

Godwin's Citations, 1783-2005: Highest Renown at the Pinnacle of Disfavor

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I

*F*ive-and-twenty years ago he was in the very zenith of a sultry and unwholesome popularity; he blazed as a sun in the firmament of reputation; no one was more talked of, more looked up to, more sought after, and wherever liberty, truth, justice was the theme, his name was not far off: – now he has sunk below the horizon, and enjoys the serene twilight of a doubtful immortality.¹

William Hazlitt's 1825 account of the reputation of William Godwin (1756-1836) has been widely accepted ever since. Most scholars agree that Godwin enjoyed a meteoric rise to fame in the 1790s as the author of *An Enquiry concerning Political Justice* (1793) and *Caleb Williams* (1794) but sank into obscurity after 1800, and spent the last thirty-six years of his life in neglect and poverty. A study of Godwin's citations tells a more complicated story. In providing numerical precision for his reception, it allows for a more nuanced view of his reputation, and holds a few surprises as well.

Godwin's reputation, as measured by citations, fell into several different periods, not just one. The first phase did not peak in the early 1790s, but in 1801 (admittedly for negative reasons – hence our title). This was followed by a precipitate loss of interest, down from a peak of

108 citations in 1801, to a mere 4 in 1811. Percy Bysshe Shelley might be forgiven for having written to Godwin on 3 January 1812 that he had “enrolled [his] name on the list of the honorable dead,”² since Godwin’s reputation was then at its lowest point. Yet 1812 also marked the start of a slow recovery of interest in Godwin with several peaks, the highest in 1831, and declining gradually, touching bottom a few years after his death. Godwin’s reputation was low during the mid-Victorian period, but began to revive again in the 1880s. Since then, two or three sub-trajectories can be identified, but overall his reputation has increased and continues to do so. The new Godwin was important as both an exponent of a living philosophy and an object of academic study. In the latter role he is very much alive still. The resurgence in scholarly recognition continues apace, with new Oxford World’s Classics editions of his principal works, the electronic publication of his diary, and a scholarly edition of his letters under way;³ but it is too early to assess the impact of these latest developments, and our study ends in 2005.

Reception studies are well-established in intellectual and cultural history as a way of understanding the meaning and impact of authors’ work.⁴ Beyond the humanities, interest in reception has often been motivated by more mundane considerations. Initially in the natural sciences, and then in the social sciences, this has taken the form of citation studies.⁵ The main purpose has been to establish rankings of scholars and their contributions. In recent years, citation counts have been used widely to measure academic performance and to reward it. Such counts make use of large databases of citations, which have been compiled in the last few decades. It is not easy to apply citation analysis to the reception of writers, especially where they were active long before the starting dates of the citation databases. Nevertheless this approach is possible in the case of Godwin. This is because a pioneering count of publications referring to Godwin was undertaken in the mid-twentieth century by Burton R. Pollin.⁶ He takes the record up to 1966. After that date, new citation databases are available to carry

the count forward. We have used one of them, JSTOR, to take the record up to 2005. Taken together, Pollin and JSTOR provide a continuous record of citations from the first published comment on Godwin's first publication, *The History of the Life of William Pitt, Earl of Chatham* (1783), up to 2005. For a few decades, there is an overlap between the two sources, which makes it possible to get a sense of their relative quality.

The quantitative precision of citation studies is to some extent spurious. This is well understood in citation studies beyond the humanities: numbers say little about quality. On the other hand, the mere fact of a printed reference indicates that a writer's reputation is not dead, and an increase in the number of references signifies a revival of interest. Citation studies thus bring a new dimension and a new understanding to the reception of writers. In the case of Godwin, they allow us to be more precise about the timing, trends, and magnitude of his reputation.

II

In modern scholarship, priority of discovery is acknowledged in footnotes and references, and the number of citations is a measure of the impact of priority and conceptual innovations.⁷ Citations are also used to evaluate current academic performance, for example, by promotion committees and research evaluation exercises. This requires reliable databases of citations, which are of recent vintage. Their historical coverage is uneven, and it is often difficult to extract a time-series of citations. The oldest database in widespread use is currently known as the Thomson-Reuters ISI index. More accessible and familiar at the moment is Google Scholar, which provides citation counts to anyone with an Internet browser. These two databases (and several others) have some serious limitations of cover. For this reason, citations have not been used much to reconstruct historical trajectories of intellectual impact, even for scientists.

Recently, however, another dataset has become available. This is a by-product of the JSTOR project to digitize scholarly journals. This

database was started in 1995 with a core of the most highly regarded North American academic journals in humanities and social science fields; it has since expanded to include the main English-language journals, and increasingly other disciplines and the peripheries of scholarship.⁸ Unlike other databases, JSTOR reaches back to the initial year of its journals, sometimes into the nineteenth century. Its coverage ends behind a “moving wall” a few years before the present. The most important finding in citation studies is that the bulk of cited articles are published by a minority of authors in a minority of journals.⁹ On that basis, JSTOR’s coverage of a substantial number of the most important journals is adequate; it does not provide a population count, but a large high-quality sample. Since it collects its data in the scholarly literature, it does not count books directly. But it does count reviews of books, and a much-reviewed book is likely to have considerable impact, even if the book itself is not counted as a citation. In sum, JSTOR does not encompass everything, but is unlikely to misrepresent scholarly trends. Current total citations in Google Scholar are substantially higher, in some cases by an order of magnitude.

JSTOR was recently used for the first time as a dataset for reconstructing the intellectual careers of Nobel Prize-winners in economics.¹⁰ This study traced citations and publications from 1930 onwards, which provided good coverage for the population in question, and compared the citations of Nobel Prize-winners with those of outstanding economists from the past, including Adam Smith and Karl Marx. It is interesting to discover that Adam Smith is currently still the most cited economist of all, while Karl Marx has been ranked number two for most of the years since 1930. Such findings indicate the potential of citation data to evaluate the current reputation of historical writers. Our author, William Godwin, falls chronologically almost precisely between Adam Smith and Karl Marx.

