

Personal Identity, Narrative, and History: *The Female Quixote* and *Redgauntlet*

Everett Zimmerman

Recent critical discourse tends to resist exclusive definitions of the novel but yet to imply some definable corpus. The novel is regarded as a kind of prose that is neither self-identical nor able to be assimilated to the seemingly more precisely pedigreed genres that it simulates. Among such genres are history, biography, and autobiography, interrelated strands of narrative that were prominently appropriated by eighteenth-century fiction. Although we have little difficulty distinguishing the novel from these forms of writing, they continue to serve the novel's perennial claim to a truth-telling function.

This appropriation of history and biography (including autobiography) connects the novel to two salient features of the eighteenth-century intellectual landscape: the primacy of history for the understanding of society, and the philosophical elaboration and critique of notions of personal identity. The institutions of civil and social life were thought to be explicable only through history, as they are products of a particularized development. And the new philological understanding, praised by William Wotton and exemplified by Richard Bentley, implied that sacred as well as secular texts were comprehensible only through interpretation consistent with their historical contexts. While personal identity appears to be a private concern far removed from the usual subject matter of history, eighteenth-century conceptions of the private were also inflected by the category of

history, as the following well-known remark about Locke's *Essay Concerning the Human Understanding in Tristram Shandy* suggests: "It is a history-book ... of what passes in a man's own mind."¹

When John Locke designates "memory" as the criterion for personal identity, he is in effect deriving identity from our consciousness of our history.² Locke's view may be plausibly restated as follows: we are what we are able to narrate about ourselves. This kind of personal history is dependent on individual consciousness and is far removed from the public claims that the historical genres make, yet the relationship of identity to autobiographical writing is close, as Montaigne had demonstrated. And it was a commonplace of eighteenth-century (and earlier) historiography that private experiences and writings were the foundations of history, as evidenced in the narratives of Edward Hyde, Earl of Clarendon and Gilbert Burnet, Bishop of Salisbury. The assumption on which the following analysis rests is that the eighteenth-century novel takes as one of its significant tasks the exploration and reconciliation of the categories of public and private as represented by the connected but opposing poles of history and personal identity.

In *Time, Narrative, and History*, David Carr posits narrative as the basis for personal identity as well as for most kinds of history.³ Narrative is the organizer of events and also of our selves. But our personal narratives are deeply entwined with the various narratives that constitute the groups in which our lives participate. The temporal dimensions of these groups may exceed by years or centuries the limits of an individual life. Historical writing, even if concerned with distant times and cultures, implicitly intersects this narrative "we" that forms part of our individual identity. Thus, the categories of public and private are fluid and reciprocal, not just oppositional.

Eighteenth-century debates on personal identity can be interpreted as assaults on tightly woven theories of self as easily as affirmations of them. Locke's radically internalized view of personal identity as based on memory and his separation of "personal" identity from the "human" identity that is based on the perceptions of others made personal identity into a private matter, and thus raised questions of justice, or what

1 Laurence Sterne, *The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy, Gentleman*, ed. Melvyn New and Joan New, 3 vols (Gainesville: University Presses of Florida, 1978), 2:ii,98.

2 John Locke, *Essay Concerning the Human Understanding*, ed. Peter H. Nidditch (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975), pp. 328-48.

3 David Carr, *Time, Narrative, and History: An Essay in the Philosophy of History* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986).

may be called “civil” identity. The Lockean self may have to wait until the great judgment to receive an appropriate day in court, for human courts cannot conveniently take the vagaries of memory and consciousness into account.

Hume rejects that radically private aspect of the Lockean self as a fiction. He reintroduces a self that is discernible through cause-and-effect thinking but is organized by much looser patterns analogous to the baggy identity of a political organization:

I cannot compare the soul more properly to anything than to a republic or commonwealth, in which the several members are united by the reciprocal ties of government and subordination, and give rise to other persons, who propagate the same republic in the incessant changes of its parts. And as the same individual republic may not only change its members, but also its laws and constitutions; in like manner the same person may vary his character and disposition, as well as his impressions and ideas, without losing his identity. Whatever changes he endures, his several parts are still connected by the relation of causation.⁴

Because of his assumption that there are intelligible connections among human events, Hume finds that it is plausible to create a narrative out of an entire human life:

Nor only in any limited portion of life, a man’s actions have a dependence on each other, but also during the whole period of his duration from the cradle to the grave. ...The unity of action, therefore, which is to be found in biography or history, differs from epic poetry not in kind but in degree.⁵

Human intentionality pervades the actions of life as well as the literary productions of history and fiction, and as a consequence our narratives reflect the coherences, even if limited, of our private minds and public actions.



Among the novels of the eighteenth century, there are many that might be assimilated to the task implied in the above analysis—the reconciliation of personal identity and civil identity. The (auto)biographical fictions that

4 David Hume, *Treatise of Human Nature*, ed. L.A. Selby-Bigge and P.H. Nidditch (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978), p. 261.

5 “Of the Association of Ideas” from *An Inquiry concerning Human Understanding, The Philosophical Works of David Hume* (Boston: Little Brown, 1854), 4:25. Most modern editions omit a portion of the full text of this section, which Hume shortened for the last edition printed in his lifetime. There is no evidence that Hume repudiated the omitted portion.

organize many of these narratives place stories of individual lives in connection and contention with the public and conventionally historic events surrounding private life, for example, *Tom Jones* and *Tristram Shandy*. I shall examine only two fictional texts in connection with the interrelations of civil and personal identity, Charlotte Lennox's *The Female Quixote* (1752) and Walter Scott's *Redgauntlet* (1824). Both of these texts foreground their high awareness of fictional precedents and thus comment on the novel's constitution. They generously invoke the quixotic as an inheritance of Cervantes' great book, looking intently at the large issue it raises: fictions as a shaping part of human existence. They also pay tribute to Richardson, as well as to numerous other texts. Placing themselves within a tradition of fiction writing that they interrogate and bring into confrontation with the historical record of human existence, Lennox and Scott make even more problematic the already contested issue in the discussions of personal identity—the definition of a private self that is not open to historical determination. While I do not want to argue that *The Female Quixote* and *Redgauntlet* are concerned with technical aspects of personal identity, they exemplify the dissonances between personal identity and civil identity, dissonances that are narratively defined as connections and conflicts between *self*-shaping and historical fixedness.

