this time is misleading if not inaccurate when compared directly with the historical fact:

La masse de bonheur et de plaisir qui fit irruption en Lombardie avec ces Français si pauvres fut telle que les prêtres seuls et quelques nobles s'aperçurent de la lourdeur de cette contribution de six millions, qui, bientôt, fut suivie de beaucoup d'autres. (95)

An idyllic picture is painted of the reception of these soldiers by the local inhabitants:

Dans les campagnes l'on voyait sur la porte des chaumières le soldat français occupé à bercer le petit enfant de la maîtresse du logis, et presque chaque soir quelque tambour, jouant du violon, improvisait un bal. (96)

Whilst they were well-received, the reception of the French does require qualifications. The most ready source of evidence of this is in Napoleon's correspondence. (97) Historical accounts of incidents are also enlightening. (98) Stendhal's claim that the clergy or the nobility were the dissident elements is not without foundation but it is certain that Napoleon wanted no resistance from any quarter and above all sought to control Italy rather than liberate it:

Les troupes françaises dispersèrent des manifestations républicains dans les rues de Milan. L'enthousiasme de la liberté faisait place désormais aux calculs d'intérêt. (99)

A balanced view which included such details was obviously of no use to Stendhal since its 'valeur de repère' would be seriously impaired. Even the military aspect of the Italian campaigns can be regarded otherwise than in Stendhal's presentation. Stendhal invested the campaigns with an almost supernatural vigour compounded of youth, enthusiasm, bravery and purity of motive at the disposal of a leader who had all these qualities with the addition of genius:

Le 15 mai 1796, le général Bonaparte fit son entrée dans Milan à la tête de cette jeune armée qui venait de passer le pont de Lodi, et d'apprendre au monde qu'après tant de siècles César et Alexandre avaient un successeur. Les miracles de bravoure et de génie dont l'Italie fut témoin en quelques mois réveillèrent un peuple endormi; huit jours encore avant l'arrivée des Français, les Milanais ne voyaient en eux qu'un



ramassis de brigands, habitués à fuir toujours devant les troupes de Sa Majesté Impériale et Royale: c'était du moins ce que leur répétait trois fois la semaine un petit journal grand comme la main, imprimé sur du papier sale. (100)

However, when viewed in retrospect, the Italian campaigns can be considered within the context of military history as something less than miraculous:

To contemporaries of Napoleon's Italian campaigns of 1796-7 seemed almost miraculous: a dozen victories in as many months, announced in bulletins which struck the public like thunderclaps. It was a revelation of a new kind of blitzkrieg, and it was natural to ascribe it simply to the genius of the commander and the élan of the revolutionary armies. But to the military historian it appears also as the logical culmination of changes in the theory of war which had been gradually evolving for half a century. (101)

Napoleon, from the military point of view, was by no means untutored, and had at his disposal the knowledge that had been developed over the past century and which contributed to such a degree to his success as a commander:

Thus, by the outbreak of the Revolution, the French army had a sound and coherent doctrine of offensive strategy and tactics which was being expounded by the staff. Napoleon absorbed this doctrine in his professional training at Valence and Auxonne; it was far more important to him than his reading of military history, which was comparatively superficial, apart from a study of Maillebois' campaign in Piedmont in 1745. (102)

Felix Markham, as well as putting the military aspect of the Italian campaigns in perspective, conveys something of Napoleon's attitude of mind, the awakening of his ambition, (103) and confirms the viewpoint that extreme exploitation of Italy resulted in more than sporadic resistance:

By July\*, Saliceti estimated that 60 millions of francs had already been levied from Italy. These exactions soon produced disquieting signs of resistance; at the end of May, a rising of the populace in the region of Pavia had to be ruthlessly crushed. (104)

\*1796

Before leaving this historical aspect of La Chartreuse de Parme it is interesting to observe contemporary reactions to events in Italy at that period, other than those of Napoleon. The letters of an aide de camp of Napoleon, Joseph Sulkowski, provide a considerable insight into the facts of the situation. (105) An initial impression, which bears out Stendhal, is that of the Italians' cowardice, possibly attributable to Austrian oppression. However the spontaneous joy of Stendhal's account seems lacking:

*de* "La première chose qui me frappa à Bologne, ce fut de voir tous les Italiens affublés d'une cocarde; ce n'est sûrement pas par attachement pour les individus français qu'ils l'ont arborée; quant à la cause, j'eus bientôt lieu de me convaincre qu'ils sont à mille lieues de pouvoir l'apprécier; ce n'est donc que d'après un ordre tacite du pape qu'ils ont osé la prendre, et je présume, non sans raisons, que le Saint-Père se serait hâté lui-même de l'attacher au sommet de sa tiare à notre seule approche; cette bagatelle servit à me faire connaître les diverses gradations de la peur des Italiens par celles de leur flatterie." (106)

Sulkowski is free to exercise the same irony at the expense of the Italians in general that Stendhal has to reserve for the noble reactionaries, the clergy and the Austrians. Sulkowski attributes a great deal of the sources of unrest to the clergy, who form an undeniably reactionary group in Europe throughout the Napoleonic period and who become active in support of deposed monarchies after the Congress of Vienna:

*/s* "Pour inculquer dans l'esprit de peuple ce vertige pernicieux, les prêtres s'étayèrent de toutes les ressources du fanatisme: fausses nouvelles, calomnies, indulgences, confessions, processions, prédictions, miracles même, rien ne fut oublié et rien ne fut utile. (107)

Whilst Sulkowski occasionally feels, like Stendhal, that the breath of freedom could make something of the Italians, (108) his overall picture is very far from favourable and greatly removed from that of Stendhal. The attitude of the Italians varied greatly from place to place; although sometimes Sulkowski could claim to detect *germes d'enthousiasme*, (109)

he also encountered treachery, cowardice and enmity. (110)

It remains to consider the portrayal of the various factions involved in the events of this period. For Stendhal an important aspect of Austrian domination was its demoralising effect on the peoples dominated; an idea of his which occurs elsewhere. (111) The French invasion not only liberated the Italians but awoke them from a state of lethargy brought about by years of repression:

Depuis une cinquantaine d'années, et à mesure que l'Encyclopédie et Voltaire éclataient en France, les moines criaient au bon peuple de Milan, qu'apprendre à lire ou quelque chose au monde était une peine fort inutile, et qu'en payant bien exactement la dime à son curé, et lui racontant fidèlement tous ses petits péchés, on était à peu près sûr d'avoir une belle place en paradis. Pour achever d'énerver ce peuple autrefois si terrible et si raisonneur, l'Autriche lui avait vendu à bon marché le privilège de ne point fournir de recrues à son armée. (112)

This oppressive atmosphere is dispelled with impressive speed and valour by a youthful, ideologically sound army:

Ces soldats français riaient et chantaient toute la journée; ils avaient moins de vingt-cinq ans, et le général en chef, qui en avait vingt-sept, passait pour l'homme le plus âgé de son armée. (113)

Stendhal compares the youth and gaiety of this army with the main protagonists of the Austrian cause. In effect Stendhal claims a monopoly of youth, beauty and gaiety for the French and their supporters and invests the opposition with a similar monopoly of years, ugliness and moroseness:

Alors commença cette époque de réaction et de retour aux idées anciennes, que les Milanais appellent i tredici mesi (les treize mois), parce qu'en effet leur bonheur voulut que ce retour à la sottise ne durât que treize mois, jusqu'à Marengo. Tout ce qui était vieux, dévot, morose, reparut à la tête des affaires, et reprit la direction de la société: bientôt les gens restés fidèles aux bonnes doctrines publièrent dans les villages que Napoléon avait été pendu par les Mameluks en Egypte, comme il le méritait à tant de titres. (114)

The marquis del Dongo, the leading collaborator and Fabrice's father in the eyes of the world, is drawn in the most unfavourable light possible:

"huit jours après, continuait Robert, quand il fut bien avéré que les Français ne guillotinaient personne, le marquis del Dongo revint de son château de Grianta, sur le lac de Come, où bravement il s'était réfugié à l'approche de l'armée, abandonnant aux hasards de la guerre sa jeune femme si belle et sa soeur. La haine que ce marquis avait pour nous était égale à sa peur, c'est-à-dire incommensurable: sa grosse figure pâle et dévote était amusante à voir quand il me faisait des politesses." (115)

The comparison between the marquis and the vast majority of the people, Stendhal claims, is acute:

La joie folle, la gaieté, la volupté, l'oubli de tous les sentiments tristes, ou seulement raisonnables, furent poussés à un tel point, depuis le 15 mai 1796, que les Français entrèrent à Milan, jusqu'en avril 1799, qu'ils en furent chassés à la suite de la bataille de Cassano, que l'on a pu citer de vieux marchands millionnaires, de vieux usuriers, de vieux notaires qui, pendant cet intervalle, avaient oublié d'être moroses et de gagner de l'argent. (116)

The actions of the supporters of the French are characterised by bravery, passion and generosity:

Le marquis avait arrangé le mariage de sa jeune soeur Gina avec un personnage fort riche et de la plus haute naissance; mais il portait de la poudre; à ce titre Gina le recevait avec des éclats de rire, et bientôt elle fit la folie d'épouser le comte Pietranera. C'était à la vérité un fort bon gentilhomme, très bien fait de sa personne, mais ruiné de père en fils, et, pour comble de disgrâce, partisan fougueux des idées nouvelles. Pietranera était sous-lieutenant dans la légion italienne, surcroît de désespoir pour le marquis. (117)

In comparison the Austrian supporters are both cowardly and cruel; more so than the Austrians who themselves are less severely judged:

Ces messieurs, fort honnêtes gens quand ils n'avaient pas peur, mais qui tremblaient toujours, parvinrent à circonvenir le général autrichien: assez bon homme, il se laissa

persuader que la sévérite était de la haute politique, et fit arrêter cent cinquante patriotes: c'était bien alors ce qu'il y avait de mieux en Italie.

Bientôt on les déporta aux bouches de Cattaro, et, jetés dans les grottes souterraines, l'humidité et surtout le manque de pain firent bonne et prompte justice de tous ces coquins. (118)

This heavily underlined dichotomy between the two sides helps to explain Fabrice's eventual departure for Waterloo. The enthusiasm was contagious to a degree:

- Je pars, lui dit-il, je vais rejoindre l'Empereur, qui est aussi roi d'Italie; il avait tant d'amitié pour ton mari!  
(119)

In his fictional description of the Italian campaigns and the years of French rule in Italy Stendhal is motivated by the necessity of representing a clear-cut situation. The French are the liberating forces welcomed by the vast majority of the populace.

As a final note it could be claimed that the French occupation, in the person of the lieutenant Robert, was responsible for Fabrice's very existence:

En fait, Fabrice est fils de la marquise del Dongo et du lieutenant Robert, mais l'allusion est si discrète qu'elle passe inaperçue. (120)

Stendhal's description of Fabrice's experiences on the battlefield at Waterloo constitutes one of the most celebrated pieces of military fiction and one to which Tolstoy himself was indebted. Stendhal owes some of the description to his own experience:

On peut chercher enfin si le chapitre de Waterloo, justement célèbre, a été inspiré à Stendhal par ce qu'il avait pu voir et entendre des batailles rangées. Lui, qui ne fut ni à Marengo ni à Jéna, aurait, pense-t-on communément, utilisé ses souvenirs de la campagne de Russie et de Borodino; et plus sûrement encore les images flottantes que lui avait laissées la bataille de Bautzen dont, le 21 mai 1813, il avait tracé un récit très bref, bien qu'excessivement pittoresque et qui annonçait par plus d'un trait ce que devaient être,

vingt-cinq ans plus tard, retracées par la même plume, les impressions de Fabrice del Dongo. (121)

Stendhal's presentation of the battle of Waterloo is highly original. The confusion of the battle is strikingly conveyed by an observer whose status is somewhat less than that of a raw recruit which contrasts sharply with more orthodox approaches:

C'est donc à la lumière des faits que Stendhal, que son individualisme, sa prédisposition à l'analyse, et sa prédilection pour l'humour ne pouvaient que pousser dans le même sens, a eu l'audace d'introduire le point de vue du particulier dans la littérature de la guerre. Celle-ci, jusque-là, n'avait admis le tableau de bataille que selon le style officiel et épique, sous forme de vaste panorama reconstitutif et de manière à présenter l'engagement comme un déploiement majestueux et symphonique de mouvements décomposables et clairs. (122)

The keystone of the whole episode is the unawareness of Fabrice:

Mais c'est ici tout le morceau que Stendhal a organisé sur la proposition paradoxale que Fabrice, qui a convoyé certains mouvements décisifs, s'est même trouvé face à face avec l'Empereur, s'est si peu rendu compte de ce qui se passait qu'il a pu douter d'avoir effectivement assisté à un engagement. Tel est le postulat, ou plutôt le fait expérimental qui devait tant illuminer Tolstoi; il tient dans la formule: Fabrice "à dire vrai, ne comprenait rien à rien". (123)

The artistic brilliance, the humour, the irony and the pathos of Stendhal's description of Waterloo has been superbly analysed. (124) The final section of this chapter will be an examination of Stendhal's presentation of the battle.

Fabrice is totally unable to interpret any of the vague, formless movements he witnesses. Indeed he harbours doubts as to whether what he witnessed was the battle of Waterloo or a battle at all:

Il n'était resté enfant que sur un point: ce qu'il avait vu, était-ce une bataille, et en second lieu, cette bataille, était-elle Waterloo? Pour la première fois de sa vie il

trouva du plaisir à lire; il espérait toujours trouver dans les journaux, ou dans les récits de la bataille, quelque description qui lui permettrait de reconnaître les lieux qu'il avait parcourus à la suite du maréchal Ney, et plus tard avec l'autre général. (125)

The entire description, which consists of a mass of small details in isolation, is unfolded to the accompaniment of the noise of the guns. Initially Fabrice is enthusiastic but aimless and is all the more thankful for finding a guide and friend in the person of the vivandière:

De temps à autre le bruit du canon semblait se rapprocher et les empêchait de s'entendre, car Fabrice était tellement hors de lui d'enthousiasme et de bonheur, qu'il avait renoué la conversation. (126)

From the beginning the impression is of figures appearing and disappearing in the smoke and the continuous, pervasive noise. There is an unreal, nightmarish quality to the picture of Fabrice taking a meal on the very edge of the confusion that was the battle. His determination is not diminished by his ignorance but rather augmented by it:

Je comprends bien que je ne sais rien, lui dit Fabrice, mais je veux me battre et je suis résolu d'aller là-bas vers cette fumée blanche. (127)

The incoherence of events is countered to an extent by the character of the vivandière, full of common sense and sympathy, leading the bemused Fabrice round the battle-field. Small details are highlighted giving an impressionistic picture of the conflict. The canon continue to roar:

A ce moment, le bruit du canon redoubla, un coup n'attendait pas l'autre. C'est comme un chapelet, dit Fabrice. (128)

Fabrice's total ignorance of warfare soon becomes apparent:

Mais, mon Dieu, je parie que tu ne sais pas seulement déchirer une cartouche.

Fabrice, fort piqué, avoua cependant à sa nouvelle amie qu'elle avait deviné juste. (129)

His first encounter with the horrors of war finds him unprepared. His reaction to the dead body stands out in comparison to that of the vivandière:

Fabrice n'avait pas fait cinq pas que sa rosse s'arrêta tout court: c'était un cadavre, posé en travers du sentier, qui faisait horreur au cheval et au chevalier.

La figure de Fabrice, très pâle naturellement, prit une teinte verte forte prononcée; la cantinière, après avoir regardé la mort, dit, comme se parlant à elle-même: Ça n'est pas de notre division. Puis, en levant les yeux sur notre héros, elle éclata de rire. (130)

By chance he stumbles upon Ney and his escort, whose wanderings seem as aimless as those of the vivandière. However Fabrice is happy, despite being unsure who was Ney:

Un quart d'heure après, par quelques mots que dit un hussard son voisin, Fabrice comprit qu'un de ces généraux était le célèbre maréchal Ney. Son bonheur fut au comble; toutefois il ne put deviner lequel des quatre généraux était le maréchal Ney; il eût donné tout au monde pour le savoir, mais il se rappela qu'il ne fallait pas parler. (131)

His innocence and lack of understanding of the French character cause Fabrice to make many mistakes in his conduct towards the men with whom he has fallen in. He gains considerable satisfaction from coming under fire and from the supposed good will of his companions. The escort forms an independent entity in itself moving here and there, seemingly without cause, isolated in the midst of smoke, noise and confusion:

La fumée empêchait de rien distinguer du côté vers lequel on s'avancait; l'on voyait quelquefois des hommes au galop se détacher sur cette fumée blanche. (132)

Fabrice is still unable to decide whether the disordered, formless conflict in which he is marginally participating is indeed a battle:



-Monsieur, c'est la première fois que j'assiste à la bataille, dit-il enfin au maréchal des logis; mais ceci est-il une véritable bataille? (133)

Realistic details, rendered all the more horrifying by their clarity against the general confusion are interpolated in the formless narrative:

Il entendit un cri sec auprès de lui: c'étaient deux hussards qui tombaient atteints par des boulets; et, lorsqu'il les regarda, ils étaient déjà à vingt pas de l'escorte. Ce qui lui sembla horrible, ce fut un cheval tout sanglant qui se débattait sur la terre labourée, en engageant ses pieds dans ses propres entailles; il voulait suivre les autres: le sang coulait dans la boue. (134)

Fabrice is not yet wholly accustomed to these scenes:

Un fort vilain spectacle attendait là le nouveau soldat; on coupait la cuisse à un cuirassier, beau jeune homme de cinq pieds dix pouces. Fabrice ferma les yeux et but coup sur coup quatre verres d'eau-de-vie. (135)

In the confusion and the additional lack of clarity induced by the spirits Fabrice misses a glimpse of the Emperor. His brief friendship with the escort ends when his horse is needed more than he himself and Fabrice sees the remainder of the battle on foot. The climax of Fabrice's battle is his killing of an enemy horseman with a gun loaded by a companion:

Notre héros se croyait à la chasse: il courut tout joyeux sur la pièce qu'il venait d'abattre. (136)

The overall impression of this account is one of incoherence. Fabrice, being totally ignorant of warfare, is unable to even deduce some kind of pattern from the random events in the way that a soldier might. Each individual incident is unrelated to any other and all is lost in the confusion of the smoke and the noise. Out of this confusion, with no seeming reason, occasional death or mutilation strikes a man down. As Bardèche indicates the battle is an education for Fabrice:

Tout est surprise. L'enfant est enthousiaste, et c'est ce zèle qui est d'abord la source du comique. Il croit à l'Empereur selon son coeur, à la Grande Armée selon sa légende, aux chevauchées héroïques, aux frères d'armes dont on serre la main en silence, à la mort de Bayard. Lucien Leuwen pensait ainsi: et il découvrait que le courage et le désir de servir consistent le plus souvent à recevoir des huées et de la boue. Stendhal se charge de l'éducation de l'enfant aux yeux clairs. La guerre n'est rien de tout cela. (137)

The battle of Waterloo is also an 'education' for the reader. A few pages before this episode he could read of the glorious exploits of the youthful revolutionary army of liberation. Here there is cowardice where there was bravery; dishonesty and baseness of spirit where there was generosity and nobility. Nowhere in the description of Waterloo is there any hint of esprit de corps or moral rectitude; the impression is that of a struggle for self-preservation in a confused but nevertheless deadly environment. Apart from providing a magnificent description in its own right this account contrasts strongly with the vigour of the Italian campaigns. Here, in the opening chapters of La Chartreuse de Parme, are both the beginning and the end of the French Imperial Empire. A time of glory fades and dies, listless and without the moral drive it once had, on the field of Waterloo. Stendhal thus places his hero against a background of a vanished era which, having once experienced, and having for himself seen its demise, he can only regret:

In French literature Stendhal is the last great representative of the heroic ideals of the Enlightenment and the Revolution. His criticism of the present, his picture of the past rest essentially on this critical contrasting of the two great phases of bourgeois society. The implacable nature of this criticism has its roots in the living experience of the past heroic period and the unshaken belief - despite all scepticism - that the development of history will yet lead to a renewal of this great period. (138)

*too much part. of work.*

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CHAPTER IIIBALZACLE COLONEL CHABERT & LE MEDICIN DE CAMPAGNE

Balzac's Comédie humaine is of considerable significance in the development of the historical novel. His writing embodied a conscious attempt to present an artistic recreation of historical events. He was fully aware of Scott's value as an innovator and sought to improve on him by providing a body of work which would have greater cohesion:

The Waverley novels also gave him an inkling of what miracles the novel could perform in bringing past ages to life. Even in 1820 or 1821 he was hoping to do for France what Scott had done for his own country, but to do it more systematically by making the novel a medium for the interpretation of recorded historical fact. (1)

Balzac was sensible of the technical possibilities and limitations involved in the embodiment of factual material in the novel. The difficulty of portraying significant historical events, especially in their most obvious manifestation, war, and of portraying famous historical personages, was known to Balzac:

Et Balzac considère cela comme du dilettantisme de la part des romanciers s'ils procèdent autrement, s'ils choisissent comme sujet la splendeur extensive des événements historiques, à la place de la richesse intensive du développement typique de tous les éléments sociaux. (2)

The essence of fictional historical writing is the convincing portrayal of the people whose lives were affected by particular events. For the artist the point of departure is not the delineation of great events nor the recreation of the lives of historically significant characters but the description of the day-to-day existences of those whose lives were shaped by the episodes in question:

What matters therefore in the historical novel is not the retelling of great historical events, but the poetic awakening of the people who figured in those events. (3)

Balzac's writing demonstrates clearly an acknowledged debt to Scott. Scott had employed the techniques of realist observation, which had been developed in English studies of contemporary society by writers such as Fielding and Defoe, in order to create a valid historical novel. This novel was to go beyond the provision of external historical colour and seek an analysis of characters placed in an historical situation. However Balzac was to take the development of the historical novel several stages further. From the technical point of view Balzac's work formed more of an integrated whole than the diverse novels of Scott. Balzac also sought a finer presentation of characters than Scott and he criticised him on both these counts:

In the foreward to the Comédie Humaine the idea of a cycle appears in the form of a cautious and sympathetic criticism of Scott's conception. Balzac sees in Scott's novels a lack of system in his great predecessor. This criticism together with Balzac's other criticism - that Scott presented the passions too primitively, because he was the prisoner of English hypocrisy - constitutes the formal aesthetic point at which Balzac passes from the portrayal of past history to the portrayal of the present as history. (4)

It is Balzac's awareness of the progressive nature of history and the inevitability of the present that constitutes an advance on Scott's novels. Stendhal's works embody the idea of the mal du siècle:

Toute la maladie du siècle présent vient de deux causes; le peuple qui a passé par 93 et par 1814 porte au coeur deux blessures. Tout ce qui était n'est plus; tout ce qui sera n'est pas encore. Ne cherchez pas ailleurs le secret de nos maux. (5)

His heroes can never flourish in the atmosphere of the Restoration; his view of events is retrogressive in its desire for a re-establishment of the régime of the philosophe - inspired republic. A greater awareness of historical perspective lends a significance to Balzac's works in the development of the historical novel that Stendhal, essentially a continuation

of the enlightenment tradition, lacks:

Balzac's deepest experience was the necessity of the historical process, the necessity for the present to be as it was, although he saw more clearly than anyone else before him the infinite net of chance which formed the precondition of this necessity. (6)

A clear line of development can be traced, therefore, from the English realist novels of the eighteenth century, which, whilst excelling in contemporary observation lacked any sense of historical perspective, through the novels of Scott who applied their techniques to a vivid portrayal of the past, to the novels of Balzac who added his consciousness of the historical nature of the present to his skill in observation in order to create his contemporary history, the Comédie humaine:

Thus Thus with Balzac the historical novel which in Scott grew out of the English social novel, returns to the presentation of contemporary society. (7)

This could be said to represent a shift of emphasis from a portrayal of the past for its own sake to a more profound conception of history in an examination of the historical significance of the present. This tendency is noted by Maurice Bardèche:

Walter Scott était avant tout un historien dans le roman historique, et Balzac y fut avant tout un romancier. (8)

Balzac's concentration on the present results in a very vivid picture of contemporary life. He achieves an intensity in his descriptions of events and studies of character that only such close and detailed observation would allow:

The compression of historically portrayed events into a relatively brief period, full of big changes following one another in rapid succession, forces Balzac to characterize almost each year of the development individually, to give quite short phases an historical atmosphere peculiar to them, whereas it was sufficient for Scott to present the general character of a longer epoch with historical faithfulness. (9)



Balzac himself outlined his aims in writing the Comédie humaine. He felt that a careful attention to detail in the presentation of a limited period of time together with a consciousness of historical perspective would justify the all-embracing nature of the title of his works:

L'immensité d'un plan qui embrasse à la fois l'histoire et la critique de la Société, l'analyse de ses maux et la discussion de ses principes, m'autorise, je crois, à donner à mon ouvrage le titre sous lequel il paraît aujourd'hui: La Comédie humaine. (10)

Balzac's political theories have been studied in depth. (11) However no examination of Balzac as an historical novelist would be complete without some assessment of his ideas. The intrusion of Balzac's ideas into his works, particularly le Médecin de campagne (12) renders an examination of them particularly relevant. Balzac's loyalties underwent a change from an adherence to liberal views in his youth to a belief in the efficacy and necessity of an authoritarian government, a monarchy and a strong Roman Catholic Church. His belief that the mass of the people were better served by a paternalistic despotism than by being allowed a universal franchise they were not equipped to use to their advantage puts him at variance with Stendhal whose ideas were firmly rooted in the concepts of the enlightenment. Balzac, however, was not to abandon wholly the precepts of a liberal youth, notably in a continuing admiration for Napoleon:

Nous avons longuement montré, au cours de nos derniers chapitres, l'étrange persistance chez le légitimiste de 1832 de certaines tendances chères au libéral de 1820: bonapartisme, peinture sévère de certaines menées cléricales, critique de l'aristocratie parisienne ou provinciale, tout cela reparaît avec une grande liberté sous la plume du romancier du Curé de Tours, de Louis Lambert et même du Médecin de Campagne. (13)

That Balzac should continue to criticise abuses within the Church or the aristocracy despite his strong support for both these institutions is not out of place in a writer of perception

who cannot be unaware of specific defects in something which has his general approval. His attitude towards Napoleon will be amplified later. One aspect of Balzac's thought that is quite unequivocal is his paternalistic attitude towards the people:

d. He subscribes to none of the contemporary illusions about the fitness of the working classes for a share in the government: the proletariat must be kept in perpetual tutelage. But he offers two safeguards. One is that the social and political hierarchy shall be flexible enough for real talent to find its place. The other - his whole system depends ultimately upon this - is that the Church shall provide those moral and religious sanctions which alone can correct the natural egoism of men and women of all ranks. (14)

This attitude springs from two main sources. Firstly is the belief, from observation, that the proletariat is not capable of working to its own advantage and that it is more humane to direct it than give it the freedom to wander aimlessly or perhaps to do itself some positive harm. This aspect has been admirably expressed in terms of more personal relationships:

Mais on peut aimer le peuple de deux manières: comme une maîtresse très chère dont on respecte tous les désirs ou comme un enfant dont on refuse les caprices. (15)

Secondly is the fear of the tyranny of popular rule. The recognition of this great failing of universal franchise shows considerable perception on the part of Balzac:

L'Election, étendue à tout, nous donne le gouvernement par les masses, le seul qui ne soit point responsable, et où la tyrannie est sans bornes, car elle s'appelle la loi. (16)

However Balzac was primarily an artist and his ideas were more the instinctive reactions to his observation of human nature than the result of any carefully argued establishment of a system of ideas. Although various clear-cut attitudes can be discerned, such as Balzac's paternalism and his appreciation of Napoleon, Guyon finds Balzac very much reacting to his circumstances rather than remaining invariably true to any preconceptions:

En vérité, ce qu'il faut bien voir, ce qui nous est apparu à nous-même à mesure que s'élaborait notre travail, c'est qu'il n'y a pas eu chez Balzac de véritable "conversion", c'est que ses prises de position successives, en face des événements et des partis politiques de son époque, n'avaient pas de réelle importance, et qu'elles correspondaient soit à ses impulsions sentimentales sans attaches profondes avec sa pensée, soit à des considérations d'opportunité dictées par un arrivisme d'ailleurs mal informé et maladroit. Son libéralisme était un faux libéralisme parce qu'il ne reposait pas sur la foi en la bienfaisance, et en la fécondité de la liberté, son légitimisme n'était qu'un faux légitimisme car il ne tenait aucun compte des fondements juridiques et moraux de la légitimité. (17)

The presence of Napoleon in the writing of Stendhal is explained by Stendhal's nostalgic enthusiasm for a heroic period that had passed away. Balzac, too, evinces some of the enthusiasm that was the inspiration of much of the Napoleonic writing in the period around 1830. (18) Balzac's feelings towards Napoleon however, are also expressed from a more personal viewpoint:

"Comme une bonne partie de la génération qui a eu vingt ans au lendemain de Waterloo, Balzac a idéalisé Napoléon. Mais, ce qui lui est propre, c'est qu'il a aussi interprété Napoléon suivant sa théorie personnelle, il en a fait le héros de l'énergie qu'il oppose aux dissipateurs de l'énergie. Napoléon, quelle qu'ait été la puissance initiale de son tempérament, aurait dû être tué en quelques années par sa consommation prodigieuse de pouvoir et d'énergie, s'il avait vécu toute sa vie comme dans les journées de bataille. Mais, précisément, explique Balzac, il savait concentrer sa volonté et sa pensée, comme ses troupes, sur certains points. (19)

Decisive action found merit in Balzac's eyes. Le Médecin de campagne provides Félicien Marceau with the material necessary to support the supposition that Balzac at least tacitly approved the coup d'état as a manifestation of the energy which he admired in Napoleon:

Balzac nous expose cette technique de coup d'Etat. Il ne nous dit pas, il est vrai, qu'il l'approuve. Mais il ne ménage pas son admiration au docteur Benassis, lequel, dans ce domaine, partage les vues de Marsay. "A mon avis, dit-il, un homme qui conçoit un système politique doit, s'il se sent la force de l'appliquer, se taire, s'emparer du pouvoir et agir." (20)

Marceau sees in Balzac's support of the Church and the monarchy the grounds to suspect Balzac of an inclination towards the Restoration government to the detriment of a total approbation of Napoleon:

*dr* Il admire Napoléon (non sans quelques réserves), il laisse son abbé Bonnet réclamer "l'homme providentiel". Mais - sans qu'il l'ait jamais, je crois, clairement exprimé - on sent bien que son goût le porte plutôt vers des formes moins personnelles du pouvoir; qu'à Napoléon, il préfère Louis XVIII et son cabinet, Talleyrand et ses collaborateurs, Fouché et sa police, Marsay et sa bande. Au chef solitaire il préfère le groupe, le clan, "le cercle social dans lequel se renferment les évolutions du pouvoir." (21)

It is incontestable that, whatever Balzac's precise feelings towards him were, Napoleon's presence is felt throughout the body of Balzac's work. The enthusiasm of the period for Napoleon and Balzac's own enthusiasm, together with the overwhelmingly important part of Napoleon had to play in the period, 1789 to 1848, that Balzac had elected to chronicle, make this constant presence inevitable:

Par l'impulsion qu'il a donné au siècle, par le remuement qu'il a provoqué, par le changement qu'il a apporté dans les lois, par les déformations qu'il a fait subir à beaucoup d'esprits, Napoléon est présent dans presque toute l'oeuvre. (22)

However this does not mean that Napoleon figures as a character in Balzac's writing. Balzac is faithful to his own assertion that a novel can only touch on a major historical character in passing. This apparent dichotomy between the importance of Napoleon in the works of Balzac and his non-portrayal as a character has been explained by Lukács:

Les grands événements historiques, les grandes figures historiques sont très rarement propres à exprimer d'une façon plastique les aspects typiques de l'évolution de la vie sociale. Par exemple, ce n'est pas un hasard si Napoléon n'apparaît que très rarement et toujours de façon seulement épisodique dans l'oeuvre de Balzac, bien que le napoléonisme, le principe de la monarchie napoléonienne, soit le héros social central de nombreux romans de Balzac. (23)

One major function of the presence of Napoleon in Balzac's novels is as a source of inspiration for his young heroes. A clear distinction can be made between this function in Balzac's works and the equivalent in Stendhal's. For Stendhal Napoleon was a prototype career, hopelessly emulated by young men who could not come to terms with the Restoration. For Balzac Napoleon showed how to make a career; it was the methods that were significant, not the career itself:

C'est lui qu'il donne pour idole et aussi pour modèle à ses jeunes ambitieux. Tous veulent imiter Napoléon: ils ne se proposent pas de l'imiter dans sa carrière, comme les héros de Stendhal qui ont l'oeil fixé sur le jeune sous-lieutenant de Brienne, mais dans ses méthodes, dans sa puissance sur lui-même. (24)

The 'methods' concerned are the selective employment of the energy at one's disposal in order to make the most effective use of it:

Enfin, cette énergie peut aussi être économisée, dépensée au bon moment, puis détendue: c'est l'hygiène de vie que Balzac prête à Napoléon et qui est imitée par ses jeunes ambitieux. (25)

A closer examination will now be made of two of Balzac's novels, Le Colonel Chabert and Le Médecin de campagne. Here the Napoleonic element is particularly strong:

Le souvenir de Napoléon rôde surtout dans Le Colonel Chabert et dans Le Médecin de campagne. (26)

Like The Trumpet-Major, Le Colonel Chabert contains no lengthy descriptions of episodes in the Napoleonic Wars. A brief outline of the part played by one man in the battle of Eylau in the latter can, to a great extent, be ranked with the piecemeal descriptions of Trafalgar which filter through to the inhabitants of Overcombe in the former. However, in common with The Trumpet-Major, Le Colonel Chabert is permeated with the atmosphere of the Wars, characters and plot being

deeply affected by this period of European conflict. The important difference between the two works is in their chronology. Hardy's novel is situated around the period 1803 to 1805. Balzac's on the other hand, covers the period 1815 to 1840 with the bulk of events taking place in 1816.<sup>(27)</sup> Thus the Wars which for Hardy's characters constituted a present and very real threat are viewed in retrospect by Balzac. This does not mean to say that they are any the less important; it is merely that there is a shift of emphasis. The essential difference between the characters of Hardy and Balzac's Colonel Chabert is that the former hope for an end to the Wars whilst the latter reached the peak of his fortune and career during the very period that embodied such fears for the inhabitants of Wessex. Colonel Chabert is a man entirely out of his element. He is in no way akin to the heroes of Stendhal whose lives are lived out almost entirely after the Napoleonic epoch which continues to exert an ideological hold over them. Colonel Chabert is a part of the past but survives until a period where he is entirely out of place. Balzac, essentially, accepts the present. Stendhal does not. For Balzac, who understood the historical necessity for the present, Colonel Chabert was essentially an anachronism. Not only is the character found to be politically and ideologically allied to the past; his position as a man thought dead, a man with no identity whose wife must reject him and whose very physical aspect is totally unrecognisable, underline his complete lack of affinity with the present. The anachronistic nature of the Colonel Chabert is total and profound:

Ce n'est pas seulement son carrick d'un autre temps qui est émouvant, ni cette effrayante blessure des sourcils à la nuque c'est aussi, c'est surtout son attachement à ce qu'il a connu, à ces hommes auprès desquels il a combattu, à l'épopée de sa génération. Il rentre dans un monde qu'il ne comprend plus. Ney est mort, Murat est mort, Caulaincourt a pris le maquis, Napoléon est à Sainte-Hélène. (28)

At the same time it must be remembered that Balzac had a sincere admiration for Napoleon and was sensible of the

attractions of that period of French ascendancy. Colonel Chabert, therefore, is drawn with the deepest sympathy. Indeed his wife is severely judged whereas nowhere does Chabert fall short of an essential nobility of character. It is in the description of the wife and her ally Delbecq that the social element of the work lies:

Et ce sera la grande leçon sociale de cette nouvelle, éclairage implacable des existences bien parisiennes: c'est par sa dureté que la femme triomphe, c'est en détruisant tout ce qu'il y a en elle de féminin, tout ce qu'il peut y avoir même d'humanité, c'est en se faisant l'âme d'une prostituée. Et elle triomphe en effet par une ruse de prostituée. Elle a le courage de jouer à son mari une comédie si basse, si infâme qu'elle le dégoûte et elle compte sur ce dégoût: elle sait qu'elle peut le faire abdiquer par dégoût. (29)

Balzac's evident sympathy with the character of Chabert is in no way, however, a contradiction of his legitimist beliefs nor does it lessen to any extent his belief in the historical necessity of the present. At this time, about 1830, when Napoleonic literature was rife, the Restoration politicians adopted the Napoleonic legend, hoping, by official approval, to ally themselves with the mass of the people for whom Napoleon represented the glory of France:

Ce portrait sympathique d'un officier de l'armée impériale n'est pas seulement, de la part de Balzac, un sacrifice à une mode littéraire (car Napoléon et ses grognards envahissent alors la littérature), il est un sincère hommage au chef prestigieux qui sut découvrir de tels hommes. Sans doute, cette exaltation de la gloire impériale n'a plus, à cette date, une signification politique aussi claire que quelques années auparavant. Nous avons vu que le parti royaliste avait compris l'intérêt qu'il y avait pour lui, s'il voulait rallier les masses, à rendre hommage à l'Empereur et à ses héroïques soldats. (30)

However, despite Chabert's nobility of character, Balzac cannot allow a happy outcome for his hero. In his final abstention from life, in his withdrawal from a contest he feels unworthy of him, Chabert resembles the heroes of Stendhal:

Le destin de ces hommes doit justement démontrer la bassesse, les désagréments mesquins de toute l'époque, d'une époque dans laquelle il n'y a plus de place pour les grands descendants de la période héroïque de la bourgeoisie, de la période de la Révolution et de Napoléon. Tous ces héros de Stendhal sauvent leur intégrité morale par le fait qu'ils quittent la vie. L'exécution de Julien Sorel est représentée manifestement par Stendhal comme un suicide. Fabrice et Lucien quittent également la vie, même si c'est de manière moins pathétique, moins dramatique. (31)

However, what is superficially similar is basically different, and in this difference lies the essential difference, indicated earlier, between Stendhal and Balzac. Stendhal's heroes, inexorably linked to a heroic past, wage an ill-fated war against the present. The tragedy lies in their inability to come to terms with the present. Balzac's heroes are no less involved in a struggle against the society of the moment but Balzac does not question its historical necessity. Some succeed and some fail but what is essential is that the nature of the present is accepted for what it is. For Stendhal the present is unworthy of his heroes. For Balzac failure is to fail to adapt to the present:

C'est contre la société, malgré elle, en bravant ses lois, que les grands héros balzaciens trouvent, sinon le bonheur, du moins l'épanouissement de leur personnalité, leur plénitude d'être. D'autres abandonnent la lutte et, tournant le dos à la société qui le leur refuse, cherchent le bonheur dans l'évasion. Certains se résignent à l'acceptation dans la médiocrité. Les plus faibles trouvent le refuge suprême dans la mort. (32)

Le Colonel Chabert, then, recounts the struggles and final resignation of a man who has returned to life only to find that he and his kind have no place in the present. His appearance is an affront to those who have profited under the new régime and he himself is too proud to make the necessary adjustments in order to advance his own cause.