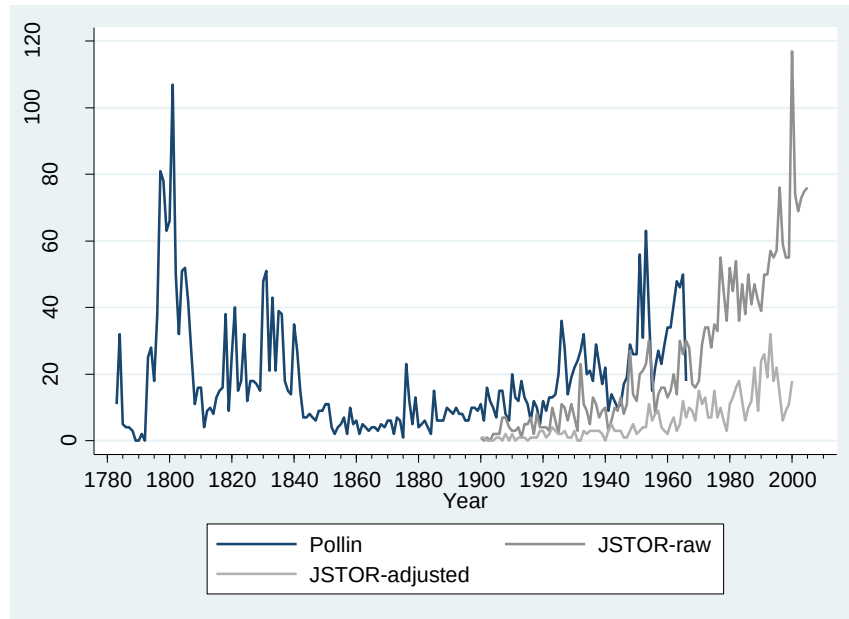
Ideally, one would wish to follow a writer’s reputation over the whole of his or her career, from the first publication up to the present. In Godwin’s case, this can be done, thanks to Pollin’s painstaking

work. Pollin provided a simple graph showing the number of citations (up to 1966),¹¹ but this does not seem to have made any impact at all on Godwin scholarship. For all his hard work, Pollin has only twelve citations for his book in Google Scholar, and ten in JSTOR.¹² In our study, we splice together Pollin's time-series of citations (up to 1966) with JSTOR, covering citations from 1900 to 2005. Thus, for several decades, we can compare citation counts from both sources, and get a sense of how accurate they might be. To enable this comparison, we have modified Pollin's data by removing Godwin's own writings and periodicals (which Pollin includes). Finally, we use Google Scholar to evaluate the relative ranking and current citation stature of Godwin's many publications, and his relative position in the world of scholarship.

It is not sufficient to provide a raw count of citations. It is also necessary to take account of the size of the literature. Hence the JSTOR information is provided in two formats, the raw count of citations, and an index which reports Godwin's citations as a fraction of total citations in the literature, which controls for the size of that literature.¹³ It would be desirable to do the same for Pollin's citations, but we do not have any measure of the relevant size of the literature. Our more detailed analyses (for example, in Figure 3) cover shorter sub-periods, where this distortion is likely to be less of a problem.

III

Figure 1 shows a complete trajectory of Godwin's citations from the two sources described above. It provides a quantitative graphical representation of his impact in print. For JSTOR, there are two curves, one showing raw citation scores, and the other is controlled for the size of the literature. While Pollin strove for completeness, JSTOR provides only a sample. Hence the absolute level of JSTOR citations will be an underestimate. Nonetheless it should be reasonably accurate in measuring changes over time. A visual examination of the raw citation scores indicates that they are in rough agreement.



*Figure 1: Godwin Citations, 1783-2005. Sources: (a) Pollin, *Godwin Criticism*; (b) JSTOR.*

The work of successful authors may be likened to an innovation. There is a good deal of research about the take-up of innovations over time. Most of this research has taken place in the field of marketing, where the purpose is to try and predict the success of innovations (for example, of the take-up of particular household appliances). This research originally took its inspiration from epidemiology (the study of the diffusion of disease in populations). The typical patterns of diffusion are indicated in Figure 2. This figure is taken from the study of Nobel Prize-winners in economics, and shows the citation trajectories of Paul Samuelson, one of the most influential economists in the post-war period, who won the Nobel Prize in 1970.