Quixotic fictions raise concerns relevant to personal identity because of the central character's imposition of a text on self: is there a consistent person beyond or behind the imposed conventions? Such questioning is related to hermeneutical concerns; we observe the mistaken uses of a fictional text and try to determine more appropriate interpretive strategies. Furthermore, the quixotic implies the historical as its opposing reality and examines the boundaries between the historical and the fictional, boundaries that then become problematic.

Published in 1752, after the lengthy fictions of the 1740s, *The Female Quixote* is in an auspicious position to comment upon the constitution and institutionalization of the novel (Johnson's *Rambler* 4 had appeared in 1750).⁶ Book 9, chapter 11, often but inconclusively attributed to Johnson, gives implicit praise to Richardson, who had corresponded with Charlotte Lennox during her writing of *The Female Quixote*, while the quixotic fiction itself participates in the anti-romance theme, which was used to

6 Patricia Meyer Spacks uses *The Female Quixote* as "an appropriate starting point for investigation of the eighteenth-century novel. Its central questions concern the nature of desire (including desire for fiction) and of readers' relation to it; the boundaries of responsible interpretation; the scope of fiction's appropriate emotional effect and its consequences; the relative place of rationality and passion in understanding; the interpenetration of fiction and history." *Desire and Truth: Functions of Plot in Eighteenth-Century English Novels* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990), p. 32.

claim the superiority of the novel to the romance. *The Female Quixote* mocks the fiction of Madeleine de Scudéry among others (seventeenth-century fiction that is by this time rather out of fashion in any case), while also revealing the author's detailed acquaintance with it and implicitly defending it.

Despite their burlesque elements, quixotic fictions uphold Johnson's conception of the possibility of the fictional for showing "life in its true state."⁷ While it comically depicts the heroine's bizarre behaviour, then, Lennox's book also assimilates its heroine to the real as opposed to the romantic, a transition that occurs in the heroine's conversion to history, as opposed to romance, in the penultimate chapter. This possibly Johnsonian chapter disquietingly declares its suspicions of all fiction; even as it praises the moral impact of works such as Richardson's, it makes veridical history the primary norm for the measurement of writing. A number of critics have pointed out that the clergyman who argues Arabella into sanity does not require her to renounce all fiction.⁸ Nevertheless, the dialogue between the clergyman and Arabella implies a hierarchy that elevates history above fiction. History is superior even to fiction that is to some degree realistic and morally instructive. Openly unrealistic fiction, such as the fables of Aesop, is also acceptable if it conveys a moral truth without in any way confusing itself with the historical.⁹ In accord with an indictment of imagination like that in *Rasselas*, the chapter hints that madness is persistently incipient and its harbingers, including fictions, must always be suspected. As is the case with Don Quixote's final cure, many readers have found Arabella's subjection to the real a diminishment of the possibilities that romances had implied for her. Not only are her extravagances curbed, but also the mental and emotional horizons of her world are narrowed. She turns from all fictions to accept a world in which her possibilities are bounded by the common denominators of a society already known by her to be defective. She is then no heroine at all. And her book turns against itself, not just against reputedly lesser romances.

7 Samuel Johnson, *The Rambler*, vol. I, ed. W.J. Bate and Albrecht B. Strauss (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1969), p. 19.

8 David Marshall, "Writing Masters and 'Masculine Exercises' in *The Female Quixote*," *Eighteenth-Century Fiction* 5 (1992), 127-28; Mary Patricia Martin, *Novel: A Forum on Fiction* 31 (1997), 45. I agree that Lennox's aim is to elevate a particular kind of fictional practice, but I also think that her clergyman elevates history above all fiction.

9 Charlotte Lennox, *The Female Quixote, or, the Adventures of Arabella*, ed. Margaret Dalziel with an introduction by Margaret Anne Doody. Chronology and appendix by Duncan Isles (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), p. 377. References are to this edition.

These conflicts within Lennox's book can be articulated through the related terms of the "epistemological" and the "hermeneutical." Arabella attempts to form her identity within the boundaries of the fictional world that her reading has portrayed. Her readjustment to a current and historical world is then both hermenutical and epistemological. She must find better ways of reading (or find new books), and she must also learn to understand her experience as others do. In so far as Arabella's interpretive problems are based on assumptions about reading, they are hermeneutical, and in so far as they are based on her assumptions about the nature of knowledge itself, they are epistemological. When she grossly misinterprets the nature of her experience, she is in need of a more justifiable epistemology, and when she appears to be abusing a book's meaning in some ludicrously literal way, she is need of a more complex hermeneutics. The two terms cannot, however, be separated in some definitive way. The very point of a quixotic fiction is to connect and complicate these two terms—the epistemology and hermeneutics of a quixotic figure are intertwined and confused.

Arabella is on occasion unable to interpret her sense experience appropriately because of her imposition of a romance motif on experience defined as non-bookish. Lennox, nevertheless, is careful to keep Arabella's mental world within the boundaries of eighteenth-century empirical assumptions at those times when the "heroine" is not adjusting her experience to her literalistic hermeneutics. For example, after Arabella professes her preposterous belief that the writing-master who seduced Miss Groves is a nobleman, Miss Glanville responds: "You may as well persuade me, the Moon is made of a Cream Cheese, as that any Nobleman turned himself into a Writing-master, to obtain Miss Groves" (p. 142). Arabella contemptuously remarks that she is not likely to be comparing a "Planet, which, haply, is not much less than our Earth, to a thing so inconsiderable, as that you name—" (p. 142). To which Miss Glanville, the advocate of social realism and pettiness, responds, "Why, certainly, I have more Reason to trust my own Eyes, than such whimsical Notions as these" (p. 143). This interchange endorses Arabella's intelligent participation in the empirical knowledge and assumptions of an enlightened age, rather than advocating her reliance on a vulgar and ignorant version of sense experience. While Miss Glanville's interpretation of the relationship of Miss Groves and the writing master is far more persuasive than Arabella's within the social norms of their contemporary society, Miss Glanville's easy if persuasive interpretation also suggests her casual acceptance of the tawdriness of her society. Her subsequent ignorance of lunar probabilities implies also that there is little intellectual understanding behind her social judgments. Arabella's ludicrous misjudgment reflects her resistance to

narrowly prudential assumptions about social behaviour, while the basis of her mistake (the inappropriately literal application of a romance plot) suggests that she might be cured through an adjustment of her hermeneutics and may not need an entire mental and social rehabilitation.