Balzac makes it clear from the outset that an old order has given way to new. By allowing the reader to overhear, as it were, the day-to-day business of the Restoration,



Balzac indicates the nature of the change:

...et sa première pensée fut, ainsi que le prouve la date de l'ordonnance ci-dessous désignée, de réparer les infortunes causées par les affreux et tristes désastres de nos temps révolutionnaires, en restituant à ses fidèles et nombreux serviteurs (nombreux est une flatterie qui doit plaire au Tribunal) tous leurs biens non vendus,... (33)

Chabert is made brutally aware of the changing nature of his world. Left for dead in February 1807 he learns of subsequent events only after the disastrous Russian campaign, having spent the intervening years in penniless wanderings dogged by ill-health and suffering incarceration of account of accusations of insanity. A chance meeting with a comrade to whom he is able to offer irrefutable evidence of his identity serves to inform him of recent events:

Il m'apprit les désastres de la campagne de Russie et la première abdication de Napoléon. Cette nouvelle est une des choses qui m'ont fait le plus de mal! Nous étions deux débris curieux après avoir roulé sur le globe comme roulent dans l'Océan les cailloux emportés d'un rivage à l'autre par les tempêtes. (34)

Even this link with the past, his comrade Boutin, is severed at the final fall of the Empire:

Combien de désespoirs ne m'a-t-il pas fallu dévorer! - Boutin sera mort, me disais-je. En effet, le pauvre diable avait succombé à Waterloo. (35)

The realities of his new situation are brought home very sharply to Chabert:

Je me souviens d'avoir pleuré devant un hôtel de Strasbourg où j'avais donné jadis une fête, et où je n'obtins rien, pas même un morceau de pain. (36)

His eventual arrival in Paris leaves him in no doubt as to the changed nature of the times:

Enfin j'entrai dans Paris en même temps que les Cosaques.  
Pour moi c'était douleur sur douleur. (37)

Even the sympathetic ear and the open purse of Derville do little to allay the low estate to which Chabert has fallen:

- L'homme qui a décidé le gain de la bataille d'Eylau serait là! se dit Derville en saisissant d'un seul coup d'oeil l'ensemble de ce spectacle ignoble. (38)

All these touches help to convey the utterly different nature of the world into which Chabert finds himself resurrected. Probably the most important change, and one that seals the fate of Chabert is the change of status of his wife:

Le colonel avait connu la comtesse de l'Empire, il revoyait une comtesse de la Restauration. (39)

It was now the turn of the countess's second husband to find his career in the ascendant. A man with a talent for compromise, he had trodden a middle path in the days of the Empire, allowing his talents to be appreciated, and rewarded, without allying himself irrevocably with Napoleon:

La réputation de capacité que se fit le jeune comte, alors simplement appelé monsieur Ferraud, le rendit l'objet des coquetteries de l'Empereur, qui souvent était aussi heureux de ses conquêtes sur l'aristocratie que du gain d'une bataille. (40)

Thus he was not compromised with Napoleon's fall and continued to prosper under the Restoration:

Il comprenait les exigences de la position dans laquelle se trouvait Louis XVIII, il était du nombre des initiés qui attendaient que l'abîme des révolutions fût fermé, car cette phrase royale, dont se moquèrent tant les libéraux, cachait un sens politique. Néanmoins, l'ordonnance citée dans la longue phase cléricale qui commence cette histoire lui avait rendu deux forêts et une terre dont la valeur avait considérablement augmenté pendant le séquestre. (41)

Chabert's successor had been able to compromise more than Chabert whose loyalties were utterly binding. However the

Restoration had brought one thing home to the count Ferraud and that was the unsuitability of his marriage. The widow Chabert had, under Napoleon, wealth, beauty and prestige. Her marriage to Ferraud gained for her prestige even among the aristocrats whose self-interest induced them to stay in France but whose vainglory made them contemptuous of the new aristocracy of the Empire. The Restoration altered the circumstances. Chabert's widow was still beautiful, still rich, but could not be considered an advantageous marriage; certainly not as advantageous as a marriage with the only daughter of a peer of the realm:

Au premier retour du roi, le comte Ferraud avait conçu quelques regrets de son mariage. La veuve du Colonel Chabert ne l'avait allié à personne, il était seul et sans appui pour se diriger dans une carrière pleine d'écueils et pleine d'ennemis. (42)

Thus the Restoration worked against Chabert in a tortuous fashion. His wife, had she not loved her second husband, could have returned to Chabert; they would not be poor. Had her second husband wished to retain his wife an amicable solution could have been arranged; Chabert was chivalrous and honourable. However the Comtesse Ferraud had conceived a passion for her second husband, and the society into which he had enabled her to enter, but could not be sure of his support if the matter came before the law. She therefore had to try to win Chabert and persuade him to renounce his rights. His discovery of her ruse so revolted Chabert that he abandoned all his claims and sought only to live out the remainder of his life alone. Thus the circumstances Chabert finds on his return to France cause him to be rejected in every possible way. The old soldier returns to peace, his Emperor gone. Rejected of necessity by his wife he can no longer find the will to claim his fortune or even his name.

If it is made clear that Chabert is a relic from a different world his continuing allegiance to that world is also stressed. He is not unaware of the anachronism of his loyalties:

Je me trompe! j'avais un père, l'Empereur! Ah! s'il était debout, le cher homme! et qu'il vît son Chabert, comme il me nommait, dans l'état où je suis, mais il se mettrait en colère. Que voulez-vous! notre soleil s'est couché, nous avons tous froid maintenant. (43)

Chabert's raison d'être had terminated in 1815 on the field of Waterloo. Momentarily driven by the desire for justice his discovery of the ignoble nature of his wife takes from him this small strength. It is not surprising therefore, that the most impressive passages in Le Colonel Chabert are those which contain Chabert's account of Eylau and his supposed death. Inextricably tied to the past the old soldier becomes animated and articulate in his recreation of his last great battle with the army of the Empire:

Nous fendîmes en deux les trois lignes russes, qui, s'étant aussitôt reformées, nous obligèrent à les retraverser en sens contraire. Au moment où nous revenions vers l'Empereur, après avoir dispersé les Russes, je rencontrai un gros de cavalerie ennemie. Je me précipitai sur ces entêtés - là. Deux officiers russes, deux vrais géants, m'attaquèrent à la fois. L'un d'eux m'appliqua sur la tête un coup de sabre qui fendit tout jusqu'à un bonnet de soie noire que j'avais sur la tête, et m'ouvrit profondément le crâne. Je tombai de cheval. Murat vint à mon secours, il me passa sur le corps, lui et tout son monde, quinze cents hommes, excusez de peu! (44)

If it was to his advantage that his action at Eylau had become part of history the recording of his death was not:

- Monsieur, dit le défunt, peut-être savez-vous que je commandais un régiment de cavalerie à Eylau. J'ai été pour beaucoup dans le succès de la célèbre charge que fit Murat, et qui décida le gain de la bataille. Malheureusement pour moi, ma mort est un fait historique consigné dans les Victoires et Conquêtes, où elle est rapportée en détail. (45)

Chabert's familiarity with warfare enables him to ascribe the chance that had him left for dead to some negligence on the part of the field surgeons who based their judgement on what they had seen, dispensing with closer examination:

Ma mort fut annoncée à l'Empereur, qui, par prudence (il m'aimait un peu, le patron!), voulut savoir s'il n'y aurait

pas quelque chance de sauver l'homme auquel il était redevable de cette vigoureuse attaque. Il envoya, pour me reconnaître et me rapporter aux ambulances, deux chirurgiens en leur disant, peut-être trop négligemment, car il avait de l'ouvrage: - Allez donc voir si, par hasard, mon pauvre Chabert vit encore? Ces sacrés carabins, qui venaient de me voir foulé aux pieds par les chevaux de deux régiments, se dispensèrent sans doute de me tâter le pouls et dirent que j'étais bien mort. L'acte de mon décès fut donc probablement dressé d'après les règles établies par la jurisprudence militaire. (46)

For Chabert this conjecture forms the only logical explanation of his being left for dead. The awful finality of this fate is conveyed in simple, expressive terms:

Autrement comment concevoir que j'aie été, suivant l'usage de la guerre, dépouillé de mes vêtements, et jeté dans la fosse aux soldats par les gens chargés d'enterrer les morts?(47)

Chabert's description of the state in which he found himself on regaining consciousness brings home to the reader the horror of the situation:

J'entendis, ou crus entendre, je ne veux rien affirmer, des gémissements poussés par le monde de cadavres au milieu duquel je gisais. (48)

The macabre details of his efforts to free himself are thrown into relief by the savagely humorous manner in which they are presented:

En furetant avec promptitude, car il ne fallait pas flâner, je rencontrai fort heureusement un bras qui ne tenait à rien, le bras d'un Hercule! un bon os auquel je dus mon salut.(49)

This one extensive discourse shows clearly how the man is a product of a past age. His dry, expressive account of his part in the battle of Eylau testifies to the capabilities and qualities of a man who made his career in Napoleon's army. These passages, where Chabert recalls a past which to him is more vital than the present, are not the only ones which illustrate Chabert's affinity with the past. Ill-lodged and of precarious fortunes his quiet pride and patient resignation are kept alive by his spiritual recourse to the past:

Sur la table vermoulue, les Bulletins de la Grande-Armée réimprimés par Plancher étaient ouverts, et paraissaient être la lecture du colonel, dont la physionomie était calme et sereine au milieu de cette misère. (50)

His loyalties to a bygone era embrace those fellow-countrymen who shared the precarious existence of those years with him. His conduct towards the Vergniaud family attests to a selfless nobility of mind. For Chabert the bonds formed under the rigours of campaigning remain sacred:

- Nous appelons ainsi les troupiers qui sont revenus de l'expédition d'Egypte de laquelle j'ai fait partie. Non seulement tous ceux qui en sont revenus sont un peu frères, mais Vergniaud était alors dans mon régiment, nous avons partagé de l'eau dans le désert. (51)

The loyalty is fully reciprocated by Vergniaud to the best of his ability:

- Pardon, excuse, monsieur, il a la plus belle chambre. Je lui aurais donné la mienne, si je n'en avais eu qu'une. J'aurais couché dans l'écurie. Un homme qui a souffert comme lui, qui apprend à lire mes mioches, un général, un égyptien, le premier lieutenant sous lequel j'ai servi... faudrait voir? Du tout, il est le mieux logé. (52)

Those men who had served under Napoleon became a recognisable 'type' during the years of the Restoration. Survivors from that period were regarded almost as curiosities. Chabert's link with the past was not only spiritual, it became something tangible; he was a living antiquity:

A le voir, les passants eussent facilement reconnu en lui l'un de ces beaux débris de notre ancienne armée, un de ces hommes héroïques sur lesquels se reflète notre gloire nationale, et qui la représentent comme un éclat de glace illuminé par le soleil semble en réfléchir tous les rayons. Ces vieux soldats sont tout ensemble des tableaux et des livres. (53)

Even Chabert's brief period of reconciliation with his wife is characterised by reminiscence:

Quoique les deux époux revinssent souvent à leur situation bizarre, soit par des allusions, soit sérieusement, ils

firent un charmant voyage, se rappelant les événements de leur union passée et les choses de l'Empire. (54)

Long after Chabert had abandoned his struggle with the present, and had given up his name in exchange for a number, echoes from the past could still stir his mind from its state of mute resignation:

Cet officier causait en marchant avec un autre, avec un Russe, ou quelque animal de la même espèce, lorsqu'en voyant l'ancien, le Prussien, histoire de blaguer, lui dit:- Voilà un vieux voltigeur qui devait être à Rosbach. - J'étais trop jeune pour y être, lui répondit-il, mais j'ai été assez vieux pour me trouver à Iéna. (55)

From the noble simplicity of Chabert's evocation of the past in the account of Eylau to the last sight of him, twenty-four years later, almost fallen into senility, is not such a large step. 1816 finds Chabert with some vestiges of the energy of a man of action, animated by the retelling of his war. 1840 finds Chabert acting out the confused memories of parade-ground and battlefield, his capacities dwindling but his preoccupations unchanged:

Il se mit au port d'armes, feignit de les coucher en joue, et s'écria en souriant:- Feu des deux pièces! vive Napoléon! Et il décrivit en l'air avec sa canne une arabesque imaginaire. (56)

The changing nature of society had no place, then, for men such as Chabert, whose inability to adapt to the present was augmented by their preoccupation with the past. Chabert himself felt that he could only successfully have survived the collapse of the Empire if all memory of it had been erased from his mind. There might always have been the possibility of recommencing his army career:

Ma foi, vers cette époque, et encore aujourd'hui, par moments, mon nom m'est désagréable. Je voudrais n'être pas moi. Le sentiment de mes droits me tue. Si ma maladie m'avait ôté tout souvenir de mon existence passée, j'aurais été heureux! J'eusse repris du service sous un nom quelconque, et qui sait? je serais peut-être devenu feld-maréchal en Autriche ou en Russie. (57)

Chabert is sensible of his total rejection by society. His incompatibility with the new régime as an old soldier of the Empire is heightened by the loss of identity and by his awareness of the untoward nature of his return:

J'ai été enterré sous des morts, mais maintenant je suis enterré sous des vivants, sous des actes, sous des faits, sous la société entière, qui veut me faire rentrer sous terre! (58)

Chabert is left without resource in an alien society. All with which he was familiar has passed away. He can appeal to no one; only to the inanimate relics of a period of history in which he was involved:

- J'irai, s'écria-t-il, au pied de la colonne de la place Vendôme, je crierai là:- "Je suis le colonel Chabert qui a enfoncé le grand carré des Russes à Eylau!" Le Bronze, lui! me reconnaîtra. (59)

Ultimately Chabert has recourse only to death:

- Oui, s'écria le colonel comme s'il achevait une phrase mentalement commencée, je dois rentrer sous terre. Je me suis déjà dit. (60)

Ironically, however, Chabert survives. The emptiness of his life is that much greater for its length. There is no complexity in Chabert's incompatibility with the world to which he has returned:

J'ai subitement été pris d'une maladie, le dégoût de l'humanité. Quand je pense que Napoléon est à Sainte-Hélène, tout ici-bas m'est indifférent. Je ne puis plus être soldat, voilà tout mon malheur. (61)

Le Colonel Chabert demonstrates Balzac's supreme consciousness of the historical necessity for the present. He is able to portray a character who becomes an anachronism in his own life time through the vagaries of a period of vast European turmoil. Chabert represents all that was finest in a period of heroism and action, which has irrevocably passed away. This



period gave an opportunity for such as Chabert to rise to great heights, but its passing left them utterly without support:

- Quelle destinée! s'écria Derville. Sorti de l'hospice des Enfants trouvés, il revient mourir à l'hospice de la Vieillesse, après avoir, dans l'intervalle, aidé Napoléon à conquérir l'Égypte et l'Europe. (62)

It is generally accepted that Le Médecin de campagne embodies much of Balzac's own political and social theories:

What matters is that Le Médecin de campagne is the first novel in which he gave a frank exposition of his political philosophy and proclaimed the monarchy and the Church to be the twin bulwarks of society. He called for a firm hierarchy and strong authoritarian government: king, hereditary peerage, an executive and a legislature of competent experts, with an elected body merely to vote supplies and register laws. (63)

Naturally any such embodiment must be affected by the exigencies of character portrayal:

Le plus souvent, le romancier a donné à ses idées personnelles une déformation suffisante pour qu'elles paraissent naturelles dans la bouche de son personnage. (64)

Given, then, the significance of Le Médecin de campagne as an expression of personal attitudes, the Napoleonic element, which is not inconsiderable, must be viewed as Balzac's most important fictional contribution to the vast body of Napoleonic literature. It is important as it also represents Balzac's own coming to terms with his personal emulation of the Emperor; an emulation which could find no outlet in political endeavour:

It marks the point in Balzac's career when he realized that he could achieve greater conquests, gain more prestige as a European figure, and so more effectively emulate Napoleon, by his writings than by political activity. (65)

Thus Balzac followed his own advice; the way of his own heroes rather than Stendhal's. The Napoleonic element is, perhaps,

less than originally intended, and in keeping with Balzac's literary assertions, is wholly episodic in nature. Nevertheless Napoleon, his Empire and his Army permeate utterly the fabric of the novel and find their highest expression in the simple testimony of a veteran:

Balzac's project for presenting a battle at first hand, characteristically, modulated into a humanitarian tract, Le Médecin de campagne. To be sure, this includes "The Napoleon of the People," a folk-tale recited by an old soldier to a group of peasants, which is one of the finest chapters in the imperial legend; it is also one of the most elegiac. (66)

It is this 'elegiac' aspect which links the two works of Balzac considered here; Le Colonel Chabert and Le Médecin de campagne. Levin continues:

"No more eagles" is now the watchword. The short story Adieu, pathetically re-enacting on French soil the Grand Army's crossing of the Beresina, is another good-bye to all that. There is no homecoming for Colonel Chabert, who has legally been slain at Eylau, and whose remarried wife hounds him back into an asylum. (67)

Despite the preponderance of social and political ideology for which the novel is, primarily, the vehicle, it is the Napoleonic element which has the greater power of holding the reader. Initially it appears to form a series of intrusions into the text conceivably to 'gild the pill of didacticism'. (68) As such these episodes would be wholly unconnected the one with the other:

Much use is made in this work of the Napoleonic legend. The countryside of the Dauphiné is resonant with memories of 'le petit Tondu', and the book is punctuated with anecdotes told about him by Genestas and two other veterans, Gondrin and Goguelat. The long political discussion that takes place, in the third chapter of the definitive edition, round Benasis' supper-table, is immediately followed by what is usually regarded as the pièce de résistance of this work, that part which had previously been printed in L'Europe littéraire as 'L'Histoire de l'Empereur racontée dans une grange par un vieux soldat.' (69)

This is not to underestimate the value of the Napoleonic element. However it is possible to see in these episodes a structural cohesion which makes of this element a unified thread running through the length of the novel. The introduction of Genestas, the soldier, as the second major character and his meeting with Gondrin, who shares much common ground with Goguelat, allow the episodes to fall naturally into place, created by characters who have been established as convincing figures under circumstances which could conceivably permit the introduction of such episodes into the text:

Cette fois le lecteur est bien préparé; lorsqu'il arrive au récit de Goguelat, il ne s'aperçoit pas de son caractère épisodique, tant il lui semble naturel et attendu. (70)

This coherent evocation of the Napoleonic era is not without some purpose in Le Médecin de campagne. It would seem that the Napoleonic element, not only admitted for its own sake (entertaining as it is), serves to demonstrate, once more, the historical necessity for the present. In showing the inexorable path of progress and the irrevocable nature of the past, particularly in the insistence upon the death of Napoleon, and above all in showing a present which is flourishing through Balzac's ideologies of the Restoration, the Napoleonic element has an active rôle to play in the work as a whole. As in Le Colonel Chabert Balzac pays tribute to Napoleon, to his soldiers and to France's moment of glory. Also in common with Le Colonel Chabert, Le Médecin de campagne testifies to the irrevocable nature of this past. It is even possible for a detailed analysis of the work to maintain that Le Médecin de campagne owes its continuing popularity to its echoes of Napoleon:

Aujourd'hui encore, si Le Médecin de campagne demeure un des ouvrages de Balzac le plus souvent réédités, s'il est toujours, en somme, une "bonne affaire", n'est-ce pas à ces épisodes militaires qu'il le doit d'abord?. (71)

But whilst Bernard Guyon points to the persisting interest of the Napoleonic element in Le Médecin de campagne he is also

aware of the one basic aspect of the manner of its presentation which forever consigns it to the ranks of past history; even those of mythology. The era has passed; it has become history and the present is consequential thereupon. Guyon points to the popular nature of the Napoleonic element as evinced by its ultimate expression in the words of Goguelat. He also indicates Balzac's concern to convey the speed and vitality of Napoleon's campaigns. Above all, however, it is his consciousness of the legendary nature of this period of recent history which places it totally and irrevocably in the past:

Passons sur les nombreuses additions de phrases telles que: "Etait-ce naturel? auriez-vous fait cela pour un simple homme?" "Non, c'était écrit là-haut...". "Voilà ce qui est vrai comme l'Évangile..." Signalons seulement pour terminer le plus important de ces ajouts, la "fantastique" histoire de l'"homme rouge" apparu à l'Empereur pour la première fois en Syrie, revenu à Marengo lui promettre qu'il verrait le monde à ses genoux et réapparaissant une dernière fois le soir du sacre. (72)

The structure and continuity of the Napoleonic element in Le Médecin de campagne relies primarily on the portrayal of the character of Genestas. In Genestas the reader can observe a representative of all soldiers. He embodies the attitudes, the outlook, the manner of life of the soldier. At the same time he represents all that is best in soldiery; a picked man from among the many fine men of the Grand Army. He conveys the extent of adulation of the troops for Napoleon and acts as historian and, on occasion, apologist for the Napoleonic era. He is a link between the past and the present, still exercising his profession, still leading an active existence. However he also bears witness to the esprit de corps of the army, its loyalties and the regrets for the passing of a glorious era. Above all Genestas conveys the irrevocable nature of the past with which he, as a protagonist, is a living link. From the beginning of Le Médecin de campagne it is clear that Genestas represents the heroism of past military glory, not only as an embodiment of all the attributes of the Napoleonic soldier but as a quintessence of the virtues

which earned France its victories. He holds much in common with his fellow soldiers yet is something special; a survivor from the earliest of Napoleon's campaigns, an Egyptien, as is Colonel Chabert. He is at the same time both a relic of the past and a living testimony to the past:

L'étonnement est une sensation que Napoléon semble avoir détruite dans l'âme de ses soldats. Aussi le calme de la figure est-il un signe certain auquel un observateur peut reconnaître les hommes jadis enrégimentés sous les aigles éphémères mais impérissables du grand empereur. Cet homme était en effet un des militaires, maintenant assez rares, que le boulet a respectés, quoiqu'ils aient laboré tous les champs de bataille où commanda Napoléon. (73)

The simplicity of his life of honesty and obedience is stressed. His existence had been that of any soldier:

Sa vie n'avait rien d'extraordinaire. Il s'était bien battu en simple et loyal soldat, faisant son devoir pendant la nuit aussi bien que pendant le jour, loin comme près du maître, ne donnant pas un coup de sabre inutile, et incapable d'en donner un de trop. (74)

Genestas himself later testifies as to the simplicity of the soldier's existence. Mutely accepting orders he continues relatively uninforme~~d~~ and unquestioning, living from encounter to encounter, concerned with the simple necessities of life and the skills and requirements of his profession. The soldier becomes accustomed to movement and death, occupied by daily exigencies rather than the profounder fears or concerns:

- Mais, répondit Genestas, ma vie est la vie de l'armée. Toutes les figures militaires se ressemblent. N'ayant jamais commandé, étant toujours resté dans le rang à recevoir ou à donner des coups de sabre, j'ai fait comme les autres. Je suis allé là où Napoléon nous a conduits, et me suis trouvé en ligne à toutes les batailles où a frappé la Garde impériale. C'est des événements bien connus. Avoir soin de ses chevaux, souffrir quelquefois la faim et la soif, se battre quand il faut, voilà toute la vie du soldat. N'est-ce pas simple comme bonjour? Il y a des batailles qui pour nous autres sont tout entières dans un cheval défermé qui nous laisse dans l'embarras. En somme, j'ai vu tant de pays, que je me suis accoutumé à en voir, et j'ai vu tant de morts que j'ai fini par compter ma propre vie pour rien. (75)

The vast extent of the Napoleonic Wars is conveyed in the way the soldier has become accustomed to travel and is no longer impressed in his long marches across Europe, Russia and North Africa. The travels of a soldier are no more than endless vistas of battlefields; everything is reduced to a vast conflict, a universal battleground:

Comme presque tous les militaires de l'époque, il n'avait vu le monde qu'à travers la fumée des canons, ou pendant les moments de paix si rares au milieu de la lutte européenne soutenue par l'empereur. (76)

With Genestas, as with any other soldier, understanding was replaced by obedience. Where his own knowledge faltered a trust in the Emperor, and the reluctance to betray his own ignorance, brought the newly-promoted Genestas through a moment of difficulty under amusing circumstances:

Quand Napoléon écrivit à Schoenbrunn, le 13 mai 1809, dans le bulletin adressé à la Grande Armée, maîtresse de Vienne, que, Comme Médée, les princes autrichiens avaient de leurs propres mains égorgé leurs enfants, Genestas, nouvellement nommé capitaine, ne voulut pas compromettre la dignité de son grade en demandant ce qu'était Médée, il s'en reposa sur le génie de Napoléon, certain que l'Empereur ne devait dire que des choses officielles à la Grande Armée et à la maison d'Autriche; il pensa que Médée était une archiduchesse de conduite équivoque. (77)

However if Genestas shares the simplicity and limited education of the soldier he also shares his perception, his judge of character. Years spent in a victorious army led by men of outstanding merit accustomed the soldier to recognise worth and capability in his fellows:

Habitué, par les rapports qu'il avait eus avec les hommes d'énergie que rechercha Napoléon, à distinguer les traits des personnes destinées aux grandes choses, Genestas devina quelque mystère dans cette vie obscure, et se dit en voyant ce visage extraordinaire: "Par quel hasard est-il resté médecin de campagne?" (78)

Yet although Genestas represents the soldier he also surpasses

him. Whilst typical of the Grande Armée he epitomises its finest qualities:

S'il portait à sa boutonnière la rosette appartenant aux officiers de la Légion d'Honneur, c'est qu'après la bataille de la Moskowa la voix unanime de son régiment l'avait désigné comme le plus digne de la recevoir dans cette grande journée. (79)

In Genestas the reader can find the same loyalties, the same esprit de corps as in Colonel Chabert. Genestas' treatment of his men is exemplary in its firmness, justice and understanding. His fraternal feelings towards fellow veterans shows them to be members of what was almost a family who regarded the Emperor as a father. His own experience in the ranks made him enlightened in command:

Jadis soldat comme eux, il connaissait les joies malheureuses et les joyeuses misères, les écarts pardonnables ou punissables des soldats qu'il appelait toujours ses enfants, et auxquels il laissait volontiers prendre en campagne des vivres ou des fourrages chez les bourgeois. (80)

The loyalty between Genestas and Renard is striking despite the tragic end to the relationship. The unifying nature of warfare and its ennoblement of fellow protagonists is one of its few laudable aspects. The comradeship forged in the dangers and vicissitudes of conflict is impressive in its strength:

Pendant la retraite je fus plus d'une fois sauvé par les soins d'un maréchal des logis nommé Renard, qui fit pour moi de ces choses après lesquelles deux hommes doivent être frères, sauf les exigences de la discipline. (81)

This unlimited loyalty is simply stated:

Me croyant tué en duel, il nettoyait ses pistolets, et avait idée de chercher chicane à celui qui m'aurait mis à l'ombre... (82)

A final act of heroism on the part of Renard brings the relationship to an end. Even the betrayal of the friendship in

rivalry over a woman does not alter its constancy on the battlefield:

Un de ces Sauvages allait m'enfiler avec sa lance, Renard le voit, pousse son cheval entre nous deux pour détourner le coup; sa pauvre bête, un bel animal, ma foi! reçoit le fer, entraîne, en tombant par terre, Renard et le Cosaque. Je tue le Cosaque, je prends Renard par le bras et le mets devant moi sur mon cheval, en travers, comme un sac de blé.  
(83)

Genestas' loyalty to the army and willingness to fight for his Emperor overcome all other considerations in 1815:

Je me suis trouvé chef d'escadron dans les grenadiers de la garde impériale, et malgré les douleurs que je ressentais encore de ma blessure, j'ai fait ma partie de moulinet à la bataille de Waterloo. (84)

Genestas' ultimate loyalty is to the Emperor and remains unshaken even in final defeat, despite being released from his obligations:

Quand tout a été dit, j'ai accompagné Napoléon à Paris; puis, lorsqu'il a gagné Rochefort, je l'ai suivi malgré ses ordres; j'étais bien aisé de veiller à ce qu'il ne lui arrivât de malheurs en route. (85)

This constant loyalty to Napoleon, tempered only by an equal loyalty towards his country makes the character of Genestas an important vehicle for the glorification of Napoleon's memory. Benassis, whilst sensible of Napoleon's greatness, judges him politically:

Avec le peuple, il faut toujours être infaillible. L'infaillibilité a fait Napoléon, elle en eût fait un Dieu, si l'univers ne l'avait entendu tomber à Waterloo. (86)

Genestas' opinion of Napoleon was formulated of the battlefield. No subsequent failure could dim the glory of his victories. Napoleon's almost superhuman quality is seen as the cause of his downfall:

...si vous aviez vu l'empereur manoeuvrant pendant la campagne de France, vous l'auriez facilement pris pour un dieu; et s'il



a été vaincu à Waterloo, c'est qu'il était plus qu'un homme, il pesait trop sur la terre, et la terre a bondi sous lui, voilà. (87)

Genestas' devotion to Napoleon is the stronger for his having had personal contact with him. A chance meeting on a battle-field serves to indicate Napoleon's common touch, his knowledge of, and his concern for, his men. The status of the Egyptians is again stressed, their long and deep involvement with the Emperor being recognised:

Napoléon me regarde: "-Tu es le capitaine Genestas? me dit-il. -Oui, sire. -Tu es allé en Egypt? -Oui, sire. -Ne continue pas d'aller par ce chemin-là, me dit-il, prends à gauche, tu te trouveras plus tôt à ta division." Vous ne sauriez imaginer avec quel accent de bonté l'empereur me dit ces paroles, lui qui avait bien d'autres chats à fouetter, car il parcourait le pays pour reconnaître son champ de bataille. (88)

A final, emotionally charged meeting with Napoleon strengthens the ties between Genestas and his Emperor. It also shows Napoleon in a favourable light, recognising true loyalty and devoted unselfishly to France even at the last:

"-Tiens, me dit-il, je ne t'ai jamais rien donné, tu n'étais pas de ceux qui avaient toujours une main pleine et l'autre ouverte; voici la tabatière qui m'a servi pendant cette dernière campagne. Reste en France, il y faut des braves après tout! Demeure au service, souviens-toi de moi. Tu es de mon armée de dernier Egyptien que j'aurai vu debout en France." (89)

Even Napoleon's defeat and final, inevitable surrender is invested with heroism and ennobled by the grief of his followers:

Napoléon a donc essayé un dernier moyen, il a fait ce qu'il faisait sur les champs de bataille, il est allé à eux, au lieu de les laisser venir à lui. Vous parlez de chagrins, rien ne peut vous peindre le désespoir de ceux qui l'ont aimé pour lui. (90)

It is Napoleon who is credited with the realisation that he and Genestas remain alive after the death of a cause and that their survival is of little consequence:

"-Hé! bien, Genestas, me dit-il en s'approchant de moi, nous ne sommes donc pas morts?" Ce mot-là m'a crevé le coeur. (91)

Genestas' most profound emotions are expressed in terms of his involvement with Napoleon and his life as a soldier serving him:

-Après la victoire de Wagram et le retour de Napoléon aux Tuileries, en 1815, dit-il en soupirant, voilà ce qui m'a donné le plus d'émotions. (92)

Outside of Goguelat's long panegyric on Napoleon Genestas presents the most sustained evocation and praise of the Emperor. Primarily Napoleon's brilliance is shown as being military. However Genestas also claims for him a degree of political ability, at least in the capacity to choose wise ministers. Genestas recognises the possible lack of wisdom in expressing to the full his enthusiasm for Napoleon. However this is amply counterbalanced by Genestas' expression of an overwhelming necessity for loyalty to France and consequently the Bourbons. It is, above all, Napoleon's genius which is vaunted. He, it seems, was expressly made for glory. The range of his capabilities renders him omniscient; his victories omnipotent. Here, indeed, is the Napoleonic legend:

- Oh! monsieur, la prise de Moscou et la reddition de Mantoue! Mais vous ne savez donc pas ce que c'est! N'est-ce pas notre gloire à tous? Vous êtes un brave homme, mais Napoléon aussi était un bon homme; sans l'Angleterre, vous vous seriez entendus tous deux, et il ne serait pas tombé, notre empereur; je peux bien avouer que je l'aime maintenant, il est mort! Et, dit l'officier en regardant autour de lui, il n'y a pas d'espions ici. Quel souverain! Il devinait tout le monde! il vous aurait placé dans un Conseil d'Etat, parce qu'il était administrateur, et grand administrateur, jusqu'à savoir ce qu'il y avait de cartouches dans les gibernes après une affaire. Pauvre homme! Pendant que vous me parliez de votre Fosseuse, je pensais qu'il était mort à Sainte-Hélène, lui. Hein! était-ce le climat et l'habitation qui pouvaient satisfaire un homme habitué à vivre les pieds dans les étriers et le derrière sur un trône? On dit qu'il y jardinait. Hantre! il n'était pas fait pour planter les choux! Maintenant il nous faut servir les Bourbons, et loyalement, monsieur, car, après tout, la France est la France, comme vous le disiez hier. (93)

Genestas also embodies the attitude of the soldier to war. He conveys an idea of the conditions prevalent, particularly during the retreat from Moscow, and something of the sense of collapse and defeat:

C'était pendant la retraite de Moscou. Nous avions plus l'air d'un troupeau de boeufs harassés que d'être la Grande Armée. Adieu la discipline et les drapeaux! chacun était son maître et l'Empereur, on peut le dire, a su là où finissait son pouvoir. (94)

The disastrous enterprise reduces all ranks to the common level of a struggle for survival, for food and warmth:

Les uns rongeaient des carottes glacées en exprimant une sorte de plaisir animal, et des généraux enveloppés de mauvais châles ronflaient comme des tonnerres. Une branche de sapin allumée éclairait la grange, elle y aurait mis le feu, personne ne se serait levé pour l'éteindre. (95)

As hunger, fatigue and the climate take their toll all supplies and equipment are at a premium:

...après la retraite de Moscou, mon régiment se refit dans une petite ville de Pologne. Nous y rachetâmes des chevaux à prix d'or, et nous y restâmes en garnison jusqu'au retour de l'empereur. (96)

Naturally enough war brings profits to some and the desperate condition of the troops assures the fortune of all who are able to turn this to their advantage:

...Le vieux père juif, de qui les doigts ne se trouvèrent pas gelés pour manier de l'or, avait très bien fait ses affaires pendant notre déroute. (97)

Genestas' plight is exacerbated by his acceptance of responsibility for the woman his friend had won from him:

Monsieur, il m'a fallu songer à cette femme au milieu de tous les désastres de la campagne de 1813, la loger, lui donner ses aises, enfin la soigner, et je crois qu'elle ne s'est guère aperçue de l'état où nous étions. (98)

This brief examination of the presentation of the character of Genestas serves to demonstrate his function in representing the soldier, indeed the soldier at his finest, and, in his reminiscences, in reminding the reader of the Wars, their nature, significance and their place in past history. Genestas is the common denominator for all the Napoleonic episodes. Through him the character of Gondrin is introduced and that of Goguelat is mentioned. This allows the author to integrate naturally the chapter Le Napoléon du peuple.

The meeting between Genestas and Gondrin comes as no surprise; the existence of Gondrin and his fellow veteran Goguelat is not something unexpected. Early on in Le Médecin de campagne the significance of Napoleon in this otherwise remote area is indicated, together with the reason for this significance:

Aucun événement politique, aucune révolution n'était arrivée dans ce pays inaccessible, et complètement en dehors du mouvement social. Napoléon seul y avait jeté son nom, il y est une religion, grâce à deux ou trois vieux soldats du pays revenus dans leurs foyers, et qui, pendant les veillées, racontent fabuleusement à ces gens simples les aventures de cet homme et ses armées. (99)

Guyon's indication of the legendary nature of the Napoleonic element in Le Médecin de campagne holds true for the episode of the meeting between Gondrin and Genestas. Gondrin is more than an Egyptien, great praise though this is evidently intended to be, he is the sole survivor of the sappers of the Beresina crossing. Goguelat, to whom the conversation naturally turns, is no less a fabulous figure, having received the croix from Napoleon on the field of battle. However not only does this episode add to the legendary nature of the Napoleonic element, it provides a substantial description of the Wars, the conduct of the soldiers during hostilities and their fate after the fall of the Empire. The scope of the Wars is amply conveyed in Benassis' initial description of Gondrin's career. This career, lasting the better part of twenty-five years, embraced most of Europe, North Africa and

Russia and included most of Napoleon's major campaigns:

Mais pour vous rendre cet homme intéressant, il faut vous raconter sa vie. Il a nom Gondrin, reprit-il, il a été pris par la grande réquisition de 1792, à l'âge de dix-huit ans, et incorporé dans l'artillerie. Simple soldat, il a fait les campagnes d'Italie sous Napoléon, l'a suivi en Egypte, est revenu d'Orient à la paix d'Amiens; puis enrégimenté sous l'Empire dans les pontonniers de la Garde, il a constamment servi en Allemagne. En dernier lieu, le pauvre ouvrier est allé en Russie. (100)

× The strength of the bonds formed between fellow-protagonists on the field of battle is again indicated; these men are seen to form what is almost a family whose ties are the experiences and campaigns held in common. The men that constitute this 'family' have special attributes, not the least being their sheer ability and good fortune to have survived so long against so many odds:

-Nous sommes un peu frères, dit Genestas, j'ai fait les mêmes campagnes. Il a fallu des corps de métal pour résister aux fantaisies de tant de climats différents. Le bon Dieu a, par ma foi, donné quelque brevet d'invention pour vivre à ceux qui sont encore sur leurs quilles après avoir traversé l'Italie, L'Egypte, l'Allemagne, Le Portugal, et la Russie. (101)

Gondrin had put his survival in jeopardy in his heroic braving of an almost certain death when he, with forty-one other sappers, had thrown two pontoon bridges across the Beresina in thaw. This consummate act of heroism is one of which Gondrin is justly proud, but there is a military economy in his assertion that his aptitude for the task lay in his being one of those who were 'assez poilus'. Not only is the heroism of the sappers underlined. The democratic nature of the army and its dedication to heroism is demonstrated in the personal leadership of General Eblé:

Mon homme est un des pontonniers de la Bérézina, il a contribué à construire le pont sur lequel a passé l'armée; et pour assujettir les premiers chevalets, il s'est mis dans l'eau jusqu'à mi-corps. Le général Eblé, sous les ordres duquel étaient les pontonniers, n'en a pu trouver que quarante-deux assez poilus, comme dit Gondrin, pour entreprendre cet ouvrage. Encore le général s'est-il mis à l'eau lui-même en les encourageant, les consolant, et leur promettant à chacun mille francs de pension et la croix de légionnaire. Le premier homme qui est entré dans la Bérézina a eu la jambe

emportée par un gros glaçon, et l'homme a suivi sa jambe. Mais vous comprendrez mieux les difficultés de l'entreprise par les résultats: des quarante-deux pontonniers, il ne reste aujourd'hui que Gondrin. Trente-neuf d'entre eux ont péri au passage de la Bérézina, et les deux autres ont fini misérablement dans les hôpitaux de la Pologne. (102)

The heroism of Gondrin, his almost miraculous survival, the multitude of campaigns he has seen and the sufferings he has undergone, in short, his long and selfless service to his country is deemed as nothing when not supported by a few documents. The death of General Eblé and Gondrin's position as the only surviving sapper forfeit for him, on his return to the Bourbon Restoration, his thousand francs and his croix. However even his basic rights of pension are unobtainable and Gondrin subsists by begging until his return home, where, with failing faculties, he has to work for his living. His nobility is in his mute acceptance of the injustice his country has perpetrated:

Arrivé à Paris en mendiant son pain, il y fait des démarches dans les bureaux du ministère de la Guerre pour obtenir, non les mille francs de pension promis, non la croix de légionnaire, mais la simple retraite à laquelle il avait droit après vingt-deux ans de service et je ne sais combien de campagnes; mais il n'a eu ni solde arriérée, ni frais de route, ni pension. Après un an de sollicitations inutiles, pendant lequel il a tendu la main à tous ceux qu'il avait sauvés, le pontonnier est revenu ici désolé, mais résigné. (103)

Gondrin's very existence is a glorification of the Napoleonic era and an integral part of the Napoleonic legend. If Le Colonel Chabert, with the majority of events taking place immediately after the collapse of the Empire, emphasises the end of an era whose survivors cannot come to terms with the present, Le Médecin de campagne can view the years of the Empire more in retrospect. These years, relegated to the realms of past history, can safely be invested with a legendary glory which is productively exploited by successive administrations. Le Colonel Chabert is pervaded by a sense of defeat; Le Médecin de campagne allows a degree of pride in what is now the history of France. The period was, after

all, characterised by a preponderance of French victories. For Gondrin the Empire is still a real and highly personal entity. The deep involvement in those years of glory which were his own finest years has left an indelible impression on him even to the more humble details of his present existence:

Il dîne avec moi les jours de la bataille d'Austerlitz, de la fête de l'Empereur, du désastre de Waterloo, et je lui présente au dessert un Napoléon pour lui payer son vin de chaque trimestre. (104)

Even this minor act of charity has to be disguised appropriately to save the old soldier's sensibilities:

Je n'ai pu lui faire accepter ma pièce de vingt francs que comme portrait de l'Empereur. (105)

Abandoned, as it were, by his Emperor and by a glorious past to be repudiated by a heedless if not hostile present, Gondrin survives only through the strength gained in the knowledge of his Emperor's approbation and by a Jacobite faith in his return. He cannot accept that Napoleon is dead:

Une seule chose le console. Quand le général Elbé présenta les pontonniers valides à l'Empereur, après la construction des ponts, Napoléon a embrassé notre pauvre Gondrin, qui sans cette accolade serait peut-être déjà mort; il ne vit que par ce souvenir et par l'espérance du retour de Napoléon; rien ne peut le convaincre de sa mort, et persuadé que sa captivité est due aux Anglais, je crois qu'il tuerait sur le plus léger prétexte le meilleur des Aldermen voyageant pour son plaisir. (106)

The structural necessity for a connection between Gondrin and Goguelat is clear. By the close of the episode of the meeting between Genestas and Gondrin the reader is amply prepared for Goguelat's spirited declaration of faith in Napoleon. In indicating this Guyon also shows himself to be aware of the profundity of the relationship between the two veterans; of the presence of a familial element:

Il a tenu à nous faire faire, bien avant la veillée, la connaissance de son personnage. Il a profité naturellement

de la rencontre entre G enestas et Gondrin. Gondrin et Goguelat sont deux fr eres; voir l'un, c'est parler de l'autre. (107)

On the whole Goguelat's career, briefly indicated by Benassis at this juncture, is similar to Gondrin's. Goguelat has been fortunate, however, to gain positive recognition of his services and, better able to maintain a well-ordered existence, he has received his dues. Where Gondrin is an embodiment of the Napoleonic legend Goguelat is its spokesman, both for his peasant fellows and for the reader. His life has been moulded by the army and characterised by danger and discomfort. In common with Gondrin his admiration for Napoleon knows no bounds and his faith in his continued existence is as firm:

- L'autre soldat, reprit Benassis, est encore un de ces hommes de fer qui ont roul  dans les arm es. Il a v cu comme vivent tous les soldats fran ais, de balles, de coups, de victoires; il a beaucoup souffert et n'a jamais port  que les  paulettes de laine. Son caract re est jovial, il aime avec fanatisme Napol on, qui lui a donn  la croix sur le champ de bataille   Valoutina. Vrai Dauphinois, il a toujours eu soin de se mettre en r gle; aussi a-t-il sa pension de retraite et son traitement de l gionnaire. (108)

Goguelat can revitalise for Gondrin the memories of a glorious past. Even this simple fact is somehow endowed with a sense of the miraculous:

Quand Goguelat parle de Napol on, le pontonnier semble deviner ses paroles au seul mouvement de ses l vres. (109)

The injustice of the post-Napoleonic administrations in their neglect of the soldier is always near the surface in this episode. Genestas can realise the true worth of such as Gondrin and can only deprecate the present state of affairs. Genestas is confident that Gondrin's heroism would not have been overlooked had Napoleon not fallen. The soldier's faith in the justice of Napoleon and confidence in the belief that all merit would receive appropriate reward, regardless of rank, shows, once again, the truly revolutionary nature



of Napoleon's army. Not even in the British army would heroism on the part of the ordinary soldier be officially recognised. Genestas can do little but commiserate:

- Si le petit tondu vivait encore, lui cria l'officier, tu aurais la croix et une belle retraite, car tu as sauvé la vie à tous ceux qui portent des épaulettes et qui se sont trouvés de l'autre côté de la rivière le 1<sup>er</sup> octobre 1812; mais, mon ami, ajouta le commandant en mettant pied à terre et lui prenant la main avec une soudaine effusion de coeur, je ne suis pas ministre de la guerre. (110)

Gondrin, a living testimony to the glory of the Empire, is impressive even in his decline. He appears to command respect, despite his fallen status, as a monument to the quality of Napoleon's armies:

Il y eut un moment de silence, pendant lequel les deux cavaliers regardèrent ce débris des soldats de bronze que Napoléon avait triés dans trois générations. Gondrin était certes un bel échantillon de cette masse indestructible qui se brisa sans rompre. (111)

In Genestas' sympathy and avowal of assistance the familial nature of Napoleon's army is clearly established. His promises, in their force and sincerity, have for Gondrin an unequivocal significance as his recognition of Genestas as a man from the ranks<sup>(112)</sup> clearly shows:

-Pauvre vieux, dit Genestas. A sa place je ferais comme lui, nous n'avons plus notre père. Monsieur, dit-il à Benassis, la résignation de cet homme me cause une tristesse noire, il ne sait pas combien il m'intéresse, et va croire que je suis un de ces gueux dorés insensibles aux misères du soldat. Il revint brusquement, saisit le pontonnier par la main et lui cria dans l'oreille:- Par la croix que je porte, et qui signifiait autrefois honneur, je jure de faire tout ce qui sera humainement possible d'entreprendre pour t'obtenir une pension, quand je devrais avaler dix refus de ministre, solliciter le roi, le dauphin et toute la boutique. (113)

Even Benassis, who, as a paternalist humanitarian, is a representative of much of Balzac's own opinion, endorses the criticism of contemporary administration. However his words

seem to lack force, comparatively, and are stinting in their support:

-De semblables cruautés administratives fomentent la guerre des pauvres contre les riches, dit le médecin. (114)

Averting civil unrest seems to be the criterion, rather than the need to see justice done. Gondrin's resignation echoes Chabert's 'notre soleil est couché, nous avons tous froid maintenant'. (115) The overriding impression is one of final defeat, of loss, of inability to come to terms with the present. Gondrin had, literally, dedicated his life to Napoleon, the Empire and the army. For him and his like meaningful existence had terminated. Genestas, at least, is still a soldier. For Colonel Chabert, Gondrin and Goguelat the soldiering is done. Chabert speaks for a generation when he says:

Je ne puis plus être soldat, voilà tout mon malheur. (116)

Gondrin's statement, more humble in its wording, embodies the same conviction:

...quand je me suis mis à l'eau là-bas, j'avais fait à l'armée l'aumône de ma vie, donc il y a eu du gain, puisque je suis encore sur mes ergots. Tenez, voulez-vous voir le fond du sac? Eh! bien, depuis que l'autre a été dégommé, je n'ai plus goût à rien. Enfin ils m'ont assigné ici, ajouta-t-il gaiement en montrant la terre, vingt-mille francs à prendre, je m'en paie en détail, comme dit c't'autre! (117)

Despite these seeming similarities between Chabert, Gondrin, Goguelat and even Genestas it is possible to draw some distinctions between them. Félicien Marceau, fully aware of Balzac's historical consciousness, finds in Gondrin, Goguelat and Genestas an acceptance of a new way of life, an ability to come to terms with the present. For Marceau, Chabert is the failure:

Jamais nous ne les entendrons invoquer la chute de Napoléon pour justifier ne fût-ce/le vol d'un poulet. Pourquoi?