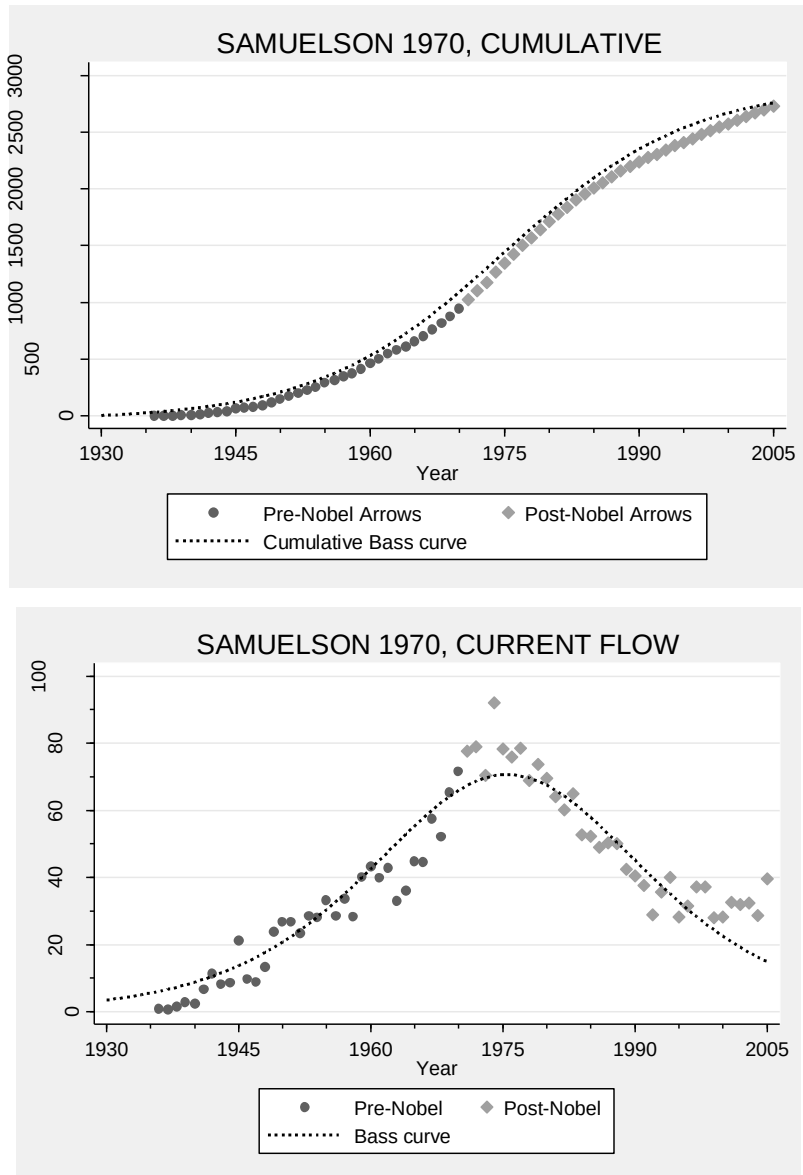


Figure 2. Typical Diffusion Patterns, Cumulative and Current Flow.
Source: Bjork *et al.*, "Time-Series Citation Data," Figure 1, n. p.

This research has uncovered a pattern: if we are interested in, for example, the total number of people who will have been affected by the disease (in epidemiology), or the total number of people who have purchased a new model of consumer durable, the *cumulative* diffusion process (Figure 2, top) can usefully be described as an s-curve. Following a shallow lead of early adoption (or infection), there is an exponential (convex) increase up to an inflection point, and then a concave section that flattens out at the peak of adoptions. At the start, a few acolytes embrace the innovation. Information and emulation spread the word, and take-up accelerates. Diffusion then slows down as the innovation approaches its maximum appeal.

The flow of citations over time (Figure 2, bottom) rises toward a peak at the inflection point as diffusion accelerates, and declines when most new take-up has taken place. In such models, the probability and timing of new adoptions (in our case, new citations) is determined by the quantity and pace of previous ones. This figure describes a bell-shaped curve. Such models provide a good approximation of the diffusion of innovations, and this approach can also be applied to the citation record of authors. In the study of Nobel Prize-winners in economics, it was shown that these models provide a good fit for the citation patterns of the economists in question. In Figure 2, the dots represent citation levels. The vertical scale (“Arrows”) is an index of citations as a proportion of publications listed in the whole of the JSTOR citation database. This adjusts the citation count to the size of the literature. In brief, most successful innovations are picked up gradually at the start, reach a peak of popularity, then lose their novelty value and decline.

The solid curve is provided by a mathematical curve-fitting procedure, the Bass model.¹⁴ In the Nobel Prize-winners set (57 people), only a few authors diverged from this pattern. Figure 3 shows Godwin’s citation record with a succession of Bass curves fitted. A visual examination of Godwin’s citation record over the very long term suggests that he has gone through four or five bell-shaped trajectories. This curve-fitting procedure is somewhat arbitrary, since the start and

end point of the curves of each trajectory are selected by the analyst. Once this is done, however, the curve is calculated automatically. This is simply a plausible smoothing procedure, but it is strongly suggestive of an underlying process of innovation and decline.

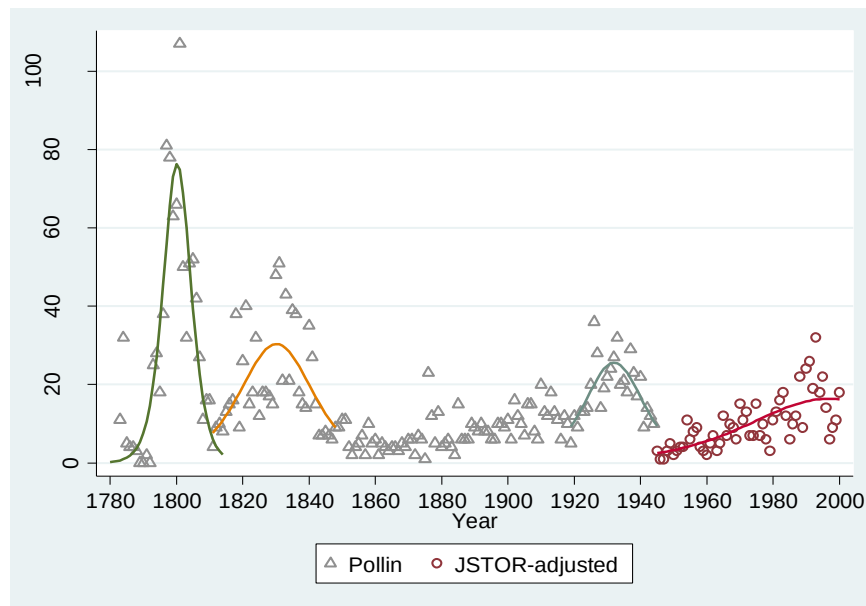


Figure 3. Godwin Citation Trajectories, 1783-2000.

Data Source: (a) Pollin, *Godwin Criticism*; (b) JSTOR. Adjustment method: Bjork *et al.*, "Time-Series Citation Data." Note: The scattergram data are from Pollin and JSTOR as indicated. The trajectory curves are "Bass Curves," as described in the text, and in Bjork *et al.*; JSTOR-adjusted are JSTOR data adjusted for a constant overall size of the JSTOR citation sample.