The Countess's attempt to reorient Arabella's hermeneutics has history as its predominant category—both Arabella's history and that reflected in the romances Arabella relies on. The Countess, like Glanville, is able to discern in Arabella a deeper character that exists independently of the behaviour inculcated by romance reading: Arabella has a "Wit and Spirit" that "was not absolutely hid under the Absurdity of her Notions" (p. 323). Her attempted repetition of ridiculous romance motifs is the result of "her Studies, her Retirement, her Ignorance of the World, and her lively Imagination" (p. 323). The Countess emphasizes the sharp differences between the world of the romances and Arabella's contemporary world: "And when one reflects upon the dangerous Adventures to which Persons of their Quality were expos'd in those Times, one cannot help rejoicing that we live in an Age in which the Customs, Manners, Habits, and Inclinations differ so widely from theirs, that 'tis impossible such Adventures should even happen" (p. 326). Arabella, however, protests the moral relativism that she discerns in the Countess's views: "But custom, Madame, said Arabella, cannot possibly change the Nature of Virtue or Vice: And since Virtue is the chief Characteristic of a Hero, a Hero in the last Age will be a Hero in this" (p. 328). The Countess then cites Christianity as a change that has in fact altered the structure of morality: "Judging them by the Rules of Christianity, and our present Notions of Honour, Justice, and Humanity, they certainly are" bad men (p. 328).

The Countess strikes a somewhat precarious course between totally rejecting the romance writings that Arabella reads, and allowing some necessary realignment of their meaning that would still give them value despite radical social change.¹⁰ In both cases any direct application to present life is rejected. The slight opening that the Countess gives for salvaging romances through historical reinterpretation occurs by means of her conception of linguistic change. When Arabella asks the Countess to narrate her "Adventures," the Countess shows Arabella that it is insulting to impute "Adventures" to a respectable woman of the present time, whose "History" is composed of only a "few and natural Incidents" (p. 327).

¹⁰ Scott Paul Gordon argues cogently that *The Female Quixote* implicitly gives much support to romance. See "The Space of Romance in Lennox's *Female Quixote*," *Studies in English Literature 1500–1900* 38 (1998), 499–516. I find, however, that the Countess's approval of romance is more equivocal than he suggests. She appears to be more concerned with gradualist strategies for leading Arabella away from romance reading than with validating romance.

In subsequent discussion, the Countess suggests a philological program for approaching the moral differences between the past of the romances and present reality: while virtue and vice may retain their natures, the language used to define them may dramatically change its meaning over time. Although holding out this hope of reinterpreting the romances to keep them within a canon of acceptable literature, the Countess also implies that Arabella needs to constrain her life within the narrow boundaries suitable to a woman's history in the present age (which disqualifies it from having the significance needed for lasting history). She must learn to narrate her life within history (and thus as non-historical), rather than as romance. The Countess herself has managed to make this adjustment: she had been "deep read in Romances; and but for an early Acquaintance with the World, and being directed to other Studies, was likely to have been as much a Heroine as Lady *Bella*" (p. 323).

The "Doctor," the clergyman who undertakes Arabella's final cure, is hard pressed to respond to some of her attempts to maintain the value of the romances. He is able to prevail only when he has persuaded her to allow the argument to be decided on the basis of the veracity of the romances as determined by their persuasiveness as history. In the course of their discussion Arabella urges him to consider that if these books do not describe real life, they "give us an Idea of a better Race of Beings than now inhabit the World" (p. 380). She defends her reading by defending her life: "These books I have read; and that I hope without any Injury to my Judgment, or my Virtue" (p. 374). Arabella is here summoning arguments that had long been used to defend fictions of many kinds. Eventually, however, the clergyman is permitted to rest his argument on the quality of the romance authors' knowledge of the events they describe:

How then, Madam could these Events be so minutely known to Writers so far remote from the Time in which they happen'd?

By records, Monuments, Memoirs, and Histories, answered the Lady.

But by what Accident, then ... did it happen these Records and Monuments were kept universally secret to Mankind till the last Century? ... And whither are they now vanished again that they can be found no more? (p. 375)

The clergyman wins a resounding victory over Arabella's historical credulity, and she is cured of the epistemological fallacies that had long confounded her understanding of her social world.¹¹ These fallacies are notably

11 Wendy Motooka shows that the "novel does not resolve the hermeneutical conflict driving its plot" because the "clergyman rejects romances wholesale as 'senseless fictions.'" "Coming to a Bad End: Sentimentalism, Hermeneutics, and *The Female Quixote*," *Eighteenth-Century Fiction* 8 (1996), 269, 270.

apparent in her failure to accept as her contemporary reality the appearances that signify the class structure: she has too often insisted on transforming servants and writing-masters into nobility.

Yet the arguments that Arabella has used against the clergyman's views are not entirely without continuing reverberation in their suggestion of a hermeneutic theory that can justify fictions. Indeed, the clergyman himself acknowledges that Shakespeare, Richardson, and Aesop have written acceptable fictions because of their conveyance of moral truth. The clergyman is determined, nevertheless, to reduce fictional writings to a status subsidiary to some presumed historical veridicality. This determination is founded on his and his society's demand that Arabella accept contemporary social assumptions (especially those about class and gender) as a reality beyond historical questioning. Arabella's society anxiously insists that contemporary history is beyond history. The romances must be shown to be false, not recuperable through historicization; otherwise, contemporary values might also be regarded as a passing phase of manners.

