Notes

1 Narrative order


7. Three decades after the publication of the Life of Savage, Johnson and Boswell made their tour of the Scottish highlands, and it is clear from their accounts of the journey that Johnson’s continuing sentimental attachment to the lost jacobite cause is inseparable from its association with a clan system which he believed could not now be revived. Johnson’s Journey to the Western Islands of Scotland (1775) is a brilliant analysis of the dissolution of this particularistic and ‘patriarchal’ order into the juridically and commercially unified British
state following 'the late conquest'. His own analysis excludes, through its rigorous abstraction, his attachment to the clan system and to the surviving sites and personnel of the jacobite insurgency; elements which figure powerfully, as Johnson was aware they would do, in Boswell's account, *The Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides* (1785). See Samuel Johnson, 'A Journey to the Western Islands of Scotland', and James Boswell, 'The Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides', ed. R.W. Chapman, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1970.

8. Donald Ault has discussed Blake's poetry in a way that would provide a basis for comparing what Blake and Burke do to narrative order. Ault argues that the reader of Blake's *The Four Zoas* (1797) is engaged in a 'constant retroactive reconstitution' of prior events within the narrative. See Donald Ault, *Narrative Unbound: Re-visioning William Blake's 'The Four Zoas'* , New York: Station Hill Press, 1987, p. xi.

9. See J.G.A. Pocock, 'Conservative Enlightenment and Democratic Revolutions: The American and French Cases in British Perspective', *Government and Opposition*, xxiv, 1989, 81–105; 'Post-Puritan England and the problem of Enlightenment', in *Culture and Politics from Puritanism to the Enlightenment*, ed. P. Zagorin, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980, 91–111. It will be evident that my own view differs from Pocock's to the extent that I believe much British enlightenment writing (Johnson's, for instance) is characterized by a tension between conservatism (support for the *status quo*) and reaction (support for some version of the *status quo ante*, whether Stuart or Commonwealth). The problem with Pocock's view is exemplified by his presentation of the allegory of the three brothers in *A Tale of a Tub* (1704) as evidence of Swift's commitment to a typically British middle way in Church and State ('Conservative Enlightenment', 85–6). The allegory does indeed represent this view, a view which Swift did hold, but which he held – or so other parts of the same text suggest – at a distance and even, sometimes, in contempt. That is to say, Pocock ignores the question of Swift's irony.


23. ‘Biographies end with the subject’s death. Autobiographies have no such natural termination. However, this one has the advantage of ending at the moment of an undeniable and dramatic caesura in world history, in consequence of the attack of September 11, 2001 on the World Trade Centre and the Pentagon.’ Eric Hobsbawm, Interesting Times: A Twentieth-Century Life, Harmondsworth: Allan Lane, 2002, p. 411.
24. Hayden White links a range of relevant speculations as follows: ‘In the acquisition of language, Lacan had suggested, the child also acquires the very paradigm of orderly, rule-governed behaviour. Barthes adds that in the development of the capacity to assimilate “stories” and to tell them . . . the child also learns what it is to be that creature that, in Nietzsche’s phrase, is capable of making promises, of “remembering forward” as well as backwards, and of linking his end to his beginning in such a way as to attest to an “integrity” which every individual must be supposed to possess if he is to become a “subject” of (any) system of law, morality or propriety.’ Hayden White, The Content of the Form: Narrative Discourse and Historical Representation, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1987, p. 36. Nietzsche discussed remembering and promising in The Genealogy of Morals (1887); see Friedrich Nietzsche, The Birth of Tragedy and The Genealogy of Morals, trans. F. Golffing, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1956, pp. 189–230. Lacan described the sentence, out of which narratives are made, in a way that could be applied to narrative itself: ‘the sentence completes its signification only with its last term, each term being anticipated in the constitution of the others and, inversely, sealing their meaning by its retroactive effect’: Jacques Lacan, Ecrits: A Selection, trans. Alan Sheridan, London: Tavistock, 1977, p. 303.


## 2 Samuel Johnson and the order of time


3 Edmund Burke: Middles versus beginnings and ends

2. My play on the word ‘recall’ derives from Shelley’s in Prometheus Unbound where Prometheus tells Jupiter that ‘The curse/Once breathed on thee I would recall . . .’. (lines 58–9), P.B. Shelley, The Poems of Shelley, vol. 2, eds Kelvin Everest and Geoffrey Matthews, London: Longman, 2000. ‘Recall’ here means simultaneously ‘remember’ and ‘retract’, as if his discourse (the curse), bearing within itself the life of its own subsequent material effects, were a root whose pulling up would kill the plant it has engendered, a physical weight which can and must be carried back to him. To remember the curse is to retract it, but it can only be remembered if it is called back (re-called) at him. The repressive power which Shelley attributes to the curse, and the liberating power he attributes to its retraction is relevant to his idea that poetic speech itself has ‘legislative’ force. See Gavin Edwards, ‘Mind-Forg’d Manacles: A Contribution to the Reading of Blake’s “London”’, Literature and History, 5, i, Spring 1979, pp. 87–105 (103).
3. I am grateful to lain McCalman for drawing this point to my attention.
6. Quoted in O’Brien, Reflections, p. 36. O’Brien argues that Burke’s attempt to show that ‘the English Revolution, unlike the French one, had not been really revolutionary at all’ is ‘the most forced part of his argument’, an attempt ‘which we can judge successful only by choosing to forget about the contributions of the contemporaries of Henry VIII and Oliver Cromwell’ (p. 37). Indeed, we need also to forget those other parts of the Reflections where Burke says something like the opposite. O’Brien’s references to the ‘English Revolution’ (or ‘the English revolution’) are themselves significantly confusing: sometimes the phrase seems to refer specifically to the events of 1688 and sometimes much more broadly to the long national-protestant
sequence beginning with the Henrican Reformation and culminating in 1688. Burke does indeed 'choose to forget', and want his readers to 'choose to forget', the contribution of Oliver Cromwell – 'regicide usurper' and subduer of the Irish – to the Glorious Revolution of 1688: that is, to remember it, but subliminally.