The first spurt of citations appears in 1783-84, in response to a flurry of anonymous works published by Godwin when he first settled in

London to earn his living as a writer. In addition to his biography of the elder Pitt, he published (to largely benign reception) two political pamphlets, a prospectus for an imaginary school, three short novels, a volume of sermons, and a collection of literary parodies. Godwin's career as a writer and thinker took off a decade later when he published *Political Justice*. The first bell-shaped trajectory of his reputation lasted for about fifteen years. It was sustained by two further editions of *Political Justice* (1796, 1798), the pamphlet *Cursory Strictures* (1794), and the novel *Caleb Williams*, which were quickly followed by a volume of essays, *The Enquirer: Reflections on Education, Manners, and Literature* (1797), and a further novel, *St Leon: A Tale of the Sixteenth Century* (1799). Godwin's reputation peaked in 1801, and went into steep decline over the next ten years. The next cycle started around 1812 and was much longer, lasting until the mid-1840s. Godwin's reputation was never extinguished altogether, and after 1793 there was never a year when he was not cited at all. From the mid-1880s there was a revival of interest, indeed a boomlet, which lasted until the First World War, followed by a solid inter-war trajectory, and another post-war one, which dipped in the 1960s. This is where Pollin's record ends. The JSTOR record of citations (unadjusted for the size of the database) generally follows Pollin up to the 1960s, takes off again at the end of the 1960s, and was still going strong in 2005. Godwin now appears to be on a rising trajectory again, enjoying levels of absolute citation comparable to those he had reached at the time of *Political Justice*. If one takes account of the much larger size of the current reputational world, however, Godwin's most recent revival, while undeniable, is still relatively modest. It may be illuminating to consider the drivers of each of these different surges.

IV

Reputation can be achieved both by popularity and by notoriety. Godwin was a controversial figure from the start. *Political Justice* was a late entrant into the British debate on the French Revolution.¹⁵ While Godwin was writing the book, from September 1791 to January 1793,

public opinion turned sharply against the French Revolution and its British sympathizers. *Political Justice* appeared on 14 February 1793, a fortnight after the French National Convention had declared war on Britain and Holland, urging the British people to rise against their oppressors, and three days after Britain had declared war on France. The book was reviewed sympathetically by a number of journals,¹⁶ and became widely known and admired among the radical intelligentsia. It also attracted hostile criticism from the start. The government-funded *British Critic*, a new journal founded by a group of Anglican clergymen, derided *Political Justice* as a *reductio ad absurdum* of the speculations of "Helvetius, Rousseau, the author of *Systeme de la Nature*, and some English writers of equal extravagance."¹⁷ In order to estimate the impact of Godwin's publications in terms of approval or disapproval, we have gone through all of Pollin's citations which appeared in Godwin's lifetime, and set apart those we judged to be negative in tone. This is necessarily a crude division. A balanced notice, by definition, would give some weight to both positive and negative aspects of the work under consideration. However, as the political controversy over the French Revolution became increasingly polarized, balanced reviews were hard to find.¹⁸ Nonetheless, the separation of negative commentaries from positive or neutral ones gives us some measure of the quality of Godwin's continued reputation. A negative commentary suggests that the reviewer, despite a low opinion of the work in question, considers it deserving of notice because of the impact it might have on other readers. The figure is plotted as a ratio of negative to other notices in Figure 4.

Figure 4 confirms the prevailing view that opinion turned sharply against Godwin in the late 1790s.¹⁹ As noted earlier, the first bell-shaped curve starts in 1793 with the publication of *Political Justice* and its largely sympathetic initial reception. Positive response to Godwin was swelled by *Cursory Strictures* and *Caleb Williams* – and, in 1796, by *The Iron Chest*, a stage adaptation of *Caleb Williams* by George Colman the younger. In 1796 and 1797 the first of many novels satirizing Godwin's intellectual position appeared, but opinion was still predominantly

positive, even when his marriage to Mary Wollstonecraft, the early advocate of women's rights, made him the subject of celebrity gossip.²⁰ There was little serious adverse criticism before late 1797, when the *Anti-Jacobin*, a satirical weekly periodical supported by government funds (succeeded in 1798 by the *Anti-Jacobin Review*) began a popular campaign to discredit Godwin's opinions.

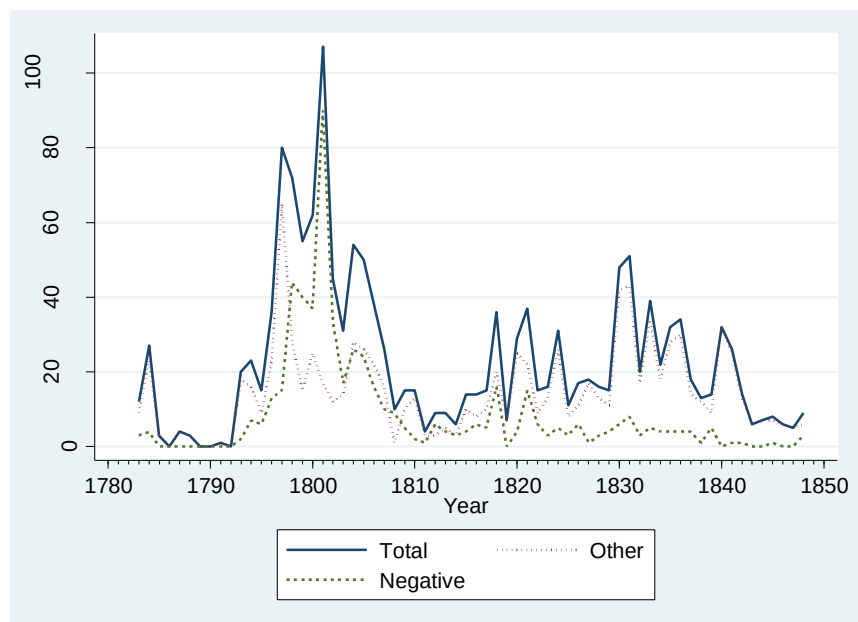


Figure 4: Godwin Total, Negative and “Other” Lifetime-plus Citations, 1783-1848. Source: Pollin, *Godwin Criticism*.