Parce que ce sont de braves gens? Bien sûr. Mais surtout parce que, courageusement, sans s'épuiser en regrets ou en rancœurs, ces deux anciens soldats ont repris un métier civil et parce qu'ils sont capables de l'assumer, parce qu'ils ont compris que les temps avaient changé, parce qu'ils ont su composer et se réadapter.

Genestas resté dans l'armée, Gondrin et Goguelat bien replantés dans la vie civile, ils échappent à la déchéance des autres demi-solde. Nous reconnaissons ici la condamnation que porte Balzac sur ceux qui croient pouvoir abolir le temps, nier l'histoire, rayer les circonstances, sur ceux qui se refusent à composer ou qui ne savent pas, en un mot sur les tenants de l'absolu. (118)

Yet these old soldiers are not so very different the one from the other. Gondrin and Goguelat may well continue to be useful members of society after their demobilisation but is there any element of choice? Private soldiers most of their lives, unquestioningly obedient despite the rigours of campaigns, the dangers and the discomforts, they return home to their accepted lot of toil and resignation. Their survival is not so much an active acceptance of a new order but their unthinking compliance before all the trials life has to offer. That they both profoundly miss the days of their soldiering is made abundantly clear. Even more important they live in the expectation of Napoleon's return; something a man of intellectual capacity like Chabert could obviously never do. Genestas, too, has not faced the problems of a new order of things entirely. He is still a soldier, relatively isolated from the outside world. It is very much a question of character; it does not occur to Gondrin and Goguelat to do anything but accept the world as it is. Genestas largely is saved from making any real choice. Chabert is both able and in the position to make a choice and he turns his back on life. These four soldiers are alike in their consciousness of a bitter loss. Although each expresses his sorrow differently it nevertheless remains the same sorrow. What they can do is really beyond their control; each acts according to the kind of man he is.

The final pages of this study will be devoted to an examination of the most sustained and artistically effective

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praise of Napoleon to be found in Balzac's writing; the account of Napoleon's career given by Goguelat in the chapter headed Le Napoléon du Peuple in Le Médecin de campagne. The structural unity of the Napoleonic element in Le Médecin de campagne has been indicated. Despite the highly episodic nature of Goguelat's account it has been seen to fall into place naturally within the structure of the narrative as a whole. It is from this fact that Guyon deduces some of the possible reasons Balzac may have had for including in Le Médecin de campagne material which very probably existed prior to the work's completion in its final form.<sup>(119)</sup> Firstly, however, Guyon puts forward the two more obvious reasons for the episode's existence. Balzac, as an artist, wished to create an authentic appraisal of Napoleon's career from the popular viewpoint. He also took the opportunity of expressing his own political views just as much of his social ideology had been expressed through the medium of Benassis:

C'était d'abord pour lui un nouveau moyen d'exprimer sa pensée politique. Sans doute y cherchait-il avant tout à se faire le peintre exact des sentiments populaires à l'égard de l'Empereur; mais il est évident, pour qui connaît les jugements antérieurs portés par le romancier sur l'Empereur, que c'est son Sentiment personnel qu'il exprimait dans ces pages sous une forme épique, comme il avait exprimé ses idées dans les pages philosophiques du discours de Bénassis.  
(120)

Guyon, however, finds a more satisfying answer in his claim that Balzac sought to render his work more to the public taste by introducing the Goguelat episode into a novel whose nature allowed this to be done without any disturbance of the structure, indeed, if anything, strengthening it:

Il fallait à tout prix animer l'oeuvre, l'illustrer d'un de ces morceaux de bravoure dont ce conteur-né avait le secret. Il a choisi le plus facile: n'était-il pas imprégné d'anecdotes militaires et de méditations sur l'Empereur? Le plus naturel aussi: dans quelle oeuvre romanesque cette histoire de l'Empereur narrée par un vieux soldat aurait-elle trouvé place avec autant de vraisemblance et d'à propos? Il a choisi surtout celui qui, par son sujet même, avait le plus de chances de lui valoir les applaudissements enthousiastes d'un public largement populaire et de garder ainsi à son livre ce caractère de "bonne affaire" qu'il avait voulu lui donner. (121)

However the complexities of Balzac's political or indeed financial motivations cannot be adequately examined here. For the purpose of this study it is of greater relevance to regard the episode as the result of artistic endeavour. As such, two main aspects are discernible, the expression of Balzac's own ideas and the effort to produce a convincing portrayal of the popular Napoleonic legend. The first aspect can be briefly touched upon: Guyon's study has confirmed the use of the episode as a vehicle for Balzac's own opinions:

Balzac, nous l'avons dit, voulait faire exprimer à Goguelat ses propres idées sur l'Empereur. Parfois, il s'oublie. Derrière le vieux grognard transparait le professeur d'histoire et de philosophie politique. Par exemple dans cette réflexion: "Et, comme avait dit l'homme rouge:- C'est L'Asie contre l'Europe." Mais de tels accidents sont rares. Le plus souvent, le romancier a donné à ses idées personnelles une déformation suffisante pour qu'elles paraissent naturelles dans la bouche de son personnage. (122)

The aim here will be to examine Goguelat's account as an artistic attempt to create a popular rendering of the Napoleonic legend. The impressive character of these pages lies in the economy and speed of delivery of material which is steeped with a sense of the fabulous, the legendary. Goguelat's language is the common language of the people; he addresses them in terms they can immediately comprehend. The story gives the impression of having been told many times before; the audience expects a certain approach, a certain formula, just as a child expects a favourite tale to be couched always in the same words. Here is the essence of story-telling:

Lorsque Balzac fait parler Goguelat dans la grange, on retrouve, un moment, la foi, le merveilleux, la facilité de conter, l'authentique participation d'un public collectif à une poésie collective. (123)

Whether the content is factually accurate or not is not of primary importance. Evidently such a telescoped account would err to quite a considerable extent through over-general-

sation even were there no actual errors of fact. An historical inaccuracy does not, of necessity, mar an artistic presentation of history. No reader, for example, is troubled by the following observation on Colonel Chabert:

Il est mort officiellement à Eylau en février 1807, et la noblesse d'Empire ne sera créée que par un décret de mars 1808. (124)

As Pierre Citron allows:

Ces quelques incertitudes ne nuisent en rien à la vérité des personnages essentiels. (125)

Since an artistic recreation of history does not rely on its accurate presentation of known historical facts for its effectiveness as fiction, total accuracy is irrelevant. What is in question here is the convincing evocation of the popular Napoleonic legend, together with whatever inaccuracies it may or may not contain. The ease and fluidity with which Goguelat presents his tale reflects the crystallized nature of the events. Only what is part of the past can be recalled with such command:

...il est mené, comme le dit Goguelat lui-même, au pas de charge; on court au travers des années, des événements, avec une facilité merveilleuse. Tout a un sens, tout a une unité; on peut accélérer, se permettre des ellipses; tout se tient, et pas seulement parce que les auditeurs savent, mais surtout parce que c'est le passé, tout le passé, qu'on leur a pris, qui a un sens, pour ses hommes, par opposition au présent, où rien ne tient, où rien n'intéresse, où tout est contrainte, absurdité, fragments incapables de se rejoindre. (126)

Goguelat's story is of the past, a past beyond recall. It is an added irony that this account, so evidently drawn<sup>f</sup> from what is now history, does not indicate for Goguelat the end of the Napoleonic era; he awaits his Emperor's return. It is possible to see in the style of this episode a more profound inspiration than the constraints imposed by dialect and lack of education:

Les mots, les expressions populaires ne relèvent plus du pittoresque, mais d'une sorte de franc-maçonnerie de la liberté. (127)

The element of legend, of the almost supernatural can also be seen as a rebellion against the barren present. The people are understandably only too willing to invest a period of history, which so lends itself to myth-making, with a significance which goes beyond the bounds of normality:

"Maintenant, suivez-moi bien, et dites-moi si ce que vous allez entendre est naturel!" Ce leitmotiv va ponctuer chacun des grands mouvements de l'épopée. Personne ne répondra jamais à cette question. Mais la réponse est claire: non, tous ces événements ne sont pas naturels, de cette "nature" qui est celle des bureaux, des patrons, de la raison qui organise le monde au profit du capitalisme. (128)

This last may be attributing too exact a reaction to Goguelat's audience. However it is certain that the people were ready to accept much of Goguelat's story because it was the myth of their time, one which had raised their hopes. Every event in Napoleon's career is somehow related to the wonderful, from his birth onwards:

Pour vous commencer l'extraordinaire de la chose, sa mère, qui était la plus belle femme de son temps et une finaude, eut la réflexion de le vouer à Dieu, pour le faire échapper à tous les dangers de son enfance et de sa vie, parce qu'elle avait rêvé que le monde était en feu le jour de son accouchement. C'était une prophétie! (129)

The very nature of Napoleon's career constituted the raw material of mythology:

Enfin, à preuve qu'il était l'enfant de Dieu, fait pour être le père du soldat, c'est qu'on ne l'a jamais vu ni lieutenant ni capitaine! (130)

With Napoleon's downfall the atmosphere of legend ceases. There is a tangible return to reality:

Plus d'aigles! Le reste est suffisamment connu. L'Homme Rouge passe aux Bourbons comme le gredin qu'il est. La France est écrasée, le soldat n'est plus rien, on le prive de son dû, on te le renvoie chez lui pour prendre à sa place des nobles qui ne pouvaient plus marcher, que ça faisait pitié.(131)

Even the reference to 'L'Homme Rouge' now seems ironical.

'L'Homme Rouge' has been seen to be a significant aspect of the legendary presentation of Napoleon:

a L L'Homme Rouge même, qui revient si souvent, c'est la personification d'un Destin que ne sauraient annexer les puissants du jour. Ils riraient de l'Homme Rouge, les intellectuels, les industriels, ceux du Globe comme ceux de la rue Saint-Denis, comme ceux de chez Nucingen; Mais l'Homme Rouge n'est-il pas un moyen de se rire d'eux? L'Homme Rouge est toujours là, comme l'Empereur n'est pas mort. Les mythes vivent parce que les hommes ont besoin de vivre. D'un coup, c'est la "raison" qui se trouve déclassée. La raison paralyse, nous rend complices de nos exploiters raisonnables. On ne cède pas à ce chantage et on n'y échappe que par la sur-raison, qui n'est pas la déraison. (132)

Having considered the style and the legendary atmosphere of this episode a final aspect to be examined will be its expression of popular aspirations and ideals:

"L'infanterie, voyez-vous, c'est tout à l'armée": cette phrase n'est pas que naïf lieu commun. Par elle, l'armée, celle des rois, celle des nobles, celle des grands, devient, redevient celle du peuple, le peuple même. Toute une hiérarchie se trouve renversée, et ce renversement correspond à ce qui a été: les armées de masses, les armées de fantassins, ont bouleversé la vieille Europe des cavaleries.(133)

Here is the essence of the significance of the Napoleonic Wars for the people. Napoleon had led the people of France to glory and wealth fighting with them, at their side.

Goguelat recalls Napoleon's words and contrives to make them express the equality of the men who were fighting together for a common cause and whose leader was one of them:

"Mes amis, qu'il dit, nous voilà ensemble. Or, mettez-vous dans la boule que d'ici à quinze jours vous serez vainqueurs, habillés à neuf, que vous aurez tous des capotes, de bonnes guêtres, de fameux souliers; mais, mes enfants, faut marcher pour les aller prendre à Milan, où il y en a."  
(134)



This army of the people humbled the greatest among the old hierarchies:

Les rois demandaient grâce à genoux! (135)

The army itself could aspire to their status:

"Les simples soldats seront des princes qui auront des terres à eux." (136)

The status of the ordinary soldier, drawn from the people, was never higher. Never has such an egalitarian, meritorious system been known:

Là commence véritablement le triomphe du soldat. Pour lors, tout ce qui savait écrire passe officier. Voilà les pensions, les dotations de duchés qui pleuvent; des trésors pour l'état-major qui ne coûtaient rien à la France; et la Légion d'Honneur fournie de rentes pour les simples soldats, sur lesquels je touche encore ma pension. (137)

The army presented a career almost without limitations inspiring a hopeless envy in succeeding generations of ambitious young men:

Vous entendez bien que chaque soldat, ayant la chance de chausser un trône, pourvu qu'il en eût le mérite, un caporal de la Garde était comme une curiosité qu'on l'admirait passer, parce que chacun avait son contingent dans la victoire, parfaitement connu dans le bulletin. (138)

Genestas, silent witness to Goguelat's epic narrative, is profoundly affected:

Encore au service, engagé dans le "système", Genestas est gagné par l'émotion, se sent rajeunir, et se rappelle avoir été simple soldat: le langage, au lieu de rejeter les hommes à leur solitude, ou de l'exprimer, les unit et les entraîne: c'est sur ce point, sans doute, que Le Médecin de campagne, plus profondément que dans les exposés et dans les récits concernant l'oeuvre, répond à la littérature du mal du siècle. (139)

Drawn into the circle of listeners Genestas tries to convince the people of the reality of Napoleon's death:

-Chut! enfants, dit l'officier en s'efforçant de cacher sa profonde douleur. Chut! il est mort en disant: "Gloire, France et bataille." Mes enfants, il a dû mourir, lui, mais sa mémoire!... jamais. (140)

Balzac sees his characters in terms of their reaction to the present, the historical inevitability of which he is always aware. Goguelat's last, few words could express a final irony or, perhaps, a formula for happiness:

Goguelat fit un signe d'incrédulité, puis il dit tout bas à ses voisins:- L'officier est encore au service, et c'est leur consigne de dire au peuple que l'Empereur est mort. Faut pas lui en vouloir, parce que, voyez-vous, un soldat ne connaît que sa consigne. (141)

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CHAPTER IVTHOMAS HARDYTHE TRUMPET-MAJOR & THE DYNASTS

Erckmann-Chatrion's novel, Waterloo, has been seen to have had definite propagandist aims. The Trumpet-Major, not generally considered to be one of Hardy's greatest novels, has no such pretensions. A primary objective will therefore be to establish some form of basic critical evaluation of the novel in order to lend both direction and a sense of proportion to any subsequent study of its historical aspects.

Although the Napoleonic Wars fulfill an important rôle in both providing a colourful backcloth to this romantic tale and as an external agent to the machinations of the plot and the manipulation of the characters, their presence is less intrusive than in many other works. It is to a great extent true when George Wing states:

Although the darker implications of war and military service are not ignored, this tale of the Napoleonic Wars is burnished with military grandeur, with the splendour of uniform and review. (1)

Much painstaking research was made into the background. (2) A greater work, The Dynasts, was also envisaged, which would absorb much of this material. The material and the use to which it is put has been examined at length. (3)

The novel does not pretend to any great social or political significance. The attitudes, formed by internal stability, are considerably simpler than those of Europe, caught in the toils of invasion and popular nationalism. The foremost feeling present is a nationalism which is embodied in a loyalty firmly placed behind the king. The British progression towards democratic freedom is an intricate and essentially gradual development. Hence Napoleon is always seen in the rôle of aggressor, never as a liberator. It is interesting to note that even the Milanese were not as single-minded in their enthusiasm for Napoleon (4) as Stendhal would have his readers

believe. (5) England was always sensitive to the ever-increasing threat from the new-found Republic despite some initial Wordsworthian enthusiasm.

In 1804 the English attitude was unequivocal. Napoleon was the Devil incarnate, the arch-enemy, the marauding foreigner. Thus insofar as Hardy's novel lacks overall, historical perspective it must be borne in mind that to the British peoples the issues were clear-cut. In their rôle as defenders of liberty and their homes they were not aware of the wider significance of nationalist movement on a European scale nor could they have been expected to be. The serious element is entirely embodied in the risks of invasion and the sorrows of war together with 'some sad shades of romantic disillusion'. (6) As far as Hardy's own philosophy is concerned this book is generally deemed relatively uncomplicated:

There hovers over the book an eighteenth century air not so much that of Fielding as of Goldsmith: amiable domestic comedy, English ways and stuff, a moderate toying with sentiment, and a world utterly at home with itself. Hardy is for once quite without intellectual ambition, he has nothing whatever to prove and not very much to say, he can relax in the pleasures of memory and portrayal. (7)

Although it is possible to interpret The Trumpet-Major as a philosophically significant work this can only be done largely from implications. However profound an interpretation one puts on such implications it is still true to say that the novel contains little direct philosophising. More serious consideration of The Trumpet-Major has been advocated:

The patriotic cues evoke a comfortable response, perhaps, and obscure for a moment some of the implications. In any case to call the train of events a Schopenhauerian withdrawal is perhaps to oversimplify, to set aside the possibility of irony. None the less, it still seems odd that this book, in which there is a stress, unusual in Hardy, upon the acceptance\* of a fatalistic pattern, should be almost universally regarded as his most lighthearted novel. (8)

\*author's italics

This aspect can be detected particularly in the actions of the character John Loveday and will be examined at a later stage.

The Trumpet-Major is not primarily concerned with a description of the Napoleonic Wars as is The Dynasts, nor does it contain descriptions of specific events in the Wars as does War and Peace or La Chartreuse de Parme. However to Hardy these Wars constitute the 'external incidents' which 'direct the course' of his novel.<sup>(9)</sup> These external events pervade the fabric of the work; the restrained tempo of the human relationships and day to day events in this tiny section of rural England gaining in breadth and urgency from the disturbed world outside.

The martial element is never entirely absent from the work. Even when no direct reference is made to the hostilities abroad the presence of troops 'which brought the excitement of an invasion without the strife'<sup>(10)</sup> acts as a constant reminder of the gravity of the situation. The fact that some of the forces are foreign underlines the scale of the conflict. Many of the local inhabitants are directly concerned in the hostilities, being seen in the guise of volunteers or yeomen, and all are supremely conscious of the threat from across the Channel. Frequent reference to the beacon serves to underline the imminent nature of invasion and a certain sense of continuity is achieved by the casting of two veterans as watchmen. Two of the main characters, Robert and John Loveday, are involved directly in the two different arenas of war enabling the writer to encompass a greater field of military activity than the limitations of the fixed milieu would allow. Also, to an extent, the Wars intrude on the structuring of the plot, being, in particular, instrumental in the bringing together and parting of characters.

In an early work on Hardy F.A. Hedgcock states:

Le roman est inspiré par la tradition qui reste dans le Dorsetshire de l'agitation de la période; il rattache la vie tranquille d'un petit pays près de la côte aux grands événements qui remuaient toute l'Europe. (11)



With a shift of emphasis this would be very true. What can be stressed is the 'local' nature of the book. It is not so much that a specific area is shown in relation to the wider scheme of events but more that the wider scheme of events is seen, very much as Anne sees the 'Victory', from afar. England is still an island and by far the most sinister aspect of the Wars to the inhabitants of Overcombe is the invasion fleet:

William Tremlett,..... inquired if anybody had seen the terrible flat-bottomed boats that the enemy were to cross in. (12)

By frequent allusion and by calculated degrees of reference the historical background is kept in constant view and the atmosphere of war pervades the whole setting. From the outset the reader learns that 'the vast amount of soldiering was a cause of much trembling to the sex'. From the presence of soldiery to the reason for such a presence is a short step and the first chapter\*provides what must be considered as the representative reaction of the locality to the gravity of the situation:

Widow Garland's thoughts were those of the period. 'Can it be the French?' she said, arranging herself for the extremest<sup>form</sup> of consternation. 'Can that arch-enemy of mankind have landed at last?' It should be stated that at this time there were two arch-enemies of mankind - Satan as usual, and Buonaparte who had sprung up and eclipsed his elder rival altogether. Mrs. Garland alluded, of course, to the junior gentleman.

The degree of/success Hardy achieves has been debated and questioned. However adverse criticism is often levelled when the critic is being far too demanding on a work of limited scope. Carl Weber states:

'Napoleon' and 'Waterloo' were obviously names that had close personal and family associations for Hardy, and stories he had heard from his ~~father~~ interested him. But this novel has never stirred readers deeply and it never will. Hardy simply lacked the sympathy with the spirit of historical romance that enabled three of his contemporaries to create the impressive accounts of Waterloo found in Vanity Fair, in War and Peace, and in Les Misérables. (13)

This is unjust and largely untrue. Hardy does not seek to undertake such an account in a novel set entirely in England. The reactions of the inhabitants of Overcombe are charted with reasonable credibility; they are not in the field of war, even if threatened, and the degree of danger, though great, is not as immediate as depicted by Thackeray in Brussels at the time of Waterloo for example. And flight, when it does come, is for Mrs. Loveday, Anne and Molly, a touchingly inefficient affair. Whilst the participants in the drama have no real knowledge of the horrors of war and the plight of the refugee the fears cannot be explicit, and in The Trumpet-Major this is the case. Molly is the most demonstrative in her fears and the reason bears out this proposition entirely:

...Molly occasionally burst into tears of horror, believing Buonaparte to be in countenance and habits precisely what the caricatures represented him. (14)

The men who have to advance are in the same ignorance as the retreating women. The reaction varies. There is a realisation that war carries with it horrors unknown but fears have to be suppressed and sacrifices made:

'Fight how we may we shan't get rid of the cursed tyrant before autumn, and many thousand brave men will lie low before it's done,' remarked a young yeoman with a calm face, who meant to do his duty without much talking. (15)

Even Festus, basically more a Shakespearian borrowing than a character creation in the truest sense, is craven in ignorance and unrealistically melodramatic in his subsequent optimism. Hardy is not beyond creating sympathetic humour, even in conditions of adversity, which is true to national character. If the situation were one of real horror, as in the midst of strife, this might not be possible. Here this is not the case:

'Bother it all!' he exclaimed, looking at his stock of flints.

'What?' said Bob.

'I've got no ammunition: not a blessed round!'

'Then what's the use of going?' asked his son.

The miller paused. 'O, I'll go,' he said. 'Perhaps somebody will lend me a little if I get into a hot corner.'

'Lend ye a little! Father you was always so simple!' said Bob reproachfully.

'Well - I can bagnet a few, anyhow,' said the miller.(16)

Hardy cannot be blamed for failing to achieve what he does not attempt. In providing a novel set in time of war with authentic background he succeeds very well. In showing the reactions of a simple, rural people, inhabitants of a country free from invasion in hundreds of years, to dangers they can neither conceive nor comprehend Hardy succeeds equally well. And, as a final point, if Weber's comparisons were justifiable the addition of The Dynasts to the list would invalidate the claim.

It has been seen that Hardy's use of the Napoleonic Wars has been largely structural and that the matter of prior importance was the creative effort, and not a conscious portrayal of an era to a specified end. This will not be seen to be so in The Dynasts, where an examination of the chosen medium of artistic expression will be undertaken very much in the light of the overwhelming importance of the Napoleonic Wars as the raw material of the work.

The next aim will be to determine some of the reasons which caused Hardy to choose this period of history at all as a background to such a large amount of writing. The obvious must first be stated in that for Hardy's generation the Napoleonic Wars were the outstanding European conflict prior to the Great War of 1914-1918. The words of Hardy himself in his 1903 preface to The Dynasts must act as an important indication of motives:

The choice of such a subject was mainly due to three accidents of locality. It chanced that the writer was familiar with a part of England that lay within hail of the watering-place in which King George the Third had his favourite summer

residence during the war with the first Napoléon, and where he was visited by ministers and others who bore the weight of English affairs on more or less competent shoulders at that stressful time. Secondly, this district, being also near the coast which had echoed with rumours of invasion in their intensest form while the descent threatened, was formerly animated by memories and traditions of the desperate military preparations for that contingency. Thirdly, the same countryside happened to include the village which was the birthplace of Nelson's flag-captain at Trafalgar.

When, as the first published result of these accidents, The Trumpet-Major was printed...

It is certain that the interest and involvement indicated in this quotation was of long standing. As early as 1848 there are indications that he had access to sources of inspiration:

He also found in a closet A History of the Wars - a periodical dealing with the war with Napoleon, which his grandfather had subscribed to at the time, having been himself a volunteer. The torn pages of these contemporary numbers with their melodramatic prints of serried ranks, crossed bayonets, huge knapsacks, and dead bodies, were the first to set him on the train of ideas that led to The Trumpet-Major and The Dynasts. (17)

The seeds of inspiration once sown Hardy's reading was copious and diverse. Yet the depth of Hardy's feeling for the period precludes a totally researched inspiration, as is born out by the earlier quote from the preface of The Dynasts. He was born in 1840, quite early enough to have heard plentiful first-hand accounts of the hostilities and a ready transmission of the awful expectancy felt in the face of imminent invasion. As late as 1875 Hardy could still visit veterans of Waterloo at Chelsea Hospital and converse with them. (18) It is indeed at this same time when the idea of writing The Dynasts became crystallised in a recognisable form, as is indicated in a quotation from Hardy's memoranda given in The Early Life:

"Mem: A ballad of the Hundred Days. Then another of Moscow. Others of earlier campaigns - forming altogether an Iliad of Europe from 1789 to 1815." (19)

Hardy himself makes it quite clear that he is indebted to live sources and personal familiarity with vestiges of the epoch.<sup>(20)</sup> It is this indebtedness which enables him to handle his historical sources with such convincing mastery and insight.

As well as the recollections of people known to him as a youth and interviews held with veterans later in life, as well as the sight of the relics of invasion alarms and the serious historical researches, pursued with the aims of The Dynasts foremost in his mind, Hardy had recourse to researches of a more sociological nature. These researches were charted in the notebook already mentioned, that headed British Museum Notes taken for 'Trumpet-Major'. These notes specifically alluded to events, modes of dress, speech and behaviour from 1803 to 1805. Hardy referred to contemporary sources such as newspapers and journals. W. F. Wright, in his study of the use of the notes in the Wessex scenes in The Dynasts states with reference to the entries:

They cover activities of the Royal Family at Weymouth, information on military dress and training, examples of local customs and beliefs, rumours of invasion, and an assortment of details that might help in giving verisimilitude to a scene. (21)

The first aspect to be considered in detail will be the use of the historical material as a background to what would otherwise remain a simple village romance. An examination of the intrusion of conflict on such a scale upon the narrow existence of the village will also entail a survey of the reactions of the inhabitants to these external incidents and the lesser, internal manifestations which greatly affect them.

So diverse are the allusions employed by Hardy and so thoroughly does he manage to permeate his novel with the martial nature of the period that it is a complex task to analyse his use of the military background that he has so painstakingly researched. Even in moments of drama Hardy reminds the reader of the period setting:

The miller and John stood like straight sticks in the room the others had quitted, John's face being hastily turned towards a caricature of Buonaparte on the wall that he had not seen more than a hundred and fifty times before. (22)

One element that can be easily separated however is the use of military 'colour' by means of descriptions of uniforms and troop movements. Hardy ensures a plentiful supply of opportunities to indulge in such descriptions by the simple device of situating an encampment of soldiers on the edge of the village.

The arrival of the soldiery is an intrusion upon rustic calm, frightening the sheep and, for an instant, the natives. Anne is the first to observe this arrival:

Turning her eyes further she beheld two cavalry soldiers on bulky grey chargers, armed and accoutred throughout, ascending the down at a point to the left where the incline was comparatively easy. The burnished chains, buckles, and plates of their trappings shone like little looking-glasses, and the blue, red, and white about them was unsubdued by weather or wear. (23)

With troops still continuing to arrive Hardy indulges in further descriptions. The romance of uniform is underlined, as it is elsewhere,\* by allusion to its attractiveness to women:

Their uniform was bright and attractive; white buckskin pantaloons, three-quarter boots, scarlet shakos set off with lace, mustachios waxed to needle point; and above all, those richly ornamented blue jackets mantled with the historical pelisse - that fascination to women, and encumbrance to the wearers themselves. (24)

However the interest shown in the troops is not explained merely by the show. The sudden appearance of an impressive, disciplined body of men, especially at a time of crisis, intrigues the local population. The elements of novelty and curiosity are stressed as the soldiers prepare to camp:

\*p. 86.

Those three or four thousand men of one machine-like movement, some of them swashbucklers by nature; others, doubtless, of a quiet shop-keeping disposition who had inadvertently got into uniform - all of them had arrived from nobody knew where, and hence were a matter of great curiosity. They seemed to the mere eye to belong to a different order of beings from those who inhabited the valleys below. Apparently unconscious and careless of what all the world was doing elsewhere, they remained picturesquely engrossed in the business of making themselves a habitation on the isolated spot which they had chosen. (25)

An extension of the effect of the more isolated encampment of the soldiers is the closer contact made with the wives:

In the evening the village was lively with the soldiers' wives; a tree full of starlings would not have rivalled the chatter that was going on. (26)

The international nature of the troops does not serve merely to provide Hardy with the excuse to parade countless different costumes but broadens the scope of the novel by intimating the extent of the conflict:

They passed on to the tents of the German Legion, a well-grown and rather dandy set of men, with a poetical look about their faces which rendered them interesting to feminine eyes. Hanoverians, Saxons, Hungarians and other foreigners were numbered in their ranks. (27)

The proximity of Budmouth with its royal visitor has already been cited as a reason for Hardy's interest in the connection between the area and the period. In The Trumpet-Major the presence of troops and the King are combined to provide a fine military spectacle in a review:

The spectators, who, unlike our party, had no personal interest in the soldiery, saw only troops and battalions in the concrete, straight lines of red, straight lines of blue, white lines formed of innumerable knee-breeches, black lines formed of many gaiters, coming and going in kaleidoscopic change. (28)

During the first part of the book the military presence provides the greater proportion of the martial element. This element is not manifested merely in uniforms and reviews but represents the ever-present threat of war. Following the departure of the troops the military events are pitched in a higher key and involve the threat of invasion (albeit unfounded) and the actual participation of Bob Loveday in action against the French at sea. When the troops leave Overcombe their absence is noticeable:

...and soon the cones of white canvas, now almost become an intrinsic part of the landscape, fell to the ground. (29)

With the departure of the troops this 'decorative' aspect of military life diminishes especially since events take a more serious turn. However occasionally more glamorous elements intrude notably in the description of Sergeant Stanner's recruiting-party where glamour would have been of the essence:

Then drums and fifes were heard, and in a minute or two they saw Sergeant Stanner advancing along the street with a firm countenance, fiery poll, and rigid, staring eyes, in front of his recruiting-party. The Sergeant's sword was drawn, and at intervals of two or three inches along its shining blade were impaled fluttering one-pound notes, to express the lavish bounty that was offered. (30)

Hardy himself was sensitive to the appeal of the military of the period. Despite fully recognising the darker side of warfare he comments favourably upon the men, John Loveday's comrades, that frequented the miller's home, where a close view of them is afforded:

...it was a period when romance had not so greatly faded out of military life as it has done in these days of short service, heterogeneous mixing, and transient campaigns; when the esprit de corps was strong, and long experience stamped noteworthy professional characteristics even on rank and file; while the miller's visitors had the additional advantage of being picked men. (31)



Historical novels which claim to be anything other than 'historical only as regards their purely external choice of theme and costume',<sup>(32)</sup> must show some greater historical consciousness. This can be done by showing an awareness of historical developments and their political and social implications on a wide scale as does Tolstoy, for example, in War and Peace. That the historical novel as such developed largely after the Napoleonic Wars reflects the international scale of the conflict and the awareness brought about by major features such as nationalist movements and vast, conscripted armies. Hardy himself attempted seriously to embody historical fact on such a scale in The Dynasts. In The Trumpet-Major strict limitations are imposed in the way of milieu whilst a deliberate attempt is made to link the events in the story with the turbulent, historical background of the Wars. Hardy succeeds, within his self-imposed limitations, in producing a novel which can be justly termed 'historical' because he goes further than lending only historical colouring, in the way of costume and events, to his writing. The convincingly historical element in The Trumpet-Major is the behaviour and reactions of the varied range of characters to the events around them. By close attention to individual reaction to all the various aspects of the Wars he is free to introduce, Hardy is able to build up a valid picture of the times whilst working on such a small scale.

Having examined the use of military colour occasioned mainly by the actual presence of soldiery it is appropriate to continue by examining the reaction of the local inhabitants to the soldiery. Initial reactions are surprise, interest, excitement and fear. Overcoming any fears is the excitement necessarily experienced in such a small village. The spectacle is the major point of interest:

'Mother, mother; come here! Here's such a fine sight! What does it mean? What can they be going to do up there?'(33)

Widow Garland's fears are natural. It is either the French or a clear indication that the French are expected. Despite

both fears being unfounded the troops, during their stay, continue to act as a reminder of the imminent nature of invasion. The entire village is attracted by the sight of the soldiers making camp and the inhabitants are called from their various occupations. Even Simon Burden is distracted:

The arrival of soldiery had drawn him out from his drop of drink at the 'Duke of York' as it had attracted Anne. (34)

Once any fears are dispelled the villagers are able to fully enjoy the holiday atmosphere created by the novelty of the occasion:

The space in front of the mill-pond was now occupied by nearly all the inhabitants of the village, who had turned out in alarm, and remained for pleasure, their eyes lighted up with interest in what they saw; for trappings and regimentals, war horses and men, in towns an attraction, were here almost a sublimity. (35)

This difference between village life and town life is referred to more than once. It underlines the narrowness of Hardy's chosen field in that not only is the European conflict distanced both geographically and by the limited concepts of the people but that even the life of local townships is a thing to wonder at:

As the days went on, echoes of the life and bustle of the town reached the ears of the quiet people living in Overcombe hollow - exciting and moving those unimportant natives as a ground-swell moves the weeds in a cave. (36)

This anxiety-free interest 'which brought the excitement of an invasion without the strife' <sup>(37)</sup> has immediate effect upon the youth of the village:

Thirteen of these lads incontinently stated within the space of a quarter of an hour that there was nothing in the world like going for a soldier. (38)

The female reaction is modestly understated but displays an active interest in this exciting arrival of attractive men:

The young women stated little, but perhaps thought the more; though, in justice, they glanced round towards the encampment from the corners of their blue and brown eyes in the most demure and modest manner that could be desired. (39)

Realistically reaction is not always so approving; the young men's attitudes towards the military become sour when the kindly view taken by the women has its effect:

...the dispossessed young men who had been born in the place were left to take their walks alone, where, instead of studying the works of nature, they meditated gross outrages on the brave men who had been so good as to visit their village. (40)

However in general the soldiers became very much a part of the life of the village during their stay. Social contact is maintained:

...they were always standing at garden gates, walking in the orchards, or sitting gossiping just within cottage doors, with the bowls of their tobacco-pipes thrust outside for politeness' sake, that they might not defile the air of the household. (41)

Of even more significance to the village inhabitants is the prosperity brought about by the presence of troops in such numbers. This is an aspect which presents in concrete terms the relationship between the village and the encampment:

The villagers were by this time doing a roaring trade with the soldiers, who purchased of them every description of garden produce, milk, butter, and eggs at liberal prices. (42)

Individual reaction to the troops varies and serves to illuminate further the characters of the people concerned. Loveday's expansiveness finds expression:

While the troopers loitered on their horses, and chatted to the miller across the stream, he gathered bunches of the fruit, and held them over the garden hedge for the acceptance of anybody who would have them;...(43)

Farmer Derriman's reactions are of a totally different nature:

'Soldiers, yes - rot the soldiers! And now hedges will be broke, and hens' nests robbed, and sucking pigs stole, and I don't know what all. Who's to pay for't, sure?' (44)

Apart from this clear-cut military element, easy to extract together with local reaction, the use of the Napoleonic Wars as background material is complex. It is therefore necessary to break down this large amount of material in order to lend clarity to the study. It is the impact of the Napoleonic element as a whole which is effective but certain aspects can productively be discerned and examined separately. Firstly there is the threat of invasion which culminates in a false alarm, none the less disturbing at the time. Secondly there is the participation of the major characters, John and Robert Loveday, in the war on land and at sea. Thirdly there is the participation of lesser characters and the local populace in the hostilities as yeomen or volunteers. Lastly is the mass of small details and references such as the hieroglyphic profile of Napoleon which serves to keep the Wars ever present in the readers' minds.