8. These images may strike us as so lurid that they must tell us more about Burke than they can tell us about the revolution. But there is plenty of evidence in the debates, legislative decisions, everyday events and public images of the revolution to suggest that Burke's gothic extravaganza did anticipate some of the revolution's effects on French people's own sense of social – including familial – identity. Lynn Hunt, whose Family Romance of the French Revolution ably explores this aspect of the revolution, provides a nicely appropriate example: ‘As I was completing this book I came across a most unusual piece of information in the holiday gifts section of The New Yorker of 10 December 1990. Under the rubric “On and Off the Avenue” appeared a description of a mechanical toy dating from the French Revolution. The toy is shown on a videocassette titled The Marvellous Toys of Dr Athelstan Spilhaus; it consists of two blacksmiths hammering at the severed head of an aristocrat while another figure tends the forge fire. The toy is dated 1791 and its motto reads: “Ici on reforge les tetes de familles”.' Lynn Hunt, The Family Romance of the French Revolution, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989, p. 193. The idea of the body politic and the family politic are indeed joined here, at the neck, where they are most vulnerable to the guillotine.


16. ‘What is at work in this prescriptivist ideology is the political version of Nachträglichkeit, the process by which past experiences may be revised so as
to align them with one’s current psychic state.’ Eagleton, _Heathcliffe_, p. 43. See also Brooks, _Reading for the Plot_, pp. 90–112.

4 **Watkin Tench and the cold track of narrative**


5. John Hawkesworth, _An Account of the Voyages undertaken by order of the present Monarch for making Discoveries in the Southern Hemisphere, successively performed by Commodore Byron, Captain Wallis, Captain Cartaret, and Captain Cook in the Dolphin, the Swallow, and the Endeavour, drawn up from the Journals which were kept by the several Commanders, and from the papers of Joseph Banks Esq by John Hawkesworth, LL.D., in 3 vols. Illustrated by cuts, and a great variety of Charts and Maps relating to Countries now first discovered, or hitherto but imperfectly known_. London: Strahan and Cadell, 1773.

6. Narrative of the kind I attempt to describe here corresponds to what the French linguist Emile Benveniste influentially described as _histoire_. Sometimes translated as ‘history’, sometimes as ‘narrative’, _histoire_ is defined by contrast with what Benveniste calls ‘discours’. This distinction, subsequently extended by Gerard Genette, cannot however be applied directly to English texts because French tenses – on the characteristics of which the distinction principally relies – do not correspond to English ones in all respects. I have tried to adapt Benveniste’s important distinction to English grammatical circumstances, stressing the central importance of the exclusion of the present perfect in the construction of narrative. See Emile Benveniste, _Problems in General Linguistics_ (1966), translated by Mary Meek, Coral Gables, Florida: University of Miami Press, 1971, pp. 205–16; Gerard Genette, _Figures of Literary Discourse_, translated by Alan Sheridan, New York: Columbia University Press, 1982, pp. 127–44.

7. Reference has already been made to Eric Hobsbaum’s formulation of this problem as he approaches the end of his autobiography, _Interesting Times_. It is appropriate that a historian, used to working in the past tense, should be especially conscious of the problems raised by narrating his own recent past.

9. Le Comte de La Pérouse commanded the French voyage of exploration which put in to Botany Bay a few days after the British in 1788 and subsequently disappeared in the Pacific.


5 **William Godwin: Stories and families**


7. In *Caleb Williams*, this sense is largely confined to descriptions of Emily Melvile's association with the Tyrells where the word 'family' plays a particularly important role in helping to obscure the character of her position in the household. ‘The orphan daughter of Mr Tyrell's paternal aunt’ (p. 282),
Emily is a part of the Tyrell family in two senses (she is a member of the household and a blood-relation of Mr Tyrell) but not in a third sense (she is not part of the Tyrell lineage, not a Tyrell).