The balance changed from positive to negative citations in 1798. In January of that year, Godwin, following the death of Mary Wollstonecraft (10 September 1797), published *Memoirs of the Author of a Vindication of the Rights of Woman*, a candid and sympathetic account of her unconventional life which provoked widespread hostility from the conservative press. In the same year, Thomas Malthus published *An*

Essay on the Principle of Population (1798), inverting some of Godwin's speculations in *Political Justice*, and this led to further negative comment. For the next four years, Godwin's views were attacked in newspapers and journals, in anti-Jacobin novels, and in public lectures, sermons, and pamphlets. Godwin achieved his highest renown at the pinnacle of disfavor in 1801, the year in which he provided his own account of the reaction against his work and replied to his principal critics in the pamphlet, *Thoughts Occasioned by the Perusal of Dr Parr's Spital Sermon*. Table 1 shows that references to him in newspapers, periodicals, books, and pamphlets peaked in that year, reaching 108, the highest point ever (compared with 28 in the year following the publication of *Political Justice*, and 18 in 1795, the lowest point in between). Of these references, 90 were hostile, partly because of systematic campaigns against his ideas by Federalist periodicals in America.²¹

Table 1: Godwin Negative and Other Citations. Source: Pollin, *Godwin Criticism*.

Year	Negative	Other	Total	Percent negative
1783	3	9	12	25
1784	4	23	27	15
1785	0	3	3	
1786	0	0	0	
1787	0	4	4	
1788	0	3	3	
1789	0	0	0	
1790	0	0	0	
1791	0	1	1	
1792	0	0	0	
1793	2	24	26	8

1794	7	16	23	30
1795	6	10	16	38
1796	13	23	36	36
1797	15	65	80	19
1798	44	28	72	61
1799	40	16	56	71
1800	37	25	62	60
1801	90	18	108	83
1802	33	12	45	73
1803	17	14	31	55
1804	26	28	54	48
1805	24	28	52	46
1806	16	23	39	41
1807	10	16	26	38
1808	9	1	10	90
1809	5	10	15	33
1810	2	13	15	13
1811	1	3	4	25
1812	6	3	9	67
1813	4	7	11	36
1814	3	3	6	50
1815	3	11	14	21
1816	6	8	14	43
1817	5	11	16	31
1818	16	20	36	44
1819	0	7	7	
1820	4	25	29	14
1821	15	22	37	41
1822	6	9	15	40
1823	3	13	16	19
1824	5	26	31	16
1825	3	8	11	27
1826	6	11	17	35
1827	1	17	18	6

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1828	3	13	16	19
1829	4	11	15	27
1830	6	42	48	13
1831	8	43	51	16
1832	3	17	20	15
1833	5	34	39	13
1834	4	18	22	18
1835	4	28	32	13
1836	4	30	34	12
1837	4	14	18	22
1838	1	12	13	8
1839	5	9	14	36
1840	0	32	32	
1841	1	25	26	4
1842	1	13	14	7
1843	0	6	6	
1844	0	7	7	
1845	1	7	8	13
1846	0	6	6	
1847	0	5	5	
1848	3	6	9	33

The downward trajectory of the first bell-curve reflects the collapse of Godwin's reputation in the first decade of the nineteenth century. In 1802 and 1803 especially, there was a marked decline in the number of citations (with negatives still outweighing the others). By 1804, however, the pace of Godwin's fall had slackened because of extensive notices of his *Life of Geoffrey Chaucer* (1803), an ambitious work published in two quarto volumes, and the balance of negative and other responses had leveled out. In 1805 and 1806, his overall citation levels were higher than in 1793 and 1794, with positives narrowly outweighing the negatives, a trend which continued more or less unbroken until 1810. This was

largely due to the success of Godwin's pseudonymous schoolbooks for the Juvenile Library, a bookselling and publishing firm which he established with his second wife Mary Jane Godwin in 1805. In the first two years of business alone, *Fables Ancient and Modern. Adapted for the Use of Children from Three to Eight Years of Age* (1805), *The History of England. For the Use of Schools and Young Persons* (1806), and *The Pantheon: or Ancient History of the Gods of Greece and Rome* (1806), all by "Edward Baldwin, Esq.," together with *Life of Lady Jane Grey, and of Lord Guildford Dudley, Her Husband* (1806), by "Theophilus Marcliffe," received positive notices in the *Anti-Jacobin Review*, the *British Critic*, and several other journals previously critical of Godwin's writings. The irony was not lost on the Whig aristocrat Lord Holland: "The good little books in which our masters and misses were taught the rudiments of profane and sacred history, under the name of Baldwin, were really the composition of Godwin, branded as an atheist by those who unwittingly purchased, recommended, and taught his elementary lessons."²² The popularity of Godwin's schoolbooks was not enough to arrest his descent, but it helped to provide a soft landing.

During his second, longer bell-curve of renown, from 1812 onwards, Godwin received largely even-handed and indeed respectful treatment from most journals – with one or two exceptions, notably the *Quarterly Review*. While he continued to be a controversial figure, the quantitative balance of opinion was not hostile. A further revival of his fortunes began in 1815, the year in which Charles Lamb gave him a mock burial in a letter to Thomas Manning: "Poor Godwin! I was passing his tomb the other day in Cripplegate churchyard. ... his systems and his theories are ten feet deep in Cripplegate mould."²³ In May of that year, Godwin had published at his own expense the *Lives of Edward and John Philips, Nephews and Pupils of Milton*. The gamble paid off. In the *Edinburgh Review* (previously hostile to Godwin), his former adversary James Mackintosh reviewed the work sympathetically and reflected at length on Godwin's reputational fortunes in the 1790s, sparking a minor revival of interest in his novels. (New editions of *Caleb Williams* and *St*

Leon were published in 1816.) It was left to Hazlitt to speak up for *Political Justice*: in his 1816 *Examiner* notice of Robert Owen's *A New View of Society* (1813-14), he hailed Godwin's book as one of the originals for Owen's ideas on the "doctrine of Universal Benevolence."²⁴