Although the war abroad concerns the inhabitants of Overcombe and directly affects the two major characters, being indeed, the cause of John Loveday's death, the most immediate fear is that of invasion. This is all the more intense because of the general belief that invasion, when it came, would commence with a landing very near the village. Corporal Tullidge, who had received injuries at Valenciennes in 1793, expresses an opinion in accordance with these fears:

'It is my belief that the point they will choose for making the shore is just over there,' and he nodded with indifference towards a section of the coast at a hideous nearness to the house in which they were assembled,...(45)

The ever-present reminder of the very real danger involved in the possibility of invasion is the setting up of beacons at

vantage points; the one in the immediate locality being kept by Corporal Tullidge and a fellow veteran Simon Burden who had "both served well and long in the Foot". (46) From the bright spectacle of the review an observer can turn and identify the locations of several such beacons, a more serious testimony to the martial nature of the times:

Inland could be seen Badbury Rings, where a beacon had been recently erected; and nearer, Rainbarrow, on Egdon Heath, where another stood: further to the left Bulbarrow, where there was yet another. Not far from this came Nettlecombe Tout; to the west, Dogberry Hill, and Black'on near to the foreground, the beacon thereon being built of furze faggots thatched with straw, and standing on the spot where the monument now raises its head. (47)

Hardy does not merely gather this information to add verisimilitude to a 'period' piece of writing but is aware of the impact of such precautions against invasion on the lives of ordinary people:

Among the many thousands of minor Englishmen whose lives were affected by these tremendous designs may be numbered our old acquaintance Corporal Tullidge, who sported the crushed arm, and poor old Simon Burden, the dazed veteran who had fought at Minden. Instead of sitting snugly in the settle of the Old Ship, in the village adjoining Overcombe, they were obliged to keep watch on the hill. (48)

Such a task is not without distinction however and Loveday excuses their presence to the fastidious Anne with words of sound sense and sentiments appropriate to dangerous times:

'They faithfully promise that as soon as ever the gunboats appear in view, and they have fired the beacon, to run down here first, in case we shouldn't see it. 'Tis worth while to be friendly with 'em, you see, though their tempers be queer.' (49)

The miller's 'little entertainment' provided for John and his soldier friends is the setting for much earnest discussion of the possibility of invasion. Few doubt the immediate

nature of the threat and many live in great fear of it:

William Tremlett, who had not enjoyed a sound night's rest since the First Consul's menace had become known, pricked up his ears at sound of this subject, and inquired if anybody had seen the terrible flat-bottomed boats that the enemy were to cross in. (50)

For once Britain's insularity is small comfort:

...there were supposed to be more than fifteen hundred of these boats, and that they would carry a hundred men apiece. So that a descent of one hundred and fifty thousand men might be expected any day as soon as Boney had brought his plans to bear. (51)

Precautions were taken against invasion other than the setting up of beacons. The raising of locals and volunteers will be examined in relation to its effect upon the villagers. Other facts emerge; Hardy selects interesting details which by their comparative obscurity add to the impression of an intimate knowledge of the period necessary to allow characters to live and act convincingly within that period. A journey into town brings the reader into contact with the vehicles to be used for carrying troops:

...among them the extraordinary machines which had been invented for the conveyance of troops to any point of the coast on which the enemy should land; they consisted of four boards placed across a sort of trolley, thirty men of the volunteer companies riding on each. (52)

The presence of the King at Budmouth, though a source of great excitement and interest, is also one of concern since at such a proximity to the French coast there is some fear for his safety:

The fear of invasion was such that six frigates lay in the roads to ensure the safety of the royal family, and from the regiments of horse and foot quartered at the barracks, or encamped on the hills round about, a picket of a thousand men mounted guard every day in front of Gloucester Lodge, where the King resided. (53)

As with their reactions to the presence of troops the attitudes of the inhabitants of Overcombe vary according to their different characters. Farmer Derriman remains preoccupied with the possibility of financial loss and feels that the instability of the times casts doubts on the security of banks and lawyers. (54) Anne expresses the fears of all the inhabitants; the fear of loss of relations, friends and homes. Political considerations do not enter into the matter. The situation is a simple one of facing threats of aggression from abroad:

'...I am troubled about the French. O Bob! I am afraid you will be killed, and my mother, and John, and your father, and all of us hunted down!' (55)

The fears in the face of possible invasion find their clearest expression in the closeness it engenders between the two families at the mill, united in the face of common danger:

The little family gathered themselves together, all feeling the crisis more seriously than they liked to express. Mrs. Loveday thought how ridiculous a thing like social ambition was in such a conjuncture as this, and vowed that she would leave Anne to love where she would. Anne, too, forgot the little peculiarities of speech and manner in Bob and his father, which sometimes jarred for a moment upon her more refined sense, and was thankful for their love and protection in this looming trouble. (56)

The threat of invasion culminates in the false alarm. After this juncture fears recede save for a brief period after the Capitulation of Ulm:

The Austrian General Mack had capitulated with his whole army. Then were revived the old misgivings as to invasion. 'Instead of having to cope with him weary with waiting, we shall have to encounter This Man fresh from the fields of victory,' ran the newspaper article. (57)

It is just before the false alarm that Hardy writes most strikingly about the seriousness of the invasion threat, summing up the inner fears of thinking Englishmen:

Still, between these bursts of hilarity, it was sometimes recollected that England was the only European country which had not succumbed to the mighty little man who was less than human in feeling, and more than human in will; that our spirit for resistance was greater than our strength; and that the Channel was often calm. Boats built of wood which was greenly growing in its native forest three days before it was bent as wales to their sides, were ridiculous enough; but they might be, after all, sufficient for a single trip between two visible shores. (58)

Miller Loveday's sons, John and Robert, fulfill important rôles in the development of the plot and, at the same time, through being directly involved in the background of the Wars, help to 'anchor' the flow of the narrative in this background. Their movements are largely governed by circumstances related to the Wars, with a subsequent effect upon the plot. This aspect of the involvement of John and Robert Loveday with the martial element will be examined at length. Here the object is to consider such aspects as the better portrayal of the military background owing to the part these two major characters play in it. Through the participation of John and Robert Loveday in the hostilities a greater breadth of vision is acquired and the opportunity to go outside the reactions of the civilian population presents itself.

The two men seem to come onto the stage alternately, more often than not, being the two sides of a triangle prone to considerable vacillation, the third side of which is Anne Garland. This state of affairs is admirably suggested by the weather vane in front of the mill:

When the sun shone upon this figure it could be seen that the greater part of his countenance was gone, and the paint washed off his body so far as to reveal that he had been a soldier in red before he became a sailor in blue. The image had, in fact, been John, one of our coming characters, and was then turned into Robert, another of them. (59)

The brothers' rival, Festus Derriman, is made aware, much to his displeasure, of the duality of his opposition:



'Has anybody been hanging about Overcombe Mill except Loveday's son the soldier?' he asked of a comrade.  
'His son the sailor,' was the reply. (60)

It is John who enters the tale first, his presence amongst the troops newly arrived at the village affording a closer examination of them than otherwise possible:

The deeps and shallows of the mill-pond being better known to him than any other man in the camp, he had apparently come down on that account, and was cautioning some of the horse-men against riding too far in towards the mill-head. (61)

The constant presence of troops is called to mind more often than not by the trumpet calls emanating from the camp. This in turn promotes a constant awareness of John's presence in Anne Garland. The threat of invasion, the involvement of the characters in the Wars together with the shifting relationships, prey to the troubled times, are thus inextricably mingled:

She spent much of her time indoors or in the garden, hearing little of the camp movements beyond the periodical Ta-ta-ta-taa of the trumpeters sounding their various ingenious calls for watch-setting, stables, feed, boot-and-saddle, parade, and so on, which made her think how clever her friend the trumpet-major must be to teach his pupils to play those pretty little tunes so well. (62)

It is above all the brothers' involvement in action that is the significant element in building up an atmosphere of conflict. Robert, with his distinguished action at Trafalgar, is a greater source of material but John, too, serves his purpose:

He thus gave her accounts at fifteen paces of his experiences in camp, in quarters, in Flanders, and elsewhere; of the differences between line and column, of forced marches, billeting, and such like, together with his hopes of promotion. (63)

He brings the Wars close to home and by his presence invests them with reality and immediacy as well as cutting an attractive figure and giving rise to comment and opinion:

Anne went back towards the pavement with her trumpet-major, whom all the girls envied her, so fine-looking a soldier was he; and not only for that, but because it was well known that he was not a soldier from necessity, but from patriotism, his father having repeatedly offered to set him up in business: his artistic taste in preferring a horse and uniform to a dirty, rumbling flour-mill was admired by all. (64)

John's presence also links the civilians' and the soldiers' involvement in the hostilities. Constantly moving from camp or barracks to the mill and back he lives in both worlds:

'I could not write to tell father we were coming. It was not because of any rumour of the French, for we knew nothing of that till we met the people on the road, and the colonel said in a moment the news was false. Buonaparte is not even at Boulogne just now. I was anxious to know how you had borne the fright, so I hastened to Overcombe at once, as soon as I could get out of barracks.' (65)

Robert Loveday only joins in the hostilities after much deliberation and is finally swayed by a narrow escape from the press-gang:

But though physically himself again, he was not at all sure of his position as a patriot. He had that practical knowledge of seamanship of which the country stood much in need, and it was humiliating to find that impressment seemed to be necessary to teach him to use it for her advantage. (66)

This previous indecision is bound up with the course of the romance, Robert at that time being greatly smitten with Anne:

Bob still remained neutral. Not being able to decide whether to enrol himself as a sea-fencible, a local militia-man, or a volunteer, he simply went on dancing attendance upon Anne. (67)

He makes his decision known to Captain Hardy, an acquaintance of the Loveday family. Apart from the fact that Hardy had taken pains to establish kinship with him reference to such a distinguished man lends weight to the narrative and importance to the characters involved. Robert Loveday displays here what would have been considered the finest of sentiments:

'The press-gang has been here, and though I showed them that I was a free man, I am going to show everybody that I can do my duty.' (68)

It is greatly in evidence that this duty is well done. Hardy refers at length of Bob's short but extensive naval career thus bringing closer external events and expanding the scope of the novel. Serving on Nelson's flagship and being a party to the Admiral's fall Bob can provide the limited confines of Overcombe with the material required to lend any degree of verisimilitude to the historical background. After his participation in the events at Trafalgar his travels assume world-wide proportions:

During the last twelve months Bob had been occasionally heard of as upholding his country's honour in Denmark, the West Indies, Gibraltar, Malta and other places about the globe, till the family received a short letter stating that he had arrived again at Portsmouth. (69)

Robert Loveday returns to stay but the army claims John who leaves and never comes back. His name, too, is connected with great names and famous battle-fields but he reminds the reader more sharply of the realities of the situation in his death:

He\* had been to Budmouth, and announced to the arrested senses of the family that the -th Dragoons were ordered to join Sir Arthur Wellesley in the Peninsula. (70)

Much of the simplicity of the attitudes of mind expressed in the novel is attested in the comments of Mrs. Loveday on the respective rôles of both Robert and John as active participants in the Wars:

'Don't trouble and vex about it,' said Mrs. Loveday soothingly. 'They are both instruments in the hands of Providence, chosen to chastise that Corsican ogre, and do what they can for the country in these trying years.' (71)

\*Robert Loveday

Although Robert and John are Overcombe's main representatives in the conflict abroad, the lesser characters are involved at home to an extent which can emphasise far more the immediacy of the threat Britain faced than could any description of external events. That the local inhabitants, ordinarily non-combatants, should be so organised into various bands to protect their homes in the event of invasion serves to indicate how fully involved the country was, if not to the extent of France, at least to an extent that was, to England, a novelty. The local forces, volunteers or yeomen, bear the brunt of a little disparagement, especially when compared, unfavourably, with the resident soldiers:

'Ah! well - they be not regulars,' said Miller Loveday, keeping back harsher criticism as uncalled for. But inflamed by the arrival of the dragoons, which had been the exciting cause of his call, his mind would not go to yeomanry. (72)

Such comment, occasioned by the amateur status of those concerned, is justified by the diffidence of some of the men and the ignorance of others together with what humour Hardy is able to exact from the situation:

'Twill be a beautiful stroke of war, if so be 'tis quietly done!'

'Beautiful,' said Cripplestraw, moving inside his clothes. 'But how if we should be all abed, corpel? You can't expect a man to be brave in his shirt, especially we Locals, that have only got so far as shoulder firelocks.(73)

The miller does not allow earlier scepticism to stand in the way of his subsequent enlistment in the volunteers. The entire neighbourhood has taken this course of action:

The chief incident that concerned the household at the mill was that the miller, following the example of all his neighbours, had become a volunteer, and duly appeared twice a week in a red, long-tailed military coat, pipe-clayed breeches, black cloth gaiters, a heel-balled helmet-hat with a tuft of green wool, and epaulettes of the same colour and material. (74)

The character that lends most humour to this aspect of the Wars is that of Festus. Although, bombastic and craven, he is in many ways a Shakespearean character in inspiration rather than an original conception, he affords some degree of amusement. The drilling scene will be set aside here, its total lack of originality lowering its status to that of a borrowed embellishment. Festus frequently intrudes upon the scene, larger than life:

'...I often find people are put out by my coming among 'em, especially when I've got my regimentals on.' (75)

That Festus' military enthusiasm marks him out as an amateur, even were it completely genuine, Hardy is well aware. Overcombe and its inhabitants cannot conceive the realities of war and their fears are vague fears just as Festus' glorying is the product of self-delusion. Festus serves to throw into relief the true attitudes of the regular soldiers, enlightened as they are to the full significance of war:

...the troopers seemed willing to let persons hold any opinion whatever, provided that they themselves were not obliged to give attention to it; showing, strangely enough, that if there was one subject more than another which never interested their minds, it was the art of war. (76)

Festus has very set ideas on his own rôle in the event of a possible landing:

'Look here Cripplestraw. This is a reg'lar foolish report. How can yeomanry be put in front? No-body's put in front. We yeomanry have nothing to do with Buonaparte's landing. We shall be away in a safe place, guarding the possessions and jewels.' (77)

His conduct during the subsequent invasion alarm is less than honourable, using his knowledge of the false nature of the scare to attempt to impress his comrades, themselves scared but doing their best to put a good face on matters:

They turned their indignant eyes full upon him. That he had sported with their deepest feelings, while knowing the rumour to be baseless, was soon apparent to all. (78)

Festus also represents a less dedicated element of the population. His participation in the defence is always selfishly motivated; he has none of the simple dignity of the miller:

Balked in his project of entering the watering-place and enjoying the congratulations upon his patriotic bearing during the advance, he sulkily considered that he might be able to make some use of his enforced retirement by riding to Overcombe and glorying himself to Miss Garland before the truth should have reached that hamlet. (79)

The final aspect was the accumulation of small details and references, mainly researched material, which lend authenticity and a truly contemporary flavour to the background of the Wars. These references are frequently lacking in specific martial content, serving more to keep the theme of conflict ever-present in the reader's mind:

...bestirring himself to get the ladies some of the best liquor the house afforded, which had, as a matter of fact, crossed the Channel as privately as Buonaparte wished his army to do, and had been landed on a dark night over the cliff. (80)

The review affords more than a spectacle, the risk of invasion being converted into concrete odds:

They listened to a man who was offering one guinea to receive ten in case Buonaparte should be killed in three months, and other entertainments of that nature, which at this time were not rare. (81)

Vestiges of the Wars with which Hardy himself was familiar are introduced, suitably presented, with great effect:

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

wall, they always stood - a whole sheaf of them, formed of new ash stems, with a spike driven in at one end, the stick being preserved from splitting by a ferule. (82)

One of the most striking details that Hardy introduces into his narrative is the description of the hieroglyphic profile of Napoleon Robert Loveday has procured:

'Here's something brave and patriotic. I bought it in Budmouth. Isn't it a stirring picture?'

It was a hieroglyphic profile of Napoleon. The head represented a maimed French eagle; the face was ingeniously made up of human carcasses, knotted and writhing together in such directions as to form a physiognomy; a band, or stock, shaped to resemble the English Channel, encircled his throat, and seemed to choke him; his epaulette was a hand tearing a cobweb that represented the treaty of peace with England; and his ear was a woman crouching over a dying child. (83)

Hardy's ironic humour frequently affects the presentation of his narrative. It is particularly successful when he describes the activities of what appear to be comic opera characters; the adventurous Englishman and the mysterious spy. His irony is not brought to bear so much on the events themselves but reflects the tone of the provincial reporting that he is indirectly conveying:

About once a week there appeared in the newspapers a paragraph concerning some adventurous English gentleman who had sailed out in a pleasure-boat till he lay near enough to Boulogne to see Buonaparte standing on the heights among his marshals; or else some lines about a mysterious stranger with a foreign accent, who, after collecting a vast deal of information on our resources, had hired a boat at a southern port, and vanished with it towards France before his intention could be devined. (84)

Even when Hardy is at his most expansive the humour is tinged with irony. An episode involving the manservant, David, serves not only to amuse but to convey the realities of invasion as seen through the eyes of the villagers. Irony is implicit in the futility of the action:

'Afore I went to church for a pike to defend my native country from Boney, I pulled out the spigots of all the

barrels, maister; for, thinks I - damn him! - since we can't drink it ourselves, he shan't have it, nor none of his men.' (85)

The trip to the theatre does not free Robert and Anne from the constant anxieties to which the War has made them prone:

The despatch-box being opened the King read for a few moments with great interest, the eyes of the whole house, including those of Anne Garland, being anxiously fixed upon his face; for terrible events fell as unexpectedly as thunderbolts at this critical time of our history. (86)

One of the most significant incidents, despite its brevity, is the encounter between Anne and the King. Just as the meeting between Robert Loveday and Captain Hardy allows a reflected glory to endow humble personages and events with greater significance, so this episode elevates Anne and Robert for an instant above the mainstream of history in which they, as individuals, are of little consequence:

'Loveday - a good name. I shall not forget it. Now dry your cheeks, and don't cry anymore.' (87)

The news of Trafalgar provides Hardy with an opportunity to utilise another feature of the period he had uncovered in the course of his research:

...the stage-coaches on the highway through Wessex to London were chalked with the words 'Great Victory!' 'Glorious Triumph!' and so on;...(88)

That the martial element can be considered as one of the aspects of the plot has already been stated. The examination of the participation of John and Robert Loveday in the Wars has further revealed this aspect. To Hardy the plot was of importance on two major counts. Firstly he was constrained by the literary tastes of his era, particularly considering the manner of the initial presentation of this novel,\* to establish a well-formulated plot. Secondly his own ideas,

\*It was published in serial form in Good Words.



his fatalism which by dint of pessimistic observation portrayed what was supposedly an inexorable fate as actively malicious, frequently required events to justify tragic outcomes. Hardy is able to employ the Wars as a deus ex machina to allow the course of the story to run smoothly and credibly.

The first episode in which the Wars assume a structural importance is in the 'unmasking' of Matilda Johnson by John Loveday:

'You have not seen me before?'

'I have not,' she answered, with a face as impassible as Tallyrand's.

'Good God!'

'I have not!' she repeated.

'Nor any of the -th Dragoons? Captain Jolly, Captain Beauboy, Mr. Flight, for instance?'

'No.'

'You mistake; I'll remind you of particulars,' he said drily. And he did remind her at some length.

'Never!' she said desperately. (89)

The Wars here are not of any significance in themselves; this event does not particularise them in any way. However this involvement of the martial element in the fabric of the plot elevates its function from that of being merely a backcloth and sets events more firmly in their period setting. In like manner the vacillations of the romance have their roots in the movements of the two brothers. When John has rendered an alliance between Matilda and Robert impossible he is removed (90) from the immediate vicinity of the mill to barracks at Overcombe thus leaving the destined couple alone. Bob's suit prospers largely through John's having fallen into disfavour through Anne's misinterpretation of his interest in Matilda. It is the precarious nature of the times which encourages Bob to enlighten Anne, making her better disposed towards John:

...the possibility of John's death, which had been newly brought home to him by the military events of the day, determined him to get poor John's character cleared. (91)

Bob decides to join the navy and his absence and infidelities

bring Anne close to forming a union with the trumpet-major, respected and held in affection but not loved. Bob's parting is deliberate:

'I go away on purpose, and I shall be away a long time. If in that time she should list over towards 'ee ever so little, mind you take her.' (92)

When Robert Loveday returns, promoted, to a sorely tried Anne his new rank is not without significance in his final successful struggle to win her back:

He certainly was a splendid, gentlemanly, and gallant sailor from end to end of him; but then, what were a dashing presentment, a naval rank, and telling scars, if a man was fickle-hearted? However, she peeped on till the fourth day, and then she did not peep. The window was open, she looked right out, and Bob knew that he had got a rise to his bait at last. (93)

Finally the serious, tragic element of The Trumpet-Major will be examined. To an extent this is embodied in the threat of invasion yet it manifests itself in many other ways at odd moments throughout the book. The pleasant, rustic nature of the setting serves to highlight the tragic nature of war, so far removed from the inate calm of the countryside. Moments of pleasure are rendered poignant at the suggestion that they are remembered all the more readily because of subsequent sorrows:

It was a cheerful, careless, unpremeditated half-hour, which returned like the scent of a flower to the memories of those who enjoyed it, even at a distance of many years after, when they lay wounded and weak in foreign lands. (94)

For the soldiers in the novel the stay at Overcombe is a brief one, a pause before being sent to battlefields throughout Europe, many never to return. The most joyful events can be shadowed by the author's privilege of claiming powers of omniscience:

Poor Stanner! In spite of his satire, he fell at the bloody battle of Albuera a few years after this pleasantly spent summer at the Georgian watering-place, being mortally wounded and trampled down by a French hussar when the brigade was deploying into line under Beresford. (95)

The men themselves at the Miller's gathering are untroubled by the future but in the light of the author's disclosures the more lighthearted the revels the sadder the thought of possible impending tragedy:

There is not one among them who would attach any meaning to 'Vittoria,' or gather from the syllables 'Waterloo' the remotest idea of his own glory or death. (96)

The tragic element can be indicated in various ways. Anne Loveday is disturbed when she dwells on a soldier's function, the normal attitude being to dwell on intangibles such as patriotism or glory and not meditate on the realities of warfare:

Oh yes, she liked soldiers, she said, especially when they came home from the wars, covered with glory; though when she thought what doings had won them that glory she did not like them quite so well. (97)

The review, with its opportunity to regard the men and the leaders of the British army, enables Hardy to reflect upon the transient nature of even the bravest human show:

They still spread their grassy surface to the sun, as on that beautiful morning not, historically speaking, so very long ago; but the King and his fifteen thousand armed men, the horses, the bands of music, the princesses, the cream-coloured teams - the gorgeous centre-piece, in short, to which the downs were but the mere mount or margin - how entirely have they all passed and gone! - lying scattered about the world as military and other dust, some at Talavera, Albuera, Salamanca, Vittoria, Toulouse, and Waterloo; some in home churchyards; and a few small handfuls in royal vaults. (98)

The most frightening aspect of the invasion threat is not the preparation for resistance, this in itself is optimistic, but the arrangements for retreat. The displacement of civilians,

the creation of refugees, is one of the tragedies of warfare:

... 'a Government man has been here, and to all the houses, taking down the numbers of the women and children, and their ages, and the number of horses and waggons that can be mustered, in case they have to retreat inland, out of the way of the invading army.' (99)

The attempt to impress Robert Loveday reveals the other side to the 'romance' of military life:

'If you choose to take the bounty and come voluntarily, you'll be allowed to go ashore whenever your ship's in port. If you don't, and we've got to pinion 'ee, you will not have your liberty at all. As you must come, willy-nilly, you'll do the first if you've any brains whatever.' (100)

This totally unpleasant aspect of war, the coercing of civilians to fight under notorious conditions, is made all the more striking by the coldly practical attitude of Captain Hardy:

'There has been a hot impressment. It is of course a disagreeable necessity, but it can't be helped.' (101)

In the same way the indifference of authority to its losses in the ranks of ordinary seamen serves to emphasise the cruelty of war. Not only is the personal risk great but the sacrifice of one's life goes not only without official regret but also unheeded:

When at last, at the end of November, there appeared a final and revised list of the killed and wounded as issued by Admiral Collingwood, it was a useless sheet to the Lovedays. To their great pain it contained no names but those of officers, the friends of ordinary seamen and marines being in those good old days left to discover their losses as best they might. (102)

The final gathering at the mill before John's departure is an occasion for reflection upon the fates of those present. The high toll taken speaks for itself, the ironic comparison between this outcome and Anne's wishes for 'a prosperous voyage, easy conquest, and a speedy return' (103) emphasising the tragedy of the situation:

But, alas, for that! Battles and skirmishes, advances and retreats, fevers and fatigues, told hard on Anne's gallant friends in the coming time. Of the seven upon whom these wishes were bestowed, five, including the trumpet-major, were dead men within the following years, and their bones left to moulder in the land of their campaigns. (104)

The tragic climax of the novel is the departure of John to eventual death. Most of Hardy's characters are at odds with fate but here tragedy is the more intense through the resignation of the hero. Throughout the book he has sublimated his own desires for the sake of his far less worthy brother and this is the reward he reaps. Hardy is never far from being ironical and irony is an important element in this ending in which the Wars, as throughout the book, have a significant part to play:

The candle held by his father shed its waving light upon John's face and uniform as with a farewell smile he turned on the doorstone, backed by the black night; and in another moment he had plunged into the darkness, the ring of his smart step dying away upon the bridge as he joined his companions-in-arms, and went off to blow his trumpet till silenced for ever upon one of the bloody battle-fields of Spain. (105)

Owing to its almost unique form The Dynasts differs radically from all the other works included in this study. It is arguable, therefore, that this dramatic epic, intensely poetic in inspiration, is out of place in what is otherwise a group of novels. However this study is essentially a consideration of the fictional presentation of fact and The Dynasts constitutes the most important fictional exploitation of the Napoleonic Wars in existence. When the form of The Dynasts is examined it will be seen that too great a concern with the form is limiting and often misleading and that the essential is its embodiment of the Wars. The status of The Dynasts as a work concerned with the Napoleonic Wars is indisputable; a comparative study on War and Peace and The Dynasts includes the comment 'War and Peace and The Dynasts are the two greatest imaginative works on the Napoleonic Wars'. (106) Also The Dynasts

is inextricably related to other works in this study. Apart from the obvious connections between The Dynasts and The Trumpet-Major there is a derivative relationship between The Dynasts and War and Peace. Hardy owes more to Tolstoy in many ways than Tolstoy to Stendhal in the form of actual borrowings, although possibly Tolstoy's debt to Stendhal is the greater as from him he gained the basic technique of battle description. However it is insufficient to point to the importance of The Dynasts as a depiction of the Napoleonic Wars and to its relationship with other works included in this study. What is essential is that from the point of view of the presentation of historical fact in a work of creative fiction The Dynasts is of immense importance because of its sheer breadth of vision. Events are viewed impassively from above, exposing their tragic nature and the delusions of human beings and they are also seen through the eyes of the participants from the kings and generals to the lowliest deserters or camp followers. In The Dynasts the reader sees history being made and all its repercussions. Hardy has not, perhaps, a grasp of nationalism and mass movements but he is fully conscious of the human predicament and the helplessness of mankind caught in the inexorable progress of history. Although closer ties exist between Hardy and Hugo than between Hardy and Balzac<sup>(107)</sup> this consciousness of the significance of history at the lowest level has been seen to characterise both Hardy and Balzac:

Perhaps Balzac never wrote anything cleverer (though it occurs in a dullish story) than that chapter of his 'Médecin de Campagne' called 'Le Napoléon du Peuple', which allows us to see the true 'Napoleonic Legend' of the peasantry, the career of the great conqueror transformed into genuine folklore. Much of the same effect do we get by some of the rapid changes in Mr. Hardy's scene. (108)

The ability to detach oneself from humanity sufficiently to view it in its entirety, embracing every type and class of person and event, is seen by this reviewer to characterise many of the great nineteenth-century writers including, among others, Hardy, Balzac and Tolstoy.<sup>(109)</sup> The Dynasts, then,

becomes indispensable to this study when considered not only as a major portrayal of the Napoleonic Wars and as a work closely related to the other constituent works but as a brilliant recreation of history at every level.

The textual relationship between Hardy and Tolstoy has been briefly mentioned and will be further considered here. Hardy's use of War and Peace as source material is the subject of a careful study.<sup>(110)</sup> Emma Clifford's article does not seek to establish any over-all relationship between the two works but indicates the small borrowings made by Hardy on points of information, particularly with reference to events in Russia. The minor references to Tolstoy in The Later Years are mentioned together with the markings in Hardy's own copy of War and Peace. However the real source of information is found in a draft manuscript of Part III of The Dynasts.<sup>(111)</sup> It is unlikely that Hardy used War and Peace for anything but source material. There are only superficial similarities between the ideas of the two writers and major differences. Tolstoy is concerned with portraying fictional characters against an historical backcloth of overwhelming size and importance over which these characters have no control. His attempts to ascertain patterns in historical events only makes him conscious of movement of peoples eastward and a subsequent return to the west. He displays no realisation of the upsurge of national movement, indeed he belittles ideas of equality and freedom and cannot understand feelings of nationalism in countries such as Poland. Tolstoy's historical background is artistically excellent but any profound analysis is lost in a tangle of polemic with final recourse to the unknown will of God. Thus the movement of nations becomes unreasoned and lemming-like and even Erckmann-Chatrion can display greater historical and sociological sensitivity than this supreme artist. Tolstoy's historical characters become powerless puppets existing solely as 'labels' for events. Hardy is primarily concerned with the Wars. Whilst he remains insular in his attitudes he does not lay claim to any ultimate historical understanding. As in The Trumpet-Major issues are clear-

cut. For England Napoleon was a threat and his defeat necessary for national well-being. The English bourgeois revolution was essentially peaceful and England was concerned only with self-protection. Yet whilst Hardy does not display any great understanding of the wider implications of events he does demonstrate the import of historical events to all men and he attempts to deal fairly with all his characters and honestly with his factual material. His characters may well be victims of a predestined fate but their actions are of some degree of importance in achieving that fate even though they themselves may be unconscious of this. Ultimately Hardy's lesser characters have a degree of freedom in that tenacity of purpose and high-mindedness can, for Hardy, achieve some measure of individual success.

It is in no way surprising that Hardy should use War and Peace as source material. As an artist Hardy was not seeking only purely historical raw materials, which he did with great thoroughness, but anything that could be forged into an artistic creation. His conversion of material from War and Peace into various different kinds of writing leads Emma Clifford to observe that Hardy, as the creator of a work of imagination, was using War and Peace more or less arbitrarily in whatever way he wished.<sup>(112)</sup> Tolstoy provides then, to a minor extent, flesh for the bones laid down by Hardy but he in no way contributes to that bone structure. In choosing mainly details of dress and topography Hardy avoids much of Tolstoy's historical inaccuracy, indeed Emma Clifford considers Hardy's historical accuracy 'impeccable'.<sup>(113)</sup> However The Dynasts, though dependent on vast sources, remains original.

Since much of Hardy's interest in history, warfare and, in particular, with the Napoleonic era, has been discussed with reference to The Trumpet-Major, this study will be concerned with the genesis of The Dynasts and an examination of how Hardy's interests culminated in this vast work. The Dynasts is the result of many years interest and reading and was published over a period of five years, almost twenty-five years



after The Trumpet-Major, which constituted the first manifestation of these interests. (114) After so many years of consideration The Dynasts was a culminating point for Hardy:

The book brought together the philosophical concerns of his maturity with a fascination he had felt for the Napoleonic wars since early childhood. (115)

Irving Howe points to the time lapse between the events and Hardy's own lifetime, (116) a point considered by other critics, and it is interesting that much of the great nineteenth-century historical writing is similarly distanced by about a generation from its source. The importance of word-of-mouth for literary inspiration was still paramount and it seems that this time-lapse ensured that events were viewed long enough afterwards to see them in retrospect, free from the distractions of immediacy, subjectivity and danger, but not so long after that the essential, human link had been broken, a link all the more vital since it thus generally constituted vivid childhood memories of the recollections and story-tellings of the previous generation's

Hardy was born in 1840, thirty-five years after Trafalgar, twenty-five after Waterloo; an almost identical time-lag occurs with Scott, born twenty-six years after the Jacobite rebellion of 1745, and with Faulkner, born thirty-two years after the end of the American Civil War. The common factor is clearly the stimulus to the future novelist's imagination given by youthful exposure to the first-hand recollections of survivors from an exciting moment in the local past. (117)

The employment in the nineteenth century of the non-historical realist skills developed in the eighteenth century in order to depict life at a specific point in time was only truly successful when this point in time was either slightly anterior to the life of the writer or contemporary with him. The importance of the human link in connection with this has been mentioned. Another factor was the tendency in the nineteenth century to romanticise the more distant past, particularly the Middle Ages. Hugo claimed that a more dramatic and epic

work of art remained to be built on the foundations laid down by Scott. Lukács comments:

In rejecting Scott's 'prose', he renounces the only real approach to epic greatness, namely the faithful portrayal of the popular conditions and popular movements, the crises in popular life which contain the immanent elements of this epic greatness. In comparison, the Romantic 'poeticization' of historical reality is always an impoverishment of this actual, specific, real poetry of historical life. (118)

The further the artist is removed in time from his subject the freer he is to distort and romanticise. Recent history does not allow the same freedom. Even a consummate artist such as Flaubert is less successful in Salammbô than in any other of his works, despite the skill he exercises there.

However Hardy's interest in the Napoleonic Wars, which were at the root of much of the finest nineteenth-century historical writing, did not preclude, or indeed may have brought about, a profound opposition to war despite the appeal its outward trappings had for him:

Hardy had a long-standing fascination with things military. As he told a friend at the time of the Boer War, he was utterly opposed to war, yet once it had begun no one was more easily caught up by martial enthusiasm. (119)

What is usually considered to be the first reference to what was to become The Dynasts is recorded in The Early Life:

In this same month\* of 1875, it may be interesting to note, occurs the first mention in Hardy's memoranda of the idea of an epic on the war with Napoleon - carried out so many years later in The Dynasts. This earliest note runs as follows:

"Mem: A ballad of the Hundred Days. Then another of Moscow. Others of earlier campaigns - forming altogether an Iliad of Europe from 1789 to 1815." (120)

What might, in fact, really be the first extant reference to The Dynasts is open to some doubt:

\*May

March 13th.\* Let Europe be the stage and have scenes continually shifting. (can this refer to any conception of The Dynasts?)  
(121)

The editor points out that this reference possibly antedates that usually cited as the first indication of the genesis of The Dynasts in The Early Life. She also refers to the fact that Hardy himself added the query in brackets in his old age when he was no longer sure whether this was indeed the reference to The Dynasts that it certainly appears to be. Florence Hardy notes a further development in June 1877:

"Consider a grand drama, based on the wars with Napoleon, or some one campaign (but not as Shakespeare's historical dramas). It might be called 'Napoleon', or 'Josephine', or by some other person's name." (122)

It is interesting to observe, in retrospect, an author's early searching after the ideas that eventually mature into a great work. It is all the more interesting that, in the final title, The Dynasts, Hardy chose to name the old rulers of Europe and not the new. From this point in The Early Life numerous references are made to The Dynasts, or what was to become The Dynasts. Brief reference is made in November 1880<sup>(123)</sup> but the first important reference is made in March 1881. What, at first, seems to be little advance on earlier entries is followed by an addition made a few days later which indicates, for the first time, the important idea of fatality which is to be reiterated in further entries:

"Mode for a historical Drama. Action mostly automatic; reflex movement, etc. Not the result of what is called motive, though always ostensibly so, even to the actors' own consciousness. Apply an enlargement of these theories to, say, 'The Hundred Days'!" (124)

These ideas again found expression in February 1882 when Hardy speaks of "human action in spite of human knowledge" (125) but the concept does not seem to be so much one of predestined fate as one of human willfulness. There seems to be some

\*1874

possibility of human freedom provided the individual strives for it. Hardy continues:

"...showing how very far conduct lags behind the knowledge that should really guide it." (126)

For Hardy man is not entirely helpless. The Immanent Will, unlike Tolstoy's deity, is not a motivating force in that it takes a far more passive rôle. This difference is already apparent here. Four years later in March 1886 the mechanics of the form begin to take shape:

"March 4. Novel-writing as an art cannot go backward. Having reached the analytic stage it must transcend it by going still further in the same direction. Why not by rendering as visible essences, spectres, etc., the abstract thought of the analytic school?" (127)

1886 saw Hardy working in the British Museum of The Dynasts. (128)

However his initial ponderings on a philosophic framework were to lead him astray in a welter of familiars, evil geniuses and necromancy, nothing of which came to fruition. (129)

However in December 1887 his reading appears to have offered him practical guidance. He notes a comment of Addison which points to Milton's adoption of Aristotle's rule of applying the greater number of poetic devices to the least powerful areas of the work. (130) Florence Hardy comments on Hardy's use of this theory which he acknowledged without adhering to it 'slavishly'. As time progressed so the enterprise grew more ambitious although it was not yet anything more than an idea. By September 1889 Hardy could say:

"September 21. For carrying out that idea of Napoleon, the Empress, Pitt, Fox, etc., I feel continually that I require a larger canvas.... A spectral tone must be adopted.... Royal Ghosts....Title: 'A Drama of Kings'.(131)

At the same time the philosophical aspect was crystallising and in 1890 Hardy wrote:

"April 26. View the Prime Cause or Invariable Antecedent as 'It' and recount its doings." (132)

However by March 1891 Hardy still seemed to be doing little more than consider the project and was very little advanced from his first speculations as much as seventeen years before. (133) The account is taken up again in The Later Years, (134) where a note from June 26th. 1892 shows that the work was at least under way. (135) The details of the writing of The Dynasts are not charted but the final stages are noted, particularly the publication and reception of the second part since the first had not fared well:

Returning to Max Gate he finished the second part of The Dynasts - that second part which the New York Tribune and other papers had been positive would never be heard of, so ridiculous was the first - and sent off the MS. to the Messrs. Macmillan in the middle of October. (136)

This second part was better received, that is if condescending reviews are any indication of artistic merit:

The Dynasts, Part II., was not published till the first week in February 1906, and its reception by the reviews was much more congratulatory than their reception of the first part, an American critical paper going so far as to say, "Who knows that this work may not turn out to be a masterpiece?" (137)

However it seems that Hardy was not over-confident by the time he had finished the draft of the third part. When he noted his arrival at the end of his work he added, almost defensively:

"Critics can never be made to understand that failure may be greater than success. It is their particular duty to point this out; but the public points it out to them. To have the strength to roll a stone weighing a hundredweight to the top of the mount is a success, and to have the strength to roll a stone of ten hundredweight only half-way up that mount is a failure. But the latter is two or three times as strong a deed." (138)

It seems that Hardy himself was not sure whether he had completely succeeded in the immense task he had set himself.

