A powerful sense of history is commonly cited among the foremost characteristics of Romanticism. More often than not it is the Romantic interest in the Middle Ages that is stressed above all other historic periods. However, as Hugh Honour has pointed out, medievalism probably played a more important role in "pre-Romanticism"—that complex prelude to Romanticism marked by "Gothick" novels and, what Kenneth Clark called, "Gothic Rococo" architecture—than in Romanticism proper. Indeed, the Romantics were as much preoccupied with the Middle Ages, as with the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries (Victor Hugo's Cromwell, Walter Scott's Waverley novels, Eugène Delacroix's paintings of Michelangelo and Torquato Tasso), or, for that matter, with the more recent history of the Revolution and the Napoleonic era (Charles Dickens's Tale of Two Cities, Hugo's Quatrevingt-treize, François Rude's Awakening of Napoleon). Only the classical past, for so long the single focus of historic interest, had little attraction for them.

While the literature on Romantic historiography and certain aspects of Romantic historicism (notably the historical novel) is substantial, the extent to which the sense of history pervaded Romantic culture, both in "breadth" and in "depth" is seldom sufficiently stressed. For not only did it have an impact on all aspects of culture, from literature to theatre, music, fine and decorative arts, architecture, interior decoration and women's fashions, but it also had much more profound repercussions within society than is usually acknowledged. Instead of merely affecting the upper crust of the educated male establishment, it likewise animated part of the lower classes and segments of society that traditionally had remained largely untouched by "high" cultural trends: women and children. This seems to have been particularly true in France, where the
political and social upheavals caused by the Revolution and the Empire appear to have prepared the ground for a cultural democratization on a scale hitherto unknown, even unthinkable.4

It is the purpose of this essay to demonstrate that this widespread popularity of history during the height of the Romantic movement—the later Restoration and July Monarchy periods—was symptomatic of the emergence in France of a popular culture, different from traditional folklore, and anticipating in several important ways the mass culture of the twentieth century. Indeed, that the popularity of history during this period amounted to a popular cultural phenomenon comparable (with certain reservations, to be discussed below) in intensity and breadth to, let us say, the preoccupation with ecology during the 1970s or the interest in women’s issues during the 1980s. Not unlike those twentieth-century phenomena of mass culture, historicism affected both “high” and “low” culture, to the point where it became a commonly shared cultural good.

This essay consists of three parts. In the first section the broad contours of the popularity of history are sketched, in the context of literary as well as visual culture. Attention will be given to the pervasive presence of historicism rather than its complex ideological ramifications, though clearly historicism is always to a greater or lesser degree ideologically determined. In the second part, a single strand within the phenomenon of the popularization of history, namely the powerful impact in France of the historic novels of Walter Scott, is taken up and considered in greater detail. The concluding section constitutes an analysis of how and to what extent the popularity of history during the Romantic period fits modern definitions of popular culture.

The Romantic sense of history must be attributed first and foremost to history itself.5 The Revolution of 1789 and its stormy aftermath, as well as the subsequent exploits of Napoleon, ripped apart the political and social fabric of France. Few Frenchmen, from the members of the royal family to the peasants in the provinces, remained unaffected by the events of the twenty-six years that spanned the storming of the Bastille and the Battle of Waterloo, and none but the mindless could fail to be aware of living through a period of historical significance.6

Just as the events of 1989 in Eastern Europe and China caused many to meditate on the French and Russian Revolutions,7 so the survivors of the Revolution and the Empire saw past revolutions (the Great Rebellion of England, the Reformation in the German countries, the Dutch revolt against Hapsburg domination, etc.) in a new and different light. Most importantly, the cataclysmic events of the Revolution and the Empire brought into focus the impact on the lives of ordinary people of “living history,” and fueled the realization that history, beyond an inventory of kings, wars, and peace treaties, is the sum of the cumulative experiences of a group of individuals. While the
experiences of the Revolution and the Empire set history in a new perspective, mutatis mutandis, history seemed more relevant than ever to the events of the immediate past and present.

In addition to history's new pertinence to contemporary events, there was, as Marie-Claude Chaudonneret has pointed out, a political urgency for studying history as well. The defeat and humiliation of France in 1815 had made the country lose faith. Looking backward at past achievements, by studying more glorious periods of national history, was one way for France to regain its national self-esteem.

A new mode of history writing was introduced during the Restoration period by a group of authors, born in the 1780s and 1790s, including, most importantly, Augustin Thierry, Auguste Mignet, Adolphe Thiers, and Prosper de Barante. Influenced by the historical novel, a literary genre recently launched in England by Walter Scott (about whom more below), they introduced a narrative style of historiography that differed from the history writing of Chateaubriand and his followers, which had a more epical character and was still deeply rooted in the eighteenth-century philosophical approach to history, exemplified by Voltaire and Montesquieu. In his introduction to the *Histoire des Ducs de Bourgogne* (1824–26), Barante declared, “I have tried to restore to history herself the charm that the historical novel has lent her. She must be above all exact and serious, but it seemed to me that she could be at once true and alive.”

To Barante and his colleagues lending charm (attrait) to history was not a whim but a serious decision aimed at reaching the largest possible audience for the purpose of the political and moral education of the “people.” Thierry wrote, in his *Dix ans d'études historiques* (1835), "Born a commoner, I asked that the commoners' condition be paid due tribute in our history, that the memories of plebeian integrity, of bourgeois energy and liberty be collected with care and respect; in brief, that with the help of science joined to patriotism, our old chronicles are made to yield stories capable of touching popular sensibility.” As Thierry's remark indicates, the narrative historians made extensive use of old chronicles and documents to enliven their historic narrative with "authentic" anecdotal material and descriptive detail. By thus making history more colorful and “real” (what was called couleur locale at the time), they hoped to attract a new popular public, far broader than the traditional readership of history books, composed largely of scholars and intellectuals.