The next fifteen years saw a steady increase in citations, with minor peaks in 1818 (reflecting the mixed response to *Mandeville: A Tale of the Seventeenth Century in England*, published 1817), 1820-21 (reflecting the extensive and largely favorable response to *Of Population*, published 1820), and in 1824 (reflecting the enthusiastic reaction to the first volume of *History of the Commonwealth of England*, published 1824). *Of Population*, Godwin's response to the fifth edition of Malthus's *An Essay on the Principle of Population* (1817), has been described as "the last of Godwin's works to make a public impact."²⁵ It prompted an extended discussion of the Godwin/Malthus controversy lasting up to 1827 and beyond. In terms of citations, however, it was outdone in 1830, when Godwin's total citation count soared to 48, with a remarkable 29 positive notices of *Cloudesley: A Novel* (and 4 negatives). Godwin's second bell-curve reached its highest point in 1831, the year in which he published a second collection of essays, *Thoughts on Man: His Nature, His Productions, and His Discoveries*, and in which *Caleb Williams* and *St Leon* were given pride of place in Henry Colburn and Richard Bentley's *Standard Novels*, a new monthly series of cheap one-volume reprints.²⁶

Thereafter the number of citations starts to tail off, but is still marked by respectful attention to the "tottering king," whose last works included another novel, *Deloraine: A Tale* (1833), and *Lives of the Necromancers* (1834).²⁷ Meanwhile *Political Justice* attracted new readers when extracts were published by James Watson, one of the founders of the London Working Men's Association, in the *Working Man's Friend and Political Magazine* (1833), and by his colleague Henry Hetherington in the *Poor Man's Guardian* (1835).²⁸ Godwin's death in 1836 swelled citations in that year, with a large number of positive obituaries. Over the next few years, his reputation declined

steadily, apart from a minor peak in 1840-42 caused almost exclusively by the publication of extracts from *Political Justice* and *The Enquirer* in Owenite and Chartist journals. James Watson published a “cheap and elegant” fourth edition of *Political Justice* in 1842; this did not generate a major revival of interest, though it was favorably reviewed in the *New Moral World*, the paper of the Rational Society (1835-44), a communitarian organization founded by Robert Owen.²⁹ The renewed attention to Godwin’s ideas in publications intended for working men, though short-lived, gives credence to Frederick Engels’s declaration in 1844 that Godwin was “almost exclusively the property of the proletariat.”³⁰

In the middle of the nineteenth century, Godwin’s citations flattened out. Unlike many of his fellow-authors, after his death he was not kept in the public mind by an official biography or a large edition of his writings.³¹ The first full-length biographical study, C. Kegan Paul’s *William Godwin: His Friends and Contemporaries*, appeared in 1876, creating a minor peak in citations in that year. The work was commissioned by Godwin’s surviving relatives, who sought to safeguard his reputation; Kegan Paul, a former Anglican vicar and an associate of F.D. Maurice and other Christian socialist and co-operative movement leaders, was well-placed to write a sympathetic study.³² Thereafter interest in Godwin recovered in tandem with the recovery of progressive movements from the 1880s onwards. *Political Justice* in particular drew the attention of turn-of-century anarchists in search of precursors. In England, the journal *Freedom*, founded by the Russian anarchist Peter Kropotkin and his colleagues in 1886, included regular articles on *Political Justice* as an early exemplar of anarchism; in America, the leading anarchist journal *Free Society* ran a series of pieces on *Political Justice* in 1902-3.³³ In the inter-war years, interest in Godwin revived again. This was not just because of his new role as a founding father of modern anarchism. The rise of English studies as an academic discipline prompted the growth of a critical literature, often biographical in focus, exploring Godwin’s links with other literary figures of the times.³⁴ This

was a mixed blessing. Godwin became known less for his own writings than for his connections with other writers – the husband of Mary Wollstonecraft, the (impecunious) father-in-law of Shelley, and the friend of Coleridge, Hazlitt, and Lamb.

Two books published immediately after the Second World War were especially important in generating a new phase of interest in Godwin's writings and in shaping his reception over the next few decades. The first of these was F.E.L. Priestley's variorum edition of *Political Justice* (1946), originally his doctoral thesis, which made the work available for twentieth-century academic study. Priestley's edition was widely praised as a scholarly contribution, though the *Manchester Guardian* remarked that *Political Justice* itself was "alas, social dynamite no longer."³⁵ The author of the second influential book published in 1946 might not have agreed. In *William Godwin: A Biographical Study*, the anarchist George Woodcock set out to "arouse interest among English anarchists in their great predecessor" and to rehabilitate Godwin among general readers.³⁶ His book appeared with a foreword by the poet and critic Herbert Read (who had declared himself an anarchist in 1937):

Mr Woodcock's study of Godwin is timely. An increasing number of people, especially of the younger generation, are turning away in disillusionment from the dreary world created by authoritarian or State socialism, and being in no mood for reaction or despair, they discover that there is another and more revolutionary concept of socialism, libertarian socialism, which is still untried, and in detail largely unformulated. Godwin was the first and most eloquent prophet of this social philosophy, and in the years that lie immediately ahead of us, his name and his message will be reanimated.³⁷

For Woodcock, Read, and their associates, the value of *Political Justice* was more than academic: like Godwin's first readers in the 1790s, they believed his philosophy could stimulate political engagement and guide moral action.

In the post-war years, a good deal of intellectual and cultural life became institutionalized in the expanding universities. JSTOR, which follows academic publications, records a surge of popularity during the 1950s, stimulated by David Fleisher's *William Godwin: A Study in Liberalism* (1951) and D.H. Munro's *Godwin's Moral Philosophy: An Interpretation of William Godwin* (1953); and then again during the long 1960s, the decade of Pollin's major contributions. Godwin's philosophical anarchism was to some extent in tune with the rise of the progressive and academic counterculture and the New Left, and this provided an opportunity to reprint his key works. *Caleb Williams* was published by Reinhardt (New York) in 1960 and as an Oxford English Novel in 1970; *Political Justice* was published by Penguin Books in 1976. Meanwhile, Godwin's enigmatic personality received fresh attention. Following the rise of the Women's Movement in the 1970s, he loomed large in publications which gave new prominence to Mary Wollstonecraft and their daughter Mary Shelley, author of *Frankenstein* (1818); in the 1980s he was the principal subject of three full-length biographies within a decade.³⁸ In the 1990s the majority of his works were reprinted in a large scholarly edition, and many earlier editions of his writings were made available electronically through a research project on the history and theory of anarchism.³⁹ Godwin's reputation has survived its initial decline, and has surged again in recent years. He has benefited substantially from the re-historicizing of texts and their authors which currently dominates academic study of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. One consequence is the publication of authoritative editions of his diary and of his letters, which provide a whole new dimension to Godwin studies.