There is no doubt that completion was a great relief to him. It was an enormous work which had occupied him for perhaps fourteen years, had been in his mind for as much as eighteen years before that and the theme of which had been with him almost all his life. Hardy himself admitted to the extent of his preoccupation and the relief at the end in sight:

In two or three days I shall have done with the proofs of Dynasts III. It is well that the business should be over, for I have been living in Wellington's campaigns so much lately that, like George IV, I am almost positive that I took part in the battle of Waterloo, and have written it from memory. (139)

Before leaving the inspiration and genesis of The Dynasts it is interesting to note that, although it was not meant for performance, some scenes were acted for the first time in April 1908 in Dorchester by the local Dramatic Society. (140)

On the whole Hardy has attracted much unfavourable criticism, on both the form of his work and the philosophies it embodies, especially where these two aspects become confused, that is in the use of the Spirits. Most critics will allow that Hardy had a great creative talent and that The Dynasts contains certain striking passages, some fine characterisation, some excellent poetry and occasional sympathetic portrayal of the human predicament. (141) Yet there is always the intimation that Hardy had basically been mistaken in trying at all, that his work was uneven, often linguistically eccentric and philosophically bizarre. (142) These attitudes usually come about through a failure to comprehend that The Dynasts was the culmination of years spent nurturing a profound and informed interest, the scope of which would not allow normal methods and normal forms. Also it is misleading to connect the Spirits with the philosophy. They are part of the form:

Nearly all discussions of Hardy's thought fail to distinguish between formulated belief and dramatically useful symbol or myth. (143)

This critic points to the danger of over-interpretation since the Spirits are a dramatic convention rather than a philosophy,

or worse a religion, in themselves. (144) This does not mean to say that Hardy's ideas are not an important factor in The Dynasts. Some contemporary criticism was prepared to take the broad view on Hardy's work, the only valid and positive approach possible to such a creation. Max Beerbohm wrote in 1904:

Impossible his task certainly is. To do perfectly what he essays would need a syndicate of much greater poets than ever were born into the world, working in an age of miracles. To show us the whole world, as seen, in a time of stress, by the world that is unseen by us! Whoever so essays must be judged according to the degree by which his work falls infinitely short of perfection. Mr. Hardy need not fear that test. The Dynasts is a noble achievement, impressive, memorable. (145)

In the last resort any general criticism of The Dynasts must be regarded as subjective. It is possible for John Buchan to consider the realism of Hardy's philosophy 'cold' and 'bloodless' (146) and Hardy, a supreme poet, as 'lacking most of the poetic gifts'. (147) Of a work of which the theme is humanity and in which inherent is the pity felt for mankind and its struggles George Wing can state:

Hardy lamented that in The Trumpet-Major he touched only the fringe of a theme of vast creative possibility. But The Trumpet-Major is more humanly compulsive, artistically unified, of integrity. In The Dynasts Hardy is dealing on a wide screen with the immensity of spectacle, and forgets, what in his prose he interprets so felicitously, the immensity of humanity. (148)

Indications of Hardy's scope in portrayal of character and ear for conversation are countless. The 'immensity of humanity' could be the theme of The Dynasts and is fully within the grasp of the man who wrote these lines:

BOY

How can you see a dead man, father, after so long?

FIRST CITIZEN

They'll embalm him, my boy, as they did all the great Egyptian admirals.

## BOY

His lady will be handy for that, won't she? (149)

However contradictions must characterise criticism of a work of such immensity and which cannot but present an uneven surface to the reader. Its greatness must be of more significance than any of its failures and its achievements the only productive material for discussion. Before considering the text of The Dynasts in detail two aspects of Hardy's work remain to be discussed here from a critical viewpoint; the form of the work and the philosophical content.

The form of The Dynasts has been severely criticised:

A string of incidents chronologically arranged, even if it follows a curve of actual events, does not yet comprise a structured action. Many of these incidents are dependent for their meaning and shape upon a remembered course of history, almost always unsatisfactory in an imaginative work because insufficiently selective, but here especially unsatisfactory because excessively complex and chaotic. Many of these incidents are also redundant, most notably those items of battle resting upon Hardy's innocent faith in the excitement he can arouse by references to the way "the left" of one general outflanks "the centre" of another. What we have here is at best a chronicle or a panorama, not a disciplined narrative. (150)

This criticism misses the fact that the work is automatically structured by the course of events and that all the elements are related to the central theme of the Wars. In The Dynasts the Napoleonic Wars are not merely source material for a work of pure creation; from the outset The Dynasts was designed to be a vehicle for a description of these Wars. The chronicle aspect is therefore an integral part of the character of the work. The Dynasts has even been relegated from the realm of literature to that of material for scholarship:

The epic drama has become a museum piece; a fascinating area for the erudite investigator, but artistically more dead than alive. (151)

This type of comment is meaningless. The degree to which a work is read bears no relationship to its quality as a work



of art. Paradise Lost cannot often be voluntarily read in its entirety today yet is a living work of art. Hardy had rejected prose and had always thought of himself as primarily a poet. His great work he felt constrained to write more as poetry than prose and its theme allowed of no other form than the epic. The poetic value is, indeed, greater than that of its philosophical content although to put this assertion in perspective it must be stated that the historical content will remain, with the poetry, an enduring aspect of The Dynasts. The purely poetic importance of both Paradise Lost and The Dynasts has been commented upon.<sup>(152)</sup> The readability of a work is a highly subjective matter and there is something distasteful in maintaining that a work has scholastic interest only. It is unwise to dismiss too easily a work which has such a vast scope and understanding. If an artist of the stature of Hardy produces what he feels to be a magnum opus it is worth consideration. Its position within Hardy's creative output has to be realised.<sup>(153)</sup> The Dynasts is not without faults but in some ways it forms a more coherent whole than War and Peace. Even favourable criticism, however, can rarely accept the mixture of styles and methods that go to make up this work:

Vast, ungainly, and unassimilable although it may sometimes appear, The Dynasts is absolutely of a piece with Hardy's other work and the pattern of his whole career. Portentous both in form and in statement, it nonetheless represents a kind of sublimated fusion of his hitherto divergent impulses towards fiction, poetry and the drama. And if it is in a real sense the culminating point of Hardy's major fiction, it is also the embodiment of those historical and regional enthusiasms which produced The Trumpet-Major, and the most coherent expression, despite the invocation of far wider scenes, of Hardy's developed concept of Wessex.<sup>(154)</sup>

Of greatest importance in a general consideration of the form of The Dynasts, however, are Hardy's own writings on the subject. In 1904 he entered into correspondence with Arthur Bingham Walkley of The Times in support of the form of his work. The correspondence appeared in The Times Literary Supplement during that year.<sup>(155)</sup> The critical articles are

of far less value than Hardy's responses, which are highly informative. One of Walkley's main contentions was that The Dynasts was apparently in play form yet was not intended to be acted, a contradiction in terms he was unable to accept. Hardy at random mentions Shelley's Prometheus Unbound and Byron's Cain to show other works of a similar type, 'unactable play-like poems',<sup>(156)</sup> which could not summarily be dismissed. Hardy feels that this attitude seeks to prevent one art form borrowing from another with a consequent loss in vitality. The critic objects to reading the stage-form but Hardy considers that the 'play-shape is essentially, if not quite literally, at one with the instinctive, primitive, narrative shape'.<sup>(157)</sup> Brief indication of time and place and a subsequent dialogue are, for Hardy, a natural story-telling method, and the taste for reading this form a 'matter of idiosyncrasy'.<sup>(158)</sup> The most important factor, however, is that the form Hardy chose was the only one which would allow the temporal and geographical span to be effectively covered:

But analogies between the arts are apt to be misleading, and having said thus much in defence of the form chosen, even supposing another to have been available, I have no room left for more than a bare assertion that there was available no such other form that would readily allow of the necessary compression of space and time. <sup>(159)</sup>

Hardy points to his own Preface in support of his remarks that The Dynasts was never meant to be performed but was 'intended simply for mental performance'.<sup>(160)</sup> Hardy realises that ultimately acceptance of his work will be a subjective matter and never conclusive.<sup>(161)</sup> Finally, in consideration of the form of The Dynasts, other relevant comments in Hardy's Preface must be noted. He indicates that no attempt was made to really structure the work and that a certain knowledge of the background is necessary for a reader to profit from it.<sup>(162)</sup> He considers the form 'eminently readable' and that it has the advantages of a theatrical presentation whilst able to go far beyond the limits set on an actual dramatic production.<sup>(163)</sup>

Since the Spirits, largely a formal device, have frequently been connected too closely with Hardy's philosophy it is appropriate that they should be considered at this point before examining Hardy's thought. Hardy needed some kind of framework to contain his ideas and to give cohesion and direction to the work as a whole. Despite the fact that he was well aware that he was leaving himself open to criticism he rejected both Christian and Judaistic ideas and those of Classical antiquity; as literary devices he considered they were outworn. He attempted to construct an original schema which would embody what he considered was his modern outlook, although it is significant that he himself did not consider his ideas would necessarily survive.<sup>(164)</sup> Yet the Spirits by no means embody a systematic exposition of Hardy's ideas nor were they meant to. It is the work as a whole which demonstrates Hardy's interpretation of life, the Spirits serve to underline events by their comments but they do not sway them. Hardy himself wrote:

It was thought proper to introduce, as supernatural spectators of the terrestrial action, certain impersonated abstractions, or Intelligences, called Spirits. They are intended to be taken by the reader for what they may be worth as contrivances of the fancy merely. Their doctrines are but tentative, and are advanced with little eye to a systematized philosophy warranted to lift 'the burthen of the mystery' of this unintelligible world. The chief thing hoped for them is that they and their utterances may have dramatic plausibility enough to procure for them, in the words of Coleridge, 'that willing suspension of disbelief for the moment which constitutes poetic faith'.<sup>(165)</sup>

The formal use of the Spirits has been recognised but has been criticised because of the Spirits' lack of active freedom:

Only one thing could give coherence to so vast an undertaking, and that would be a controlling myth, such as can be found in traditional epic, or a moral ideology, such as appears in War and Peace. The Spirits, in their moaning rhythms of reflection, are meant to provide precisely this element; but they do not, and I believe, they cannot. For, by virtue of the philosophic premises from which they rarely can break free, they are necessarily inert. They are spec-

tators not participants, they muse but do not move, they appear but cannot act. (166)

It has already been seen that Hardy claimed no great structural unity for his work and that the historical progression adequately structured The Dynasts. Therefore to claim the Spirits were vital to give a semblance of structure to The Dynasts is invalid. However they do, to an extent, help to establish a certain pattern within the work and this precisely because they cannot act. They comment and clarify, adding to the narrative in a way that the dramatic form would otherwise preclude. The resultant chaos if the Spirits could act is unimaginable. How does the critic, who does not experience the problems of a creative writer, envisage the Spirits might act; in concert or against each other? Their scenes would be full of plottings and argument and the action would be set, once again, on the plain before Troy. Hardy had already pointed to the outworn nature of previous mythologies and what ideology could justify the slaughter? Tolstoy's God, who appears to be ultimately responsible, seems to have much blood on His hands and Tolstoy's ideology, if it exists, only pertains to that fighting which is to free Russia from France but which cannot be involved in any wider idea of the movement of peoples and popular nationalism. Adverse criticism of the Spirits can certainly be made and will be made when the text is examined but this criticism will be largely linguistic and literary. Naturally the Spirits reflect Hardy's theory of the Immanent Will but their function remains dramatic and they are the essence of theatre with their underlying reminiscence of the Greek chorus. The Spirits can be seen as aspects of Hardy's mind. (167) The Spirit of the Years is thus seen to embody experience, reason and philosophic and scientific understanding of the world. The Spirit of the Pities ~~embodies~~ embodies compassion and the Spirit Ironic an intellectual ~~aloo~~ <sup>aloo</sup> capable of some degree of compassion. The Spirit Sinister is the perversity of human nature. Any sensible interpretation of this kind works well enough but Hardy did

not define these devices too closely and left much to the individual reader. Only the Spirit of the Pities did he comment on at length:

These phantasmal Intelligences are divided into groups, of which one only, that of the Pities, approximates to 'the Universal Sympathy of human nature - the spectator idealized' of the Greek Chorus; it is impressionable and inconsistent in its views, which sway hither and thither as wrought on by events. (168)

When considering the philosophy in The Dynasts the main danger is over-interpretation. Hardy made no great claims for The Dynasts as a philosophical document:

Briefly, that the drama being advanced not as a reasoned system of philosophy, nor as a new philosophy, but as a poem, with the discrepancies that are to be expected in an imaginative work, as such it would be read. (169)

It is also evident from Hardy's own comments that his philosophy is not entirely pessimistic nor does it render man helpless to the degree some critics maintain. It seems that Hardy's Immanent Will was the compulsion within humans to act in the evil ways they do and that were they to change and realise their foolishness then this compulsion would be reduced as the number of men who resisted it increased. (170) Also Hardy preempts any criticism of his philosophy dependent on complex interpretations. He makes no claims for his ideas:

Yes: I left off on a note of hope. It was just as well that the Pities should have the last word, since, like Paradise Lost, The Dynasts proves nothing. (171)

Irving Howe's criticism of Hardy's philosophy thus ignores or is ignorant of Hardy's own comments upon it. For example he draws attention to the fact that 'a work of literature enamored of the most advanced opinions of the time in which it has been composed runs the danger of quick obsolescence.' (172) Yet Hardy was aware of this and had voluntarily rejected established mythologies as being meaningless to him and incompatible with

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his ideas. Howe considers Hardy is forced to contradict his postulation that humans are puppets of the Will and finds this to be evidence of inconsistency.<sup>(173)</sup> Yet the working of the Will through the worst human instincts allows of an element of freedom for the persistently high minded. Howe's lengthy criticism<sup>(174)</sup> demonstrates his inability to grasp the symbolic nature of Hardy's Immanent Will for he ranks it with Jehovah and attacks it on the grounds that Jehovah has an established mythology. The inescapable fact is that the Christian God could in no way serve Hardy's purpose. How could He enter into an action where blind impulse operating through man's worst instincts or his saddest delusions sent him marching in vast numbers from one holocaust to another? It must be reiterated that Hardy did not see his philosophy as expressed in The Dynasts in any way as an ultimate truth:

Nevertheless, as was said in the Preface, I have used the philosophy as a plausible theory only. Though, for that matter, I am convinced that, whether we uphold this or any other conjecture on the cause of things, men's lives and actions will be little affected thereby, these being less dependent on abstract reasonings than on the involuntary inter-social emotions, which would more probably be strengthened than weakened by a sense that humanity and other animal life (roughly, though not accurately, definable as puppetry) forms the conscious extremity of a pervading urgency, or will.  
(175)

Constructive and plausible interpretations have been made of the philosophy of The Dynasts. The most elucidating and acceptable summary has been made by J.O. Bailey:

The Will acts within Its human puppets through impulses and hungers that are nakedly selfish. Only men capable of disinterested reason, selfless compassion, and moral courage can resist the impulses of the Will. Resistance is possible because man has reflective consciousness fed by sensations. Reflection allows a man to choose on the basis of reason instead of impulse. Thus some freedom of the Will (or freedom from the Will) is possible. In the allegory of The Dynasts, man's consciousness may even awaken in the Will (which inhabits man) some conscious awareness. To a minute extent, man is a variable in the equations of the Will's determinism. This is the basis for the allegory of "evolutionary meliorism" that concludes The Dynasts. (176)

This opinion is not without support.<sup>(177)</sup> It is possible to maintain that Hardy may have regretted his contention that the Will could change, particularly with the advent of the Great War.<sup>(178)</sup> However Hardy never lost sight of the possibilities of any endeavour for human good which had as its source the generosity of spirit of humans themselves. Roy Morrell, in this connection, aptly cites Hardy's A Plaint to Man of which the relevant lines are:

And now that I dwindle day by day  
Beneath the deicide eyes of seers  
In a light that will not let me stay,

And to-morrow the whole of me disappears,  
The truth should be told, and the fact be faced  
That had best been faced in earlier years:

The fact of life with dependence placed  
On the human heart's resource alone,  
In brotherhood bonded close and graced

With loving-kindness fully blown,  
And visioned help unsought, unknown. (179)

The form of The Dynasts, then, was not a mistaken eccentricity on the part of Hardy. It had been carefully considered and was an honest attempt to produce a new and appropriate form for his material. The philosophy is not the rigid historical determinism it has been said to be. Outside the evil human impulses, which are undeniably powerful, it allows a certain flexibility of character presentation as long as a character has not surrendered his integrity to the Will.

The dramatic nature of The Dynasts favours a scene by scene analysis. The many different aspects of the presentation, the prose, the verse, the 'stage directions', the speech, the commentary of the Spirits, are not productively separated from the whole but are best viewed within the overall structure of the drama.

The account of Waterloo in The Dynasts constitutes the seventh and final act of the last part of the work. The

actual sources of Hardy's material for this writing have been carefully traced. (180) The end of the sixth act, which has charted the course of the rest of the campaign at Ligny and Quatre-Bras, comes with the eve of the battle. Although conditions for the exhausted troops of both sides left much to be desired the French were undoubtedly worse off than the English:

Fires begin to shine up from the English bivouacs. Camp kettles are slung, and the men pile arms and stand round the blaze to dry themselves. The French opposite lie down like dead men in the dripping green wheat and rye, without supper and without fire.

By and by the English army also lies down, the men huddling together on the ploughed mud in their wet blankets, while some sleep sitting round the dying fires. (181)

Despite the difference in presentation this is very reminiscent of the passages in Waterloo where the same events are described from a personal viewpoint. (182) Hardy's technique, which is something akin to the use of stage directions, is not without effect here. The events are seen at a distance, dwarfing the individual protagonist and exposing only the movements of the helpless masses.

It is at this juncture that the Spirits enter to comment on the forthcoming carnage with perhaps the best results in the entire work. The poetry of the Chorus of the Years is of a high standard and constitutes one of the few passages in The Dynasts on which Hardy himself chose to comment favourably. (183) The opening lines of the Chorus of the Years echo a theme which has been recognised in Waterloo and in War and Peace, that of the fundamental antithesis between nature and agriculture on the one hand and warfare on the other:

The eyelids of eve fall together at last,  
And the forms so foreign to field and tree  
Lie down as though native, and slumber fast! (184)

In a long, lyric passage Hardy evokes the forthcoming rape of nature. Hardy is a far greater lyric than narrative poet



which explains the weakness of some of his unsuccessful blank verse although undoubtedly much of his material is scarcely suitable for poetic rendition. Here, however, he is at his best, confident in both form and content as the Chorus of the Years reckons the toll the battle will take in a way that would not immediately occur to mankind:

Yea, the coney's are scared by the thud of hoofs,  
And their white scuts flash at their vanishing heels,  
And swallows abandon the hamlet-roofs.

The mole's tunnelled chambers are crushed by wheels,  
The lark's eggs scattered, their owners fled;  
And the hedgehog's household the sapper unseals.

The snail draws in at the terrible tread,  
But in vain: he is crushed by the felloe-rim;  
The worm asks what can be overhead,

And wriggles deep from a scene so grim,  
And guesses him safe: for he does not know  
What a foul red flood will be soaking him!

Beaten about the heel and toe  
Are butterflies, sick of the day's long rheum,  
To die of a worse than the weather-foe.

Trodden and bruised to a miry tomb  
Are ears that have greened but will never be gold,  
And flowers in the bud that will never bloom. (185)

This superb, almost pantheist, evocation of destruction, is echoed by the Chorus of the Pities which extends the idea of the ravaging of nature and the interruption of its cycles to the forthcoming untimely deaths of many men:

So the season's intent, ere its fruit unfold,  
Is frustrate, and mangled, and made succumb,  
Like a youth of promise struck stark and cold!...

And what of these who to-night have come? (186)

Although against the over-all pattern of history and the vastness of the universe Hardy sees the insignificance of the most momentous of human events, nevertheless as a poet he sees the dramatic value of Waterloo. Here men who have forged an Empire or defended their country over several

continents meet to die:

The young sleep sound: but the weather awakes  
In the veterans, pains from the past that numb;  
Old stabs of Ind, old Peninsular aches,  
Old Friedland chills, haunt their moist mud bed,  
Cramps from Austerlitz; till their slumber breaks. (187)

The poetic tension, which has built up since the Chorus of the Years first indicated the fall of night, is released with great dramatic effect as Hardy briefly delineates the gradual descent into quiet:

The fires of the English go out, and silence prevails, save for the soft hiss of the rain that falls impartially on both the sleeping armies. (188)

With the final act comes the dawn and further observation of the awakened troops, again seen, from a distance, in a panoramic view. This sweeping description is striking and effective yet the overwhelming impression is of the helplessness of the men involved. Although when viewed more closely each individual is preoccupied with his own affairs here they are but 'ants' that 'hurry to and fro'.<sup>(189)</sup> They are also described as 'tens of thousands of moving specks'<sup>(190)</sup> whose identity and nationality are reduced to mere splashes of colour. As Hardy draws in closer to the scene he shows these men engaged in the mundane pre-battle pursuits of breakfasting and making ready their arms and equipment. The warlike preparations as yet have no sinister aspect. Hardy's aloof description sees the glinting arms as a display of cutlery at a hill-side fair'.<sup>(191)</sup> The brief, clear indications Hardy gives of the dispositions of the two sides are acceptable here in a way that subsequent lists of tactics and movements, delivered by the Spirits, are not. However, before the Spirits enter upon the scene, Hardy looks for a moment at the respective leaders of the protagonists. The viewpoint of the author seems to dwarf these men as he lists the essential details, details which, apart from the commanders' same ages, could be glimpsed from afar. Hardy touches on their dress, their

mounts and their entourage and then leaves them, having conveyed to the reader a vague sense of the powerlessness of these men, as they ride back and forth before their armies.

Hardy then turns to a detailed account of the dispositions. In the mouths of the Spirits, and couched in strained verse which is an unsuitable vehicle for such material, the information lacks impact. The lists of names and manoeuvres are inadequate to the task of conveying the atmosphere of the occasion and they become confusing and difficult to follow. Hardy certainly made it clear that prior knowledge was a prerequisite to an appreciation of his tale but here a series of detailed maps are needed and a work of art should be more able to stand on its own. Above all, however, it is painfully clear that this clumsy cataloguing is not the stuff of poetry as the tortured lines of the first Semichorus of Rumours amply demonstrate:

The fourfold corps of D'Erlon, spread at length,  
Compose the right, east of the famed chaussée-  
The shelterless Charleroi-and-Brussels way,-  
And Jacquinot's alert light-steeded strength  
Still further right their sharpened swords display.  
Thus stands the first line. (192)

This presentation tends to make little impact on the reader and leaves him with a transient impression of a handful of proper names. At its worst the poetry is unbearable:

The third and last embattlement reveals  
D'Erlon's, Lobau's and Reille's foot-cannoniers,  
And horse-drawn ordnance too, on massy wheels,  
To strike with cavalry where space appears. (193)

However the exposition of poor verse is an unproductive task and obscures the undeniable truth that Hardy could be a supreme poet. Even here his poetic abilities can be glimpsed despite the constraint of material:

And round dun Hougomont's old lichened sides  
A dense array of watching Guardsmen hides  
Amid the peaceful produce of the grange,  
Whose new-kerned apples, hairy gooseberries green,  
And mint, and thyme, the ranks intrude between.- (194)

The commencement of hostilities is indicated in the 'stage directions' which are now resumed. The initial, laconic lines, which synchronise the start of battle with the sound of the bells of a convent, do not lack effect:

The clock of Nivelles convent church strikes eleven in the distance. Shortly after, coils of starch-blue smoke burst into being along the French lines, and the English batteries respond promptly, in an ominous roar that can be heard at Antwerp. (195)

However here again the writing degenerates into a series of tactical indications. Although sometimes these descriptions, in various forms and from many different viewpoints, provide a fairly effective 'pointilliste' impression of a situation, they more often show that the artistic presentation of pure historical fact is not usually feasible. Generally speaking the less actual fact is used the better, which is why the uninformed observations of Fabrice and Pierre\* are so effective. At its best historical writing is pure fiction set in a credible historical background, which, although it must be seen to affect both actions and characters, putting them in a tangible historical context, is better seen from afar and without too great an attention to purely factual detail. With Hardy's lack of ability as a narrative poet and with little dramatic impact in much of his factual description it remains that only in the lyrical passages and in the characterisation does he really achieve great literary heights. Only occasionally, as in the description of nightfall before Waterloo, and in those passages, with their strong Wessex flavour, that concern themselves with the ordinary people, is there any real measure of success outside these areas and in such writing actual historical fact is one of the least intrusive elements.

In the second scene the battle is under way. As with much of The Dynasts the general effect of Hardy's account is good and the impression gained is much like that gained from

\*In La Chartreuse de Parme and War and Peace respectively.

reading a reasonable journalistic account. However/little stands up well in a close analysis if a high and consistent literary standard is demanded.

It is in this scene that an important aspect of Hardy's thinking becomes apparent. He attributes a great advantage to the French at the onset of hostilities when Napoleon states:

They do not touch  
The core of my intent - to pierce and roll  
The centre upon the right of those opposed.  
Thereon will turn the outcome of the day,  
In which our odds are ninety to their ten! (196)

Although Hardy frequently refers to the helplessness of mankind and occasionally gives a supernatural demonstration of man's thralldom he still allows an element of independence to those who persevere, and the English victory at Waterloo is seen essentially as one of determination in the face of superior odds which consequently diminish as the battle proceeds.

Hardy's powers of characterisation are strong throughout The Dynasts. A clear, striking picture is drawn of Napoleon who, in increasing years and infirmity, is abandoned by success and left truculent and embittered. He is unprepossessing physically:

His elevated face makes itself distinct in the morning light as a gloomy and resentful countenance, blue-black where shaven, and stained with snuff, with powderings of the same on the breast of his uniform. His stumpy figure, being just now thrown back, accentuates his stoutness. (197)

He perhaps overstates his contempt for Wellington and his army:

You have been beaten by this Wellington,  
And so you think him great. But let me teach you  
Wellington is no foe to reckon with.  
His army, too, is poor. This clash to-day  
Is not more serious for our seasoned files  
Than breakfasting. (198)

The first hint of approaching Prussian forces is given, lending a poetic foresight to Napoleon's words which the

imagery compliments:

I see a darkly crawling, slug-like shape  
Embodying far out there, - troops seemingly -  
Grouchy's van-guard. (199)

Most of the scene is purely factual. Hardy tries unsuccessfully to render his material poetic. His efforts are plainly discernable:

All prospers marvellously! Gomont is hemmed;  
La Haye Sainte too; their centre jeopardized;  
Travers and d'Erlon dominate the crest,  
And further strength of foot is following close.  
Their troops are raw; the flower of England's force  
That fought in Spain, America now holds.-  
To-night we sleep in Brussels! (200)

As the prose 'directions' become more terse they become the more incomprehensible. They do not constitute an artistic embodiment of fact:

SIR THOMAS PICTON, seeing what is happening, orders KEMPT'S brigade forward. It volleys murderously DONZELOT'S columns of D'ERLON'S corps, and repulses them. (201)

The death of Picton, one of the best drawn of the minor characters, occurs. He dies, as he lived, swearing:

I catch a voice that cautions Picton now  
Against his rashness. "What the hell care I,-  
Is my curst carcass worth a moment's mind?--  
Come on!" he answers. Onwardly he goes! (202)

Napoleon is appraised of the true nature of the troops vaguely discerned approaching at the beginning of the scene. This leads him to prematurely launch Ney's cavalry charges. As the odds shorten he feels justified in falsifying the nature of events to keep up the army's courage. The odds, though less, are still in Napoleon's favour but he is acting rashly and dishonestly, allowing himself to be fettered by the Will. Already regrets and bitterness are apparent:

A messenger! Had my poor Berthier been here  
 Six would have sufficed! Now then: seek Ney;  
 Bid him to sling the valour of his braves  
 Fiercely on England ere Count Bülow come;  
 And advertise the succours on the hill  
 As Grouchy's. (Aside) This is my one battle-chance;  
 The Allies have many such! (To SOULT) If Bülow nears,  
 He cannot join in time to share the fight.  
 And if he could, 'tis but a corps the more....  
 This morning we had ninety chances ours,  
 We have threescore still. If Grouchy but retrieve  
 His fault of absence, conquest comes with eve! (203)

The third scene turns to the approaching Prussian forces and briefly describes their advance in a prose 'dumb show'. (204) Whilst this scene is purely factual it does add to the tension. The aspect of a race against time becomes apparent; Blücher and Bülow have to reach the field in time to aid Wellington and Napoleon has to preempt this move by breaking Wellington before their arrival. The tension is maintained by the increase in the distant sounds of the battle and the frustrating halts and difficulties of the advancing Prussians.

Following this short scene the next, scene four, can be noted for an expansion of the character of Wellington. He is shown as being not entirely insensitive, although of necessity hardened by the rigours of warfare and his ultimate responsibility. He is able to grieve over Picton's death without being daunted and without attributing virtues to the dead man he did not have. The tribute is the more effective for its honesty:

I am grieved at losing Picton; more than grieved.  
 He was as grim a devil as ever lived,  
 And rough-mouthed withal. But never a man  
 More stout in fight, more stoical in blame! (205)

Wellington's regret at the losses suffered by the Grey's and his fears for their Commander's safety do not blind him to the rashness of their actions which, though brave, achieve nothing, and actively aid the enemy in their empty sacrifice:

Ah - so it comes!  
 The Greys were bound to pay - 'tis always so -  
 Full dearly for their dash so far afield.  
 Valour unballasted but lands its freight  
 On the enemy's shore. - What has become of Hill? (206)

The attack on La Haye Sainte is briefly indicated in a purely factual passage. (207) Any literary presentation is limited to a rather contrived comment from the Spirit of the Pities:

O Farm of sad vicissitudes and strange!  
Farm of the Holy Hedge, yet fool of change!  
Whence lit so sanct a name on thy now violate grange?  
 (208)

The allies are hard pressed and Wellington's fortitude becomes apparent:

Despite their fierce advantage here, I swear  
 By every God that war can call upon,  
 To hold our present place at any cost,  
 Until your force coöperate with our lines! (209)

To Wellington's surprise Ney begins his cavalry attacks. The manoeuvre itself was expected but it is commenced too early:

That this was rigged for some picked time to-day  
 I had inferred. But that it would be risked  
 Sheer on our lines, while still they stand unswayed,  
 In conscious battle-trim, I reckoned not.  
 It looks a madman's cruel enterprise! (210)

With insight and some irony Wellington rejects the idea that Ney had not received the order to advance and was charging prematurely:

It may be so: he's rash. And yet I doubt.  
 I know Napoléon. If the onset fail  
 It will be Ney's; if it succeed he'll claim it! (211)



Whilst the ensuing events are carefully charted there is little drama and excitement conveyed. The endurance of the allied troops can be appreciated but the whole is detached and wooden. Hardy's conscious susceptibility to military show emerges, as it did with such effect in *The Trumpet-Major*:

Behold the gorgeous coming of those horse,  
Accoutred in kaleidoscopic hues  
That would persuade us war has beauty in it!- (212)

The awe-inspiring charge brings an admiring comment from Wellington who is able to be objectively appreciative of his enemy whilst the battle is still in progress:

It's Marshal Ney himself who leads the charge.  
 The finest cavalry commander, he,  
 That wears a foreign plume; ay, probably  
 The whole world through! (213)

This prompts a commentary from the Spirit World that is firmly in the tradition of Hardy's own attitudes, showing how much the Spirit Ironic is a facet of Hardy himself:

#### SPIRIT IRONIC

And when that matchless chief  
Sentenced shall lie to ignominious death  
But technically deserved, no finger he  
Who speaks will lift to save him!

#### SPIRIT OF THE PITIES

We must discount war's generous impulses  
I sadly see. (214) To his shame.

The charge is described both by the Spirit World and in a prose passage. The indomitable nature of the allies and the reckless daring of the French is conveyed but the atmosphere of battle found in *Stendhal*, *Tolstoy* and even in *Erckmann-Chatrion* is missing here. There is a vital, personal element lacking. Firstly the charge is described in verse in the mouth of the Spirit of Rumour:

Ney guides the fore-front of the carabineers  
Through charge and charge, with rapid recklessness.  
Horses, cuirasses, sabres, helmets, men,  
Impinge confusedly on the pointed prongs  
Of the English kneeling there, whose dim red shapes  
Behind their slanted steel seem trampled flat  
And sworded to the sward. The charge recedes,  
And lo, the tough lines rank there as before,  
Save that they are shrunken. (215)

The advantages gained by the use of a less impersonal narrative, particularly in the use of the first person, have been discussed in the chapter on Waterloo, which is a first person account. In Le Rouge et le Noir and La Chartreuse de Parme both events and the legend of Napoleon are seen through the eyes of individuals. Parallels between Fabrice and Pierre in War and Peace have already been indicated. The account of Eylau in Le Colonel Chabert is from the viewpoint of a soldier and protagonist. In Genestas' impassioned rhetoric is something of Joseph Bertha. Even The Trumpet-Major is concerned with events only as they affect the characters. It is from this personalised approach that the vitality of these works largely springs and its lack lies at the root of the poverty of much of Hardy's impersonal descriptions, and no extra-terrestrial commentary can relieve this. Hardy's prose comments have been seen to contribute occasionally to the strength of the narrative but this is far from invariably so and the description of Ney's charge is lamentably dull:

The Allied squares stand like little red-brick castles, independent of each other, and motionless except at the dry hurried command "Close up!" repeated every now and then as they are slowly thinned. On the other hand, under their firing and bayonets a disorder becomes apparent among the charging horse, on whose cuirasses the bullets snap like stones on windowpanes. At this the Allied cavalry waiting in the rear advance; and by degrees they deliver the squares from their enemies, who are withdrawn to their own position to prepare for a still more strenuous assault. (216)

In scene five there is far greater emphasis on personal, non-factual accounts set against an historical background which is both vital to the events in the scene and which in turn is

enriched by them. The results are entertaining and successful and constitute one of the best scenes in The Dynasts. Hardy's opening prose description pictures the women's camp during the progress of the battle. (217) The battle provides an ever-present background to events in the camp which is permeated by its smoke, smell and noise. The gruesome implements of the surgeon bear silent witness to the butchery that accompanied battles, and their association with death and disablement is contrasted sharply with the recent birth of a baby:

Two waggons stand near; also a surgeon's horse in charge of a bātman, laden with bone-saws, knives, probes, tweezers, and other surgical instruments. Behind lies a woman who has just given birth to a child, which a second woman is holding. (218)

In the conversation that ensues there is a judicious blend of somewhat stylised regret together with a realism and an instinct for survival born of years of hardship and imminent danger:

He looked back as they wheeled off towards the fighting-line, as much as to say "Nancy, if I don't see 'ee again, this is good-bye, my dear." Yes, poor man!...Not but what 'a had a temper at times. (219)

Here, although the Shakespearian element is present, (this is reminiscent of Mistress Quickly in Henry V), is both the melodramatic sentimentality of the class and its hardness. The husband, though perhaps not dead, is already buried. Hardy is well able to bring humour into such conversations. A second woman, also objective and strong-minded in trying circumstances, recounts her experiences:

I'm out of all that. My husband - as I used to call him for form's sake - is quiet enough. He was wounded at Quarter-Brass the day before yesterday, and died the same night. But I didn't know it till I got here, and then says I, "Widder or no widder, I mean to see this out." (220)

Just as these women could be the same, brightly-bonneted women whom Anne, in The Trumpet-Major, felt should be so know-

ledgeable in history and world affairs, the Sergeant who enters could easily have attended Miller Loveday's little gathering at Overcombe Mill. Danger and discomfort have banished gaiety and charm and this protagonist's despair conveys the plight of the allies better than any lengthy commentary:

Damned if I think you will see it out, mis'ess, for if I don't mistake there'll be a retreat of the whole army on Brussels soon. We can't stand much longer! - For the love of God, have you got a cup of water, if nothing stronger? (221)

The horrors of war are conveyed in appropriate terms:

The Lord send that I may never see again what I've been seeing while looking for my poor galliant Joe! The surgeon asked me to lend a hand; and 'twas worse than opening innerds at a pig-killing! (222)

The hard-gained experience of these battle-trying women lends events briefly described here a greater impact and a wider significance. The dreadful happenings have recurred many times before, and in many other places:

Lots of dead ones stare in that silly way. It depends upon where they were hit. I was all through the Peninsula; that's how I know. (223)

The entrance of an officer's servant provides the women with a chance to hear a summary of the battle in the popular idiom. In miniature here is the English Jean Buche or Genestas, well-equipped with gleanings from services in the parish church; the sole source of such a person's literary devices:

Waiting with the major's spare hoss - up to my knees in mud from the rain that had come down like baccy-pipe stems all the night and morning - I have just seen a charge never beheld since the days of the Amalekites! The squares still stand, but Ney's cavalry have made another attack. Their swords are streaming with blood, and their horses' hoofs squagh out our poor fellow's bowels as they lie. A ball has sunk in Sir Thomas Picton's forehead and killed him like Goliath the Philistine. I don't see what's to stop the French. Well, it's the Lord's doing and marvellous in our eyes: (224)

To the bystanders who enter upon the scene the battle appears lost and the overall effect of this interlude is to return the reader to the battle conscious of mounting despair for victory on the allied side:

As the battle becomes a slaughter, depending upon fixity of purpose for its outcome, so the deceptive, martial trap-pings are shorn away. Tolstoy showed Napoleon in defeat, sickened by bloodshed and here, in the sixth scene, an element of this appears. Hardy's anti-war sentiments have been mentioned, as has his support of Tolstoy in this matter. As The Dynasts comes to an end there is much that is both indirectly and overtly anti-war. The extent of Hardy's feelings can be measured in some of his poetry. In 'The Man he Killed', for example, from Time's Laughingstocks, Hardy uses a deceptive simplicity of presentation to express feeling of great depth:

"Had he and I but met  
By some old ancient inn,  
We should have sat us down to wet  
Right many a nipperkin!

"But ranged as infantry,  
And staring face to face,  
I shot at him as he at me  
And killed him in his place.

"I shot him dead because -  
Because he was my foe,  
Just so: my foe of course he was;  
That's clear enough; although

"He thought he'd 'list, perhaps,  
Off-hand like - just as I -  
Was out of work - had sold his traps -  
No other reason why.

"Yes; quaint and curious war is!  
You shoot a fellow down  
You'd treat if met where any bar is,  
Or help to half-a-crown." (225)

The opening lines of scene six bear witness to the progressive destruction of the French cavalry:

NEY'S charge of cavalry against the opposite upland has been three times renewed without success. He collects the scattered squadrons to renew it a fourth time. The glittering host again ascends the confronting slopes over the bodies of those previously left there, and amid horses wandering about without riders, or crying as they lie with entrails trailing or limbs broken. (226)

In a dramatic passage Napoleon rouses himself from a torpor during which his conscience has tormented him with the reproaches of Lannes, although it appears that Napoleon had no grounds other than his own feelings of guilt for believing Lannes reproached him. (227) These lines are essentially directed against the barbarity of warfare:

A horrible dream has gripped me - horrible!  
I saw before me Lannes - just as he looked  
That day at Aspern: mutilated, bleeding!  
"What - blood again?" he said to me. "Still blood?"  
(228)

All of Napoleon's speech is permeated with regrets and the bitterness of the realisation that such regrets are fruitless. The irrevocable pattern of events is clear to him as he perceives that Ney's attacks are premature:

What time is it? - Ah these assaults of Ney's!  
They are a blunder; they've been enterprised  
An hour too early!...There Lhéritier goes  
Onward with his division next Milhaud;  
Now Kellerman must follow up with his.  
So one mistake makes many. Yes; ay, yes! (229)

Yet Napoleon realises that this course of action, now commenced, cannot be abandoned (230) and his greatest regret is to be unable to follow up what Ney has achieved. This feeling voices itself in more bitterness:

Their canon are abandoned; and their squares  
Again environed - see! I would to God  
Murat could but be here! Yet I disdained  
His proffered servica...All my star asks now  
Is to break some half-dozen of those blocks  
Of English yonder. He was the man to do it. (231)

As the bad news of the Prussian advance comes in there is a feeling of desperation in Napoleon's words:

Ah! They swarm thus thickly?  
But be they hell's own legions we'll defy them! -  
Lobau's men will stand firm. (232)

However Napoleon has exerted most of his strength and is unable to reinforce Ney. That the French are no worse off than the English in this respect the reader soon learns, for Wellington will echo this outburst of Napoleon:

Infantry! Where the sacred God thinks he  
I can find infantry for him! Forsooth,  
Does he expect me to create them - eh?  
Why sends he such a message, seeing well  
How we are straitened here! (233)

Yet Napoleon, as well as both Ney and his messenger, realises that support for Ney could be crucial at that juncture. His inability to act embitters him and he renounces any claim to be in control of events. All talk of odds is finished; Napoleon helplessly awaits the outcome:

Ney does win me!  
I fain would strengthen him. - Within an ace  
Of breaking down the English as he is,  
'Twould write upon the sunset "Victory!" -  
But whom may spare we from the right here now?  
No single man!

An interval

Life's curse begins, I see,  
With helplessness!... All I can compass is  
To send Durutte to fall on Papelotte,  
And yet more strongly occupy La Haye,  
To cut off Bülow's right from bearing up  
And checking Ney's attack. Further than this  
None but the Gods can scheme! (234)

The opening of scene seven is a Spiritual presentation of the vision of man's helplessness but in many ways this is far less effective than Napoleon's almost despairing lines that closed the previous scene. It is intrusive and contrived.