Without exception, the new narrative historians were liberals, deeply involved in the public life of their time. Several of them were journalists and some, like Adolphe Thiers, were to play important roles in politics itself. History, to these men, was a polemical instrument and historiography a political act, especially crucial during the Restoration period when censorship and oppression made explicit political commentary and outright political action all but impossible. As the narrative historians, without exception, were ardent Orléanists, their role as instigators of the opposition was played
out by the onset of the July Monarchy, but a new generation of historians, most
importantly Jules Michelet, took over that task. Michelet's aim was to educate not
merely the liberal middle class but the laboring masses by writing popular history
books13 that went beyond narrating the events of the past to make them come back to
life.16 To Michelet, the historian was a secular prophet whose task it was to show the
people that the history of mankind was the account of its progressive march towards
complete physical and spiritual freedom.

The popular historians of the Restoration and July Monarchy periods nearly all
defered to Walter Scott as a model for their new mode of history writing.17 In his Dix
Ans d'études historiques, Thierry praised Scott for "studying the mass of the population
and revealing conflicting interests."18 Indeed, as Georg Lukács has pointed out, Scott's
characteristic plots feature ordinary "heroes" who, caught up in a momentous historical
conflict, do not become fanatical partisans but take a conciliatory stance. As such they
are exemplary of the mass of the population which, sandwiched between two opposing
extremist camps, shows fluctuating sympathies now for one, then for the other. Scott's
popularity in France may well have been related to his preference for such juste-milieu
heroes, though no doubt it had other causes as well. His historical imagination (always
rooted in thorough research),19 which enabled him to lend (what Delacroix would call)
an astonishing smell of reality to the historical narrative, and his ability to portray the
totality of the historical moment in the "complex interaction between 'above' and
'below,'"20 may well have been the most important factors in his vast international
reknown.21

Scott's popularity in France was enormous, as was that of his American follower
James Fenimore Cooper. Not surprisingly, these two authors had a substantial literary
following in France, ranging from forgers and pasticheurs to more or less gifted imita-
tors of their style. In 1832, Stendhal estimated that Scott had as many as two hundred
French followers, all of whose works were read, sometimes so widely as to necessitate
numerous editions.22 In addition to those popular authors, the likes of Félix Bodin, A.-
H. de Kératry, Victor du Hamel, and other now mostly forgotten writers, France
produced its own brand of popular historical novel, best exemplified by the work of
Victor Hugo and Alfred de Vigny. Unlike Scott, who looked upon the past as the
prehistory to the present, these authors viewed history as a series of moral lessons for
contemporary society.23 Historical accuracy was less important to them than it was to
Scott. As Vigny put it, it was the "truthful observation of human nature" that counted
rather than the "authenticity of fact."24

The final flowering of the historic novel in France came in the form of the romans de
cape et d'épée, the cloak-and-dagger novels of Alexandre Dumas and his followers.
Though these authors did draw on historical sources,25 history to them was primarily an
appropriate dressing for an engaging adventure story.26 Notwithstanding, Dumas best-
selling novels, Les Trois mousquetaires (1844) and Le Comte de Monte Cristo (1844), proba-
bly did more to popularize the history of seventeenth-century France than any other work of fact or fiction.

In his thoughtful study, *Popular French Romanticism*, James Smith Allen argues that the Romantic period fostered a popular literature that, unlike the old *bibliothèque bleue*, closely resembled the elite literature of the day. Indeed, Allen goes so far as to claim that certain categories of Romantic literature clearly belonged to "literary worlds both high and low." Within these categories, he includes, most importantly, narrative histories and historic novels. Using a variety of indicators, such as edition sizes, catalogues of lending libraries, and miscellaneous references, Allen demonstrates that narrative histories and historical novels were read by a considerable public comprised of readers of different gender and age, and diverse social backgrounds. In addition to providing pertinent statistical data, Allen informs us, for example, that the editions of J.A. de Norvins's narrative histories (such as his *Histoire de Napoléon* of 1827) sometimes ran into the tens of thousands; that between 1830 and 1842, Walter Scott's work appears in all twenty-six Parisian lending library catalogues he consulted; that Barante's *Histoire des Ducs de Bourgogne* was read by schoolboys, and that in 1838 copies of Hugo's *Notre Dame de Paris* were sold in the street for one franc per volume (about half of the daily wages of an unskilled laborer). Allen furthermore emphasizes the importance of the ephemeral press for the diffusion of such popular Romantic genres as history and historical fiction. Short articles on history, for example, appeared in the *Musée des familles*, the *Magasin Pittoresque*, and other popular periodicals which had circulations in the tens of thousands and, after 1836, when *La Presse* ran the first installment novel, a number of historical novels appeared in serial form in the newspapers.

While demonstrating the increased availability of histories and historical novels, both in book and serial form, Allen also discusses the broadening of the reading public during the Restoration and, especially, the July Monarchy period. It is estimated that, while in 1831 only 53 percent of men older than fourteen could read, by 1851 the figure had risen to 68 percent. During that same period, the figure for women increased from 40 percent to 52 percent. This meant that reading was no longer a privileged middle-class activity but one in which the labouring classes increasingly shared as well. "The fact exists, the people (le peuple) know how to read," wrote Alfred Karr in 1835, and in Daumier's print, *Worker and Bourgeois* (Ouvrier et bourgeois) of 1848 (fig. 72), it is the worker in his white smock who is absorbed by a newspaper while the bourgeois in black tailcoat and tophat only thinks of his belly.

The rapidly growing number of *cabinets de lecture*, where books could be borrowed for the price of ten centimes, brought historic novels and history books within range of a large segment of the urban population. At the same time, technical improvements in paper making and printing made the production of printed materials (magazines, newspapers, books) ever cheaper. All these factors operated jointly to bring historical fact and fiction to a broad segment of a population that encompassed men and women,
adults and children, the well- and little-educated, the office worker, the shopkeeper, the skilled artisan, and the domestic.