V

To conclude, consider Godwin's standing today. The most up-to-date and expansive current citation count available is Google Scholar. Table 2 consists of citations of Godwin's works (five citations and over) taken in 2013. The total number of citations is 1950, which is a

respectable score, comparable to that of the lifetime score of a well-cited academic in a research university today. In a sample of fifty current Fellows of the British Academy in cognate subjects, Godwin would be number 27 in citations, two ranks below the median, with 26 Fellows above him, and 24 below.⁴⁰

Table 2: Godwin Citations in Google Scholar (short titles, including modern editions and individual essays by Godwin within collections). Note: Scores aggregated from several different editions, using Harzing, "Publish or Perish" (www.harzing.com/pop.htm). Date of access, 3 September 2013. Full references can be followed up in Google Scholar (scholar.google.co.uk).

Political Justice	1138
Caleb Williams (Things as They Are)	219
The Enquirer	68
Memoirs of Author of a Vindication of the Rights of Woman	50
Of Population	45
St Leon	42
Essay of History and Romance	34
Lives of the Necromancers	30
Essays, Never Before Published	23
Fleetwood	23
History of Commonwealth	22
Thoughts Occasioned by Perusal of Dr Parr's Spital Sermon	21
Life of Chaucer	20
Thoughts on Man	19
Essay on Sepulchres	19
Lives of Edward and John Philips	17
Anarchist Writings [anthology]	13
A Short Residence in Sweden and Memoirs of Author of a	

Vindication	12
Of Choice in Reading	11
Uncollected Writings	11
Collected Novels and Memoirs	10
Considerations on Lord Grenville's and Mr Pitt's	
Bills	9
Fables Ancient and Modern	7
Life of William Pitt	6
Political and Philosophical Writings	6
Mandeville: A Tale of the Seventeenth Century	5

The table indicates that Godwin's enduring reputation is based almost entirely on *Political Justice*, which achieves four-figure citation status. *Caleb Williams* also has a respectable score. Both of these books are in the academic curriculum, and continue to be read. Mary Wollstonecraft, by way of comparison, has more than twice as many citations, approximately 4680, and likewise, her *Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792) has about 2600 citations in Google Scholar, where it is listed twice. *Of Population* and *St Leon* each have more than 40 citations. Godwin was immensely prolific, with scores of titles to his name, but he lives on by virtue of one big hit, and a few minor ones.

The typical author's trajectory is the bell-shaped curve of a successful one-period innovation. Godwin is one of the few who has had a second, third, and fourth life as an author. He has made the transition from a living presence in his own time into the pantheon of permanent cultural assets, from the personal focus of civil-society interaction to an enduring part of our civilization.

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Notes

¹ William Hazlitt, "William Godwin," *The Spirit of the Age; or, Contemporary Portraits* (1825), in *The Complete Works of William Hazlitt*, ed. P.P. Howe, 21 vols. (London: Dent, 1930-34), 11.16.

² *The Letters of Percy Bysshe Shelley*, ed. Frederick L. Jones, 2 vols. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1964), 1.220.

³ *Caleb Williams* (the 1794 text), ed. Pamela Clemit (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009); *An Enquiry concerning Political Justice* (the 1793 text), ed. Mark Philp (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013); *The Diary of William Godwin*, ed. Victoria Myers, David O'Shaughnessy, and Mark Philp (Oxford: Oxford Digital Library, 2010), at: <http://godwindiary.bodleian.ox.ac.uk>; *The Letters of William Godwin*, gen. ed. Pamela Clemit, 6 vols. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011-). For new critical perspectives, see Robert M. Maniquis and Victoria Myers, eds., *Godwinian Moments: From the Enlightenment to Romanticism*, UCLA Center for Seventeenth- and Eighteenth-Century Studies/William Andrews Clark Memorial Library Series (Toronto: Toronto University Press, 2011).

⁴ E.g., *The Reception of British and Irish Authors in Europe*, a research project directed by Elinor Shaffer and published by Bloomsbury Academic (formerly Continuum) in an open-ended, multi-volume book series edited by her (see <http://www.clarehall.cam.ac.uk/rbae/>); on Godwin's reception, see Kenneth W. Graham, *William Godwin Reviewed: A Reception History, 1783-1834* (New York: AMS Press, 2001).

⁵ For an overview of citation studies, see Nicola De Bellis, *Bibliometrics and Citation Analysis: From the Science Citation Index to Cybermetrics* (Lanham: Scarecrow Press, 2009).

⁶ Burton R. Pollin, *Godwin Criticism: A Synoptic Bibliography* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1967).

⁷ De Bellis, *Bibliometrics*, 181-242.

⁸ Roger C. Schonfeld, *JSTOR: A History* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2003).

⁹ De Bellis, *Bibliometrics*, 75-140.

¹⁰ Samuel Bjork, Avner Offer, and Gabriel Söderberg, "Time-Series Citation Data: The Nobel Prize in Economics," *Scientometrics* (Springer Online, March 2013, at: <http://link.springer.com/article/10.1007%2Fs11192-013-0989-5>; print publication forthcoming).

¹¹ Pollin, *Godwin Criticism*, 650-54.

¹² On 9 October 2013.

¹³ Technical details in Bjork *et al.*, "Time-Series Citation Data."

¹⁴ Technical details in Bjork *et al.*, "Time-Series Citation Data."