Not only did this speech have greater effect but Wellington's subsequent appraisal of Napoleon's crude tactics better conveys something of the helpless, heedless slaughter that has developed:

Manoeuvring does not seem to animate  
Napoleon's methods now. Forward he comes,  
And pounds away on us in the ancient style,  
Till he is beaten back in the ancient style;  
And so the see-saw sways! (235)

Each side is strained to the utmost and Wellington is no more able to provide reinforcements than Napoleon:

Reinforcements?  
And where am I to get him reinforcements  
In Heaven's name! I've no reinforcements here,  
As he should know. (236)

Wellington's fortitude is stressed. With little regard for his own safety he remains in a position where he can survey events:

I may as well be shot as not perceive  
What ills are raging here. (237)

The emphasis, at this critical juncture, is on endurance. This constitutes the one ideological aspect of victory in The Dynasts. Wellington cannot allow for any respite:

Inform your general  
That his proposal asks the impossible!  
That he, I, every Englishman afield,  
Must fall upon the spot we occupy,  
Our wounds in front. (238)

At this point there is a certain degree of atmosphere and tension in the writing. The 'pointilliste' technique of prose direction, speech and Spirit commentary succeeds in creating a fair idea of the hard-pressed state of the allies. Both the troops, their leaders and Wellington himself are



shown to be under enormous strain. Wellington stresses the necessity for that determination that has been seen to be so important:

The game just now  
Goes all against us; and if staunchness fail  
But for one moment with these thinning foot,  
Defeat succeeds! (239)

A brief, prose summary indicates the state of the allied forces. The economy of these lines conveys something of the desperate nature of the allied situation:

The battle continues to sway hither and thither with concussions, wounds, smoke, the fumes of gunpowder, and the steam from the hot viscera of grape-torn horses and men. One side of a Hanoverian square is blown away; the three remaining sides form themselves into a triangle. So many of his aides are cut down that it is difficult for WELLINGTON to get reports of what is happening afar. It begins to be discovered at the front that a regiment of hussars, and others without ammunition, have deserted, and that some officers in the rear, honestly concluding the battle to be lost, are riding quietly off to Brussels. Those who are left unwounded of WELLINGTON'S staff show gloomy misgivings at such signs, despite their own firmness. (240)

In contrast the superfluous comments of the Spirit Sinister, although doubtless consciously forming an anti-climax, fall too far below the tone and atmosphere of the preceding lines and add an irksome note of bathos to the scene. Here the Spiritual commentary is reduced to the doggerel of the demon king in a pantomime:

One needs to be a ghost  
To move here in the midst 'twixt host and host!  
Their balls scream brisk and breezy tunes through me  
As I were an organ-stop. It's merry so;  
What damage mortal flesh must undergo! (241)

In scene eight Napoleon confirms that the approaching Prussians are Grouchy's forces, thereby, as it were, damning himself as a slave of the Immanent Will. Napoleon's actions are

reported by the Spirit watchers who find Ney to be still mindful of honour. Napoleon, however, is beyond redemption:

Excellent Emperor!  
He tops all human greatness: in that he  
To lesser grounds of greatness adds the prime,  
Of being without a conscience. (242)

As the end of the battle, which is to terminate in an allied victory, comes in sight, Hardy makes it clear that the allies are in a very precarious position themselves. (243) The charge of the Guard, which Hardy describes in brief, prose passages and in the verse of the Chorus of Rumours, is singularly unimpressive. The verse is too mechanical, and does not achieve even the effect of the prose introduction:

The picked and toughened Guard, many of whom stood in the ranks at Austerlitz and Wagram, have been drawn up in three or four echelons, the foremost of which now advances up the slopes to the Allies' position. The others follow at intervals, the drummers beating the "pas de charge." (244)

The repulse of the Guard with its brief prose commentaries and snatches of speech presumably is designed to express action and excitement but it falters badly and does not achieve what a pure, prose description might have achieved. The result here is a plethora of regimental numbers, commanders' names and curiously artificially sounding shouts. There is little sensation of movement or even noise. Tolstoy's artistic description of Borodino is vibrant with the sounds of battle, and Waterloo for Erckmann-Chatrion and Stendhal is characterised by constant movement. The best part of Hardy's description is the account of the sudden appearance of Maitland's Guards (245) who, in a dramatic moment, present a wall of firelocks 'four deep' to the Imperial Guard, dashing their illusion of victory. The character of Wellington, maintained with great effect, suffers a little here, his unyielding courage and sang froid being somewhat overstated:

UXBRIDGE (starting)  
I have lost my leg, by God!  
WELLINGTON

By God, and have you! Ay - the wind o' the shot  
Blew past the withers of my Copenhagen  
Like the foul sweeping of a witch's broom.-  
Aha - they are giving way! (246)

As the French retreat in rout the Spirit of the Years observes  
Napoleon's final despair:

He says "Now all is lost! The clocks of the world  
Strike my last empery-hour." (247)

The prose description of the retreat and pursuit captures  
something of the savagery of the man hunt. Here is the  
anti-war element at its most effective, an uncoloured account  
which can rely entirely on its content for impact:

The streams of French fugitives as they run are cut down  
and shot by their pursuers, whose clothes and contracted  
features are blackened by smoke and cartridge-biting, and  
soiled with loam and blood. Some French blow out their own  
brains as they fly. The sun drops below the horizon while  
the slaughter goes on. (248)

The Spirits chart the last moments of the battle. The  
mortality of man is savagely affirmed:

How know the coffined what comes after them,  
Even though it whirl them to the Pleiades?-(249)

The pervading presence of death is all the more powerful for  
this assertion of its finality. Ney, seeking death, is  
reserved for a worse death at a later date but Napoleon 'loses  
his last chance of dying well!'<sup>(250)</sup> The events which are part  
of the legend are mentioned, Cambronne's supposed defiance  
and the tenacity of the Guard.<sup>(251)</sup> and Ney's unswerving heroism.<sup>(252)</sup>  
In some of the most effective lines spoken by the Spirits the  
Spirit of the Years accurately judges the human mentality at  
this stage of the battle:

Nought remains  
But vindictiveness here amid the strong,  
And there amid the weak an impotent rage. (253)

The Spirit of the Pities questions the meaningless slaughter but only to have reiterated that the Immanent Will 'works unwittingly, /As one possessed, not judging.' (254) With considerable success Hardy turns to prose to describe the last moments of the battle which by this time is a rout. Here the sounds and smells become apparent. In the moonlight the scene is one of horror and devastated nature:

The reds disappear from the sky, and the dusk grows deeper. The action of the battle degenerates to a hunt, and recedes further and further into the distance southward. When the tramlings and shouts of the combatants have dwindled, the lower sounds are noticeable that come from the wounded: hopeless appeals, cries for water, elaborate blasphemies, and impotent execrations of Heaven and hell. In the vast and dusky shambles black slouching shapes begin to move, the plunderers of the dead and dying.

The night grows clear and beautiful, and the moon shines musingly down. But instead of the sweet smell of green herbs and dewy rye as at her last beaming upon these fields, there is now the stench of gunpowder and a muddy stew of crushed crops and gore. (255)

With the French defeat at Waterloo the old rulers of Europe come creeping back. Throughout The Dynasts the old order receives scant respect from Hardy and their return to full power is not conveyed with enthusiasm:

#### SPIRIT OF THE YEARS

So hath the Urging Immanence used to-day  
Its inadvertent might to field this fray;  
And Europe's wormy dynasties rerobe  
Themselves in their old gilt, to dazzle anew the globe!  
(256)

Napoleon, of all Hardy's characters, is the one most obviously a slave of the Will, yet he alone is conscious of this slavery. The final scene of The Dynasts shows Napoleon defeated. As he is taxed by the Spirits, perhaps here representing his conscience, or at least an inner doubt, he is seen to be aware of his helplessness:

Yet, 'tis true, I have ever known  
That such a Will I passively obeyed! (257)

Napoleon's long speech of despair and complaint shows a considerable degree of historical insight on the part of Hardy. Whilst ascribing Napoleon's career largely to a preordained fate Hardy shows himself able to recognise the fortuitous circumstances which enables such a career to be undertaken. Napoleon realises that it would have better suited his legend had he died undefeated, perhaps by his own hand at Fontainbleau or a soldier's death in Russia. His death now would lack impact however:

Is it too late?...  
Yes. Self-sought death would smoke but damply here!  
(258)

Napoleon, had, above all, been opportune, a fact he realises:

And yet - I found the crown of France in the mire  
And with the point of my prevailing sword  
I picked it up! (259)

Hardy states that the concept of a commander is not so much an innate impossibility but something which has become more and more an impracticability over the years. The hero and leader stems from a period when conflict was on a smaller scale and survives, as an ideal rather more than a reality, into modern times when, however, the leader is not so much a deciding as a contributing factor to events:

I came too late in time  
To assume the prophet or the demi-god,  
A part past playing now. (260)

Hardy realises that the awakened feelings of nationalism had briefly allied the masses of the people with its old hereditary rulers:

Yea the dull peoples and the Dynasts both,  
Those counter-castes not oft adjustable,  
Interests antagonistic, proud and poor,  
Have for the nonce been bonded by a wish  
To overthrow thee. (261)

In the After Scene that concludes The Dynasts Hardy is concerned with the problem that arises when the concept of predestination clashes with the illusion of free will. Yet as an artist, particularly as a poet, Hardy could not allow fatalism an exclusive rôle. Hardy's attitude is one of disillusion in that he allows the most imperturbable witness to the heedless nature of the Will, that is the Spirit of the Years, to have entertained hope:

You almost charm my long philosophy  
Out of my strong-built thought, and bear me back  
To when I thanksgave thus....Ay, start not, Shades:  
In the Foregone I knew what dreaming was,  
And could let raptures rule! But not so now. (262)

The fact that here is disillusioned hope rather than an incapacity for hoping is in itself an optimistic attitude. Even the Spirit of the Years could change if once it had grounds for optimism. And these grounds are surely indicated in the final lines of The Dynasts:

#### CHORUS

But - a stirring thrills the air  
Like to sounds of joyance there  
That the rages  
Of the ages  
Shall be cancelled, and deliverance offered from the  
Consciousness the Will informing, till It fashion all  
things fair!  
(263)

The significance of this optimism, with which Hardy chose to end The Dynasts, has been clearly demonstrated:

The necessitarian conditions would always exist. Gravity would continue, and the seasons would alternate irrevocably. Death would come, and for the individual it would be final. But it was conceivable that, even while occupied with necessitarian things, the imagination might still break free and, in its freedom, achieve a vision of a reality where Necessity was irrelevant. (264)

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CHAPTER VTOLSTOYWAR AND PEACE

The main function of this chapter will be to examine closely Tolstoy's presentation of historical fact in his treatment of the Napoleonic Wars. Relevant material occupies a large part of War and Peace and the area of study will be accordingly narrowed down to an analysis of Tolstoy's account of the battle of Borodino.

However/ of all the writers who make up this study Tolstoy took the most pains to evolve coherent, historical theories of his own and he chose to embody much of his ideas on history within the framework of War and Peace. It is impossible, then, to take a purely aesthetic approach to an examination of the historical element in War and Peace when its author so clearly intended such writing to illustrate his views on the theory of history, historical truth and historians.

This will necessitate considering the material contained in the Epilogue to War and Peace.

Apart from Erckmann-Chatrian's propagandist aims in Waterloo of the writers in this study only Hardy has any real affinity with Tolstoy in his overt concern with fundamental questions and problems posed by human existence. However even Hardy, in The Dynasts, is more concerned with the seeming heedlessness of the human environment to human suffering and, in his consideration of philosophical abstracts, he resorts to the creation of an unwieldy, symbolic mythology which sometimes appears more to hinder than aid the artistic creation. Tolstoy seeks to analyse the motivating forces behind historical events, the phenomena of power and conflict. A significant element in Tolstoy's historical theory is his savage attacks on the traditional historical viewpoints. There is in fact a greater preponderance of the destructive than the constructive. Hardy's declaration of the indifference of the human environment to humanity verges on an accusation of positive spite on

the part of this environment and he expresses his bitterness and pessimism in his insistence on the 'ironical' nature of the tragedies of life. This preoccupation seems to drive him to contrive his plots accordingly even, as for example in Jude the Obscure, when this seems to take events beyond the bounds of what could generally be considered feasible. In much the same way Tolstoy, driven by frustration at the meagre nature of his positive conclusions, vents his anger on the traditional historians, to which end he is prepared to falsify known historical facts and indulge in the tedium of polemic at the expense of the aesthetic element. The obtrusive, non-literary aspects are never entirely at home in either The Dynasts or War and Peace, the authors having to struggle with the problem of balance between the artistic and the philosophic. In the case of Tolstoy this has drawn considerable criticism particularly since his work as a whole is of higher artistic merit than Hardy's and is less beset with Hardy's problems of structure and method. Flaubert sums up the general attitude of favourable criticism:

"Merci de m'avoir fait lire le roman de Tolstof. C'est de premier ordre! Quel peintre! et quel psychologue! Les deux premiers sont sublimes, mais le troisième dégringole affreusement. Il se répète et il philosophe! Enfin, on voit le monsieur, l'auteur, et le Russe, tandis que jusque-là, on n'avait vu que la nature et l'humanité. Il me semble qu'il a parfois des choses à la Shakespeare. Je poussais des cris d'admiration pendant cette lecture... et elle est longue! --- Oui, c'est fort, bien fort!" (1)

Another writer, D.H. Lawrence, found certain affinities between the two writers, Hardy and Tolstoy. Lawrence saw the recognition of the myriad nature of life and the vastness of the forces and movements involved in any action as the mark of a great writer and he attributed this vision to both Hardy and Tolstoy among others:

And this is the quality Hardy shares with the great writers, Shakespeare or Sophocles or Tolstoy, this setting behind the small action of his protagonists the terrific action of unfathomed nature; setting a smaller system of morality, the one grasped and formulated by the human consciousness within the vast, uncomprehended and incomprehensible morality of nature or of life itself, surpassing human consciousness.(2)

Any comparisons drawn here between the authors who constitute this study remain brief as a general survey has been undertaken. However, having shown similarities between Tolstoy and Hardy in their approach to the problems posed by philosophical content and its relation to the structure of the work, it seems appropriate to indicate some of the purely literary similarities found between the constituent writers, in this case between Tolstoy and Stendhal. Isaiah Berlin, who, together with Georg Lukács, presents the most penetrating analysis of Tolstoy as an historical novelist, recognises the relationship between the techniques of the two writers, a relationship freely acknowledged by Tolstoy:

The best avowed of all Tolstoy's literary debts is, of course, that to Stendhal. In his celebrated interview in 1901 with M. Paul Boyer, Tolstoy coupled Stendhal with Rousseau as the two writers to whom he owed most and added that all he had learnt about war he had learnt from Stendhal's description of the battle of Waterloo in La Chartreuse de Parme, where Fabrice wanders about the battlefield understanding nothing.(3)

Stendhal was not concerned with the theory of history as was Tolstoy. The impressive accounts of Waterloo owe more to the author's close observation and analyses of his own experiences than to any carefully formulated system of ideas. Whilst Tolstoy's theories do not become obtrusive it is true that they lend authority and consistency of approach to his treatment of historical events. Leon recognises both this and the extent of Tolstoy's debts to Stendhal. These debts however remain literary and technical:

It is Tolstoy's deep penetration into the usual fallacies that masquerade as the science of history that gives to War and Peace much of its extraordinary authority. In this he is much indebted to Stendhal, and he himself often used to say that until he read the first part of the Charterhouse of Parma he never understood to what extent things happened on the battlefield which had no connection with any previously determined plan. (4)

A consideration of the sources of War and Peace and of its place in the development of the historical novel will now be undertaken.

It is generally accepted that Tolstoy was profoundly interested in history and was always concerned with 'the basic ontological questions'.<sup>(5)</sup> This interest has frequently been noted:

Tolstoy's interest in history and the problem of historical truth was passionate, almost obsessive, both before and during the writing of War and Peace.<sup>(6)</sup>

The inspiration, sources and genesis of War and Peace have been closely charted.<sup>(7)</sup> There is a marked similarity between the growing interest of Tolstoy, his reading and ambitions and Hardy's interest in the same period. Yet again it is seen that for the writers of the nineteenth century the Napoleonic Wars constituted the conflict of the century, as indeed they were, both in terms of history and ideology. Christian summarises the origins of War and Peace:

But the foundations of War and Peace were laid long before Tolstoy began to plan his great novel. They rest in that deep and lasting interest in history which he acquired as a young man. In his early twenties he read the long standard histories of his own country and major works by European historians. In particular he was fascinated by the theme of the Napoleonic wars, and he read through the detailed works on 1812 and 1813 by the official Russian historian Mikhailovsky-Danilevsky and the volumes on the same period by the French historian Thiers. His comments in his diaries reveal the unfavourable impression they made on him. 'To compile a true, accurate History of Europe in this century'; he wrote as a young man of 24, 'There is a task for a life-time.'<sup>(8)</sup>

Christian's study illuminates Tolstoy's preoccupation with form. The first appearance of material from what was to become War and Peace was accompanied by instructions from Tolstoy forbidding the use of the term 'novel' in reference to the work which was entitled 1805.<sup>(9)</sup> If it was history that interested Tolstoy it was the history of his century that interested him the most,



above all the period of the Napoleonic Wars, a period which was of such overwhelming significance for over a century. Of this relatively short period it was the year 1812, for nationalist reasons, to which Tolstoy was drawn above all. Not only did historical veracity trouble Tolstoy but he seemed to sense that his approach technically would be original if not radically different from previous literary forms:

And it is undoubtedly 1812 and its wider implications which are uppermost in his thoughts. That this is so can be seen from the short preface to be found in the same manuscript as A Day in Moscow, and beginning: 'Countless are the times I have begun and given up writing the story of 1812 which has been growing clearer and clearer in my mind and which has been crying out more and more urgently to be written down in clear concise forms.' Explaining the reasons for his numerous false starts he says:

Above all I was hampered by traditions both of form and content. I was afraid to write in a language which would not be the same as everybody else's; I was afraid that what I wrote would not fit into any category, whether novel, short story, poem or history; I was afraid that the need to describe important people of 1812 would compel me to be guided by historical documents and not the truth...(10)

This preoccupation with form, when confronted with material of such a scope, was perfectly natural and Hardy had tried to solve the problem by writing a dramatic epic. For Tolstoy the result of his interests was a vast prose work that can scarcely be termed a novel at all. Polemic runs side by side with the magnificent descriptions he himself valued so little. (11) Poorly balanced invective against historians and against historical characters towards whom Tolstoy showed a violent antipathy, particularly Napoleon, (12) contrasts with highly sensitive character studies and analyses of human behaviour. The vastness of the work, its brilliance and its dichotomies have been ably summarised:

War and Peace is undoubtedly one of the greatest novels that have ever been written but Tolstoy did not think of it as a novel at all. He described Anna Karenina (which was written later) as his first novel; what concerned him primarily in War and Peace was historical truth. Though he was in his late thirties when he wrote it, he was fulfilling an ambition

he had harboured since his early twenties. 'To write the genuine history of present-day Europe, that is an aim for the whole of one's life.' The book is made up of fact and fiction mixed as never before. Historical characters like Napoleon and Tsar Alexander rub shoulders with invented characters. The historical characters speak invented dialogue. The invented characters are put into solid historical situations. Fiction is yoked to the service of truth. (13)

Tolstoy may well have been preoccupied with historical validity but it will be seen that, to a great extent, truth is yoked to the service of fiction; at the least truth as Tolstoy envisaged it. Certainly within the development of the historical novel it is Tolstoy's ability to place fictional characters in historical settings rather than any reputation as a skilled and impartial observer of historical fact that makes him as important as he is:

One is not surprised then, to find War and Peace widely different in artistic methods from all historical novels of the school of Sir Walter Scott, Dumas or Sienkiewicz. Ivanhoe and The Talisman give pictures of far-off times and countries that add to the narrative a gaudy strangeness; costuming and historic associations lend interest to conventional and vaguely conceived characters; Tolstoy, on the other hand, draws living men and women whose lives are seen against the background of a world event which they have no power to shape or direct. (14)

Whilst this critic underestimates the rôle of Scott in the development of the historical novel his assessment of Tolstoy's achievements is accurate. It is true, however, that Tolstoy owes less to those writers thought of chiefly as historical, particularly Scott, than to the great European realists of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries and to his Russian literary heritage:

The derivation of Tolstoy's fiction from the classical school of Russian realism begun by Pushkin can hardly be doubted. However, this colossus of a genius, who took all knowledge for his province, read omnivorously in foreign literatures as well as in Russian, and one may trace in the rich unrolling tapestry of his art threads from the works of English eighteenth-century writers, especially Sterne, and,

in the nineteenth century, Thackeray and Dickens, whom he regarded as the greatest novelist of the age, and also from the French realists, particularly Stendhal. (15)

Above all, however, Tolstoy remained a highly individual writer. He was certainly a successor to the great European realists, but, as Lukács observes, this very fact means he post-dated the movement:

Although Tolstoy continued the great realistic traditions of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the traditions of Fielding and Defoe, Balzac and Stendhal, he did so at a time when realism had already fallen into decay and the literary trends which were to sweep away realism had triumphed throughout Europe. Hence Tolstoy, in his literary work, had to swim against the current in world literature, and this current was the decline of realism. (16)

Technically, therefore, Tolstoy was isolated and this isolation appears to have been evident to him in his hesitation in a choice of literary medium and in classifying War and Peace as a novel at all. Though naturally susceptible to trends and influences it is as an individual that Tolstoy holds his elevated position in the history of prose fiction:

Although Tolstoy continued and developed the traditions of the older realism, he always did so in his own original way and in accordance with the needs of the age, never as an epigone. He was always in step with his time, not only in content, in the characters and social problems he presented, but also in the artistic sense. (17)

If, then, Tolstoy was a great individualist, successor to great realist traditions but not fettered by them, always conscious of the tenor of contemporary life, perceptive and sensitive, to what degree was War and Peace truly an historical novel? For some critics this question does not arise:

The work has such an immediacy for us that we tend to forget what Tolstoy never forgot, that he was writing a historical novel. (18)

Yet the very title of novel has been already called into question, and certainly Tolstoy himself could not consider War and Peace a novel, not in the accepted Western sense:

What is War and Peace? It is not a novel, still less a poem, still less an historical chronicle. War and Peace is what the author wanted and was able to express in that form in which it was expressed. (19)

Although closely concerned with the Napoleonic Wars and although bearing testimony to Tolstoy's extreme interest in the philosophy of history how much is War and Peace an accurate historical document? The non-fictional characters cannot, on the whole, be accepted as objective portraits; a glance at Napoleon or Kutuzov assures us of that. It will be seen that Tolstoy had a cavalier attitude towards facts established beyond all doubt when they came in the way of his theories and prejudices. The work cannot therefore be called a novel and there are limits as to its historical validity. What, then, is Tolstoy's creation, undeniably great as it is? What it certainly is is the product of a major creative talent who had a profound knowledge of a certain section of society. Tolstoy, preoccupied with the problems of free-will and power, presented his characters against a background which both intrigued and baffled him. The historical aspect succeeds more because of Tolstoy's descriptive powers and the lack of any real difference between the conditions experienced at say, Borodino, and those experienced by Tolstoy at Sevastopol and Chernaya. In War and Peace there are living fictional characters and a credible background. That this background is historically accurate is far less likely and the likelihood that the non-fictional characters are true to life is very remote indeed. It seems that it is B.M. Eykhenbaum who most clearly understands this situation:

Straight historical things like the novel he had conceived from the epoch of Peter the Great Tolstoy was unable to write, because 'recollection' had nothing to do with it. War and Peace came to realization because its military background was the Crimean campaign, its family background life at Yasnaya Polyana. (20)

The fact remains that there is a considerable 'historical' content in War and Peace and, in a work of art, it is surely not so much the so-called truth of those events that purport to be based on historical fact that is of importance but the effectiveness of the historical accounts as convincing background to the author's characters and as a convincing vehicle for whatever he may wish to express. A major task therefore, will be an examination of Tolstoy's historical theory in order to determine its influence on his historical accounts. This will be prefaced by a general critical assessment of his theories with particular reference to his falsification of established historical facts. On this basis the second part of this chapter can be built; the examination of the account of the battle of Borodino, bearing in mind both these historical theories and the aesthetic aspects of Tolstoy's writing.

The Epilogue to Tolstoy's War and Peace falls into two parts. The first, as well as terminating the narrative, contains a fair number of general, historical observations. These observations are more highly particularised in the second part which contains a critique of the historians and historical theories of both past and present and an attempt to formulate various ideas of Tolstoy's own. It has been noted that the substance of Tolstoy's criticism far outweighs that of his constructive comments, the paucity of the latter adding to the savagery of the former.

An initial consideration will be of the elements of falsification in War and Peace. The relative importance of adhering to objective historical truth, as far as it can be determined, has already been touched upon, with the general conclusion that an artistic creation has only to have the appearance of reality or be of sufficient intrinsic merit to persuade a reader to momentarily put aside the normal limits to credibility. However, as the study of Waterloo maintains, the introduction of any element of propaganda or polemic entails far more stringent requirements on the part of the reader as to any semblance of reality in the created work. Any

momentary lapse in the reader's belief, through a knowledge of the true nature of certain events or the discovery of inconsistencies within the body of the work, shakes his faith in the entire narrative and, above all, in any theories expressed therein since they consequently appear to require falsely presented factual material for their illustration or proof. Tolstoy was aware of this:

If truth does not matter to the literary reader of a great masterpiece of history such as Gibbon's, Tolstoy fully realized that a novel would fail if it did not seem to be historically true, for the reader must believe in the whole of society described in it. (21)

Yet Tolstoy, despite a real craving for truth, was driven by his contempt for historians with their glaring inaccuracies and lack of real observation, their generalisations and their trivialities, by his slavophilia and his corresponding hysterical dislike of Napoleon, to falsifying fully authenticated historical and biographical material:

Contemporary historians and military specialists at least one of whom had himself fought in 1812, indignantly complained of inaccuracies of fact; and since then damning evidence has been adduced of falsification of historical detail by the author of War and Peace, done apparently with deliberate intent, in full knowledge of the available original sources and in the known absence of any counter-evidence - falsification perpetrated, it seems, in the interests not so much of an 'artistic' as an ideological approach. (22)

The result of these falsifications, putting aside those with any claim to being the requirements of artistic creation, is immediate and obvious:

Lapses in factual information and substantial distortions in characterizations of great figures of the past, which in some cases can possibly be excused as artistic licence, reflect badly on Tolstoy's philosophy of history in War and Peace. (23)

It is this last critic's observation of the character of Kutuzov which gives the clue to Tolstoy's falsifications and

substantiates our explanation of this phenomenon. Kutuzov, as Tolstoy's embodiment of the Russian spirit, has to follow very definite lines as a character. This Russian spirit, as an intrinsic element in Tolstoy's theory that historical action represents the collective manifestation of a vast number of individual events and desires, requires Kutuzov to act as a key character in Tolstoy's demonstration of his philosophy of history. Kutuzov, then, is moulded both by the requirements of Tolstoy's historical ideas and by his slavophilia:

In his simplicity, intuitive wisdom, lack of hypocrisy and affectation, and in his conviction of the impossibility of controlling events, Kutuzov takes his place with the innumerable simple and patriotic members of the gentry and peasantry as a representative of the unconscious spirit of the nation which Tolstoy identifies as the true historical force at a time of national crisis. (24)

Tolstoy's sleepy, peasant-like figure, the pliant representative of the Russian peoples, contrasts strongly with descriptions to be found of Kutuzov in a detailed historical study of that period of Russian History:

Il gardait pourtant intacts toute la vivacité de son esprit, sa mémoire prodigeuse et jusqu'à ses goûts de sybarite, friand de bon/ chère et de jolies femmes. Courageux guerrier, il avait jadis perdu un oeil dans les batailles contre les Turcs, mais l'expression de son visage n'en restait pas moins attrayante et intelligente. A de riches dons de la nature, à une pénétration peu commune, il joignait le fruit de ses observations recueillies pendant une carrière longue et accidentée. Initié à tous les raffinements de la vie occidentale, adepte fervent de la Franc-Maçonnerie, parlant le français et l'allemand avec aisance, il restait russe jusqu'à la moelle des os et amalgamait en sa personne, d'une façon étonnante, les traditions de la vieille Russie et l'apport occidental. (25)

From the outset, then, it can be seen that Tolstoy's preoccupation with historical truth will be coloured by his own prejudices and the irresistible desire to show the soundness of his own conclusions, even in the face of historical contradiction. That this should be so is not so much an indication of blind stubbornness on the part of Tolstoy;

Whatever else he cannot be accused of either a lack of insight or intelligence. More it expresses the inevitable obsession with a theory which becomes all the more obsessive because of its contradictory nature. Tolstoy's attempts to prove the impossibility of a single free agent in the events of history are constantly driven by the knowledge of the basic human illusion of free will:

In War and Peace Tolstoy treats facts cavalierly when it suits him; because he is above all obsessed by his thesis - the contrast between the universal and all-important but delusive experience of free will, the feeling of responsibility, the values of private life generally, on the one hand; and on the other the reality of inexorable historical determinism, not, indeed, experienced directly, but known to be true on irrefutable theoretical grounds. (26)

Tolstoy's achievements in the Epilogue to War and Peace have been closely examined. (27) The starting point of Tolstoy's philosophy of history was his assessment of the possibility of drawing up a series of laws which would both rationalise the past and chart the future course of events. In this Berlin sees an affinity with Marx (28) except that Tolstoy could not accept the possibility of ever arriving at such a condition of enlightenment. For Tolstoy a consciousness of the future negated the possibility of human existence in the form in which it is now. That an arch-materialist such as Marx, who employed the skills of social, economic and political sciences to evolve guidelines for the future development of mankind, should be so contrasted with Tolstoy is not surprising. Yet a less obvious but more elucidating comparison is to be found between Tolstoy and Virginia Woolf, and it is this comparison which highlights so clearly the nature of Tolstoy's attention to the minutae of events, his recognition of the innumerable facets present in the smallest action and the subsequent impossibility of evolving any real, coherent theories on human conduct and history:



Utterly unlike her as he is in every other respect, Tolstoy is, perhaps, the first to propound the celebrated accusation which Virginia Woolf half a century later levelled against the public prophets of her own generation - Shaw and Wells and Arnold Bennett - blind materialists who did not begin to understand what it is that life truly consists of, who mistook its outer accidents, the unimportant aspects which lie outside the individual soul - the so-called social, economic, political realities - for that which alone is genuine, the individual experience, the specific relation of individuals to one another, the colours, smells, tastes, and sounds, and movements, the jealousies, loves, hatreds, passions, the rare flashes of insight, the transforming moments, the ordinary day-to-day succession of private data which constitute all there is - which are reality. (29)

It is these latter 'internal' aspects of human existence that Tolstoy so successfully describes. Yet he seems unwilling to follow any compromise when his search for patterns in human behaviour in the mass, as it is demonstrated in historical events, ends with a rejection of all possibility of finding any such patterns. It is possible to postulate a degree of comprehensibility in historical actions if they are considered to be the mass manifestations of fear and greed, for example, though the variables prevent any 'predictions'. This still leaves individual freedom of choice in so-called internal matters and a fair illusion of freedom in external ones, and indeed an individual may have an element of choice in his conduct though this is inevitably governed by basic human drives and the inexorable nature of these drives in their mass manifestation.

Tolstoy's first task in the Epilogue is an utter condemnation of historians both from the past and from the present:

After demolishing the jurists and moralists and political philosophers - among them his beloved Rousseau - Tolstoy applies himself to demolishing the liberal theory of history according to which everything may turn upon what may seem an insignificant accident. (30)

Equally, Tolstoy rejects any serious attempts to analyse human behaviour scientifically, because of its complexity. (31)  
Again, however, he does not admit to the possibility that

the causes are simple and only the manifestations are complex. Because of this Tolstoy is utterly incapable of allowing any individual 'power' over events or over the lives of others. He cannot endow men with the ability, conscious or unconscious, to exploit basic human drives, to turn given situations to their own advantage, to manipulate rather than direct events. Tolstoy must inevitably reject the concept of 'great men':

Tolstoy's central thesis - is some respects not unlike the theory of the inevitable 'self-deception' of the bourgeoisie held by his contemporary Karl Marx, save that what Marx reserves for a class Tolstoy sees in almost all mankind - is that there is a natural law whereby the lives of human beings no less than those of nature are determined; but that men, unable to face this inexorable process, seek to represent it as a succession of free choices, to fix responsibility for what occurs upon persons endowed by them with heroic virtues or heroic vices, and called by them 'great men'. (32)

Tolstoy's conclusions on the problem of free will are not decisive. He seems to lean towards a form of rustic obscurantism, a spiritual counterpart to a material manifestation of these tendencies found in his ignorant, emotionally charged condemnation of scientific farming methods. (33) It is this attitude which created Kutuzov, the epitome of Tolstoy's theories, for Tolstoy's positive doctrine on free will amounted to this:

...that it is better to realise that we understand it - much as spontaneous, normal, simple people, uncorrupted by theories, not blinded by the dust raised by the scientific authorities, do, in fact understand life - than to seek to subvert such common-sense beliefs, which at least have the merit of having been tested by long experience, in favour of pseudo-sciences, which, being founded on absurdly inadequate data, are only a snare and a delusion. That is his case against all forms of optimistic rationalism, the natural sciences, liberal theories of progress, German military expertise, French sociology, confident social engineering of all kinds. And this is his reason for inventing a Kutuzov who followed his simple, Russian untutored instinct, and despised or ignored the German, French and Italian experts; and for raising him to the status of a national hero which he has, partly as a result of Tolstoy's portrait, retained ever since. (34)

Having rejected the possibility of formulating a scientific approach to history, the possibility of the existence of 'great men' and having exposed free will as an illusion Tolstoy provides inadequate substitutes for those traditional answers to eternal human problems that he so testily sweeps aside:

The thin 'positive' doctrine of historical change in War and Peace is all that remains of this despairing search, and it is the immense superiority of Tolstoy's offensive over his defensive weapons that has always made his philosophy of history - the theory of the minute particles, requiring integration - seem so threadbare and artificial to the average, reasonably critical, moderately sensitive reader of the novel. (35)

One major aspect that this general, critical survey of Tolstoy's theories has exposed is the problem of the leader in War and Peace. Practically speaking major figures are reduced in importance until they can be said to represent, presumably fortuitously, the will of the people as a whole, or at least the sum of preceding events:

In history, he maintains, the so-called great men are merely labels, giving names to events, and like labels, they have only the smallest connection with the events themselves. (36)

The result is that the protagonists who are treated most sympathetically are those who abandon all 'pretence' to directing events or who are blindly chivalrous in the face of the unknown, necessitating the invention of Kutuzov and Tushin. Scorn is poured on those who seek to control events, particularly Napoleon. Tolstoy does not even accept that a character can fail to control, or rather manipulate, events, the possibility of control does not arise in the first place. This gives rise to an extreme situation:

Not only valorous officers, he argues, but clever generals are of no account in the progress of a campaign. Napoleon, greatest of all military geniuses by common repute, was nothing but a puffed-up nonentity. (37)

This aspect will be further considered during an examination of the text for, as Noyes observes, Tolstoy's position is weak indeed:

On the one hand he makes Napoleon of no more significance than a private soldier in his army; on the other he makes him a blind instrument in the hands of the forces controlling human destiny, thereby recognising that at least he was a more important instrument than any other man of his time. (38)

One major result of this abnegation of the power of the individual is the tendency on the part of critics to view War and Peace as a chronicle of the Russian peoples:

Napoleon was defeated by a whole nation of which Kutuzov was the accidental representative. (39)

For some this is in no way incidental but is the essence of the work into which are injected, as it were, the Napoleonic Wars and Tolstoy's theory of history:

However, the integration of the Napoleonic campaign into the design of the novel, whose subject is the history of the people, is accompanied by lengthy sections of theorizing about war, its leaders, and the historical implications of their actions. (40)

This is not a chance remark as Simmons reiterates this more strongly at a later stage:

Once the main theme of the novel is grasped, a history of the people and the manner in which all elements involved in it are integrated by Tolstoy's theory of history, the basic structure becomes apparent and stands as a refutation of the notion that the work is formless. (41)

This error arises from the need to find a central issue. Having been forced away from the concept of a hero by Tolstoy's own philosophy the critics seize at a character such as Kutuzov, so evidently approved of, which as Tolstoy's brain-child is not surprising, find him to be representative of the Russian 'spirit' and assume that the concept of Russian and the Russian

peoples is a central issue. Firstly Tolstoy denies the existence of any main theme:

No single idea runs through it, no contention is made, no single event is described; still less can it be called a novel with a plot, with a constantly deepening interest, and with a happy or unhappy denouement destroying the interest of the narrative. (42)

Secondly were a theme unconsciously to emerge it would never be that of the Russian peoples. This aspect of the book is cited again and again despite Tolstoy's evident paternalist and not condescending attitude to the peasantry as a whole. Critics such as Lukács, ostensibly communist, find great significance in Tolstoy's treatment of the peasants.<sup>(43)</sup> If Tolstoy's own attitude towards all but the aristocracy is not clear from the work itself then his personal writings clarify the issue:

The lives of officials, merchants, theological students and peasants do not interest me and are only comprehensible to me; the lives of the aristocrats of that time, thanks to the documents of that time and other reasons, are comprehensible, interesting and dear to me. (44)

It seems that Tolstoy is driven by slavophilia and a bottom-heavy theory of history to place emphasis on the rôle of the Russian peoples. However this must not be wrongly construed. Tolstoy was writing about his own people in an historical context. Preoccupied with the creation of a valid and realistic background he was drawn to theorise and his theories do not match the vigour of his descriptions. This formless, themeless body of writing finds its strength in its creative brilliance not its social commentary nor historical theories. The scope is such that most aspects and levels of existence are touched upon but Tolstoy's main interests and sympathies lie with the aristocratic circles with which he was familiar.

The first part of the Epilogue does not contain an attempt at constructing a coherent philosophy of history as does the

second but it is nevertheless of great interest. Initially Tolstoy clearly establishes some basic premises which, however, in this loose discussion of history, he at times appears to ignore or bend to suit his purpose. His confusion, partiality and frustration are far more in evidence here than in the more measured statements of the second part.

In the opening pages of the Epilogue Tolstoy makes three important assertions. Firstly he admits to the existence of some undefined forces that affect mankind. He admits to some possible pattern in the action of these forces but denies that mankind has any knowledge either of these forces or of the pattern they follow.<sup>(45)</sup> Secondly he makes it quite clear that not only do world-historical figures have no intrinsic power but that they reflect the 'movement of the masses'.<sup>(46)</sup> Thirdly Tolstoy extends this last point by attacking historians for their criticism of such figures since to Tolstoy they are powerless figureheads:

In dealing with the part played by these historical personages the historians are severe in their criticism, supposing them to be the cause of what they describe as reaction.<sup>(47)</sup>

Were Tolstoy able to adhere to these basic theories there could be little quarrel with any subsequent assertions and illustrations, these ideas being scarcely more than an extension of the homily that man is a prey to circumstances. Yet when Tolstoy turns to a discussion of Alexander, particularly with reference to the period following the final fall of Napoleon, any attempt at a logical analysis within his own system of ideas is abandoned in favour of a muddled and peevish defence of the Tsar. Tolstoy will go as far as a childish rejection of terms, refusing to understand normally accepted generalities such as 'progress' and 'reaction'.<sup>(48)</sup> Considering that Tolstoy has just reduced world-historical figures to ciphers or labels any criticism from historians could presumably be ignored or at the most countered by the simple argument that the individual they criticise is in no way responsible

for his actions. Yet Tolstoy's defence of Alexander is almost incoherent. He firstly complains that of all the sovereigns criticised for 'reaction', a term he has already tried to devalue, Alexander appears to be singled out, and as if this is of any consequence, he claims that this same Alexander had been praised for liberality at the beginning (49) of his reign by those historians who then condemn his reaction. Firstly there is no reason why any reign cannot embody good and bad attributes and recognising the one does not preclude recognition of the other. Secondly were Alexander indeed a powerless representative of his subjects or of circumstances all criticism, good or bad, is irrelevant. Tolstoy's arguments become even more specious. Since the actions Alexander is praised for have their source in the same man, the same character, as those for which he is blamed Tolstoy seems to feel that in some way all blame is nullified. Equally all praise could be so argued away:

Do not the very actions for which the historians applaud Alexander I - the attempts at liberalism at the beginning of his reign, his struggle with Napoleon, the firmness he displayed in 1812 and the campaign of 1813 - proceed from those very sources - the circumstances of birth, breeding and life that made his personality what it was - from which also flowed the actions for which they censure him, like the Holy Alliance, the restoration of Poland and the reaction of the 1820's? (50)

Tolstoy comes perilously near to reducing his arguments to a bald statement that Alexander was a gentleman and no more need be said. Were this all, relatively little harm would have been done yet Tolstoy's lyricism in his defence of the Tsar betrays him time and again. Firstly his figurehead is 'standing on the highest possible pinnacle of human power'. (51) Secondly he is an individual, though this should make little difference, with his own particular characteristics, 'impulses towards goodness, beauty and truth' (52) as it happens. Above all, however, it is the assertion that if an historian can criticise Alexander posterity can equally criticise the historian that astonishes. This statement, typically,

embodies a sympathetic presentation of Alexander and a slighting presentation of the historian. (53) This falls down on two scores. Firstly Tolstoy presumes that the historian is preoccupied with judging motives whereas in criticising the period of reaction in Alexander's reign he is condemning a very real situation and the supposed high-mindedness of the Tsar is of little relevance. This is besides the fact that Alexander is supposed to be powerless for good or bad. Secondly Tolstoy seems to deny the possibility of establishing basic concepts of good and bad in man's behaviour towards man. His own perception and sensitivity as a novelist make this difficult to believe.