While narrative histories and historic novels must have reached a substantial audience, an even broader segment of the population was exposed to history through the agency of the theatre. Both the Romantic dramas of Victor Hugo, Alfred de Musset, Alfred de Vigny, and Alexandre Dumas, and the popular historic melodramas of Guibbert de Pixerécourt and his successors—Victor Anicet-Bourgeois, Joseph Bouchardy, Adolphe Dennery, and others—drew on history as a main source of inspiration. Joining the visual to the verbal, the historic costume piece brought alive the very same
figures and events from the past that were common fare in narrative histories and historic novels. Indeed, since many melodramas were nothing more than dramatizations of popular historic novels, they divulged the plots of those works among a segment of the population that either could not read or read with such difficulty that a novel or history book would have been beyond its reach. "I am writing for those who cannot read," said De Pixerécourt, one of the most-performed writers of melodramas in the early nineteenth century.\textsuperscript{36} And though his remark may well have been somewhat hyperbolic, it does suggest that the historic melodramas that were performed in the boulevard theatres of the Restoration and the July Monarchy drew crowds whose literacy level was limited. Based on a study of the relation between salaries and the price of theatre tickets during the July Monarchy, John McCormick has suggested that the typical public of the boulevard theatres was composed of skilled artisans, small shopkeepers and traders, \textit{petits rentiers}, soldiers on half-pay, etc.\textsuperscript{37} Contemporary cartoons, such as Daumier's \textit{The Fifth Act at the Gaîté} (\textit{Le Cinquième acte à la Gaîté}; fig. 73), with its public of petty bourgeois and working class folk, confirm this suggestion and furthermore show that the boulevard theatre attracted women and men, adults as well as children (though the latter may have attended primarily because babysitting care was not available or affordable).

Though it is customary to make a distinction between the (low) melodramas of the boulevard theatres and the (high) dramas performed in the Comédie française or the Odéon, it must be stressed that the Romantic drama did attract a popular audience as well. McCormick has shown that the least expensive seats at the Comédie française—or the Théâtre français, as it was called at the time—cost one franc, twice as much as the cheapest tickets at the Ambigu or the Gaîté, yet still within reach of the public that frequented the boulevard theatres. The least expensive seats at the Porte St. Martin (fig. 74), where many of Hugo's dramas premiered, in 1835 cost only five centimes more than at the Ambigu and the Gaîté, and by the end of the July Monarchy they were the same price. Hugo seems to have been well aware of this fact and wrote his plays with the popular component of his audiences in mind. In the introduction to Ruy Blas, first performed at the newly opened Renaissance on November 8, 1838, he wrote, "Three types of spectators make up what one commonly calls the public: firstly, women; secondly, thinkers, thirdly, the crowd (\textit{la foule}) in the proper sense of the word."\textsuperscript{38} Hugo went on to say that each group looks for something different in a play: the crowd wants action, women want passion, thinkers want convincing psychological characters. Unlike other forms of theatre, which only deliver one of these elements (tragedy providing passion; melodrama, action; and comedy, convincing psychological characters), the new "\textit{drame romantique}" contained all three elements.\textsuperscript{39} Hugo, by his own admission, consciously strove for a dramatic form that would appeal to a diversified public of men and women, of educated and non-educated viewers.

Like drama and melodrama, opera too drew on history for its plots. "Grand opera,"
a July Monarchy creation much like the “drame romantique,” was almost exclusively historic in inspiration—as the best-known operas performed during the July Monarchy confirm—and it was in opera that history found perhaps its most grandiose and dramatic visual representation (fig. 75). Meyerbeer’s Robert Le Diable (first performed in 1831) and his Huguenots (1836), both incredibly successful grand operas were set in the past, as were Bellini’s I Capuleti e I Montecchi (1833) and I Puritani (1835), Berlioz’s Benvenuto Cellini, Donizetti’s Anna Bolena (1831), Marino Faliero (1835), Lucia de Lammermoor (1837), Robert Devereux, comte d’Essex (1839), and Lucrezia Borgia (1840), Halévy’s La Juive (1835) and Charles VI (1843), and Rossini’s Guillaume Tell (Paris 1829).
to name only a few. Many opera libretti were, in fact, based on historic novels, dramas, or melodramas. *Lucia de Lammermoor*‘s libretto, for example, was based on Scott’s *The Bride of Lammermoor* and Verdi’s *Ernani* (Venice, 1844) on Hugo’s drama *Hernani*.

In his essay, “Word and Image in Pixérécourt’s Melodramas,” W.D. Howarth demonstrates that one of the important theatrical innovations of the melodrama was an “increasing reliance on the non-literal, and to some extent, non-verbal elements of the
Among those non-verbal elements Howarth mentions, in particular, the frequent use of static *tableaux*, which freeze dramatic moments in the play, much like a still at the end of a sitcom. Purely visual, the *tableau* (which also became a popular device in opera) interrupts dialogue and action to cause the viewer to concentrate momentarily on the stage set, the display of the figures on the stage, their gestures, body language, and costumes.

Such puncturing of the verbal by the visual has a parallel during the Romantic period in the illustrated book. A typically Romantic phenomenon, the illustrated book emerged as a function of economic and technical developments. An increased demand followed by an increased supply of books created a more competitive market and a need for aggressive marketing strategies. Book illustration constituted such a strategy, which was more effective as illustrators were better known. The invention of wood-engraving, a picture-printing technique that could be combined with traditional type (thus making it possible to print text and image at one run of the press), made the production of illustrated books less cumbersome, hence less expensive. While in earlier illustrated books the pictures (printed from etched or engraved copperplates or lithographic stones)
were printed on separate pages, often removed from the text they were meant to illustrate, the new woodblock illustrations (sujettes) were set within the text, generally without a border, creating a fluid relationship between the visual and the verbal. It was under the July Monarchy, particularly during the decade of 1835–1845, that Romantic book illustration reached its zenith. Many of the best-known illustrated books of the period were historic novels, histories, or newly edited classics (Dante, Shakespeare, Cervantes, Molière, La Fontaine, etc.). Illustrations, closely linked to the text, helped readers to visualize historical scenes and figures. Their authors, Jean Gigoux, Alfred and Tony Johannot, Eugène Lami, Célestin Nanteuil, Camille Roqueplan, and others helped to promote the sale of the books they illustrated by exhibiting paintings and watercolors (sometimes the very ones that served as prototypes for their illustrations) on literary and historical subjects at the Paris Salons. Thus Tony Johannot, in 1831, exhibited a series of watercolors on subjects of Walter Scott, which were reproduced as wood-engraved illustrations in Furne’s edition of Scott’s Oeuvres complètes (1830–1832). Similarly, in 1836, he showed four watercolors underlying illustrations for Victor Hugo’s Notre-Dame de Paris (Renduel edition, 1836), and in 1838, ten watercolors for illustrations of Goldsmith’s Vicar of Wakefield (Bourgueleret edition, 1838). At the same time, he exhibited larger oil paintings on themes by Scott (1833, 1839, 1840), as well as scenes from medieval and Renaissance history, such as the Death of Du Guesclin (1835), the Battle of Rosebecque (1839; for the Musée de Versailles), the Battle of Fontenay-en-Auxerrois (1840; for the Musée de Versailles); Childhood of Du Guesclin (Salon, 1840); and Louis VII Forcing the Passage of the Maeander (1842; for the Musée de Versailles).