Any sustained discussion of history will be more complex than the clergyman's view, which is an argument designed to triumph in a particular context. *The Female Quixote* entertains more faceted views of history within its narrative prior to the clergyman's seemingly final word. The more capacious, if less systematic, construal of history found in these various earlier interchanges includes several elements that the clergyman leaves implicit or suppressed. History for the clergyman is the past and our research on it; he does not dwell on its status as writing. Once history is fully conceded to be writing, its inescapable and motivated process of selecting details and the multiple functions that can be subsumed in a generalized veridicality are foregrounded. Written history is then part, and only a part, of history. It is motivated by interests that may include veridicality prominently, but these interests are never exhaustively described by any single term.

Arabella's insistence on transmuting the commonplace into the adventurous is related to her view that a history must be composed of the extraordinary. She is determined to have a history that will long survive her: "I shall not write it ... tho', questionless, it will be written after my Death" (p. 110). But later, needing a history more quickly, she asks her servant Lucy to provide one. When Lucy is reluctant to take on so portentous a task, Arabella's further charge to her parodies the romances' claims to historicity and parades her own self-centred impositions on history:

[Lucy should] be able, not only to recount all my Words and Actions, even the smallest and most inconsiderable, but also my Thoughts, however instantaneous;

relate exactly every Change of my Countenance ... and every Gesture which I have used for these Ten Years past; nor omit the smallest Circumstance that relates to me. (p. 122)

Lucy later disclaims any knowledge of the so-called disguised gardener's thoughts, but Arabella insists: "I expect you should decypher all his thoughts, as plainly as he himself could do; otherwise my History will be very imperfect" (p. 123). But the story of this same character's stealing of carp is an "egregious Mistake" that "I charge you not to mention" (p. 123).

This exposure of romance as unhistorical cuts two ways. Much history is also unhistorical in similar if more subtle ways, as readers of ancient and pre-Enlightenment history know. I refer not to the subtle biases and conjectures to be found in all history, but to the relatively explicit fictionalizing that the Enlightenment often criticized but did not entirely eliminate. After all, if an historical narrative contained only the verifiable, would it not be implausibly constricted? How can a narrative not include the plausible among the details of the actual? The unverifiable thoughts of a character are claimed by fiction as *The Female Quixote* states, but they are not always absent from history: "to place this momentous Affair in a true Light, 'tis necessary to go back a little, and acquaint the Reader with what had passed in the Apartment; and also, following the Custom of the Romance and Novel-Writers, in the Heart of our Heroine" (p. 180).

Sir Charles Glanville resists Arabella's narratives with a rough but effective commonsensical realism, but he is in some respects as intellectually handicapped as his niece, Miss Glanville. When Arabella recounts the myth of Thalestris and the Amazons, Sir Charles finds it preposterous that a male army might ever accept female leadership. Arabella's acceptance of the expanded romance versions of the myth as literal history is of course foolish, yet Sir Charles's unwillingness to consider the possibility of some substratum of truth in the story is also a remarkably unsubtle view of history and of fiction. And his subsequent display of his lack of knowledge even of the existence of the ancient kingdoms of Scythia and Mauretania reveals that his downright realism is sometimes founded solidly on ignorance, but not on history (p. 205).

To a degree, then, *The Female Quixote* suggests that history has negotiable boundaries and that fiction is not without a capacity to negotiate. Although the clergyman converts Arabella to an unnuanced version of history in which her beloved romances can claim little participation, aspects of the preceding narrative entice us to regard history less monolithically, to see

it as a range of activities that may partake of the fictional as well as the factual. Paul Veyne's sometimes enigmatic little book *Did the Greeks Believe in Their Myths?* may help us to see Charlotte Lennox's narrative from outside some of its, or perhaps our, Enlightenment assumptions.¹² The answer to Veyne's titular question is "yes," but in many different ways in different times. Veyne also suggests, however, that we too believe in our myths. He exfoliates varying conceptions of history held by the ancients that differ markedly from ours, with the aim of exposing our tendency to be oblivious to the historicity of our own assumptions. Although we accept the oppositions of reason and myth, truth and fiction, real and imaginary as fundamental and inescapable, "culture, without being false, is not true either" (pp. 122, 127). Thus there are a range of cultural questions that can escape the oppositions that we assume; in contrast to us the ancients tended to accept less sharply contrasted views of historical truth. Veyne's position is not, however, the simpleminded one that denies knowledge:

it is clear that the existence or the nonexistence of Theseus and gas chambers in one point of space and time has a material reality that owes nothing to the imagination. But this reality or irreality is perceived, misunderstood, or interpreted in one way or another according to the program in force. It, by itself, does not claim our attention; things are not perfectly clear. There is no truth of things, nor is it imminent. (p. 107)

What we call "'reality' is the child of the constitutive imagination of our tribe" (p. 113). This "constitutive imagination" is not derived from individual psychology but from the "arbitrary and inert frameworks" within which "each epoch thinks and acts" (p. 118), what Veyne metaphorically characterizes as a "fishbowl," a transparent structure which bounds the mental world of each epoch.

The changes that Veyne describes take place slowly, but he identifies the "Quarrel of the Ancients and Moderns" as a time of significant change in the nature of history: ancient texts were deprived of their "aura," and "historical reality" was separated from the "texts that narrate it" (p. 113). Veyne does not argue that ancient historians could not distinguish between events and texts, but that "sources themselves" were "part of history" (p. 109). A sharp opposition to this respect for past narratives is to be found in the seventeenth-century writer Fontenelle, who thought that myth contained no truth at all. In contrast, the ancients found true details at the core of myths, even if the myths altered that truth. The ancient historians

12 Paul Veyne. *Did the Greeks Believe in their Myths? An Essay on the Constitutive Imagination*, trans. Paula Wissing (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988). References are to this edition.

tended to depend on someone's words and thus showed hesitation about sharply distinguishing truth from fiction (p. 27).

The shift from this testimony-centred version of history to the one that sharply separates the historian from history, the text from event, is also, Veyne's argument implies, related to the "formation of professional centers of truth" (p. 28). The "professional investigator ... cross-checks and verifies ... he imposes the need for coherence on reality" (p. 33). In this as in other matters, Veyne does not insist on some sharp disjunction between then and now; for example, he cites Herodotus as a writer who assiduously compares accounts and the details they contain. Yet the Enlightenment accelerates the increasing prominence of the disciplinary specialist, the authority that we consult to give us the answer we consider reliable within what we define as a particular field of knowledge.