C The reader is forced to draw three main conclusions from the defence of Alexander, all of which are untenable. Firstly, if a man he admires does something that can be termed 'wrong' it is because of the constraints of historical necessity and anyway the individual is powerless. If the man fails to do something actively beneficial or morally correct it is because he is not free to do so, indeed he may have sincerely wished to carry out such an action. Furthermore an observer is deemed incapable of judging what was right or wrong at any particular juncture. This renders all criticism of historical figures irrelevant and equally dispenses with the need for defence. And when Tolstoy's so-called arguments break down he pleads ignorance:

...but I am still bound to admit that, besides these ends and aims, the action of every historic character has other more general purposes beyond my grasp. (54)

Yet again this assertion directly contradicts his initial statement that the individual is powerless. The plea of ignorance is repeated in this theoretically unnecessary defence of Alexander and his sophistry is clearly in evidence:

The activity of Alexander or of Napoleon cannot be termed beneficial or harmful, since we cannot say for what it was beneficial or harmful. (55)



Again it must be stated that historical figures should not be able to commit actions of significance anyway. They are, for Tolstoy, the reflection of the will of the people, they are constrained by circumstances, historical necessity or even by 'the mysterious forces that move humanity'.<sup>(56)</sup> Tolstoy still feels free, however, not only to defend Alexander, but to lose 'every semblance of self-control when Napoleon enters the scene'.<sup>(57)</sup>

Tolstoy terminates the defence of Alexander with a brief discussion of what Alexander might have done, although he is careful not to actually define what the real nature of these actions could have been. This section is characterised by heavy and totally misplaced sarcasm. Tolstoy seems to find something unpleasant or even amusing in the concepts of 'nationalism, freedom, equality and progress'.<sup>(58)</sup> Although Tolstoy admits this exercise is purely academic his own contention, that a world-historical figure is only capable of giving instructions that will be carried out, negates not only the possibility but the need for such an exercise. This reduces the passage to a vehicle for cheap sarcasm, certainly it is impossible to accept it as balanced reasoning:

Let us suppose that Alexander could have done everything differently. Let us assume that he might - in accordance with the prescriptions of those who accuse him and who profess to know the ultimate goal of the movement of humanity - have arranged matters in harmony with the programme of nationalism, freedom, equality and progress (for there would seem to be nothing newer) with which his present-day critics would have provided him. Let us assume that this programme could have been possible and had actually been formulated at the time: and that Alexander could have acted in accordance with it. What then would become of the activity of all those who opposed the tendency of the government of the day - of the activity which in the opinion of the historians was good and beneficial? Their activity would not have existed: there would have been no life, nothing. <sup>(59)</sup>

Tolstoy seems to deny the possibility of formulating some generally acceptable standards which could be said to reflect a concern for the public good. He seems to exclude the

possibility of perpetrating actions which are relatively good or bad; the possibility that 'within their lights' men can act well. But above all it is the last lines of this passage that seem the most unreasonable, not least because Tolstoy had himself proposed the hypothesis and this represents an escape from its true conclusions. Even more important, however, are the intrinsic contradictions they embody. For Tolstoy an action can never be reversed/otherwise, apparently, those who opposed the original action could no longer exist. Thus, for example, the corn laws could not have been repealed since then those who wished to repeal them could no longer exist. He ignores the fact that the course of events does change and that people do not generally cease to exist because they supported what turns out to be lost causes or because they achieve success in their actions. He ignores the constantly changing, diversifying nature of history and the possibility that a man can strive to achieve better things and is none the less worthy of credit because he fails. (It) almost seems to disclaim the existence of history. Tolstoy concludes:

Once say that human life can be controlled by reason, and all possibility of life is annihilated. (60)

Yet surely the observation Tolstoy puts to such striking use in the creative act is at fault. He contends that actions are the result of myriad forces which themselves can never be fully charted and understood. He denies power to individuals. He leaves no room for a simple definition of human drives. And if each tiny factor is important in conflict then he is being dishonest if he entirely denies the significance of commands and leaders, for they must at least rank alongside these myriad other forces. Tolstoy feels explanations cannot exist:

The more we strive to account for such events in history rationally, the more irrational and incomprehensible do they become to us. (61)

For Tolstoy this is certainly true and must be the cause of his frustration. However it is possible that man's basic drives are very simple and, in relation to his requirements for survival, rational. It is the outward manifestation of these drives, particularly in the mass, that appear far from simple and apparently far from rational.

After his lengthy discussion of Alexander's position during the post-Napoleonic period of 'reaction' Tolstoy reasserts the impossibility of recognising any pattern in human behaviour. Paradoxically he considers that the acceptance of this impossibility will endow the observer with greater understanding:

It is only by renouncing our claim to discern a purpose immediately intelligible to us, and admitting the ultimate purpose to be beyond our ken, that we shall see a logical connexion in the lives of historical personages, and perceive the why and wherefore of what they do which so transcends the powers of ordinary humanity. (62)

If the observer is only able, ultimately, to realise he knows nothing no one explanation of history can be totally denied, as, for example, the importance of world-historical characters, since this may be the unknown quantity. This attitude also disposes of all possibility of establishing any historical laws and therefore entirely preempts any attempts on Tolstoy's part to declare the rectitude and propriety of what has actually happened:

If we give up all claim to a knowledge of the ultimate purpose we shall realize that, just as it is impossible to imagine for any given plant other more appropriate blossom or seed than those it produces, so it is impossible to imagine any two persons, with all their antecedents, more completely adapted, down to the smallest detail, to the mission which Napoleon and Alexander were called upon to fulfill. (63)

This is ridiculously retrospective and amounts to little more than the proposition that Alexander, or Napoleon, was more qualified to be Alexander, or Napoleon than anyone else.

Tolstoy is at his most uneasy when discussing the greatest of the historical figures since his own reduction of them to ciphers becomes an unwieldy concept in the course of argument. All too easily he mentions their power, their commands, their actions, their responsibilities, despite the fact that these should not be of importance except as the outward manifestations of complex forces.

In his effort to show the great men of any period as representatives of inevitable actions Tolstoy attempts to dismiss the concepts of 'chance' and 'genius' which he feels are indispensable to the theory of the importance of great men. (64) As usual Tolstoy does not analyse terms he wishes to deny, he denigrates them. Were these terms to be equated with less intangible concepts such as 'opportunity' and 'ability' Tolstoy would have greater difficulty in attacking them. Tolstoy's striking, extended image of the sheep is wholly untenable. (65) He states:

But the sheep need only rid themselves of the idea that all that is done to them is done solely for the furtherance of their sheepish ends; they have only to concede that what happens to them may also have purposes beyond their ken, and they will immediately perceive a unity and coherence in what happens with their brother that is being fattened. Although it may not be given to them to know to what end he was being fattened, they will at least know that all that happened to him did not occur accidentally, and it will no longer be necessary to resort to conceptions of chance and genius. (66)

Tolstoy's leaps in logic are too eccentric to follow. Acceptance of a lack of understanding does not entail a realisation of a higher purpose let alone any pattern in this purpose.

Tolstoy then turns his attention to the broad lines of European history at the beginning of the nineteenth century. This largely constitutes further scope for his attacks on Napoleon. Also his historical analysis generally works backwards, maintaining that for certain events to have taken place the outward manifestation of what happened was intrinsically necessary. The effects become the cause and the cause is lost in the ensuing muddle:

For the peoples of the west to be able to achieve their militant advance as far as Moscow they had to (1) form themselves into a military group of sufficient magnitude to sustain a collision with the military group of the east; (2) renounce all established traditions and customs; and (3) have at their head, during their military movement, a man able to justify to himself and to them the guile, robbery and murder which must be the concomitants of their progress. (67)

Apparently Tolstoy feels that the focus of the European revolutionary and nationalist movements at this period was some grand design on Russia; Tolstoy cannot understand the concept of revolution. He was an aristocrat, admittedly with paternalist inclinations, and an inhabitant of a country the bulk of whose populace had, and possibly still has, a slave mentality. This must be closely related to his idea that a great man's actions reflect the peoples' will. Russians have cheerfully allowed the extravagancies of Ivan, Boris Gudunov, Peter, Catherine and Stalin. There is a masochism in Russians which permits the idea that the leader reflects the peoples' will, so acquiescent are they. Equally the people could be submitting to the whim of the ruler. So much of Tolstoy's survey is hopelessly retrospective. (68) It is no more possible to say that history could have moved in such and such a way than to give the precise reasons for the direction events did take. Above all the tone of these pages betrays Tolstoy. He cannot be credited with any objectivity or even the desire for objectivity. His attacks are tiresome. He does not appear to wish to establish truth. He tries to forward his thesis at every opportunity and maintains a personal attack on Napoleon. So keen does Tolstoy appear to get his attack onto paper that he takes little care to erradicate any inconsistencies:

This idea of glory and greatness which consists not merely in the assurance the nothing one does is to be considered wrong but in glorying one's every crime and ascribing to it an incomprehensible, supernatural significance---... (69)

This aspect of 'crimes' is repeated in phrases such as 'Completely intoxicated by the success of his crimes'. (70) This is

totally irreconcilable with assertions such as 'we shall be unable to regard them as being anything but men like other men'. (71)

Having completed the uneven, semi-mocking tirade which is supposed to make the reader reject all notions of 'chance' and 'genius' (ideas which the intelligent reader views with circumspection anyway) the expected positive explanations fail to materialise:

Man cannot achieve more than a certain insight into the correlation between the life of the bee and other manifestations of life. And the same is true with regard to the final purpose of historical characters and nations. (72)

This seems an insufficient conclusion. What is far worse is the sycophantic leer cast in the direction of Alexander which terminates the preceding diatribe. (73) The whole of Tolstoy's historical analysis amounts to this, that France at that epoch needed a blackguard, Napoleon fortunately being available. Russia required a saint and equally fortunately had Alexander:

He must have a sense of justice and a sympathy with European affairs, but a detached sympathy not obscured by petty interests; a moral superiority over his peers - the other sovereigns of the day; a gentle and attractive personality; and a personal grievance against Napoleon. And all this is found in Alexander I; all this has been prepared by countless so-called chance circumstances in his life: his upbringing and early liberalism, the advisers who surrounded him; by Austerlitz and Tilsit and Erfurt. (74)

Having brushed 'chance' aside there is little left save the possibility that Alexander's miraculous aptitude for his rôle came about through his being God's appointed. Alexander then leads Europe to an undefined goal and becomes Europe's most powerful ruler which represents an amazing contortion on the part of Tolstoy's philosophy of history. The candidate for beatification turns aside from the power he theoretically should not have had and, though always working for his people's good, happily puts the non-existent power into the hands of people he knows will misuse it:

Alexander I, the peacemaker of Europe, the man who from his youth up had striven only for the welfare of his peoples, the first champion of liberal reforms in his country, now when it seems that he possesses the utmost power and therefore the possibility of achieving the welfare of his peoples (while Napoleon in exile is drawing up childish and mendacious plans of how he would have made mankind happy had he retained power) - Alexander I, having fulfilled his mission and feeling the hand of God upon him, suddenly recognises the nothingness of the supposed power that is his, turns away from it and hands it over to contemptible men whom he despises, saying only: "Not unto us, not unto us, but unto Thy Name!" I too am a man like the rest of you. Let me live like a man, and think of my soul and of God.' (75)

Possibly this is Tolstoy's finest passage of irony. If not it falls very short of constituting an acceptable, historical analysis.

Part two of the Epilogue contains a far more serious and balanced attempt to establish certain criteria for the better understanding of historical events. Tolstoy's presentation of his case against the generally accepted views of historians is not lacking in appeal. His own positive explanation of phenomena such as power and commands is far less convincing and Tolstoy founders in much the same way as when embroiled in a defence or attack of world-historical figures.

The second part of the Epilogue opens with a brief survey of past historical study. Tolstoy mentions two interrelated explanations of historical actions, the investing of power in individual leaders and the presupposition of the existence of a divinity which subjected nations to the wills of these leaders. (76) For Tolstoy modern historians have achieved little better, their proposition that people are led by particular individuals and that there is an overall direction in which mankind as a whole is moving being no more than a rephrasing of the older concepts. (77)

It is above all at a time of considerable upheaval that man becomes desirous of understanding the forces behind events and requires explanations for intangibles such as power and conflict. Accordingly Tolstoy proceeds to delineate the sequence of events which prompts his curiosity:

In 1789 fermentation starts in Paris: it develops and spreads, and finds expression in a movement of peoples from west to east. Several times this movement is directed towards the east and comes into collision with a counter-movement from the east westwards. In the year 1812 it reaches the extreme limit - Moscow - and then, with remarkable symmetry, the counter-movement follows from east to west, attracting to it, as the original movement had done, the peoples of middle Europe. The counter-movement reaches the departure-point in the west of the first movement - Paris - and subsides.

During this period of twenty years an immense number of fields are left untilled; houses are burned; trade changes its orientation; millions of people grow poor, grow rich, move from place to place; and millions of Christian men professing the law of love for their neighbour murder one another. (78)

This analysis of the Napoleonic period as Tolstoy views it provokes in him the following questions:

What does all this mean? Why did it happen? What induced these people to burn houses and kill their fellow-creatures? What were the causes of these events? What force compelled men to act in this fashion? (79)

To illustrate traditional, and to Tolstoy unacceptable, answers to these questions Tolstoy interposes a mock-history of France. (80) This constitutes an accurate critique of textbook attitudes but Tolstoy is not concerned only with irony but is seriously attempting to expose the ineptitude of all the traditional schools of history and their totally insufficient explanation of events. (81) Tolstoy above all requires an explanation of the phenomenon of power and he cannot accept that any one man, for better or for worse, has a dominant rôle in any scene from history. (82)

Having posed this basic question Tolstoy examines more closely the various differing approaches of historians to the problem. Firstly he states that historians whom he terms 'biographical' invest ultimate power in individuals so that an action is the result of a command on the part of a great man. Tolstoy sees the main drawback to this approach in the contradictions that arise when more than one historian examines any given event. (83)



The second category of historians, the 'universal' historians, reject, to their credit, the concepts of heroes and leaders. For them actions derive from innumerable minor forces which together inspire certain events. Tolstoy objects that this view is not consistently held. On the one hand they postulate that a leading figure is a prey to circumstances and on the other that he himself has the ability or power to direct events.<sup>(84)</sup> That Tolstoy should pinpoint this aspect is in some ways strange since it is an inconsistency of which he himself is guilty. This would not come about if Tolstoy could accept the logical conclusion of the attribution of events to myriad causes, that is, that there is no reason why a world-historical figure should be any less important single factor than another and certainly should not be dismissed out of hand. Tolstoy also seems to be caught up in a mesh of pseudo-scientific reasoning when he asserts that for this school of historical thought to be valid the 'sum of the components must equal the resultant'.<sup>(85)</sup> It is impossible to measure the extent, the gravity or the importance, or whatever quality one chooses, of an event, still less determine whether the causes one has discovered, supposing the search to have been exhaustive, are 'equal' to the import of the event. Too many intangibles, too many unknown quantities are involved here, to permit such an approach. Tolstoy claims that in order to make up 'deficits' in the sum of causes 'universal' historians are forced to claim the existence of another unknown factor. This Tolstoy himself does and the reader would be prepared to let this pass as a manifestation in the writer of our common, human ignorance, if he were not so ready to condemn it in others. Tolstoy also accuses these historians of both claiming power to be the cause of events and, at will, that events produce power. It does not go without saying that this is a contradiction and, again, Tolstoy himself is not free from the problem.

Finally Tolstoy recognises a third category of historians who represent an extension of the 'universal' historians. These are the historians of 'culture' who accept as factors in events

intellectual influences. (86) Two basic objections can be raised against Tolstoy's refutation of this theory. Firstly any adherence to the idea that events are essentially composite precludes the rejection of almost any single factor. Tolstoy himself ascribes to the myriad nature of events and should be the last to follow this line of attack. Secondly, although Tolstoy denies the feasibility of events having intellectual causes, he in no way disproves this, he merely reiterates that he cannot agree. (87) It would need little or no actual proof to induce a reader to reject the idea that events have their roots purely in intellectual activity but it would need very firm evidence to show that such activity had no rôle whatsoever to play in events. What small proof Tolstoy does offer is to point to the impossibility of demonstrating any relationship between the ideals of the revolution and the subsequent terror and the conflict of the Napoleonic Wars. This depends on the crude viewpoint that the intellectual activity was the direct cause of this one physical aspect. If, however, it is accepted as a component, in that intellectual activity was one of the many causes of the revolution and that one of many ensuing aspects of the revolution was the terror, the temptation to draw a direct line between any one cause on the one hand and any one resultant factor on the other is obviated.

Tolstoy brings together these three schools of thought in a highly effective image, (88) which, like most analogies in arguments, appears to prove the speaker's point since this is its design, yet in fact, having no bearing on the case in question, it is a totally irrelevant and inconclusive piece of artistic sleight of hand. Tolstoy concludes:

The only conception capable of explaining the movement of peoples is that of some force commensurate with the whole movement of the peoples.

Yet to supply this conception various historians assume forces of entirely different kinds, all of which are incommensurate with the movement observed. Some see it as a force directly inherent in heroes, as the peasant sees the devil in the steam-engine; others, as a force resulting from several other forces, like the movement of the wheels; others again, as an intellectual influence, like the smoke that is blown away. (89)

If historians do not consider the importance of every individual concerned in an event Tolstoy sees them obliged to rely on an intangible such as 'power' to act as a driving force. (90) It is the total reliance of traditional historians on this concept which negates their validity:

One has only to forget to ask how the will of heroes produces events, and the histories of Thiers and his fellows will be interesting, instructive and not without their touch of poetry. But in exactly the same way as doubts of the real value of bank-notes arise either because, being easy to manufacture, too many of them get made, or because people try to exchange them for gold, so doubts concerning the real value of histories of this kind arise either because too many of them are written or because someone in the simplicity of his heart inquires: What force enabled Napoleon to do that? - that is, wants to exchange the current paper money for the pure gold of true understanding. (91)

Tolstoy continues with an analysis of the concept of power. Initially he dismisses simple definitions of power. (92) It is not physical superiority nor moral superiority, as he seeks to demonstrate. This brings Tolstoy to the conclusion:

If the source of power lies neither in the physical nor the moral qualities of the individual who possesses it, it is obvious that it must be looked for elsewhere - in the relation to the masses of the man who wields the power. (93)

Yet the manner in which this relationship is traditionally defined, particularly through the science of jurisprudence, is unacceptable to Tolstoy. The essence of this definition Tolstoy states is:

Power is the collective will of the masses, transferred by their expressed or tacit consent to their chosen rulers. (94)

Tolstoy finds three aspects of this transference of power, (95) all of which are, to him, untenable. Firstly it can be said that the people vest power in their ruler without conditions and any challenge to this power contravenes it. Complex periods of history render this crude interpretation of power inoperative. Secondly this power can be vested only on

certain conditions and subsequent strife is caused by contra-vention of these conditions. Here Tolstoy points to the continued existence of rulers far more refractory than those deposed or killed. Thirdly these conditions can be assumed to be unknown and rulers reflect the will of the people. Tolstoy points to the impossibility of establishing the degree to which a ruler could be said to reflect the will of the people. Tolstoy concludes:

The life of nations cannot be summarised in the lives of a few men, for the connexion between these men and the nations has not been discovered. The theory that this connexion is based on the transference of the collective will of a people to certain historical personages is a hypothesis not supported by the experience of history. (96)

Having illustrated the falseness of each of these three aspects in another extended image Tolstoy makes a final, conclusive attack on the concept of power as the vesting of the will of the people in a single leader:

The theory of the transference of the will of the masses to historical persons is merely a paraphrase - a re-statement of the question in other words.

What causes historical events? Power.

What is power? Power is the collective will of the masses vested in one person.

On what condition is the will of the people delegated to one person? On condition that that person expresses the will of the whole people.

That is, power is power. That is power is a word the meaning of which we do not understand. (97)

So far no radical quarrel can be sought with Tolstoy's assertions. Slight disagreements can be raised and the occasional anomaly indicated. Tolstoy is most at ease when demolishing established ideas. From this point he attempts to expound theories of his own and is far less successful. Firstly he redefines power as a concept:

Power, from the stand point of experience, is merely the relation that exists between the expression of the will of a person and the execution of that will by others. (98)

This 'relation' for Tolstoy is embodied in the concept of the 'command'. Tolstoy establishes the impossibility of viewing any command in isolation. It has to be considered in its place in the movement of time and then in the light of the position of the commander in relation to the commanded. Tolstoy states that 'no command ever appears spontaneously', (99) it is always part of a pattern which is made up of those events both preceding and succeeding it. Tolstoy continues this line of thought in a more radical direction:

All the impossible commands are inconsistent with the course of events and do not get carried out. Only the possible ones link up into a consecutive series of commands corresponding to a series of events, and are carried out. (100)

Tolstoy does not define what constitutes an 'impossible' command and, indeed, this whole assertion is very dubious. It fails to explain phenomena such as the charge of the Light Brigade at Balaclava or Ompteda's advance at Waterloo. In both cases the orders were not merely impossible, they were errors. They were both carried out. Although Tolstoy denies that an event is the direct result of a command, for, logically, if only 'possible' commands are followed all the conditions for that event to take place already exist, he admits to an 'interdependence' between command and event:

To understand what this interdependence is, it is necessary to reinstate the second of our two conditions governing every command which emanates from man and not from the Deity - the condition that the man who issues the command must also be a participator in the event. (101)

Tolstoy asserts that the more involved a person is in any given action the less he commands and the greater the commander the less he participates. This is true but it is very much the observation of the working of a phenomenon and deducing its motivation from outward appearances. There are basic, commonplace reasons for this lack of participation of commanders. They are, generally speaking, more able to keep out of harm's

way without this being questioned. They can, to an extent, be considered indispensable, if only for the sake of general morale. Tolstoy fails to really analyse power and begs the question of why armies form in the first place. He ignores simple aspects such as conditioning, discipline, martial appeal.

Tolstoy scales down his ideas in his examination of behaviour in the manoeuvring of a log.<sup>(102)</sup> He states that in a group activity everyone has opinions and when events eventually fulfill one of those opinions that opinion is deemed to have been a command. This type of thinking is not unexpected from Tolstoy who is imminently retrospective in his judgements. However this dismissal of the validity of commands is not entirely feasible. He neglects circumstances where one procedure is evidently more intelligent than another and is consciously followed rather than carried out accidentally. This must constitute a command or at least a direction. Also if the self-evidently better course is not taken because a poor command or direction was given and followed, leading to failure, this failure is obviously the result of a command rather than an interpretation of events after the case. Again if only one person from a group expresses an opinion, perhaps because he is known to be sensible or have relevant experience, whether the task is accomplished successfully or not the existence of commands before the events cannot be denied. Finally there is no real reason why a leader or commander cannot take an active part in events. To take Tolstoy's illustration he could help guide the log, heave it into a convenient position or whatever. Tolstoy seems to think of every event in terms of aristocrats and mujiks. Tolstoy summarises:

...we have found that historical characters and their commands are dependent on events. An incontestable proof of this deduction lies in the fact that, however many commands may be given, the event does not take place unless there are other causes for it; but as soon as an event does take place - whatever it may be - then out of all the incessantly expressed wishes of different people some will always be found which in meaning and time of utterance will bear to the event the relation of commands. (103)

There is an element of truth in this, as there is in almost every intelligent observation of events. The essential is that Tolstoy cannot produce any evidence to prove that a command does not at least constitute one of the causes for an event, even an all-important one, and perhaps, on some occasions, the only one. If it is possible that the reasons for some events are complex and unknown to us it is equally possible that the reasons for others are simple and just as unknown to us and could quite easily be no more than a single command. Further observations can be made on this passage. Firstly, every time Tolstoy deduces anything from events it is well to remember that Tolstoy falsified these when he wished. Secondly, if historical characters and commands are dependent upon events then an awareness of this could add to commanding ability. It also leads to the question of what would happen if commands were not issued. Are all events spontaneous or rather do they rely on someone correctly exploiting the state of affairs even if unknowingly? Again Tolstoy repeats that the eventually followed opinion is represented as being a command which again ignores the eventuality of only one 'opinion' being expressed. Tolstoy's remarks also ignore the possibility that a commander could himself contrive sufficient external events to enable him to make a consequential command resulting in an important event.

Tolstoy claims to have finally answered the questions he had posed but the stuff of these answers is very thin, amounting to little more than a description of events rather than an analysis of them:

Arriving at this conclusion, we are able to give a direct and positive reply to those two essential questions of history:

(1) What is power?

(2) What force produced the movement of nations?

(1) Power is the relation of a given person to other persons, in which the more this person expresses opinions, theories and justifications of the collective action the less is his participation in that action.

(2) The movement of nations is not caused by power, nor by intellectual activity, nor by even a combination of the two, as historians have supposed, but by the activity of all the people who participate in the event, and who always combine in such a way that those who take the largest direct share in the event assume the least responsibility and vice versa (104)

Tolstoy establishes nothing here. His participation in relation to direction theories are entirely lacking in substance and fail to explain anything. Equally his 'explanation' of events is to claim that events are caused by all the people involved in them which fails to elucidate the situation.

From the outset it has been clear that there is a discrepancy between the power of Tolstoy's descriptions and the lack of clarity in his historical asides and their extension in the Epilogue. Eykenbaum's establishment of the contemporary rather than historical nature of Tolstoy's writing helps to explain the situation. Tolstoy's task as a writer is to 'demonstrate by artistic means that historical circumstances and characters existed in precisely such and such a way'. (105) Whilst he concentrates on characters of whom he has the most sympathetic and intimate knowledge he is successful. Accounts of conflict that have as their source his own experiences are equally successful. However the inclusion of world-historical characters meets with a far more variable degree of success and when Tolstoy has to abandon the creative rôle to instruct his reader the quality of the work takes a downward turn. It is at this point, before passing to a consideration of Tolstoy's treatment of Borodino, that these basic critical premises must be finally established. It is Lukács, above all, who clearly analyses the complex nature of Tolstoy's presentation of history:

Thus it would be a mistake to think that Tolstoy, for instance, really depicted the Napoleonic Wars in extenso. What he does is, every now and then, to take an episode from the war which is of particular importance and significance for the human development of its main characters. And Tolstoy's genius as an historical novelist lies in his ability to select and portray these episodes so that the entire mood of the Russian army and through them of the Russian people gains vivid expression. Where he attempts to deal with comprehensive political and strategic problems of the war, for example in his description of Napoleon, he abandons himself to historico-philosophical effusions. And he does this not only because he misunderstands Napoleon historically, but also for literary reasons. Tolstoy was far too great a writer to be capable of offering a literary surrogate. Where his material could no longer be artistically embodied, he radically forsook literary means of expression and attempted to master his theme by intellectual means. (106)



Rather than analyse the description of Borodino page by page it seems more productive to examine various aspects of the battle one by one. These aspects constitute not entirely arbitrary divisions of the material into categories such as the battle narrative and the plot and characters, the portrayal of historical characters, any anti-war element, Tolstoy's descriptive powers and the aesthetic element and the historical basis for the fiction and Tolstoy's own historical theories. It is with this last aspect that this study begins.

Tolstoy opens his account of Borodino, after a prolonged portrayal of Napoleon on the eve of the battle, with a description of Napoleon's preparations and dispositions for the battle made on the 25th of August or the 6th of September, new style. Despite his own tendency to say that events could have only taken place as they did Tolstoy initially undertakes to criticise Napoleon's tactics. This also despite the fact that Napoleon's commands are supposedly more or less immaterial and, for Tolstoy, seldom or never carried out:

The original line of the Russian disposition along the river Kolocha had been dislocated by the capture of the Shevardino Redoubt on the 24th, and part of the line - the left flank - had been drawn farther back. That portion of the line was not entrenched, nor was it protected any longer by the river, and the ground in the front was more open and level than elsewhere. It was evident to anyone, whether soldier or civilian, that it was here the French should attack. One would have thought that no great deliberation would be necessary to reach this conclusion, nor any particular care or trouble on the part of the Emperor and his marshal; nor would there be any need of that high degree of talent called genius, which people are so fond of attributing to Napoleon. Yet the historians who described the battle afterwards and the men who surrounded Napoleon at the time, and Napoleon himself, thought otherwise. (107)

If Tolstoy's proposal were so obvious it is surprising that he alone noticed the possibility. Yet he is contradicting his own theories for he had no way of knowing that his interpretation of the military position would give a French victory. These minor discrepancies give rise to a deeper confusion since the reader now examines more closely Tolstoy's assertions, for,

without any recourse to other accounts of Borodino, Tolstoy's account, in itself, appears contradictory. Tolstoy accuses Napoleon of not attacking on the Russian left wing and reiterates this a little further on:

When Davoust, now styled Duke of Eckmuhl, suggested turning the Russian left wing Napoleon replied, without explaining, that it would not be necessary. (108)

Yet Tolstoy himself, on the following page, quotes Napoleon's dispositions for the battle, more or less accurately, (109) which include an order to turn the left flank, to be carried out by Prince Poniatowski. (110) It can thus be seen that even if the attack on the Russian left was not a major part of the battle it did take place, and was ordered by Napoleon. The situation becomes still less clear when Tolstoy criticises the dispositions in detail. The relevant comment here is the one criticising Poniatowski's orders:

The second instruction given was that Poniatowski, advancing to the village through the wood, should turn the Russian left flank.\* This could not be done, and was not done, because Poniatowski, advancing on the village through the wood, met Tuchkov there barring his way, and could not and did not turn the Russian position. (111)

Campan's movements, of which from the first Tolstoy admits a knowledge, are equally criticised, though these, too, constitute part of an attempt to turn the left. This seeming confusion encourages the reader to look elsewhere for information. Tolstoy appears to have recommended a certain course of action, criticised its not being followed yet in the event of its being undertaken he remains critical. Firstly, it is possible to consider that a direct attack focussed on the central redoubt was not without sense, as a major aim was to destroy the Russian army rather than to rout it:

It was a straightforward attack: blows in the face; beginning with cannon, followed by charges of the line, supported continually by all that was left of the horse - until he should have smashed up and powdered the one organised human thing that

\* Tolstoy's italics.

lay between him and the administration of Russia (as he believed it to be) at Moscow - seventy miles away. To manoeuvre the Russians out of the way was damnably easy, but by so doing he would have left their army intact - and he was 600 miles from tolerable roads, from flour, from powder, from lead, from remounts, from everything. (112)

Therefore were the 'vulnerability' of the left wing totally ignored the tactics would not have been utterly senseless. However Tolstoy himself admits to certain attempts, Poniatowski's and Campan's, being ordered, and made, and he criticises them. The question arises then, was the left wing as vulnerable as Tolstoy claims? He criticises mainly the scheme of attacking through the woodland but apparently even a frontal attack would have been at risk for the line was protected by earthworks in the form of flèches, at least, as a contemporary account shows:

Cette position enlevée ne décidait en rien du succès de la bataille: avant de la commencer, Napoléon voulait manoeuvrer et tourner l'aile gauche des Russes; mais ceux-ci, pour prévenir notre attaque, avaient mis tout le corps de Tutschkoff (troisième) et les milices de Moscou en embuscade derrière d'épaisses broussailles qui couvraient leur extrême gauche, tandis que les 2<sup>e</sup>. 4<sup>e</sup>. et 6<sup>e</sup>. corps ennemis, formaient en arrière deux lignes d'infanterie protégées par les redans qui liaient les bois à la grande armée. (113)

It becomes clear that an attack upon the Russian left was considered of prime importance and was attempted:

The result of Napoleon's reconnoissance, was a determination to attack the left wing of the Russian army, but it is said that he remained for some time uncertain whether to attack the redoubts by which it was strengthened, and force that part of the position in front, or to turn it, though this would have been difficult and hazardous. At length he resolved to attack it in front, and made his dispositions for a false demonstration upon the centre, at the village of Borodino, and for a real one "en masse" upon the Russian left wing. (114)

Moreover Cathcart considers that the enterprise of attacking the Russian left, though tactically sound, was so hazardous that had the Russians sent the reinforcements they had at their

disposal they might have gained a positive victory:

The troops which occupied the right half of the Russian position had not been engaged, had they all been brought to support the left wing, possibly a decided victory might have been gained. (115)

Tolstoy's position appears untenable. Having slightly pointed out that an attack on the Russian left was the self-evident way to win the battle he points to the failure of the movement he recommended and which, anyway, he initially claimed was not carried out. All this is from within the body of Tolstoy's own work. From other sources one can gather that an attack on the left wing was not the only way of looking at the situation. Also it is fairly clear that the Russian left was considered an important, if not focal, point of the battle and attempts were made both to attack frontally and to turn it but it was very far from being vulnerable.

Perhaps the complication lies in the lack of clarity in Tolstoy's narrative. The exact process he recommends is not clear but initially seems to be a frontal attack on the left wing, which was attempted without great success. The movement which Davoust had suggested was more broadly out-flanking:

...would it have been possible, as Davoust suggested, to concentrate his best troops on the right, occupy the higher ground there, and roll up the Russian position from its left. (116)

This Napoleon would not risk because he feared a Russian withdrawal<sup>(117)</sup> and also doubted his strength to make a complete out-flanking movement.<sup>(118)</sup> Tolstoy, however, states that Davoust suggested turning the Russian left wing, which does not constitute an out-flanking movement and which was indeed attempted, as is born out by a purely tactical commentary.<sup>(119)</sup> What is above all apparent is that Tolstoy's comments are unclear to the point of being inaccurate and that the whole question of an attack upon the Russian left was not so much a question of whether or not to attack but one of degree. Napoleon did envisage an attack but did not, at the time, wish to risk a complete out-flanking movement. The situation has been clearly described:

Le plan de Napoléon était simple. Kutusof semblait attendre l'attaque sur les collines à gauche de la route et sur le plateau de Gorki; il y avait, ai-je dit, installé la plus grosse partie de son armée. L'Empereur feindrait, au début, de porter là son principal effort; ainsi ferait-il attaquer, à grand tapage, le village de Borodino. En réalité, il jetterait la plus grosse partie de ses forces sur les collines qui s'élèvent à droite de la route, tandis que le corps de Poniatowski, passant par Outitza, derrière ce petit massif et à travers bois, tournerait la position, prêt à déboucher sur les derrières de l'ennemi, ce pendant assailli. C'était la seule manoeuvre prévue; un jour, Napoléon avouera qu'il a eu tort de vouloir enlever la position au lieu de la tourner plus largement, mais il avait peur que, comme à Drissa, somme à Smolensk, le temps pris par l'exécution d'un grand mouvement d'enveloppement ne permît encore aux Russes de se dérober. (120)

It must be emphasised that basically it is the impression of reality rather than the actual fact of reality that is important. The confusion which is instigated by Tolstoy's initial contention that the French could have been successful had they attacked on the Russian left flank results in what appears to be a series of contradictions and inaccuracies. Once one element of doubt has been introduced then the reader is no longer willing to accept with confidence any other of Tolstoy's assertions particularly here where the aim is not artistic creation but the dissemination of Tolstoy's personal ideas. When Tolstoy turns to purely fictional writing the factual basis is of far less intrinsic importance, all that is really significant is the degree to which the historical raw material becomes convincing and satisfying artistry. Tolstoy fares very ill when he moves away from his important rôle as an artist and becomes doctrinaire, apparently unreliable in his facts and indubitably subjective in his judgements.

Another of his criticisms of Napoleon's disposition is:

In the dispositions it is said, first, that the batteries placed on the spot selected by Napoleon, with the guns of Perneti and Fouché which were to come in line with them, in all 102 cannons, were to open fire and shell the Russian flèches and redoubts.\* This could not be done, since from the spots chosen by Napoleon the projectiles did not carry to the Russian works; and those 102 guns shot into the air until the nearest commander, contrary to Napoleon's instructions, moved them forward. (121)

\* Tolstoy's italics

It is, in a way, immaterial that no corroborative evidence can be brought in to substantiate this criticism. The knowledge that Tolstoy did not respect established facts and the common knowledge that Napoleon was, if nothing else, a trained gunnery officer, is enough to make the reader suspicious of this criticism. Tolstoy appears, yet again, to be indulging in his tendency to try at all costs to prove the validity of his own entangled theories and, at the same time, attack Napoleon, rather than genuinely to establish the truth of the matter. His criticism concludes:

So not one of the orders in the disposition was, or could be executed. (122)

This remark, basically unproven, is typical of Tolstoy. It is not clear, even from Tolstoy's account, that these dispositions were not carried out, and, at least in part, it seems they were. Also Tolstoy has allowed the reader to doubt his version of the facts, rendering all such conclusions as this, which lacks detailed supporting evidence, greatly suspect. Again it is highly retrospective. It may be apparent at a later date that a command could not have been implemented, (though this very assumption appears to require the acceptance of the idea that certain commands can) but pointing to the impossibility of any one command being carried out is as much wisdom after the event as that crediting with genius commands which only subsequently appear to have resulted in success that Tolstoy criticises so harshly.

Tolstoy is on firmer ground when he refutes the importance of Napoleon's cold, for this gives his rhetoric freedom of play:

If it had depended on Napoleon's will whether to fight or not to fight the battle of Borodino, or had it depended on his will whether he gave this order or that, it is evident that a cold affecting the functioning of his will might have saved Russia, and consequently the valet who forgot to bring Napoleon his waterproof boots on the 24th would be the saviour of Russia. (123)

This is basically true. It is unfortunate, however, that only Napoleon is subjected to this kind of treatment; the Tsar and Kutuzov are not continually slighted. Tolstoy's weakness would not be so noticeable if, after his attacks, he produced some positive reasoning of his own, but, as has been seen before, this is rarely forthcoming:

The question, What causes historic events? will suggest another answer, namely, that the course of earthly happenings is predetermined from on high, and depends on the combined volition of all who participate in those events, and that the influence of a Napoleon on the course of those events is purely superficial and imaginary. (124)

There is nothing self-evident about these scanty postulations. They form hasty, unreasoned conclusions to a large amount of criticism which demands a far greater amount of positive material. It also constitutes another facet of Tolstoy's idea that somehow admitting ignorance leads to enlightenment. Tolstoy continues to stress the importance of the degree of participation, a point given great weight in the Epilogue:

At the battle of Borodino Napoleon did not fire a shot nor kill anyone. All that was done by the soldiers. Therefore he did not do any killing himself. (125)

The fact that Napoleon was not, himself, physically involved in the battle does not seem to establish anything. He had conscripted armies, appointed leaders, directed the course of operations and attempts were made to carry out his instructions, which, even if unsuccessful, resulted nevertheless in death or injury, for which, to some extent, Napoleon must have been responsible. After all, the measure of success achieved is not necessarily an indication of the power of the individual, leading men in defeat is more difficult than leading them in victory, and whatever the reasons that the masses accept domination are, the important thing is that acceptance. Tolstoy categorically denies Napoleon any status as a motivating force at Borodino:

The soldiers of the French army went out to slay Russian soldiers on the field of Borodino not because of Napoleon's orders but in answer to their own impulse. The whole army - French, Italians, Germans, Poles - famished, ragged and weary of the campaign, felt at the sight of an army barring the road to Moscow that the wine was drawn and must be drunk. Had Napoleon then forbidden them to fight the Russians they would have killed him and fought with the Russians because they had to. (126)

Tolstoy has no way of knowing this. In fact the Guard, despite their enthusiasm, were quite easily held back during the entire battle. He at no point proves, or can ever do so, that 'it was not because of Napoleon's commands that they killed their fellow-men'. (127) Tolstoy, however, has reached the point where he seems to feel he has completely negated the importance of Napoleon's commands. So much so that he can declare:

The dispositions cited above are by no means inferior, are indeed superior, to previous dispositions which had won him victories in the past. His supposed orders during the battle were also no worse than the commands he had given in the course of other actions, but were much the same as usual. (128)

How he could really know this is difficult to understand. Equally difficult to understand is what this somewhat gratuitous statement is meant to establish. Any comparison of Napoleon's orders is fatuous since they are all, theoretically, meaningless. Tolstoy goes further, in a kind of gesture of magnanimity now he has 'proved' Napoleon's powerlessness:

Napoleon played his part as representative of authority quite as well at Borodino as at his other battles - perhaps better. He did nothing harmful to the progress of the battle; he inclined to the more reasonable opinions; he made no confusion, did not contradict himself, did not lose his head or run away from the field of battle, but with his sound judgment and great military experience calmly and with dignity performed his role of appearing to be in supreme control. (129)

Were this statement the conclusion of much positive and acceptable argument it might carry more weight. The final 'complimentary' remarks could either be ironical or a necessary



attribution of good sense to somebody who follows the path laid down by Tolstoy, that is, acceptance of one's lack of power. Yet Tolstoy has already accused Napoleon of refusing Davoust's 'good advice' and he will in due course refuse to use his Guard. Also it is difficult to see how Tolstoy could have allowed that Napoleon could have done anything 'harmful to the progress of the battle'. In fact, during the account of Borodino, Tolstoy, in his desire to criticise Napoleon, at one stage comments:

Napoleon did not observe that in relation to his army he played the part of the doctor, whose action in hindering the course of nature with his nostrums he so truly gauged and condemned.  
(130)

Tolstoy, having committed himself to the idea that leaders such as Napoleon are powerless, can neither compliment their non-interference nor criticise their actions since both are presumably irrelevant to the final outcome. When, within the space of a very few pages, Tolstoy appears to feel justified in both complimenting and criticising on the same, theoretically immaterial count, the reader is at a loss what to think.