Johannot’s paintings of historical subjects were by no means exceptional nor did they present a new phenomenon at the Salon. Historical subjects, other than classical (inspired by history books, historic novels, biographies of historic figures, historic dramas and melodramas, or literary classics of bygone ages), had been exhibited at the Salon since 1802, when the painters of the so-called School of Lyon (Fleury Richard, Pierre Révoil, and their followers) first began to exhibit meticulously painted anecdotal scenes from French medieval and Renaissance history. The new “genre anecdotique” or “genre troubadour” met with critical acclaim and was avidly collected by several important collectors. These included Empress Joséphine and Napoleon himself, whose artistic advisor, Dominique Vivant Denon, on several occasions drew the emperor’s attention to the new genre, in which he saw combined “the detailed brushwork of the Flemish and the taste and elegance of the French.”

The success of the genre troubadour did not last for more than twelve years. Already by 1824 it was surpassed by other forms of history painting, commonly lumped together as “Romantic history painting.” This broad category comprised large scenes from medieval or Renaissance history, painted in a tight and detailed style or with a
more loose Romantic brush, and small historic genre scenes, usually painted in a loose sketchy style. The new Romantic history painting first triumphed at the Salon of 1827–28 with such monumental works as Paul Delaroche's *Death of Queen Elizabeth of England* (422 × 343 cm), Eugène Deveria's *Birth of Henri IV* (484 × 392 cm), and Eugène Delacroix's *Death of Sardanapalus* (395 × 495 cm) and his *Doge Marino Faliero*, as well as more intimate historic genre scenes like Robert-Fleury's *Tasso in the Monastery of St. Onofrio*, Bonington's *François I and the Queen of Navarra*, and the same artist's *Henri IV and the Ambassador of Spain*. It was to remain extremely popular at the Salons throughout the next twenty years.47

Indeed, Romantic history painting received a major shot in the arm with the advent of the July Monarchy. Louis-Philippe's own interest in history, combined with his keen awareness of the importance of history as a means of political propaganda and his sensitivity towards history’s popular appeal, not only caused him to conceive of the Musée historique at Versailles (see essays by Marrinan and Munholland in this volume) but also led him to buy many popular paintings on historic themes for the national collections as well as his own private one. Among his first major acquisitions for the state was Paul Delaroche's *The Children of Edward IV* (Paris, Musée du Louvre), which was bought at the Salon of 1831 for 6,000 francs. Louis-Philippe's acquisition of this painting (a bit surprising in light of its implicit criticism of usurpers of the throne) is indicative of the king's keen sensitivity to public sentiment.49 For Delaroche's painting was the ultimate crowdpleaser, which inspired a popular play (dedicated to Delaroche), *Les Enfants d’Edouard*, written by Casimir Delavigne and first performed in the Théâtre français in 1833, and was reproduced in numerous publications, including *L’Artiste* (1831) and C.P. Landon's *Salons* (1831). Additional reproductions for separate distribution were made by H. Prudhomme (engraving), A. Béranger (two lithographs after the heads only), A.-H. Cabasson, and Delaroche himself.50

The enormous popularity of Delaroche's *The Children of Edward IV* was symptomatic of the broadening cultural appeal of the Salon after 1830. In the course of the July Monarchy, it changed from a biennial exhibition to an annual one (1833) and grew from an exhibition with some 1500 entries at the end of the Restoration period to a megashow with an average of 2,500 paintings, sculptures, and architectural drawings under the July Monarchy. The number of visitors also increased dramatically and this public, in growing measure, was composed of educationally and financially less-privileged members of society, causing the Salon to turn into something of a place of popular entertainment. Unfortunately, no precise statistics of the total numbers or the sociological (class, gender, age, etc.) makeup of the Salon public are available and the indicators most frequently used to describe this public are Salon critiques and documentary or satiric images of the Salon, neither of which are especially objective or precise. However, one reliable indicator of the increasing popularity of the Salon is the frequency with which Salons are critiqued in the press and the nature of the papers in which these
critiques appear. Thanks to Neil McWilliam, a complete bibliography of all Salon reviews is currently available and from it we learn that during the sixteen years between the first July Monarchy Salon (1831) and the last (1847), 1,655 reviews appeared, that is nearly three hundred more than the total amount of reviews of all previous Salons, from 1699 to 1827, combined. It also means an average of a little over one hundred reviews per Salon, increasing from 78 in 1831 to 139 in 1846. McWilliam's bibliography also informs us of the nature of the papers and periodicals in which these reviews appeared. It is a motley group that includes, besides such respected established dailies as the Journal des débats, Le Siècle, and the Moniteur universel, and such prestigious art magazines as L'Arististe, numerous popular publications (Magasin pittoresque, Vert-Vert, Le Furet de la ville et de la banlieue, Le Voleur); furthermore, papers directed at specific professional groups (Garde nationale, Journal de commerce); entertainment guides (Courrier des théâtres, Entr’acte); a surprisingly large number of women's magazines (Petit Courrier des Dames, La Mère de famille, Journal des demoiselles); and even a number of children's magazines (Journal des enfants, Le Petit poucet).

With this knowledge in mind, it is instructive to look at Biard's *Four o'Clock at the Salon* (fig. 76), which seems to show the same crowd as the one that fills the boulevard theatre in Daumier's cartoon *The Fifth Act at the Gaieté* (fig. 73) of 1848. This leads us to conclude that the Salon public, particularly on free admission days, included the same skilled artisans, small shopkeepers and traders, petits rentiers, soldiers on half-pay, housewives, and children, who frequented the boulevard theatres and filled the less expensive seats at the Porte St. Martin or the Comédie française.