¹⁵ Mark Philp, *Godwin's Political Justice* (London: Duckworth, 1986), 58-79.

¹⁶ Derek Roper, *Reviewing before the "Edinburgh," 1788-1802* (London: Methuen, 1978), 198-203.

¹⁷ Roper, *Reviewing before the "Edinburgh,"* 180-81; *British Critic* 1 (1793), reprinted in Graham, *William Godwin Reviewed*, 63.

¹⁸ On the transformation in reviewing practices in late eighteenth-century and early nineteenth-century Britain, see Roper, *Reviewing before the "Edinburgh,"*; Jon P. Klancher, *The Making of English Reading Audiences, 1790-1832* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1987), 18-46; Marilyn Butler, "Culture's Medium: The Role of the Review," in Stuart Curran, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to British Romanticism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 120-47.

¹⁹ The collapse of Godwin's reputation during these years may be traced more fully in *The Letters of William Godwin, Volume II: 1798-1805*, ed. Pamela Clemit (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014).

²⁰ M.O. Grenby, *The Anti-Jacobin Novel: British Conservatism and the French Revolution* (Cambridge, 2001), *passim*; *True Briton*, 12 April 1797, 3; 14 April 1797, 3; 15 April 1797, 3; 18 April 1797, 3.

²¹ E.g., *The Mercury and New-England Palladium* published 29 articles ridiculing Godwin's views in 1801 (Pollin, *Godwin Criticism*, 105-9; see also Clarence S. Brigham, *History and Bibliography of American Newspapers, 1690-1820*, 2 vols. (Worcester, MA: American Antiquarian Society, 1947), 1.317-18).

²² Henry Richard Vassell, 3rd Lord Holland, *Further Memoirs of the Whig Party, 1807-1821, with Some Miscellaneous Reminiscences* (1854), ed. Lord Stavordale (London: John Murray, 1905), 381.

²³ Lamb to Thomas Manning, 25 December 1815, *The Letters of Charles Lamb, to Which Are Added Those of His Sister Mary Lamb*, ed. E.V. Lucas, 3 vols. (London: Dent, 1935), 2.183.

²⁴ Hazlitt, *Works*, 7.98.

²⁵ Peter H. Marshall, *William Godwin* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1984), 345.

²⁶ Michael Sadleir, *XIX Century Fiction: A Bibliographical Record Based on His Own Collection* (London and Los Angeles: Constable, 1951), 2.100; Richard D. Altick, *The English Common Reader: A Social History of the Mass Reading Public, 1800-1900* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1957), 274-75.

²⁷ Cf. *Metropolitan Magazine* 6 (January-April 1833), 114 (on *Deloraine*): "He who has trod like a king through the walks of feeling and affection, even when his step totters, will have an interest and a dignity about him, that must infallibly command respect;" reprinted in Graham, *William Godwin Reviewed*, 557.

²⁸ Pollin, *Godwin Criticism*, 187-88, 160.

²⁹ "To the Socialist especially, '*Political Justice*' opens up a storehouse of argument and illustration which may truly be pronounced invaluable;" *New Moral World*, 3rd ser. 4/35 (25 February 1843), 284.

³⁰ Friedrich Engels, *The Condition of the Working Class in England*, ed. Victor Kiernan, intro. Tristram Hunt (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 2009), 245.

³¹ See Pamela Clemit, "Introduction," *Lives of the Great Romantics III: Godwin, Wollstonecraft and Mary Shelley by Their Contemporaries*, gen. ed. John Mullan, 3 vols. (London: Pickering and Chatto, 1999), 1. ix-xliv.

³² Clemit, *Lives of the Great Romantics III*, 1.227-28.

³³ Pollin, *Godwin Criticism*, 267-69, 267; see also Heiner Becker, "Notes on *Freedom* and the Freedom Press, 1886-1928," *The Raven* 1 (1987), 4-24, and *Emma Goldman: A Documentary History of the American Years*, ed. Candace Falk et al., 2 vols. to date (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2003-), 2.551.

³⁴ On the post-First World War rise of English studies, see Chris Baldick, *The Social Mission of English Criticism, 1848-1932* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983), 86-108.

³⁵ *Manchester Guardian*, 9 March 1948.

³⁶ George Woodcock, "Introduction to a New Edition," *William Godwin: A Biographical Study* (Montreal and New York: Black Rose Books, 1989), ix.

³⁷ Herbert Read, "Foreword," Woodcock, *William Godwin*, xvii.

³⁸ Don Locke, *A Fantasy of Reason: The Life and Thought of William Godwin* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1980); Marshall, *William Godwin*; William St Clair, *The Godwins and the Shelleys: The Biography of a Family* (London: Faber and Faber, 1989).

³⁹ *Collected Novels and Memoirs of William Godwin*, gen. ed. Mark Philp, 8 vols. (London: Pickering and Chatto, 1992), and *Political and Philosophical Writings of William Godwin*, gen. ed. Mark Philp, 7 vols. (London: Pickering and Chatto, 1993); *Anarchy Archives: An Online Research Centre on the History and Theory of Anarchism*, a research project directed by Dana Ward, at: http://dwardmac.pitzer.edu/Anarchist_Archives/

⁴⁰ The sample was taken from the *British Academy Directory* for 2012-13, and consisted of the first ten distinctive names (to avoid overcounting) in each of the sections H6 (Modern Languages, Literatures and other Media; this includes English), H9 (Early Modern History to c.1800), H10 (Modern History from 1800), H12 (Philosophy), S5 (Political Studies: Political Theory, Government and International Relations). The counts were made on 12 October 2013 in Google Scholar, using Anne-Wil Harzing's programme, *Publish or Perish* (www.harzing.com/pop.htm). The highest individual score was 43139 citations, the lowest was 106, and the arithmetical mean was 4581. Fellows of the British Academy tend to be near the end of their scholarly careers. Different sections varied widely in citation levels from each other, perhaps because of different scholarly practices in different disciplines, and there was sometimes a large variance within sections as well.