This initial, highly subjective examination of the events at Borodino is followed by a more literary account, largely undertaken in the form of a description of Pierre's uninformed view of the battle. Before presenting further descriptions of Napoleon, and a description of the rôles played by both Kutuzov and Andrei, Tolstoy returns to an examination and analysis of the factual material involved in the account. It is significant that Tolstoy all but abandons the rôle of the artist when confronted with the need to present and discuss supposedly factual matter and his own theories. The purely literary descriptions are confined to the presentation of fictional characters and the minutiae of minor events, significant only to single protagonists. This section, however, is less far removed from the literary than the opening pages of Tolstoy's account and is, as such, all the more acceptable. Tolstoy reiterates that the main action was fought in the centre of the field, an idea, as has been seen, not wholly tenable, certainly

not to the exclusion of the importance of the events on the Russian left:

(Outside this radius the Russians had made a brief diversion in the middle of the day with Uvarov's cavalry, on the one side, and on the other, beyond Utitsa, there had been the skirmish between Poniatowski and Tuchkov; but these were isolated and relatively trifling episodes in comparison with what took place in the centre of the battlefield.)(131)

For Tolstoy the battle was a crude confrontation:

It was on the open tract of ground visible from both sides, between Borodino and the flèches beside the wood, that the real engagement was fought in the simplest and most artless manner imaginable. (132)

Tolstoy expands his theory, not always easy to comply with, of the essentially powerless nature of world-historical characters. He attempts to demonstrate Napoleon's lack of contact with the battle owing to his inability to discern what was happening. Since Tolstoy often seems to imply that Napoleon's presence was not needed and that events shaped themselves this could be considered immaterial but it supports the more balanced viewpoint that leaders are often not as much in control of events as they believe themselves to be:

It was about two-thirds of a mile from Bagration's flèches to the Shevardino Redoubt where Napoleon was standing; and nearly a mile and a half, as the crow flies, from Napoleon's post to Borodino, and therefore Napoleon could not see what was happening there, especially as the smoke mingling with the mist entirely hid that part of the plain. (133)

As Tolstoy moves from the general, the overtly historical and subjective, to the particular and literary his narrative gains strength. His assertion of Napoleon's inability to see the field of battle, with all its implicit criticism, lacks the impact, despite its probable veracity, of the description of the confusion and the murk of the area where the action is actually taking place:

But not only was it impossible to make out what was happening from where he stood down below, or from the knoll above on which some of his generals had taken their stand, but even from the flèches themselves, where Russian and French soldiers now found themselves together or alternately - dead, wounded and alive, frightened or panic-stricken - it was impossible to make out what was taking place. For several hours in succession, amid incessant canon- and musketry-fire, now only Russians were seen there, now only French, now infantry, now cavalry: they showed themselves, fell, fired, struggled hand to hand, not knowing what to do with one another, shouted and ran back again. (134)

That this confusion, together with the changes which naturally take place during an aide's journey from one point of the field to another, should affect those whose task it is to 'administer' the battle is not surprising and Tolstoy's emphasis on Napoleon's lack of direct control during the course of the battle is understandable:

From the battlefield adjutants he had sent out and orderlies from his marshals were continually galloping up to Napoleon with reports of the progress of the action; but all these reports were deceptive, both because in the heat of the fray it was impossible to say what was happening at any given moment, and because many of the adjutants did not go to the actual place of conflict but simply repeated what they had heard from others; and also because while an adjutant was riding the couple of miles to Napoleon circumstances changed and the news he brought was already ceasing to be accurate. (135)

From these probable and acceptable assertions Tolstoy postulates the total incapacity of Napoleon, a more debateable attitude:

On the basis of such inevitably untrustworthy reports Napoleon gave his orders, which had either been executed before he gave them, or else could not be, and never were, executed. (136)

The disordered, instinctive nature of events on the field, where, when orders were found wanting, decisions were made at the lowest level, is strikingly presented:

They had no fear of getting into trouble for not fulfilling orders or for acting on their own initiative, for in the

battle the issue at stake is man's most precious possession - his own life - and it sometimes seems that safety lies in running back, sometimes in running forward, and these men who were right in the thick of the fray acted in accordance with the temper of the moment. (137)

Understandably, under these circumstances, Tolstoy regards the personal clashes as largely ineffectual and ascribes most of the slaughter to canon- and musketry-fire. (138) The outcome of a battle, for Tolstoy, relies largely upon the morale of the troops, an idea which is itself incontestible, though unwisely used to the exclusion of virtually all other possible elements. Tolstoy provides an impressive sketch of the disintegration of an army in the face of unexpected resistance:

Napoleon's generals - Davoust, Ney and Murat, who were near that region of fire and sometimes even entered it - more than once led huge masses of orderly troops that way. But, contrary to what had invariably happened in all their former battles, instead of the news they expected of the enemy's flight, these disciplined masses returned as disorganised, panic-stricken mobs. The generals reformed them but their number was steadily dwindling. In the middle of the day Murat sent his adjutant to Napoleon to request reinforcements. (139)

With Tolstoy's conclusion of the description of Borodino comes more of the obtrusive thinking which mars the narrative and detracts from its artistic value. His description of the mechanical continuation of hostilities is powerful and convincing but this description breaks down when he ventures to 'explain' the phenomenon. Leaving aside, possible explanations such as fear of the enemy, automatic obedience to orders or the want of a positive order to desist, Tolstoy falls back on 'some mysterious, inexplicable power'. (140) Tolstoy's one positive attempt at explanation is no improvement on this obscure statement:

The canon-balls flew just as swiftly and cruelly from each side, smashing human bodies, and still the fearful work went on, not by the will of individual men but at the will of Him who governs men and worlds. (141)

From this bizarre assertion Tolstoy goes on to explain the stale-mate which ended Borodino. His reasons for neither side attempting to force a victory ring hollow. It is difficult to see how Tolstoy was in a position to know why such a state of affairs came about:

To speak of what would have happened had Napoleon sent forward his Guards is like talking of what would happen if spring came in autumn. It could not be. Napoleon did not sacrifice his Guards, not because he did not want to, but because it could not be done. All the generals, officers and soldiers of the French army knew that this was out of the question, because the flagging spirit of the troops did not allow of it. (142)

Whilst it is not possible to quarrel with the importance of morale Tolstoy's intimate acquaintance with every last soldier of Napoleon's army is not easy to accept. This impressive leading up to an inadequate explanation is typical of Tolstoy's subjective and unsubstantiated, not to say eccentric, judgments. Tolstoy skirts round, rather than states, the simple, undeniable fact that, whatever the provocation, the French on Russian soil were the aggressors thus giving the Russians a moral advantage. This progression, which perhaps oversimplifies matters, of the French army, from being liberators to oppressors, has been observed in other works included in this study and has an important rôle to play here. Tolstoy finds the moral victory in the fact that the Russians remained on the field. Closer to the truth, perhaps, would be that it was their field, and they remained the moral victors whether left in possession or dispossessed:

The Russians at Borodino won - not the sort of victory which is specified by the capture of scraps of material on the end of sticks, called standards, or of the ground on which the troops had stood and were standing - but a moral victory, the kind of victory which compels the enemy to recognize the moral superiority of his opponent and his own impotence. (143)

Tolstoy's final summary, quite incontestible, relies heavily on hindsight:

The direct consequence of the battle of Borodino was Napoleon's causeless flight from Moscow, his return along the old Smolensk road by which he had come, the destruction of the invading army of five hundred thousand men and the downfall of Napoleonic France, on which at Borodino for the first time the hand of an adversary of stronger spirit had been laid. (144)

A second aspect will be the examination of Tolstoy's treatment of world-historical characters, Napoleon and Kutusov. Tolstoy is never at ease writing about Napoleon. All attempts to establish truth and to be objective are set aside, yet Tolstoy persists in his claim that he is presenting a purer distillation of fact than any historian of the past or present. The presentation of minute accounts of personal details and intimate conversations with historical personages is fraught with difficulties. When the writer is known to be antagonistic, little faith can readily be placed in accounts which must largely be conjecture, such memoirs as exist often being of doubtful reliability and, in any case, rarely possible to wholly substantiate. Tolstoy's technique is sound. His attention to details of expression and movement takes the reader's mind from the sad fact that he cannot know what he is talking about and that his guess-work is not even objective. The initial view of Napoleon is not favourable. Although Tolstoy does not use the word 'pig' it would take a very passive reader not to think of it for himself. His description, with its overtones of bestiality, sensuality and corruption, cannot be accepted. Whether it is true or not is immaterial. Such intimate detail so presented by an avowed antagonist leaves the reader with immediate doubts:

The Emperor Napoleon had not yet left his bedroom and was finishing his toilet. Uttering little snorts and grunts, he presented now his stout back, now his plump hairy chest to the flesh-brush with which a valet was rubbing him down. Another valet, with his finger over the mouth of a bottle, was sprinkling eau-de-Cologne on the Emperor's pampered person with an expression which seemed to say that he alone knew where and how much eau-de-Cologne should be applied. Napoleon's short hair was wet and matted on the forehead, but his face, though puffy and yellow, expressed physical satisfaction. 'Go on, harder, go on!...' he said, slightly tensing himself and giving a grunt, to the valet who was rubbing him. (145)

This is far from an artistic embodiment of the truth and serves to underline the fact that history is better presented from below and great people from afar. Waterloo, though artistically inferior to War and Peace, does not provoke the doubts and questions of the latter. From a purely artistic standpoint Stendhal's achievements in La Chartreuse de Parme are less uneven, though Tolstoy achieves undeniable heights at times. The opening description of Napoleon seems to function too well for Tolstoy, it introduces the subsequent lines too aptly:

'No prisoners!' said he, repeating the aide-de-camp's words. 'They are compelling us to annihilate them. So much the worse for the Russian army....Go on...harder - put more energy into it!' (146)

Tolstoy displays considerable inventiveness in his portrayal of court life, elements of this have already been seen, and he presents a convincing picture of the entourage of a dictator and the relationship between him and his fellows:

Napoleon at once noticed what they were about and guessed they were not ready. He did not want to deprive them of the pleasure of preparing a surprise for him, so he pretended not to see Monsieur de Beausset and beckoned Fabvier to him. (147)

This, in itself, is good. Were it pure fiction, unrelated to major personages in history or to events which had in fact taken place, in some form it would be excellent. Yet Tolstoy goes even further than describing external aspects of the lives of the great in detail and pries into their minds. There can be no possibility of exposing the thoughts of a world-historical figure in the same way as the psychology of a fictional character is laid bare. Even well done it always raises doubts in the mind of the reader:

But though Napoleon knew de Beausset had to say this, or something of the kind, and though in his lucid moments he knew it was untrue, it pleased him to hear de Beausset say it. (148)

Tolstoy dwells on idiosyncrac<sup>y</sup>ies. This is not without effect but does not seem to be as safe as when this technique is applied to fictional characters. Napoleon's treatment of de Beausset<sup>(149)</sup> certainly characterises the monarch who is never gainsaid but Tolstoy's motives are suspect and render the description equally suspect. Tolstoy goes too far when he describes the presentation of Napoleon's son's portrait to him. Even if Tolstoy is using every last memoir and contemporary description even these could be inaccurate, slanted, or falsely presented. There is no possibility of prying into the mind of an historical personage, and Tolstoy's results are nothing but gratuitous spite:

With the natural facility of an Italian for altering the expression of his face at will he approached the portrait and assumed a look of pensive tenderness. He felt that what he said and did at that moment would be history, and it occurred to him that the best line he could take now, when his great glory enabled his son to play stick and ball with the terrestrial globe, would be to display, in contrast to that grandeur, the simplest paternal affection. (150)

The fact that this comes directly after Tolstoy's feigned incomprehension of the 'allegory',<sup>(151)</sup> which he readily interprets here, carried away in a flood of detractive comment, does not lend authenticity to the account. The patriotism and loyalty to the Emperor which existed beyond a shadow of a doubt in Napoleon's meritocratic, revolutionary army, never ceases to irk Tolstoy. His slanted words are mocking but they for once embody the truth, to a great extent, when he speaks of 'their adored monarch'. Also, whilst France remained a power, if Napoleon chose to say his son was king of Rome he was, to all intents and purposes. The opening lines of this passage are, of course, pure conjecture:

Having sat for a little while and passed his fingers - he could not have said why - over the rough texture of the high lights, he got up and recalled de Beausset and the officer on duty. He commanded the portrait to be carried out in front of his tent, so that the Old Guard, stationed round about, might not be deprived of the happiness of seeing the King of Rome, the son and heir of their adored Monarch. (152)



After an initial, historical analysis of Borodino Tolstoy returns to Napoleon. Again the problem is of authenticity. The aim is overtly to belittle Napoleon. Having made him bestial, cruel, cunning and hypocritical, (he is now shown to be a self-indulgent old woman. Napoleon did question a Guardsman about the issue of rice. This could be taken as concern. Tolstoy makes the incident into a major example of Napoleon's pettiness. Whether this was so is largely unimportant. What is significant is that Tolstoy chose to take this approach:

'Have the biscuits and the rice been served out to the regiments of the Guards?' asked Napoleon sternly.

'Yes, Sire.'

'The rice too?'

Rapp replied that he had issued the Emperor's orders in regard to the rice, but Napoleon shook his head with a dissatisfied air, as though he doubted whether his instructions had been carried out. (153)

This preamble with Rapp throws an unfortunate light on the incident for Napoleon. The atmosphere of censure is tangibly heightened by the word 'affectation', which is surely unjustified:

Napoleon walked up and down in front of his tent, stared at the fires and listened to the stamping, and, as he was passing a tall guardsman in a shaggy cap who was on sentry duty before his tent and who had drawn himself up like a black pillar at the sight of the Emperor, Napoleon stood still facing him.

'What year did you enter the Service?' he asked with that affectation of military bluntness and geniality with which he always addressed the soldiers.

The man answered.

'Ah, one of the veterans. Has your regiment had its rice?'

'It has, your Majesty.'

Napoleon nodded and walked away. (154)

Tolstoy's observation of Napoleon during the battle is more distanced, more reliant on external factors which to some extent justify his remarks and his presumption that he is aware of Napoleon's thoughts. The otherwise persistent element of criticism is absent and the description is in keeping with the context:

Napoleon was in the grip of the depression which descends on the gambler who, after a long run of luck during which he recklessly flung his money about and won every time, suddenly finds, just when he has carefully calculated all the chances of the game, that the more he considers his play the more surely he loses. (155)

Further accounts of Napoleon's thoughts allow the reader to be again aware of how much this is conjectural. His final comment as he leaves Napoleon is feasible but marries too well with Tolstoy's attitudes:

He could not stop what was going on before and around him, and which he was supposed to be directing and which was apparently dependent on him, and for the first time, because of its ill success, the thing struck him as unnecessary and horrible. (156)

This last is reiterated in Tolstoy's final summary of the account of Borodino. Again it is a hypothetical examination of Napoleon's mind:

In sickly dejection he awaited the end of the business in which he considered himself the prime mover but which he was powerless to arrest. (157)

Since he did not try to arrest the course of the battle it is not easy to say this was impossible. At this juncture Tolstoy openly attacks Napoleon and makes his total dislike and disdain apparent:

Never to the end of his life had he the least comprehension of goodness, beauty or truth, or of the significance of his actions, which were too contrary to goodness and truth, too remote from everything human for him ever to be able to grasp their import. He could not disavow his deeds, lauded as they were by half the world, and so he was obliged to repudiate truth and beauty and all humanity. (158)

Tolstoy's attitude may be justified but it does not help the reader to accept his version of Napoleon's 'thoughts' and the intimate details of his daily life. Also he seems caught between the desire to chastise Napoleon for his actions, that

is to say render him responsible, which he cannot do, and, at the same time, belittle him for thinking he could control the flow of events. Tolstoy never satisfactorily explains this dichotomy nor does he ever really explain the concepts of 'power' and 'responsibility'. If Napoleon was powerless and not responsible then were those who complied with him, and why did they comply? All ideas such as the existence of some great, unknown plan beg the question. Much of Tolstoy's bitterness seems to spring from the fact that he would like to criticise Napoleon as responsible for so many ills but has argued himself into a position where he cannot. Also an element of envy is detectable in Tolstoy. However he may belittle Napoleon the fact of Napoleon's reputation and his brief ascendancy remains. Thus Napoleon has to be merely an unpleasant character since his 'ineffectuality' renders him incapable of being actively evil:

He imagined that the war with Russia came about by his own volition, and the horror of what was done made no impression on his soul. He boldly assumed full responsibility for what happened, and his darkened mind found justification in the fact that among the hundreds of thousands who met their deaths there were fewer Frenchmen than Hessians and Bavarians. (159)

Tolstoy's treatment of Kutuzov is entirely different. Mention has been made earlier of Kutuzov and Tolstoy's virtual re-creation of his character. These pages are limited to an examination of Kutuzov, as Tolstoy portrays him, at Borodino. Tolstoy, above all, disparaged the 'illusion' of power and the issuing of orders. Naturally he makes it clear that Kutuzov makes no such error:

He issued no orders but simply gave or withheld his assent to what was proposed to him. (160)

Kutuzov embodies to the letter Tolstoy's extreme theories of history, of power and command:

Long experience in war had taught him, and the wisdom of age had made him realise, that it was impossible for one man to

direct hundreds of thousands of others waging a struggle with death, and he knew that the outcome of a battle is determined not by the dispositions of the commander-in-chief, nor the place where the troops are stationed, nor the number of canon or the multitude of the slain, but by that intangible force called the spirit of the army, and he kept an eye on that force and guided it as far as it lay within his power. (161)

Tolstoy's highly calculated portrait of Kutuzov does not lack artistic excellence. The confrontation between Wolzogen and Kutuzov<sup>(162)</sup> is a magnificent piece of description, exposing, as it does, the self-seeking cowardice of some so-called commanders on the one hand and the dedication of Kutuzov on the other. Wolzogen is rather pleased than downcast as he delivers his version of Borodino, gleaned in turn from Barclay de Tolly, whose judgement was made from well in the rear. Kutuzov roundly rejects his assertions but his account of the true state of affairs has much of Tolstoy in it:

'They are repulsed everywhere, for which I thank God and our brave army. The enemy is defeated and tomorrow we shall drive him from the sacred soil of Russia.' said Kutuzov, crossing himself, and he suddenly ended with a sob as his eyes filled with tears. (163)

The confrontation ends with Wolzogen significantly asking for<sup>(164)</sup> 'written confirmation of the order the field-marshal had given.' Over the question of the order to attack the next day Tolstoy is surely in a dilemma. The order had great effect on the army's morale, the vital force according to Tolstoy. Yet it was a command that inspired this upsurge. Thus the orders of one man, the commander-in-chief, had direct and considerable effect on the army. Tolstoy is evidently aware of this as he sees fit to add that it was not a calculated order but an emotional outpouring:

And through the mysterious indefinable bond which maintains throughout an army one and the same temper, known as 'the spirit of the troops', and which constitutes the chief sinew of war, Kutuzov's words, his order for renewing the battle on the following day, immediately became known from one end of the army to the other.

The words - the exact form of the order - were by no means the same when they reached the farthest links in the chain. In fact there was not a syllable in the accounts passing from mouth to mouth at different ends of the lines that resembled what Kutuzov had actually said; but the drift of his words spread everywhere because what he said was not the result of shrewd calculations but the outflow of a feeling that lay deep in the heart of the commander-in-chief and deep in the heart of every Russian. (165)

It is evident, to a large degree, that Kutuzov has become a cipher, representing Tolstoy's philosophy rather than being an attempt at historical re-creation. It is this handling of world-historical figures that shows that Tolstoy's interest in history did not necessarily include the desire to re-create events and people with a view to accuracy. Utterly bound up with larger concerns such as truth, motivation, power, he in fact ended by misrepresenting the simple facts to the detriment of these wider philosophies.

In considering Borodino in relation to the flow of the narrative, and in relation to the fictional characters, it soon becomes evident how episodic the Napoleonic Wars are in War and Peace. In fact the account of Borodino stands very much on its own, more as an internal illustration of the Epilogue than an intrinsic and vital element in the work as a whole. Throughout the entire part of the battle description that is the most purely fictional, the presence of Pierre ties the episode in with the rest of the book but, in reality, there is nothing of Pierre here, he is a largely passive witness to events, a counterpart to Fabrice, who can observe but not interpret. It is Andrei who is more involved in Borodino as a character for he achieves his state of enlightenment, which is the ultimate aim for all Tolstoy's privileged characters, after receiving a mortal injury. Yet Andrei is not an active protagonist in the battle; his wound is received whilst waiting with the reserves. This is in line with the conclusion, reached in the critical examination of War and Peace, that the work was contemporary rather than historical, largely concerned with the life of the aristocracy as Tolstoy knew it, the Napoleonic Wars remaining intrusive and episodic.

Very little of Pierre emerges from the description of the battle. He is curious, but this is obligatory if he is going to witness the events. There is, initially, a detached, impartial air about his curiosity:

Pierre longed to be there in the midst of the smoke, the glittering bayonets, the movement and the noise. He looked round at Kutuzov and his suite, to compare his impressions with those of others. They were all gazing at the field of battle, as he had done, and, he fancied, with the same feelings. (166)

His increasing awareness and his fear add to the battle narrative but neither add to the character of Pierre as it stands nor particularly spring from it. Pierre's attitude to Napoleon, an important part of his personality, is not exploited here. Characters from War and Peace intrude on these great historical events and even find their deaths there, yet they seem insulated from them, they do not seem to be conscious participants, not to the degree that the world historical-figures are. This position should be reversed.

Andrei embodies the sense of isolation of the individual who is in constant danger of death. His entire mind is occupied with trying to minimise the fear. (167) Human incapacity in the face of imminent death and the surrealist change in the pace of time are both strikingly demonstrated at the moment of Andrei's injury:

'Can this be death?' Prince Andrei wondered, casting a fleeting glance of quite unwonted envy at the grass, the worm-wood and the thread of smoke that curled upwards from the whistling black ball. 'I can't die, I don't want to die. I love life - I love this grass, this earth, this air....' These were the thoughts in his mind, and at the same time he remembered that people were looking at him.

'For shame, sir!' he said to the adjutant. 'What sort of....'

He did not finish. Simultaneously there was an explosion, a splintering sound like a window-frame being smashed, a suffocating smell of powder, and Prince Andrei was jerked to one side and, flinging up his arm, fell on his face. (168)

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Andrei's enlightenment is the apotheosis of the anti-war element which is present in Tolstoy's battle scenes and which will be examined separately. Confronted with death his character crystallizes and grasps at the 'truth' as Tolstoy envisages it:

'Sympathy, love of our brothers, for those who love us and for those who hate us, love our enemies - yes, the love that God preached on earth, that Princess Maria tried to teach me and I did not understand - that is what made me sorry to part with life, that is what remained for me had I lived. But it is now too late. I know it!' (169)

The opening of the actual battle narrative, which is presented, indirectly, from the viewpoint of Pierre, is almost wholly aesthetic. The entire account can be seen as a progressive realisation of the horrors of war as one by one the external trappings, the beauty, the military enthusiasm, the sheer innocence of the participants, fall away leaving exposed the grim reality of the situation. And when this finally happens it is significant that the scene is no longer the field itself, but in and around the operating tent, away from the distraction of battle sounds, smoke and turmoil. There is no martial atmosphere, the reader is left to consider, undistracted, the ultimate effects of armed combat.

Initially the battleground is seen as an agreeable landscape. The landscape has been seen before, yet this time there is an intrusion, troops cover the ground and already smoke hangs in the air. There is nothing here but beauty, a new beauty but as yet with no sinister connotations. The one, mild term of dissent is 'unexpected':

As he mounted the steps to the knoll Pierre glanced at the scene spread beneath his eyes and was spell-bound at the beauty of it. It was the same panorama which had admired from the mound the day before, but now the whole prospect swarmed with troops, smoke-clouds from the guns hung overhead and the slanting rays of the bright sun, rising slightly to the left behind Pierre, filled the clear morning air with rosy golden light and long dark shadows. The distant forest which bound the horizon might have been carved out of some greeny-yellow precious stone, its undulating outline being pierced

beyond Valuevo by the Smolensk high road thick with troops. In the foreground glittered golden cornfields and copses. Everywhere, to right, to left and in front were soldiers. The whole scene was animated, majestic and unexpected; but what struck Pierre most of all was the view of the battlefield itself, of Borodino and the hollows on both sides of the Kolocha. (170)

At first the increasing military activity only lends splendour to the view:

The smoke of the guns mingled with this mist, and over the whole landscape, through the mist and smoke, sparkled the morning sun, gleaming on the water, on the dew, on the bayonets of the infantry congregated along the river banks and in Borodino. (171)

What is in fact the outward and visible manifestation of that aspect of the battle Tolstoy maintained was most deadly, that is to say the smoke from the guns, particularly attracts Pierre's attention. Tolstoy describes the effects in a manner still devoid of any significance other than the purely aesthetic:

Just as the mist wreathed about the hollows of Borodino, so beyond and above, and in particular further to the left, along the entire line, over the woods, over the fields, in the valleys, on the ridges of the high ground curling clouds of powder-smoke continually formed out of nothing, here a solitary puff, now a bevy together, at longer intervals or in quick succession, swelling, thickening, swirling round, merging and fading away. (172)

What is striking here, apart from the power of the description, is the manner in which this visual aspect is so divorced from the actuality of combat. No mention is made of the source of the 'phenomenon' of the smoke. The clouds are 'formed out of nothing' and the one thing that is of any deeper significance, considering the gradual introduction of the horrific nature of the battle, is the extent, the magnitude of the proceedings. This smoke, now innocuous, manifests itself at every point in the area. The visual aspect is stressed. Even when the source of the smoke is mentioned and the differing



sounds of the weapons described the noise is not as dominant as it is to become when Pierre has taken his place among the guns on the redoubt. Pierre, and the reader, are still at this point detached from the realities of the battle. The cannon-smoke can be minutely examined, each puff of smoke noted. The sound of the muskets is distinguished from the sound of the cannon. Soon, in the midst of the fighting the noise will become dominant and incessant. The sudden death of any one of the men now represented as 'glittering bayonets' will attract the attention now given to far-off sights and sounds:

Pierre glanced over at the first puff of smoke which an instant before had been a round compact ball, and in its place he saw balloons of smoke drifting sideways, and pooff... (a pause) pooff-pooff rose three others, then four more, each one answered at the same interval by a beautiful, firm, precise boom...boom-boom-boom. Sometimes the smoke-clouds seemed to scud across the sky, sometimes they hung still while woods, fields, and glittering bayonets ran past them. From the left, over fields and bushes, these great balls of smoke were constantly rising, following their solemn reports, while nearer still, over the lowlands and the woods, burst little cloudlets of musket-smoke which had no time to form into balls but had their little echoes in just the same way. 'Trak-ta-ta-tak!' crackled the musketry, but it sounded thin and irregular in comparison with the roar of artillery. (173)

With Pierre's descent onto the field comes the aspect of the description which owes most to Stendhal. Pierre stumbles upon various areas of the conflict and various groups of men. The resulting description is confused but vital, significant in its lack of order and coherence and increasingly menacing. Pierre, however, is even more of an anomaly here than Fabrice at Waterloo, who at least was in uniform and was more of a horseman than Pierre:

They all cast the same annoyed look of inquiry at this stout man in the white hat who for some unknown reason was trampling them under his horse's hooves.

'What do you want to ride into the middle of a battalion for?' one man shouted at him.

Another gave the horse a prod with the butt-end of a musket and Pierre, leaning over his saddle-bow and scarcely able to control the plunging animal, galloped ahead of the soldiers to where there was an open space. (174)

The extent of Pierre's unawareness is revealed when he comes, unwittingly, under fire. He is unable to conceive that he might be at the heart of the battle, his own ignorance and feeling of unimportance leading him to believe that his presence in any position must denote it as being out of the mainstream of the action. He is still unaware of the noise and, in the confusion, unaware of the presence of the enemy. When the first casualties are briefly indicated it is evident that Pierre is unaware even of these. There is something almost fatuous about his vacant gazings but this only serves to underline the growing horror of the situation:

Pierre saw there was a bridge in front of him and that soldiers were doing something in the smoke on both sides of it and in the meadow, among the rows of new-mown hay he had noticed the day before; but despite the incessant firing going on there it never occurred to him that this was the very heart of the battle. He did not hear the bullets whistling from every side, or the projectiles flying over his head, did not see the enemy on the other side of the river, and it was a long time before he saw the dead and wounded, though many fell not far from him. With a smile that did not leave his lips he gazed about him. (175)

So unaware is Pierre of the grim reality of his surroundings that he fails to realise he himself is under fire and has to have his horse's wound pointed out to him. (176) When the toll that the firing is taking finally registers on Pierre he is unable to wholly absorb the import of the revelation. He becomes aware of the casualties but as yet they have no impact upon him. His reaction is one of curiosity and perhaps concern, easily suppressed following a nearby soldier's example:

It was only then for the first time that Pierre noticed the wounded, staggering along or being carried on stretchers. In the very meadow with the rows of fragrant hay through which he had ridden the day before the motionless form of a soldier was lying crosswise, his head thrown back and his shako off. 'Why have they left that poor fellow?' Pierre was about to ask, but seeing the adjutant's stern face looking in the same direction he checked himself. (177)

The ultimate contrast, expressed here, between agriculture and warfare, is a recurrent theme in the battle description, where it is strongly reminiscent of Waterloo and of The Dynasts and has an important part to play in what amounts to a complete condemnation of violence at the end.

It is seen from the lines that lead up to Pierre's installation on the redoubt that even combatants are unaware of the overall scheme of things and that their attitude is surprisingly non-tactical:

'Don't trouble about me,' said Pierre. 'I'll go up on the mound if I may?'

'Yes, do. You'll see everything from there and it's not so dangerous. And I'll come back for you.' (178)

Yet this very redoubt is a focal point and again Pierre is unable to conceive of this for the understandable reason that he himself is there. (179) He takes his place beside the battery, still almost complacent in his attitude, but soon he changes as here his experiences become rapidly less and less those of a curious gentleman on an unusual outing:

Having reached the knoll, Pierre sat down at one end of a trench which enclosed the battery, and gazed at what was happening around him, with an unconscious smile of happiness. Occasionally he rose to his feet and walked about the battery, still with the same smile, trying not to get in the way of the soldiers who were loading and hauling the guns and continually running past him with bags and charges. (180)

Here the element of fear is introduced, but by contrast rather than directly. The fear of the covering force, so acutely portrayed in the description of Andrei's waiting troops, is not felt here in the busy isolation of the redoubt. The incessant activity of the group initially manages to stave off fears:

In contrast to the painful anxiety felt by the infantry soldiers of the covering force, here in the battery, where a limited number of gunners busy at their work were separated from the rest by a trench, there was a general feeling of eager excitement, a sort of family feeling shared by all alike. (181)

Tolstoy effectively describes<sup>(182)</sup> how, after initial suspicion, the soldiers, still in a good humour, accept Pierre as more or less a harmless eccentric and even display a half child-like, half condescending affection towards a man who is not of their profession. His apparent lack of fear intrigues them and their delight in his remarks and astonishment at the calm of a non-combatant and a gentleman help to dispel any appearance of fiction as the description progresses. The power of Tolstoy to endow his fiction with the illusion of reality grows, for here Tolstoy, like Hardy at his best, has relatively little to prove and simple things to say. A reference to the young officer 'for the first or perhaps the second time on duty of this kind'<sup>(183)</sup> adds to the impression of observation rather than fictional creation, and, at such times, the narrative never at any one moment fails to constitute a convincing, satisfying historical account, whereas descriptions of Napoleon, which may sometimes be founded on fact, never achieve the same distinction. Gradually Pierre becomes aware of what is happening. At first this is only covertly expressed:

His first unconscious delight in the sights and sounds of the battlefield had now given place to another feeling, especially since he had seen that soldier lying alone in the hayfield.<sup>(184)</sup>

Significantly that one casualty has a lasting impact, preying upon Pierre's mind where perhaps a massacre would have been impossible to accept or might have rendered him indifferent. As casualty succeeds casualty and guns start to be put out of action the spirit of the men does not diminish but rather is uplifted. Tolstoy stresses this rise in the pitch of emotions at some length:

By ten o'clock a score of men had been carried away; a couple of cannon had been disabled and shells fell thicker and faster on the battery, while bullets hummed and whistled from out of the distance. But the men serving the battery did not seem to pay any heed: merry voices and joking were heard on all sides. <sup>(185)</sup>

The account is not without faint touches of humour. For an old sergeant there is no such thing as retreat:

'If they've retired it's because there's work for them to do farther back.' (186)

The soldiers, in their high spirits, mock the fearful militiamen who balk at the sight of a soldier with his leg torn off. (187) There is a strong contrast between the horror of the bluntly described injury, felt by the militiamen and the reader, and the almost hysterical good humour of the soldiers who, in their desperate situation, seek to banish all fears and doubts:

Pierre noticed that every ball that hit the redoubt, every man that fell, increased the general elation. (188)

Every casualty would add to the status of the remaining as survivors if they chose to ignore that this also diminished their chances of survival. From this point onwards the narrative speeds up, an element of panic appears, the confusion is stressed and all trace of good humour disappears. Events seem far from being ordered:

Pierre looked out over the breastworks. One face particularly caught his eye, belonging to a pale young officer who was walking backwards, letting his sword hang down and looking uneasily around. (189)

From the redoubt Tolstoy provides a brief but harrowing glimpse of an encounter:

The ranks of the infantry disappeared in the smoke but prolonged cheering and rapid musketry fire could still be heard. A few minutes later multitudes of wounded men and stretcher-bearers came back from that direction. (190)

This savage, compressed miniature of the battle precedes the change in mood of the men which is complete and in total opposition to what it was previously:

No one paid any attention to Pierre now. Once or twice he was furiously shouted at for being in the way. (191)

At this point the most striking and, for Pierre, immediate death occurs. The young officer is killed, and the brevity and simplicity of the description provide the impact that a dramatised account would not:

Suddenly something happened: the young officer gave a gasp and bending double collapsed sitting on the ground, like a bird shot on the wing. Everything went strange, confused and overcast before Pierre's eyes. (192)

With the mounting horror and confusion the noise becomes more and more intrusive until Pierre is aware of little else. (193)

By contrast the announcement that there are no more charges is understated, gaining from this presentation more than from any insistence upon the gravity of such a situation:

The sergeant hurried up to the officer and in a frightened whisper (like a butler informing his master at a dinner-party that there is no more of the wine he asked for), said that the charges were finished. (194)

Thrown off his feet by an explosion during a voluntary search for the ammunition-boxes Pierre at last knows real terror, (195) and with an end to Pierre's composure the ensuing events gain in the intensity of their horror. He arrives back at the redoubt unaware of the dramatic turn events have taken, and a fast-moving, confused description of subsequent proceedings finds him engaged personally with an enemy soldier. Pierre's confusion is indicated by the lack of any identification of the soldier, apart from the blue uniform. The description is extremely powerful:

But he had not time to realise that the colonel had been killed, that the soldier shouting 'Help!' was a prisoner, and that another man had been bayoneted in the back before his eyes, for hardly had he set foot in the redoubt when a lean sallow-faced, perspiring man in blue uniform rushed on him sword in hand, shouting something. (196)

The encounter between Pierre and the French soldier is magnificently related. (197) The bewilderment and confusion, the mutual incomprehension of the situation and above all the artificiality of the struggle come over clearly. There is nothing real or personal in the conflict, neither really knows what he is doing. In fact they end by running off in opposite directions, Pierre fleeing over the bodies of the slain or the wounded; so many compared with the one body that had been seen at the beginning:

Giving no further thought to the question who had taken whom prisoner, the Frenchman ran back to the battery, while Pierre dashed downhill, stumbling over the dead and wounded, who it seemed to him were catching at his feet. (198)

The episode ends as Pierre realises that all those soldiers he shared the battery with are dead. At last he feels a total revulsion and cannot believe that others could continue the battle he now abandons:

'They must surely leave off now. Now they will be horrified at what they have done!' he thought, aimlessly following in the wake of a procession of stretcher-bearers moving from the battlefield. (199)

Throughout the rest of the account of the battle descriptions occur which add to the horror of the situation and support the impression that there is a strong element of anti-war propaganda here. The horrible, almost mechanical, nature of the continuing slaughter is brought out:

As soon as they got out of range of the shot and the shell their superior officers located in the background promptly restored order and discipline, and under the influence of that discipline led them back to the zone of fire, where order fell victim to terror of death and a blind stampede in all directions. (200)

The casualties at Borodino were immense. With no retreat on either side it was a continual slaughter. Tolstoy shows the

losses through Napoleon's eyes, since if he who had seen so many fields covered with dead and wounded is impressed at the numbers, how great and how awe-inspiring they must be:

In the slowly dispersing powder-smoke, over the whole plain through which Napoleon rode, horses and men were lying in pools of blood, singly or in heaps. Neither Napoleon nor any of his generals had ever before seen such a frightful sight or so many slain in so small an area. (201)

The account of Andrei's injury and the appropriately bloody finale to the battle in the field hospital is preceded by a description of the strain undergone by the waiting troops. (202) Here in reserve, although not in action, they incur vast losses. There is not even the justification that they are fighting. The slaughter is unresisted. The men, and Andrei, desperately try to put the horror of their situation from their minds, seizing upon every minor incident in the attempt. Tolstoy comments of Andrei:

There was nothing for him to do and no orders to be given. Everything was done of itself. (203)

It is tempting to point out that the one vital thing, moving the men, was not done. Here the intrusion of Tolstoy's theories mars the tragedy of the situation, where the men die helplessly without even the illusion of defending themselves.

The aftermath of the fighting is expressed not only in the deaths but in the injuries. The operating tent is introduced in a sinister fashion:

Some crows, scenting blood, flew about among the birch-trees, cawing impatiently. All around the tents, over an area of more than five acres, blood-stained men variously attired stood, sat or lay. (204)

The medical personnel, though no worse than any other of its kind, is as unimpressing as the place:

One of the doctors came out of the tent in a blood-soaked apron, holding a cigar between the thumb and little finger of one of his blood-stained hands, so as not to besmear it. (205)



Tolstoy in no way diminishes the horror of the situation. Simple statements of fact, with an absence of commentary, have sufficient impact here; little could be added:

From the tents came the sound of loud, angry wailing mixed with plaintive moans. At intervals dressers ran out for water or to point to those who were to be brought in next. The wounded waiting their turn outside the tents groaned, sighed, wept, screamed, swore or begged for vodka. (206)

The operations on the Tartar and Anatole Kuragin act as a background to Andrei's own operation. These passages are among the most overtly horrifying in War and Peace but perhaps the most significant is that passage where Andrei looks back to the memory of his sight of so many whole bodies which had revulsed him, perhaps prophetically:

Everything he saw about him merged into a single general impression of naked, bleeding human bodies which seemed to fill the whole of the low tent, just as a few weeks before, on that hot August day, bodies had filled the dirty pond beside the Smolensk road. Yes, it was the same flesh, the same chair à canon, the sight of which had incited in him then a sort of horror prophetic of what he felt now. (207)

In many ways the final statement on the battle is the one which, as mentioned earlier, embodies the idea of nature disturbed, of husbandry destroyed and wasted. This is surely the most serious and profound condemnation of war:

Several tens of thousands of men lay dead in various attitudes and uniforms on the fields and meadows belonging to the Davydov family and certain Crown serfs - those fields and meadows where for centuries the peasants of Borodino, Gorky, Shevardino and Semeonovsk had harvested their crops and grazed their cattle. (208)

It is fitting that Hardy should have perceived the importance of the pacifist element in War and Peace for he too, as well as Tolstoy and Erckmann-Chatrion showed nature laid waste by war. (209) Hardy's comments on War and Peace put all controversy into proportion and illuminate the one strong, coherent philosophical aspect of the work which is as important as the

pure artistry of the fiction:

"But surely all these objectors should be hushed by his great argument, and every defect in his particular reasonings hidden by the blaze of glory that shines from his masterly general inditement of war as a modern principal, with all its senseless and illogical crimes." (210)

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