**HISTORY** was everywhere in July Monarchy France: in Louis-Philippe's Musée historique, in the Salon, the theatre, the opera, the library, the cabinet de lecture, the home. People's daily surroundings and the very clothes they wore were marked by the powerful historic consciousness of the time. Fashion prints of the mid-thirties show women dressed in rococo-inspired fashions, seated on Renaissance chairs in interiors filled with Gothic bookcases (fig. 77). Typical of the July Monarchy, this historical eclecticism may perhaps be related to the contemporary stage, where props and costumes were "recycled" from one historic play to another, without too much concern for historical accuracy. In a brief exposé on clothing during the July Monarchy, Henri Bouchot emphasizes the influence on women's fashions of the Romantic drama (to which we might add other histrionic events such as operas, masked balls, carnivals, etc.), which in turn were freely inspired by Renaissance and Baroque paintings. In the course of the 1830s those fashions moved from a Renaissance medley that combined leg-of-mutton sleeves (*manches à gigot*) à la François I with ruffled millstone collars (fig. 78), to a clothing style derived from late seventeenth- and eighteenth-century models, with toilettes à la Pompadour, à la Montespan, or à la Lavallière.

It is important to stress that history's presence was felt not only in interior spaces—
museums, theatres, libraries, and private homes—but outside on the street as well. Walking through Paris during the July Monarchy, one encountered history at every corner: in the picturesque sites of vieux Paris, which enjoyed a new vogue thanks to their discussion and reproductions in numerous guidebooks, topographic albums (often published in inexpensive installments), and memoirs (fig. 79); in bookshop windows, where the latest illustrated histories and historic novels were on display; in theatrical affiches announcing some Romantic drama, historic melodrama, or grand opera; in the shop windows of luxury commodity dealers, where small historic genre scenes in oil, watercolor, or print mingled with furniture and bibelots in various neo-styles; in the print stalls on the quais, where lithographs of historic scenes (often reproductions of Salon paintings) were for sale for modest prices; in the costumes of guests at masked balls and carnival revelers returning home at night (fig. 80), and in contemporary women’s
Romantic culture. An advertisement in Le Siècle of May 20, 1840, claimed that up to that date two million volumes of Defauconpret’s translations of Scott had been sold. When keeping in mind that Defauconpret was only one of several translators of Scott’s novels, one realizes that the total number of sales must have been considerably higher. Translations of Scott’s novels could be found in every bookshop and cabinet de lecture, not only in Paris but also in the provinces. Flaubert’s Emma Bovary, during her years in the convent at Rouen, after having clandestinely read Gothic novels and romances, “moved on” to Walter Scott. Flaubert marvelously characterizes the popular Romantic mode as he writes “coming later to Walter Scott, she [Emma] conceived a passion for the historical, and dreamed about oak chests, guardrooms, minstrels. She would have liked to live in some old manor house, like those deep-bosomed châtelaines, who spend their
days beneath pointed arches, leaning on the parapet, chin in hand, watching a cavalier with a white plume galloping up out of the distance countryside on a black charger. Scott’s novels were not only read in every part of France but also by all social classes from the white collar bourgeoisie represented by Emma and Charles Bovary to the blue collar working class. George Sand in Les Compagnons du Tour de France relates how a young workman sneaks at night into the library of his mistress to read the works of Walter Scott. 
the major illustrators of Scott's work (Johannot or Roqueplan), abandoned such subjects at the height of Scott's popularity in the early 1830s. This may have been the time when he first felt that Scott was not in good taste and that his works were on a "lower" plane than those of Voltaire, Cervantes, and Lesage. The fact that Scott's novels could turn "old-fashioned" so fast meant that they could never achieve the status of "classics," with all the lofty, everlasting aesthetic value that that term implies, but that they must be more like "popular literature," which enjoys a brief vogue before disappearing without a trace.

Despite his alleged disdain for Scott, Delacroix could not quite suppress his fascination with his novels, just as he couldn't deny that he spent "delightful moments" with Gogol's stories (which he found lacking in originality) or received a "strange pleasure" reading Mérimée's "mongrel" writing style. This may explain his return to Scott subjects in the late 1840s and the 1850s, when he painted at least four subjects from Ivanhoe, Scott's ultimately popular novel.

IN HIS Popular French Romanticism, James Smith Allen includes historic novels and history books among several literary genres that he characterizes as "popular Romantic literature." In this essay I suggest going one step further by calling Romantic historicism as a whole a phenomenon of popular culture, clearly distinct from the folkloristic preoccupation with history of previous periods. In folk culture, the interest in history tends to focus on single figures (in France, this might be Charlemagne, "good king" Dagobert, the Duke of Marlborough, or Napoleon), decontextualized timeless heroes, much like Christian saints, whose reknown usually rests in one or a few grand achievements which often are exaggerations, deformations, even fabulous flourishes on historic events. The form into which this folk historicism is cast—legends, folk songs, images populaires, pantomimes, etc.—are derived from high cultural forms of the past or present, which have been adapted to a degree where they have become new and different, clearly distinguishable from elite cultural forms.

Popular historicism during the Restoration and especially the July Monarchy period was of an entirely different nature. No clear dividing line can be drawn between "high" and "low." Thierry, Barante, and Michelet, while themselves belonging to the male intellectual uppercrust, aimed their writings at "le peuple." Scott's historic novels were read by members of the Parisian cultural elite (Delacroix), by farmers' daughters in provincial convent schools (Emma Bovary), and, if we are to believe George Sand, by members of the laboring class. Access to historic literature, whether factual or fictional, rapidly increased under the Restoration and July Monarchy regimes due to increased literacy rates and availability of reading materials (through growing number of cabinets de lecture, as well as the increased importance of the ephemeral press). Victor Hugo's drames romantiques, by his own account, attracted intellectuals, women, and la foule—a "white smock" crowd, judging by Daumier's print of the Théâtre Porte St. Martin (fig.
where many of Hugo's plays were performed. By the same token, historic melodramas were, not infrequently, attended by the cultural elite.\textsuperscript{74} Paintings of historical scenes were viewed by an increasingly diversified public (at the annual Salons as well as in the Musée de Versailles (see articles by Marrinan and Munholland in this volume), which had further access to historic images through reproductions after those paintings and through book and magazine illustrations, which were often drawn by the same artists whose works were exhibited at the Salons. History, in short, was a commonly shared preoccupation of "high" and "low" society, of men and women, of children and adults.