Veyne describes a mixture of truthfulness and imagination in ancient historical works that modernity tends to separate as definitively as possible into discrete strands of history and fiction. Such a separation is enjoined within our particular "fishbowl" without being self-evidently derivable from something called reality:

It is normal for people to believe in the works of the imagination. People believe in religions, in *Madame Bovary* while they read, in Einstein, in Fustel de Coulanges, in the Trojan origin of the Franks. However in certain societies some of these works are deemed fictions. (p. 117)

He suggests that the "imaginative faculty furnishes three-fourths of any page of history, with documents providing the rest" (p. 103). The attempts to purge the imaginative from the factual in our history result in a sometimes drastic narrowing of its scope. Even when history attempts to be increasingly comprehensive, Veyne suggests, "the greater part of cultural and social life remains outside the field of historiography, even the historiography that is not concerned with events" (p. 120).

Seen against Veyne's analysis of these changes in historiography, *The Female Quixote* appears to describe Arabella's movement from one "fishbowl" to another. The clergyman teaches her to make sharp discriminations between the historical and the fictional. He wants her to see romance as limited by its authors' failures to use proper sources, in contrast to the professional historians' researches on behalf of the past. She needs to subdue the credence she gives to words and the imagination, making distinctions in favour of verifiable event. The possibility of muting such distinctions can be justified only when moral good is in question. The ancients too, Veyne suggests, saw the good as the true even when not literally so: "can one without

pedantry condemn someone who zealously embraces the good cause—that of the Good, which is also the True—for reasons that contain no literal truth? Is it not better to ignore this purely verbal inaccuracy?” (p. 79). The clergyman is willing to grant this liberty of the less-than-literal truth to fiction, but he would not allow even the verbal inaccuracy in history.

A forger in Veyne’s description is one who invokes the premises of one era from within another:

A forger is a fish who, for reasons of temperament, has ended up in the wrong bowl. His scientific imagination follows myths no longer found on the program. That this program is often, indeed always, as imaginary as the one followed by the forger, I willingly believe. (p. 108)

Arabella attempts to forge herself as a heroine. She interpolates herself into texts that place themselves within another era, without realizing that her literalistic hermeneutics turns them into forgeries too.

Arabella has made of herself an imaginary creature who rejects or neglects the social identity that she has been born into. The clergyman persuades her to accept the history that is appropriate to her social world, a history from which she is to be absent: the history of a respectable woman is excluded from the history to which Arabella has been converted. In so far as *The Female Quixote* implies personal identity, it is shaped by an inescapable social environment. David Marshall makes the important point that Arabella rejects autobiography:

The reader gets little sense of Arabella’s inner thoughts and motives apart from the mistakes she makes in interpreting the world around her. Arabella is unique in the novel because she believes that she has a story, but ... she expects that someone else will tell or write the History which she cannot or will not write herself.¹³

She first understands her destiny and history as a *sometime to be narrated* repetition of romance, but finally accepts her life as a version of the mundane lives of those who are absent from history. Arabella collides with the side of the fishbowl, and she is finally persuaded that it is reality. Its kind of history will be hers, even if her respectability allows her no adventures worthy of recounting.



Scott’s *Redgauntlet* (1824) combines its hero’s search for an identity with the narration of a political upheaval. Darsie Latimer does not know the

13 Marshall, p. 113.

facts of his birth, learning only late in the novel that he is the son of a Jacobite executed after the 1745 rebellion. As context for his hero's personal search, Scott recounts a fictional, abortive Jacobite rebellion of the 1760s, with Charles Edward Stuart returning to England. Scott's history here is fictional, but it reflects what might have happened, as in the 1750s there was Jacobite interest in assessing the potential support for another rebellion against the Hanoverian government. Darsie Latimer is recruited to leadership in Scott's fictional rebellion because of his father's identity and because of the long history of the House of Redgauntlet to which he is heir. The entire weight of a family history of which he has been ignorant—but which appears to explain many of his characteristics—impels him towards a choice that he nevertheless resists easily. Darsie is emotional, brave, and, on occasion, foolhardy—the kind of Jacobite of whom myths are made. In contrast to his friend Alan Fairford, son to the Edinburgh lawyer who is Darsie's guardian, Darsie's values are those of an aristocrat—a suggestion that his place in society is innate. Yet his search for an identity is deeper than that for true relatives alone. He ends up accepting an historic identity, but it is as a conciliator and mediator of the differences between Scotland and England, Jacobite and Hanoverian—not as leader of a cause he finds repugnant despite his ancestral connection to it.

The historical and literary character of identity is apparent to Darsie from the novel's beginning. Faced with a collection of moral and historical writers for his reading amusement, he decides instead to write to his friend Alan: "truly, I think, writing history (one's self being the subject) is as amusing as reading that of foreign countries"¹⁴ The lightness of tone belies the seriousness with which he writes:

to one plunged in my uncertainty and ignorance, the slightest gleam that promises intelligence, is interesting. My life is like the subterranean river in the Peak of Derby, visible only where it crosses the celebrated cavern. I am here, and this much I know; but where I have sprung from, or whither my course in life is like to tend, who shall tell me? (pp. 76–77)

Darsie is responding to Alan's epistolary chiding of him for "making histories out of nothing" (p. 46), a remark that reflects Alan's occasional impatience with Darsie's obsessive sifting and ordering of any possible hint of his past or future.