8. Jon Klancher argues that 'the notion of “necessity”, as it will under intense historical pressure, began to produce in Godwin’s revisions of *Political Justice* – and more fully in his project of cultural enquiry and criticism, *The Enquirer* – the complex and chaotic actions of “the contingent”’ (‘Godwin and the Genre Reformers’, p. 27). I would only add that half of the ‘pressure’ came from within *Political Justice*, in the form of Godwin’s opposition to social contracts: the tension was latent in the conceptual structure of the book from the start.

9. Indeed, the critique of the master–servant relationship in the 1796 *Political Justice* quite closely echoes part of the critique of the husband–wife relationship in the 1793 edition: 'It is absurd to expect that the inclinations and wishes of two human beings should coincide through any long period of time. To oblige them to act and to live together is to subject them to some inevitable portion of thwarting, bickering, and unhappiness' (8. 761).


6 Wordsworth’s moving accidents


5. One of seven new stanzas, inserted after line 55, in the 1802 edition of *Lyrical Ballads*; see *Lyrical Ballads*, eds Brett and Jones, p. 181.


Notes


23. As Jonathan Culler says of *Oedipus Rex*: ‘When the shepherd reveals that Oedipus is in fact the son of Laius, Oedipus leaps to the conclusion, and every reader leaps with him, that he is in fact the murderer of Laius. His conclusion is based not on any new evidence concerning a past deed but on the force of meaning, the interweaving of prophesies and the demands of narrative coherence.’ *The Pursuit of Signs: Semiotics, Literature and Deconstruction*, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1981, pp. 169–87 (174).


7 Crabbe’s Parables


8. Raymond Williams, *Keywords*, p. 66.


8 Relations: Mary Wollstonecraft and Mary Shelley

1. ‘The issues posed by [the narrative structure of *Frankenstein*] may most of all concern relation, or how narrative relation relates to intersubjective relation,


All quotations from the novel are taken from this edition.

10. It is possible to see the transformation of the metaphoric into the literal as itself obeying a Frankensteinian logic, with metaphors dying and subsequently acquiring a dangerous life of their own by being taken literally. Only Blake among the writers of this period made this connection strongly, for instance in ‘A Poison Tree’ (1794) or in the following passage from *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* (1793): ‘The ancient poets animated all sensible objects with gods or geniuses, calling them by the names, and adorning them with the properties, of woods, rivers, mountains, lakes, cities, nations, and whatever their enlarged and numerous senses could perceive. / And particularly they studied the genius of each city and country, placing it under its mental deity. / Till a system was formed, which some took advantage of and enslaved the vulgar by attempting to realise or abstract the mental deities from their objects. Thus began priesthood – choosing forms of worship from poetic tales. / And at length they pronounced that the gods had ordered such things. / Thus men forget that all deities reside in the human breast.’ *The Poems of William Blake*, ed. W.H. Stevenson and David Erdman, London: Longman, 1971, pp. 111, 212.


13. For Wollstonecraft’s earlier life and work as a possible source for Blake’s *Visions*, see Nelson Hilton, ‘An Original Story’, in *Unnam’d Forms*, eds Hilton and Vogler, pp. 69–104. Though they occupied overlapping milieux, the
extent of Wollstonecraft's knowledge of Blake's poetry has not been established. Nevertheless, the linking, by Oothoon in *Visions*, of the reductive making of equivalencies by commerce and abstract reasoning ('Wilt thou take the ape / For thy counsellor, or the dog for a schoolmaster to thy children') seems to combine in Maria's mind with the faces seen in *London's 'chartered streets'* after her husband's attempt to persuade her to prostitute herself to Mr S. 'They [his “sophisticated sentiments”] had excited sensations similar to those I have felt, in viewing the squalid inhabitants of some of the lanes and back streets of the metropolis, mortified at being compelled to consider them as my fellow-creatures, as if an ape had claimed kindred with me' (p. 168).

9 The still unravished bride of Lammermoor

7. The concept of ‘artisan painter’ has been used by Peter Lord in the context of Welsh art-history. While it describes a broad European phenomenon, Lord argues that it was only in Wales, where there was no indigenous academic painting tradition, that artisan painting become an important means for the creation of a distinctive popular-national consciousness. Peter Lord, *The Visual Culture of Wales: Imagining the Nation*, Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2000, pp. 168–244. See also, ‘Welsh Artisan Painters’, in *An Oxford Companion to the Romantic Age*, pp. 752–4.
10. 'If the poet reads the urn as a silent Grecian “historian”, the questioning of his rhyme provides a particularly co-operative voice, for historia is the
Grecian method of learning by inquiry. Yet the attempt to double the historians on this occasion produces an ironic counterplay in the language of poetic enquiry. Far from recovering the mysterious legend presumably known to the “sylvan historian”, the speaker’s “rhyme” doubles back on itself to reflect his own perplexities…. Keats elaborates the play of rhyme throughout the ode, presenting a speaker in pursuit of interpretation through rhyme that primarily expresses the ardour of the pursuer’. Susan Wolfson, *The Questioning Presence: Wordsworth, Keats and the Interrogatory Mode in Romantic Poetry*, Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1986, p. 319.


17. On the thematic implications of the differences between the 1819 edition and the 1830 Magnum Opus edition, see Gardside, ‘Union and the *Bride of Lammermoor*’. 
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