Both in the breadth of its impact and in the fact that Romantic historicism was a phenomenon that touched both "high" and "low," it is comparable to twentieth-century phenomena of mass culture, with two important differences. Unlike twentieth-century mass culture which, due to electronic media, can be transported instantly to the most isolated locations, Romantic "pop" culture was primarily an urban phenomenon. In France, it radiated out from Paris and its repercussions in the provinces became weaker as the towns became smaller and the distances larger. Walter Scott's novels were easily available in Rouen, an important commercial center located on the Seine River, the major shipping line from Paris to Le Havre, but their availability in smaller towns on the periphery of France was, no doubt, more restricted.\textsuperscript{75} The same may be said about newspapers, popular magazines, theatrical performances, etc.

Another important difference between Romantic popular culture and twentieth-century mass culture was the extent to which it reached the "underclass," and, equally important, the size and nature of that class itself. Adeline Daumard, in her studies of bourgeoisie and peuple in France during the Romantic period,\textsuperscript{76} has shown that these terms do not blanket two distinct unified groups. Instead, she argues, there was something of a continuum from bourgeoisie via petite bourgeoisie or bourgeoisie populaire to the upper crust of le peuple, comprised of skilled artisans and selected salaried ouvriers, which could boast some savings, limited investments, and/or real estate.\textsuperscript{77} As property owners, big or small, these groups differed from the huge impoverished underclass, the members of which, upon death, left nothing ("succession nulle")—not even the tools of their trade, or a bed and some furniture—and who consequently had to be buried in the "fosse commune." On the basis of a detailed study of death records, Daumard has found that in large towns the number of "successions nulles" for adult deaths nearly always exceeded 50 percent of the total, while in huge industrial centers like Paris, Lille, or Lyon, it could even climb to 70 percent.\textsuperscript{78} Existing from hand to mouth, the members of this huge pauper class lived in crowded tenement houses or on the street. Though not unanimously illiterate, they no doubt included in their midst a large percentage of the total illiterate and functionally illiterate population in France. Devoid of even the barest necessities, they had no access to the theatre or the Salon. Limited in their mobility to where they could go on foot (an omnibus ride of average length cost some 30 centimes),\textsuperscript{79}
approximately the price of 3/4 kilo of bread\textsuperscript{80}, they largely remained confined to their socially and culturally deprived quartiers. Thus the impoverished underclass of the Romantic period differed from its counterpart in twentieth-century Europe and America both in its enormous size, out of proportion to the number of unpropertied citizens in France today, and in its quality of life. Indeed, those who live below poverty level today, including even the homeless, have at least some property (a watch, a radio, some clothes) and, more importantly for our purpose, they have access, however limited, to newspapers, magazines, books, and the electronic media. As such they share to a much larger extent in the middle-class culture of their time.

An early (perhaps the earliest) phenomenon of popular culture, Romantic historicism was both similar and different from twentieth-century pop trends: similar in that it affected a social continuum that ranged from the elite to the “people,” thus eliminating the need for the separate folklore history of the past; different in that its range, both geographically and socially, was much smaller than that of mass culture phenomena today.

If historicism was the most conspicuous and pervasive aspect of Romanticism, its popularity may have been part of that movement’s downfall. Indeed, it was against historicism that the new Realists who emerged in the course of the 1840s reacted most vehemently and it may well have been the popularity, the vulgarity, of historicism that they most objected to. Is there an element of elitist irony in Charles Baudelaire’s exhortation to artists, in his Salon of 1846, to celebrate the “heroism” of modern life? Claiming that the artist of his time had a “vested interest in ceaselessly depicting the past” because it could be “turned to good account by the lazy,” he no doubt had the popular and commercial aspects of historicism in mind.\textsuperscript{81} Is there an element of elitism in Gustave Courbet’s \textit{Atelier}, in which a guitar, a dagger, and a plumed hat, “Romantic castoffs” as Courbet calls them, are included in the left side of the painting, among the “other world of trivial life, the people.”\textsuperscript{82} Paradoxically, we may posit that Realism, the movement that called for art and literature to focus on the ordinary life of ordinary people, was an elitist phenomenon that developed in reaction against that most popular aspect of Romanticism, historicism.\textsuperscript{83}
16. Napoleon is reputed to have signed the decree of admission on the eve of the battle at Leipzig.
17. Meunier 1894, 2.
23. Michaud 1825, 2:231.
27. Mellon 1958, 1. A mild challenge to Mellon’s assertion of the poverty of historical writing during the Empire may be found in Burton 1979, 117, in which the author argues that historians of the imperial era endeavored to make history more “scientific” and showed a greater sophistication and maturity than in eighteenth-century chronicles and narratives.
28. Cited in Mellon 1958, 64.
29. Michaud 1829, 1:xxv.
32. Michaud and Poujoulat 1838, ix.
33. Michaud and Poujoulat 1838, xvi.
41. Valet 1924, 142.
42. Cited in Guiral 1956, 58.
47. Gaehgtgens 1986.

Pop Culture in the Making

1. See, for example, Vaughan 1978, ch. 4; Honour 1979, chs. 4 and 5; See also the essay by Kim Munholland in this volume (pp. 144–165).
3. Clark 1962, 39. Pre-Romantic paintings on medieval subjects were primarily produced in England (Fuseli) and Germany (Nazarenes), but a number were also executed in France under Louis XVI. See Detroit 1975, 168, 337–38, 408–9, and 660–61.
4. To an extent, this cultural democratization was a function of dramatic improvements in primary education. Between the first years of the Restoration (1817–20) and the later part of the July Monarchy, the mean number of primary schools in France more than doubled, rising from 24,520 to 59,697. See Allen 1991, table A.5. The July Monarchy regime played an important part in this development, particularly through Guizot’s education bill of 1833 (see introduction, p. 4). It is important to realize, however, that this trend towards the improvement of primary education had its roots in the Enlightenment. On this subject, see Gontard 1959.
5. See Honour 1979, 193: “it is seldom sufficiently stressed how great, perhaps crucial a part in the development of the Western historical sense was played not so much by historians and historical novelists as by history itself.”
6. Lukács 1962, 23–25, links this mass awareness of contemporary events to the new phenomenon of the levée en masse and the necessity, on the part of recruiters, to explain the purpose of war through popular propaganda. Hobsbawm 1962, 119, causes us to consider Lukács’ thesis in the proper perspective by pointing out that the “mass army” of the Revolution and the Empire
was small by twentieth-century standards. Napoleon's Grande Armée, at the outset of the Russian campaign comprised 700,000 men, of which 300,000 were non-French. Between 1800 and 1815 only 7 percent of the total population of France were called up, compared with 21 percent in the much shorter period of World War I.