Darsie and Alan ostentatiously exhibit their literariness through allusion and analogies to other imaginative works, and the letters call attention

¹⁴ Walter Scott, *Redgauntlet*, ed. Kathryn Sutherland (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), p. 76. References are to this edition.

to their materiality in Richardsonian fashion. References to Richardson, Arisoto, Bunyan, and Le Sage (pp. 26, 36, 92, 128) are, for example, quickly summoned to explain or describe their thoughts and adventures. Their relationship to each other is conceived of in relation to several literary pairs, most prominently Don Quixote and Sancho Panza, who are alluded to explicitly but also implicitly in Alan's various references to Darsie's "air-drawn castles" (p. 76): "If you are Don Quixote enough to lay your lance in rest ... I pronounce you but a lost knight," says Alan of Darsie's border adventures, but "Come back and I will be your faithful Sancho Panza" (p. 85). The aristocratic romanticism of Darsie is placed against the presumably more mundane and practical Alan through this comparison; this contrast, however, does not account for the degree to which both characters are steeped in imaginative literature. While Alan is as quick to leap to a literary comparison as Darsie, his knowledge of his family and acceptance of his identity presumably give him the solidity and assurance that is denied to Darsie, who is in danger of fabricating, Quixote-like, the identity that he has not found. Alan's vocation is the law in an "especial" and "hereditary" way (p. 23). He gives a pedigree of his family, which is in its recent years a story of progress in the legal profession. His narrative of self fits easily into the larger narratives of his family and his society; whereas Darsie must attempt to "wring" some sense out of his self-narration:

I repeat the little history now, as I have done a hundred times before, merely because I would wring some sense out of it. Turn then, thy sharp, wire-drawing, lawyer-like ingenuity to the same task—make up my history as though thou wert shaping the blundering allegations of some blue-bonneted, hard-headed client, into a condescendence of facts and circumstances. (p. 17)

Darsie's sense of Alan's narrational ability and its centrality to his profession is confirmed by Alan's later success in the legendarily unresolvable Peebles-Plainstones case, which nearly reached a conclusion because of Alan's masterly imposition of a narrative order on its seemingly interminable subsidiary plots and counterclaims.¹⁵

15 Rohan Maitzen discusses similarities between lawyerly and historical narration: "Lawyers and historians, as Scott and Macaulay both recognize, do much the same sort of work: they assemble documents or pieces of evidence: they evaluate their reliability and their usefulness: they organize them into a stable structure: and they present a verifiable or defensible case." "By No Means an Improbable Fiction": *Redgauntlet's* Novel Historicism," *Studies in the Novel* 25 (1993), 172. David Daiches remarks that "The legal profession in eighteenth-century Scotland was in large measure the guardian of Scottish antiquities;" and the part played by lawyers and antiquaries, "often combined, as in Scott's own case, in a single person," is important to his novels of life in Scotland. "Scott's *Redgauntlet*," *Critical Essays on Sir Walter Scott: The Waverley Novels*, ed. Harry E. Shaw (New York: G.K. Hall, 1996), p. 138. This article was first published in 1958.

Redgauntlet is a compendium of the narrative methods of eighteenth-century fiction.¹⁶ It begins with a sustained epistolary correspondence between Alan and Darsie (letter 1 to letter 13), then introduces “Chapter I,” which is entitled “Narrative” and is followed by another so-called narrative chapter, these chapters giving an account in the authorial voice of what happened in Edinburgh during the Peebles-Plainstones hearing and after Alan’s abrupt departure. Chapter 3 shifts narrational method again, introducing a journal, a form somewhere between letter and authorial narration. The “Journal of Darsie Latimer” is still addressed to Alan, but Darsie is explicit about its altered form of narration, which does not depend on an interchange and is not structured over the shorter narrative span of letters, although the book’s author nevertheless divides the narrative into chapters (“Darsie Latimer’s Journal in Continuation”). In chapter 10, we switch to the “Narrative of Alan Fairford,” after which the book remains an authorial narrative, although containing other embedded narrative voices. These shifts are repeatedly accompanied by commentary on narrative methods, either from the perspective of the author or, when the switch to the Journal occurs, from Darsie, who meditates on its various functions.

The movement from epistolary narration to the Journal signifies the movement of Darsie’s reflections towards the more public aspects of his identity. In a sustained meditation on his writing of the Journal, Darsie analyses both its private benefits and the function it will have in establishing his character for the world. Although he had earlier lamented that if he died “few would know that such a being had existed for twenty years on the face of the earth” (p. 165), by the later stages of the Journal he is aware of his increased role in a larger world than his private reflections had been able to reveal. At the opening of the penultimate chapter of the Journal (chap. 8), he has the difficult task of “reducing to writing” his increasing understanding of the Jacobitism that seems somehow connected to his imprisonment. This segment is a sustained meditation both on the evidence for his own identity and on the political situation of Scotland and England. Darsie’s Journal enables him to forge an identity out of public and private interconnections that if unnarrativized would be fleeting and fragmentary impressions, productive only of anxiety.

In *Time, Narrative, and History* Carr points out that the constant presence of narrative does not organize our lives seamlessly: “Life can be regarded as

16 Homer Obed Brown, *Institutions of the English Novel: From Defoe to Scott* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1997), finds that “*Redgauntlet* ... seems almost to anthologize the novel—its modes, material, its themes” (p. 169). Emily Allen, “Re-making Territory: *Redgauntlet* and the Restoration of Sir Walter Scott,” *Studies in Romanticism* 37 (1998), sees in *Redgauntlet* a “teleological history of the novel that begins with Richardson’s epistolary fiction and ends with the historical fiction of Walter Scott” (p. 175).

a constant *effort*, even a struggle, to maintain or restore narrative coherence in the face of an ever-threatening, impending chaos” (p. 91). Carr suggests that part of the process of establishing self-coherence is choosing which groups we want to belong to, in so far as choice is possible (p. 151). Looking at Darsie Latimer’s difficulties from Carr’s perspective, we see that he is a part of a family “we,” a narrative that he is engaged in constructing but that must in large part be uncovered for him. But the family narrative is in sharp (although not total) conflict with what Darsie has become in the course of his individual life. Thrust into a crucial historical event, he must find a way of narrating his life that does justice to his public responsibilities, his personal character, and his hereditary connections.