7. The more so, of course, as they coincided with the much-publicized bicentenary celebration of the French Revolution.


9. Including Joseph-François Michaud, whose work is discussed in chapter 6.

10. The difference between the narrative historians and Chateaubriand and his followers should not be exaggerated. It is important to realize that Chateaubriand himself already had introduced an unprecedented measure of narration into historiography and it is not surprising, therefore, that Augustin Thierry, the leading narrative historian, was inspired to history writing by reading Chateaubriand's Les Martyrs as a schoolboy. See Lagarde and Michard 1960, 357.

11. "J'ai tenté de restituer à l'historie elle-même l'attrait que le roman historique lui a emprunté. Elle doit être avant tout exacte et sériueuse; mais il m'a semblé qu'elle pouvait être en même temps vraie et vivante." Barante (1824-26) 1842, xxvii. 

12. "Ne roturier, je demandais qu'on rendit à la roture sa part de gloire dans nos annales, qu'on recueuillit, avec un soin respectueux, les souvenirs d'honneur plebéien, d'énergie et de liberté bourgeoises; en un mot, qu'à l'aide de la science unie au patriotisme, on fit sortir de nos vieilles chroniques des récits capables d'émouvoir la fibre populaire." 


14. Thiers' political activity began in 1830 when he became a member of Louis-Philippe's council of state, was elected to the Chamber of Deputies (deputy of Aix), and became under-secretary of state (November). He remained active in politics throughout the July Monarchy and (intermittently) during subsequent regimes until, in 1871, his political career culminated in the presidency of the Third Republic.

15. As Lionel Gossman (1990, 167) has pointed out, the idea of the popular book, the livre populaire haunted Michelet all his life. As early as 1820, he wrote in his journal "If I had the talent I would like to write, for the people, books that could be sold for very low prices" ("Si j'en avais le talent j'aimerais à écrire pour le peuple des livres qu'on vendrait à bien bas prix"); Michelet 1959, 88.

16. Michelet spoke of his historiographic effort as resurrection. In the preface to the 1869 edition of his Histoire de France, he wrote, "Even more complicated, more frightening was the problem I posed for myself in history, namely the resurrection of life in its integrity, not only in its surface aspects but in its profound interior organisms" ("Plus compliqué encore, plus effrayant était mon problème historique posé comme résurrection de la vie intégrale, non pas dans les surfaces, mais dans ses organes intérieurs et profonds.") Michelet 1971-, 4:12. Comparing his historiographic effort with the works of the narrative historians on the one hand, and with those who had recently renewed the eighteenth-century philosophical approach to history (men like François Guizot and Edgar Quinet) on the other, he wrote. "May I be credited, in the future, with having set rather than attained the goal of historiography . . . Thierry saw it as narration and M. Guizot as analysis. I have called it resurrection and that term will stay" ("Que ce soit là ma part dans l'avenir d'avoir non pas atteint, mais marqué le but de l'historie . . . Thierry y voyait une narration et M. Guizot une analyse. Je l'ai nommée résurrection et ce nom lui restera.") Quoted in Lagarde and Michard 1960, 362.

17. As Gossman 1990, 227-56, has pointed out, the distinction between history and literature was less clear in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries than it is today.

18. Gossman 1990, 91. Thierry's own work is characterized by his view of modern European history as a function of racial conflict, whereby race must be interpreted not in its modern, nat-
rowly biological sense, but in its original meaning as a group of individuals with common interests, characteristics, appearance, habits, or the like.