Paul Ricoeur’s *Oneself as Another* provides a conceptual context that illuminates Darsie Latimer’s predicament.¹⁷ Ricoeur points out that Locke and Hume failed to distinguish adequately between two poles of identity—*idem* or sameness, and *ipse* or self. “Sameness” enables us to recognize reappearances (of a friend after absence, for example) or similarity in simultaneous appearances (of twins, for example). But the criteria for personal identity must also include persistence through change, which demands a conception of “self.” Having established “sameness” as his criterion for identity, Locke then uses “memory” as his crucial category for defining personal identity. Without acknowledgment, Locke has slipped to *ipse* or “self” as the criterion of personal identity, rather than continuing to rely on “sameness.” Time, Ricoeur suggests, is allied to change and is thus a threat to identity conceived as “sameness” unless we can posit a “permanence in time” (p. 117). We need to try to answer the question of *who continues* even if we cannot answer the question of *what continues*. Ricoeur designates “character” as the conceptual point where *idem* and *ipse* are joined (p. 117). The various aspects of character—our traits—are samenesses over time that are used to identify us, but these traits have a history too, which consists of “innovation” and “sedimentation.” We internalize characteristics that are at first perceived as “other.” To formulate a judgment about a life with such complexities and vagaries, the life must be “gathered together in some way, and how could this occur if not, precisely, in the form of a narrative” (p. 158). Such narratives show us patterns of development that constitute sameness over time and thus identify us (*idem*), but they also are us (*ipse*). It is narrative then that puts *ipse* and *idem* into a dialectical relationship. Ricoeur suggests that “because

17 Paul Ricoeur, *Oneself As Another*, trans. Kathleen Blamcy (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), especially the Fifth Study (“Personal Identity and Narrative Identity”) and the Sixth Study (“The Self and Narrative Identity”). References are to this edition.

of the elusive nature of real life ... we need the help of fiction to organize life retrospectively" (p. 162). He does not argue that the narrative of life is necessarily fictitious, but that literary narratives are "complementary" to life histories: "the narrative is part of life before being exiled from life in writing" (p. 163).

Darsie Latimer or Redgauntlet? Darsie's uncle Hugh Redgauntlet insists on Darsie's duty to sameness, to the "we" that constitutes his family and its traditional allegiances. He allows only a repetitive narrative. Although Darsie searches for the "before" and "after" that can be connected to his present, he will not abandon "self" to obtain "sameness." He has been alert throughout to the literary narratives that can teach him to connect *idem* to *ipse* through a retrospective narrative of character development. As head of the house of Redgauntlet, Darsie reinforces the moderate political position that puts an end to the repetitive destructiveness narrated in his family legend and enjoined by his uncle. He is able to maintain Darsie Latimer's values without giving up the traits that link him to the House of Redgauntlet—an aristocratic orientation that disqualifies him for the profession of law and distinguishes him from his friend Alan.

"Wandering Willie's Tale" (with its reverberations throughout the novel) represents the conflict between *idem* and *ipse* at its starkest. The dynastic legend insists on "sameness" at the expense of "self," and Darsie is impelled to conceive of his future as something to be discovered, not acquired or shaped. Darsie learns of the Redgauntlet mark, the frown that creates the resemblance of a horseshoe on the forehead, from "Wandering Willie's Tale" (p. 105). Later, Darsie's denial of any prior knowledge of his captor's identity is instantly contradicted by the appearance of the Redgauntlet horseshoe on Herries of Birrenwork's (Hugh Redgauntlet's) brow: "I had heard such a look described in an old tale of *diablerie*, which it was my chance to be entertained with not long since; when this deep and gloomy contortion of the frontal muscles was not unaptly described, as forming the representation of a small horseshoe" (p. 192). And frowning back at Hugh Redgauntlet, Darsie is startled to see in a mirror the same horseshoe on his own brow (p. 200). Hugh Redgauntlet then tells Darsie the legend of the horseshoe's appearance, a legend that begins with a son who resisted his father's authority and political allegiances. Battling on the opposing side, the father inadvertently rode his horse over the son's head, bringing instant death. His next child and descending Redgauntlet children are born with the horseshoe mark (pp. 208–10). The original Redgauntlet is eventually told that the destiny of his family is both that they "should continue to be powerful" and that "the valour of his race should always be fruitless, and ... the cause which they espoused should never prosper" (p. 211).

The subsequent lengthy conversation between Hugh Redgauntlet and Darsie is composed of Darsie's attempts to resist his captor's urgent arguments that Darsie accept his destiny as a Redgauntlet. In true Enlightenment fashion, Darsie suggests that they "speak upon this matter without the tone of mystery and fear" and asserts his right "to form ... resolutions upon the reasoning of [his] own mind" (p. 212). Hugh Redgauntlet responds scornfully: "The privilege of free action belongs to no mortal—we are tied down by the fetters of duty—our moral path is limited by the regulations of honour—our most indifferent actions are but the meshes of the web of destiny by which we are all surrounded" (p. 212).

The most powerful appeal by Hugh Redgauntlet is to Darsie's father, Sir Henry Redgauntlet, whose "skull is yet standing over the Rikergate [in Carlisle], and even its bleak and mouldered jaws command you to be a man" (p. 338). After Sir Henry's execution, Darsie's mother sent him to Scotland to keep him from his uncle Hugh, a fanatical Jacobite and Darsie's present captor. While the past history of the House of Redgauntlet is a legend of destruction, its recent history is also tormented and appears to have amply fulfilled the legendary prognostication of powerful impotence. Darsie's seeming truncation of the blighted Redgauntlet history by his rejection of Jacobitism is not altogether comforting, as it perpetuates the pattern of the founding legend—the alienation of a son from the father in dynastic political strife.

Scott ameliorates what appears to be a fulfilment of the destructive legend (whatever course Darsie takes) by using the newly identified Redgauntlet as a powerful conciliating force. Discerning that the Jacobite party is irresolute, Darsie determines to avoid opposing it outright if possible (p. 341). The end result is that Darsie remains on good terms with both parties and is reconciled to his uncle (p. 397).¹⁸ Scott also moderates Darsie's passion for Lilius before he is aware that she is his sister, giving as the reason that Darsie's is a character that needs obstacles to sustain love (p. 316). The larger reason behind this modulation is that Scott wishes to motivate and naturalize what is conventional both in Darsie's new position and in his identity. He must reconcile what Darsie has become and what he always has been, *idem* and *ipse*. Darsie must be both a Redgauntlet and a Hanoverian, and never truly more than a brother to Lilius: "the hearts of

18 The imagined restraint of the Hanoverian government in response to the planned uprising may strain credulity. Bruce Beiderwell concludes that "This serene close identifies power's best interests with its most modest expressions," but notes that in fact "the gallows continued their work upon the stage until 1868." "Scott's *Redgauntlet* as a Romance of Power," *Studies in Romanticism* 28 (1989), 280, 289.

both were overflowing with a feeling of natural affection, to which circumstances had hitherto rendered them strangers" (p. 323). This relationship is further mediated through the marriage of Alan Fairford, Darsie's almost brother, to Lilius, who is then wife to one for whom Darsie's "love ... surpasses the love of women" (p. 129), an allusion to David and Jonathan, another pair caught in a complex political situation.