19. On this subject, see Brown 1979.
20. Lukács 1962, 49.
21. On the popularity of Scott, see Lukács 1962, 48ff. See also the essays by Paul Ochojski (on Scott’s German reputation), Anna Katona (on the impact of Scott in Hungary), and R. D. S. Jack (on Scott and Italy) in Bell 1973.
23. Vigny, in the introduction to his best-known historical novel Cinq-Mars, stated that he intended to “paint the three kinds of ambitions that can stir us, and besides the beauty of sacrificing oneself to a generous thought” (“peindre les trois sortes d’ambition qui nous peuvent remuer et à côté d’elles la beauté du sacrifice de soi-même à une généreuse pensée”). See Vigny 1948, 2:19.
25. Material for Le trois Mousquetaires, for example, was derived from the Mémoires de M. D’Artagnan (1700–1701) by Giles de Courtliz.
26. See Dumas, “History is a pawn shop where theatrical tableaux are dressed.” Cited in Rahill 1967, 75.
28. See 1951, passim.
30. Most importantly, perhaps, the historic novels of Alexandre Dumas, who, in 1845, sold the exclusive publication rights of his novels to Le Constitutionnel and La Presse for a period of five years at an annual retainer fee of 63,000 francs. See Pinkney 1986, 125.
34. Bottin’s Almanach de Commerce lists 32 cabinets in 1820, 150 in 1830, 189 in 1840, and 226 in 1850. After that date their number declines rapidly. See Allen 1981, 140.
35. For the early history of the genre in France, Rahill 1967, 46–52, distinguishes two types of melodrama, domestic and historic. During the later Restoration and early July Monarchy periods, the historic melodrama appears to have been most common.
36. Quoted in Bradby, James, and Sharratt 1980, 17. De Pixérécourt (1773–1844) is associated primarily with the Empire and the Restoration although he lived nearly to the end of the July Monarchy. A total of thirty thousand performances of his plays were recorded in Paris and the provinces between 1797 and 1834 (Rahill 1967, 40). The next generation of melodrama authors was equally successful. Bouchardy’s Sonneur de Saint-Paul, which opened at the Gaité on October 2, 1838, is recorded to have brought ticket revenues of more than 200,000 francs (Bradby, James, and Sharratt 1980, 33).
38. "Trois espèces de spectateurs composent ce qu'on est convenue d'appeler le public: premièremenent, les femmes; deuxièmement, les penseurs; troisièmement, la foule proprement dite."
39. Hugo clearly made a virtue of what critics of the drame romantique saw as a vice: its dependence on melodramatic effects. "Romantic drama is nothing but melodrama dressed up in the artificial pomp of lyricism," Charles Nodier wrote, suggesting that all that was different about the Romantic drama and the melodrama was the presence or absence of rhyme in the dialogue. Quoted in Rahill 1967, 69.
40. See Bradby, James, and Sharratt 1980, 29
41. As Howarth points out, the tableau was an eighteenth-century invention, much used in the drames bourgeois of Diderot, who recommended the tableau as a static alternative to the coup de théâtre. See Bradby, James, and Sharratt 1980, 27.
43. Color reproductions of the Vicar of Wakefield watercolors, now in the Musée des Beaux-Arts in Rouen, are found in Columbia 1990, pls. 5–14.
44. Marie 1925, 91–93.
46. Marrinan 1988, 24, warns us that the term “genre historique” was not commonly used until 1835.
47. Following are some of the more popular works that were exhibited between 1827 and 1848: Delaroche’s *Children of Edward IV* and the same artist’s *Cromwell Discovering the Corpse of Charles I* (Salon 1831), Robert-Fleury’s *Scene from St. Bartholomew’s Day* (1833), Delaroche’s *Execution of Jane Gray* (1834), Gigoux’s *Death of Leonardo da Vinci*, Delaroche’s *Murder of the Duc de Guise*, and Scheffer’s *Dante and Virgil Meeting the Shades of Paolo and Francesca* (1835), Winterhalter’s *Dinner of Ulysses* (1837), Desvignes’ *Clotilde Mourning Her Grandsons* (1838), Robert-Fleury’s *Charles V Picking up Titian’s Paintbrush* and Cogniet’s *Tintoretto Tracing the Image of His Dead Daughter* (1843), Robert-Fleury’s *Reception of Columbus by the Spanish Court* and Isabey’s *Ceremony in the Church of Delft* (1847).
49. Louis-Philippe set great store by public opinion. In his memoirs he mentions the necessity for a monarch to completely understand the country’s mood, or, what he called the “gathering together of views shaped by luminaries, education, readings, conversations, sometimes even by the fashions of the time.” Quoted in Marrinan 1988, 215–16.
52. Quoted in Simond 1900, 2:334–337.
53. For an interesting collection of fashion prints of this period, see Fischel and Von Boehn 1927, vol. 2.
54. On this subject, see Green 1989.
56. On the reception of Scott’s novels in France, see Massmann 1972, which contains an index of critical reviews in French periodicals, and Partridge 1968.
57. For this information, see the printed catalogue of the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris.
60. Partridge [1924] 1968, 125.
61. See the printed catalogue of the Bibliothèque Nationale.
63. Ibid., 225.
64. Ibid., 225.
65. Ibid., 226.
66. Ibid., 121.
67. Ibid., 122.
69. Wright and Joannides’s list contains a surprising number of women painters, suggesting that there was a substantial audience among women for Scott and the historic novel in general.
72. See Bollême 1971, 183: “Mais l’histoire se déforme, se transforme, et sur elle se brode un autre récit.”
73. In their article, “Die Folklore as eine besondere Form des Schaffens,” Pyotr Bogatyrev and Roman Jacobson (1929) posit that folk and high culture are two distinct, but communicating systems. Either system borrows from the other and adapts materials from the other system to its own by creatively transforming them.
74. Théophile Gautier, visiting one of the melodrama theatres, found the audience “pittoresque,” indicating that he felt a bit out of place. Descotes 1964, 243. Delacroix went to the Ambigu in 1824, together with Raymond Soulé and Thales Fielding to see *Les Aventuriers*, which he found “very interesting and done in a new style. Natural.” See Delacroix 1972, 67.
75. As Allen 1991, 59–60, points out, literacy rates were also considerably lower in the country, particularly in the southern part of France, below the line extending from Le Havre in the west to Besançon in the east.
76. See Daumard 1963 and Daumard 1975.
78. Ibid.
79. Simon 1900, 2:112. In 1825 there were 378 omnibuses, which served 100,000 passengers a day. Income from tickets was 30,000 francs.
81. Baudelaire (Mayne) 1956, 126.
82. Courbet (Chu) 1992, 132.
83. This thesis is borne out by the fact that Realism in its time never won approval while Romantic history painting remained popular throughout the Second Empire period. At the Salon of 1852, for example, one of the greatest crowd pleasers was Louis Gallait’s Last Honors Paid to the Counts of Egmont and of Hoorne by the Great Oath of Brussels and not Courbet’s Demoiselles du village, which was widely criticized and caricatured in its time. See Holt 1982, 79.

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2. See Babelon, Jacquin, Daufresne and Van Zanten all cited above.
10. Lafont de Saint-Yenne 1752.
11. "Ma mission désormais est toute tracée[:] finir le Louvre veut dire le raccorder avec ce qui est fait[,] [J]e n'ai pas donc de grands frais d'imagination à faire[:] seulement du bon sens a avoir pour bien choisir." Biblioteca apostolica Vaticana, Autografi Ferrajoli Visconti, #7392: letter of 12 March 1853. I owe this reference to Professor Daniela Gallo of the Scuola Normale Superiore, Pisa.
13. These are published systematically Daufresne 1989.
15. Moniteur universel 4 January 1854.
16. The subject is given in a document "L'Empereur, fort de ses destinées et l'appui lui donne la reconnaissance des Français pour bienfaits de Napoléon Ier, clôture des révolutions et des discordes civiles, rappelle le concorde l'union, invoque la paix, source des prospérités fait fleurir la commerce, les arts et l'industrie honore la religion et convie la France à l'exécution des vastes entreprises qui doivent illustrer le règne." Archives Nationales, 64 Aj 63. The sculptor was Simart.
18. For example, Giedion 1941; Hitchc 1958; Loyer 1983.
21. The shape of the Place du Panthéon fixed simultaneously with the promulgation Labrouste’s design: Recueil des actes administratifs de la préfecture de la Seine, 1875, I: 126–127; July 1884). Daly 1852.
22. Baltard 1863; Boudon, Chastel, Co and Hamon 1977; Brousse n.d.