Scott mediates between competing notions of history: history as destiny, as repetition, as determined by birth; in opposition to history as consciousness, as possibility, as freedom. He allows Darsie both to become himself and to fulfil his destiny. The complexity of the narrative methods within the book reveal Darsie's construction of self out of the shards of a past history that gradually emerges. The large narrative shifts in the book are supplemented by many layerings of perspective, notably "Wandering Willie's Tale" as repeated in Darsie's letters, and the dynastical narratives by Hugh Redgauntlet and Lilius. The reader's apprehension of the story is more comprehensive than Darsie's and precedes his full understanding, as it includes the narrative of Alan Fairford's journey from which Darsie is excluded. In that journey Alan acquires from Provost Crosbie as much of Darsie's history and of his connection to Hugh Redgauntlet as is needed to infer Darsie's identity as son to the executed Sir Henry Redgauntlet (pp. 244–45). And in this conversation we come to know that Wandering Willie was a retainer to Sir Henry, which links his "Tale" to Darsie's legendary past and shows the motivation for Willie's subsequent assistance to Darsie. The contingencies of history are drawn into meaningful relationships through the multiple narrative patterns of the book. For Scott as for Darsie, the self is constructed within history, and history is what can be made of information through narrative. *Idem* and *ipse* are reconciled in the narrative transformation of the Redgauntlet legend into the history of Darsie Latimer Redgauntlet.



Markedly different, *The Female Quixote* and *Redgauntlet* nonetheless show similarities that are relevant to our understanding of the rise of the eighteenth-century novel. Both texts accept written history as a category distinct from the novel but one to which the novel and its characters owe a debt. While accepting a place outside written history, they aspire to be a supplement to it. This supplementarity takes the form in both texts of exploring the sometimes nebulous boundaries between the two forms, thus implying the limitations of history as well as of the novel. In both texts, a central character must negotiate the distinctions between

the private self and the demands of a public world in a way that acknowledges the primacy, although not the exclusivity, of the public world, which is allied to history. For Darsie, this negotiation is enlarging, for Arabella confining. Personal identity must be redefined as civic identity, and the romance must acknowledge its subordination to history. These negotiations, which are accomplished through narrative, are implicitly within the capabilities of the novel but outside the protocols of historical writing.

The confrontation between history and fiction is largely resolved by the institutionalizing of the novel,¹⁹ a process that claims independence for the novel, as well as implies epistemological limits for history. It is not meant by this statement that the institutionalized novel gives up its questioning of history and its exploration of the boundaries between history and fiction. On the contrary, Scott is freed to intensify this questioning of history because of his acceptance of the distinctions between history and the novel. They complement and supplement each other but are different categories. Despite its audience's clear recognition of the fact that its central "historical" event never occurred, *Redgauntlet* is an historical novel in much the same sense as *Waverley* and *Old Mortality* are. It takes history as the arena in which identity must be created, and it takes the manners of a particular time as influencing character traits and thus personal identity. Scott's historical novels may convey a deepened sense of history, but none of his novels about the conflicts related to the Stuart dynasty claims to be or to supplant historical writing, even when such writing is included within the novel. Nevertheless Scott's writing remains highly relevant to historiography.²⁰ The narrative complexity of *Redgauntlet* enacts the vari-

19 Brown argues cogently that Scott as critic, scholar, and novelist was a primary force in the institutionalization of a diverse body of fiction that was widely recognized as the novel: "what had been innovative but generically and socially problematic writing in the eighteenth century became, with Scott, a recognized genre that could be defined, edited, and collected in a set, and then described, imitated, and developed" (p. 168). Brown argues that there were many "institutions" that were only later constructed as the novel. This process of institutionalizing the novel appears to me to depend to at least some degree on an earlier "constitution" (in Michael McKoon's sense) of the novel, one that manifests itself not necessarily in decisiveness of terminology and canon but in mutual responsiveness (including antagonism) to features perceived as relevant to a shared enterprise. Exclusive approbation either of Fielding or of Richardson appears to be a manifestation of that mutual responsiveness.

20 Numerous discussions of *Redgauntlet* emphasize its historiographical relevance, although often reaching differing judgments about its point. For example, James Kerr argues that "Scott's historiography is an amalgam of conflicting notions about the relationship between fiction and historical reality and about the power of the imagination to reshape the course of history by means of story." "Fiction against History: Scott's *Redgauntlet* and the Power of Romance," *Texas Studies in Literature and Language* 29 (1987), 254. Maitzen similarly (but not identically) argues that "*Redgauntlet* focuses on that difference [between history and fiction], examining its implications for the role of history in fiction and, more provocatively, of fiction in historiography" (p. 175).

eties of narrative perspective and, thus, authority that enter the seeming objectivity of historical writing. History is construed through compounded and limited narratives that are unified in one ordered narrative. But historical writing does not foreground the narrative mediation between personal and civic identity that is the happy province of the Scott novel.

I do not argue that Scott is the culmination of eighteenth-century fiction. The novel took other directions too. I do claim that Scott is deeply responsive to earlier fiction and that he develops one of its prominent strands. *The Female Quixote* also focuses on preceding narrative traditions. Like Scott, Lennox sees history as the category against or within which the novel must define itself. And both writers understand that ideas of history are connected to private life in ways often elided in written history. Character develops in accord with its way of wearing history. Much has been written about the many forms of writing that the novel absorbed; however, I am claiming something more for history and the biographical writing that reflects or creates personal identity. History and personal identity were also prominent conceptual categories that enable our description of the eighteenth-century portion of the ragout that is called the novel.

University of California, Santa Barbara